

F1 Driver market silly season continues

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Verstappen victorious as Perez gets his act together



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Hope springs eternal as Perez keeps Verstappen honest

It's coming to something when, just four races into a Formula 1 season, the main narrative is along the lines of, "well, at least the number two driver at the top team is doing better than usual".

Bearing in mind the characteristics of the Suzuka circuit play beautifully to the strengths of the Red Bull, few expected anything other than another *tour de force* from Max Verstappen in the Japanese Grand Prix. Only the event's switch to spring – and the likely colder weather exacerbating one of Red Bull's few weaknesses, in the form of tyre warm-up – offered any hope to the rest.

The thing is, this time Perez genuinely did step up to the plate, in the spirit of Jochen Mass at Montjuic Park in 1975. As Alex Kalinauckas explains in our in-depth report on p14, the Mexican kept Verstappen on his toes at Suzuka. And he was fast enough last weekend to nullify the strategy games of the Ferraris and McLarens, which on many other weekends over recent times would have led to someone else finishing second. He's also very much in the picture at Red Bull for 2025, as we explain on p4.

Elsewhere in this issue, we enjoy British motorsport national treasure Derek Warwick looking back on p32 with Kevin Turner at the best 10 races of his career – stand by for everything from F1 to short ovals... Tom Ingram chats enthusiastically on p40 about his hopes of reclaiming the British Touring Car champion's crown, and Marcus Pye looks ahead on p44 to what will no doubt be another fabulous weekend at the Goodwood Members' Meeting.



MS

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**NEVER MISS
AN ISSUE**

Special deals for
Autosport p52



Cover image

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PIT + PADDOCK



Perez did his job with second last weekend at Suzuka

Red Bull perturbed as Audi entrance affects

FORMULA 1

A bemused Helmut Marko has said that it is “strange” to see 2026 newcomer Audi putting pressure on the Formula 1 driver market, but his Red Bull team insists it will not rush its decision on who Max Verstappen’s team-mate will be next year.

The Milton Keynes-based operation has a vacant slot for 2025, with Sergio Perez’s contract running out at the end of this season. Perez has shown improved form this year and lies second in the drivers’

standings after finishing runner-up behind Verstappen in three of the first four races. But Red Bull still wants to see whether Perez can keep up this form long term – he started last season in similarly good shape before a mid-year slump that prompted questions about his future.

The squad has plenty of options available should it decide that it does not want to continue with Perez, with a host of leading drivers who are not yet locked down. Internally, it could promote Yuki Tsunoda from RB; the Japanese youngster has

enjoyed a strong start to the season, including scoring a point in his home race at Suzuka added to seventh in Melbourne.

But Autosport understands that Red Bull is also evaluating other more experienced candidates. Alex Albon is on its shortlist, but he is under contract with Williams through 2025, so would need to be bought out. As revealed earlier this year, Red Bull has asked for a first-refusal option on his services for 2026.

Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz is a more serious candidate, with his race-winning form and impressive technical capabilities. But Red Bull is not the only team that appears to be interested in the Spaniard. Sources have revealed that factions within Aston Martin want him to join the Silverstone squad for 2025 alongside Lance Stroll and lead it into the new F1 rules era from 2026, rather than continue with Fernando Alonso. And then F1’s newest manufacturer Audi, which is taking over Sauber, is also on the hunt for drivers for its entry in 2026, and Sainz has been one of its obvious targets for a while. Audi’s push to get its drivers in place as early as next year means that those who have options there may not be able to wait too long, meaning that they may have to lay down a deadline for a Red Bull decision.

Unmoved by Audi’s influence, Red Bull insists that it will take all the time it needs to secure the strongest driver pairing for 2025. Speaking exclusively to Autosport about the





silly season

situation, Red Bull motorsport advisor Marko said: “The driver market has exploded in April, and normally no one talks in April. It’s ridiculous, but we won’t jump into this game ourselves. We will wait and see, and only then make the best choice later on. I don’t know what is going on. I have heard that Audi is putting pressure, but it’s a little bit strange for a newcomer to put pressure on the driver market.”

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner says that the second seat is very much in Perez’s hands. “He needs to just keep doing what he’s doing,” explained Horner. “The whole driver market seems to be very early this year that everybody seems to be rushing around, and we’re only four races into the year. We’re not in a huge rush. Obviously, there’s a significant amount of interest in our cars, as you would expect. But Checo has the priority, and it’s going to be a few more races yet before we start to think about next year.”

Perez is expecting things to start moving before the summer, but says he is “pretty relaxed about” his fate. “It is my 14th season in F1 and whatever comes next, I am really pleased with what I have done in the sport so far,” he told Sky Sports F1. “Obviously, the driver market is moving and in the next few weeks there are going to be a lot of movements. So, I expect within a month to really know what I am doing next year.”

JONATHAN NOBLE & RONALD VORDING

American continent backs Ben Sulayem with legal call

FIA

FIA member clubs and sport federations of the Americas have recommended that the governing body takes legal action against those who it believes slandered the organisation and its president Mohammed Ben Sulayem.

Ben Sulayem was recently cleared of wrongdoing in an internal investigation over allegations of interference in two Formula 1 races last year.

Clearly designed to quell any talk of an internal move against Ben Sulayem in the short term, a letter signed by more than 30 representatives of FIA federations from the Americas has shown emphatic support for him. And there is a clear message that they are unhappy about recent allegations made against Ben Sulayem, who was investigated after a whistleblower suggested he had interfered with a stewards’ decision at last year’s Saudi Arabian Grand Prix and also overstepped the mark in signing off the safety certificate of the Las Vegas GP.

In the letter, published on the FIA website, the clubs state that they “recommend that the FIA initiate legal action against those who, without cause, slander the FIA and its leadership”. This comes after the clubs felt that various reports of the situation surrounding Ben Sulayem were aimed at trying to hurt the FIA.

The clubs also stated: “Accusations of impropriety and unethical practices propagated by some members of the print and digital media were intended for the sole purpose of causing harm to the FIA and its leadership, particularly the President.



Ecclestone with
F1 chief Domenicali

MAUGER

“We endorse and ratify our vote of confidence in support of Mr Mohammed Ben Sulayem, for his stewardship of the FIA and his progress to fulfilling his commitment to transform the FIA in an ethical and transparent manner in order to better serve its members.”

The letter is signed by 34 member clubs and sports federations, including representatives of Colombia, Canada, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, Guatemala, Uruguay, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Chile, Belize, Paraguay, Honduras, Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Bolivia, Cayman Islands, Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago and Antigua.

The list also interestingly includes the signature of Fabiana Ecclestone, the vice-president of South America for Sports who is also wife of former F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone. She has emerged as a potential future presidential candidate, and potentially as early as the next election in 2025, depending on whether or not Ben Sulayem seeks a second term in charge.

JONATHAN NOBLE



Ben Sulayem with
a former president
– of the BRDC

SUTTON

Pirro leaves McLaren young driver role

FORMULA 1

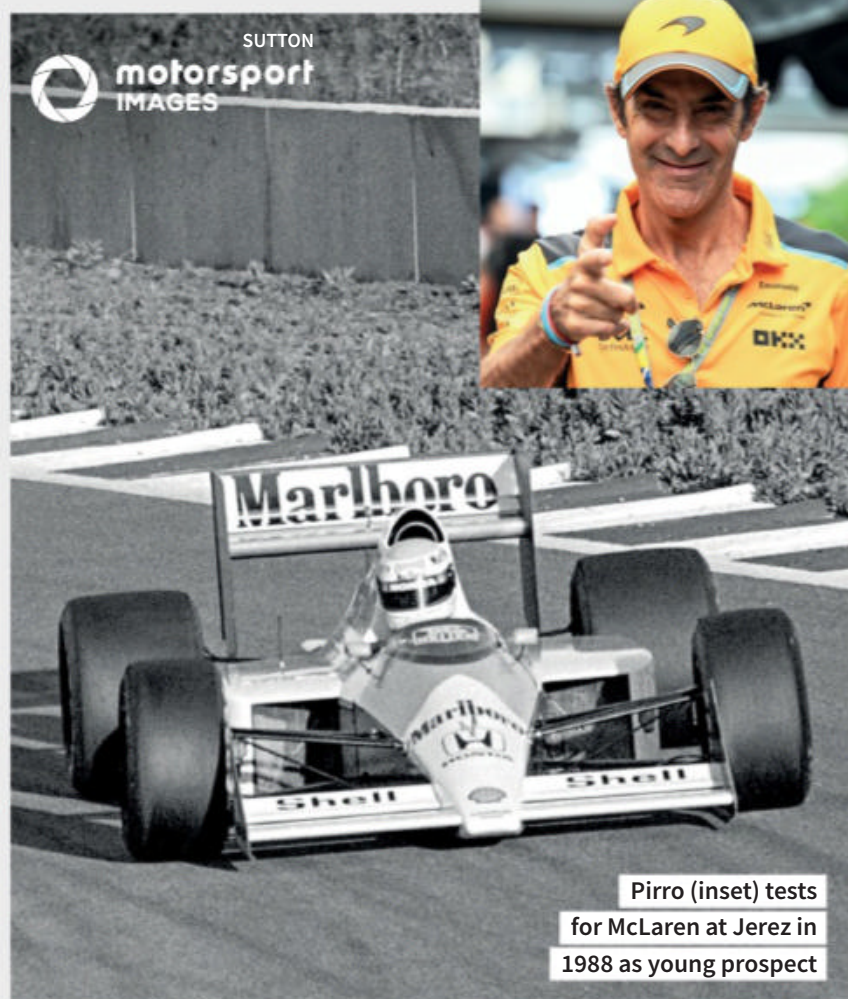
Five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro has left his role managing McLaren's young driver programme, with the team's business operations director Stephanie Carlin taking over.

Pirro only joined the Woking squad last year, but Autosport understands that a one-year contract was not extended, with McLaren opting to move the programme in-house. Carlin, who joined McLaren as its business operations director this year, will receive support from senior McLaren engineers as she takes charge of the scheme.

Pirro, who has 37 grand prix starts with Benetton and Scuderia Italia to his name, wrote on Instagram: "After a year of hard work and satisfaction, I will be leaving the McLaren DDP. Together with the Formula 1 team,

I was able to put in place a structure to help develop young, talented and hard-working drivers into future McLaren champions. I trust that the internal resources who will run the DDP will continue on my path."

Pirro was instrumental in overhauling the programme last year and streamlined its efforts to support drivers all the way from karting to the highest level. Alongside McLaren IndyCar driver Pato O'Ward and Euro 4 title winner Ugo Ugochukwu (racing this year in Formula Regional European and GB3), the team recruited 2022 Le Mans victor Ryo Hirakawa, who was named as an F1 reserve pilot. It also took on F3 champion Gabriel Bortoleto for his graduation to F2, F1 Academy driver Bianca Bustamante, and signed a one-year option on Italian F4 talent Brando Badoer – the son of ex-F1



Pirro (inset) tests for McLaren at Jerez in 1988 as young prospect

racer Luca will, like Ugochukwu, compete in FRECA.

Carlin has a wealth of experience in the junior categories after her stint with the former Carlin team, founded by her husband

Trevor and which now trades as Rodin Motorsport. She was team principal of its F3 and F1 Academy squads, and held a similar role at Team X44 in Extreme E, before joining McLaren last winter.

FILIP CLEEREN

Prema joins IndyCar grid for 2025 – it's official

INDYCAR

Italian single-seater powerhouse Prema Racing is to enter the IndyCar Series in 2025. The team announced on Tuesday plans for a two-car team powered by Chevrolet engines, following weeks of speculation reported in Autosport.

Although this is the first expansion into North America under the Prema name, it

already has a foothold in the continent via its operation of the Iron Lynx Lamborghini LMDh programme in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in addition to its European-based teams in Formula 2, F3, FRegional and various F4 series. The new team "will operate out of a state-of-the-art facility located in Indiana". Speculation suggests that the team wants to pair an established IndyCar ace with a rookie from its

European programme.

"Today's announcement marks a pivotal moment in the history of Prema Racing," said team principal Rene Rosin, son of Prema founder Angelo. "Making the step to the IndyCar Series, and competing in the world-famous Indianapolis 500, is a dream coming true for our family and everyone involved in our business. We have tremendous respect for IndyCar, its unique challenges and sensational history, and we look forward to being part of it."

There are nine Prema alumni on the F1 grid, while IndyCar 2024 counts Felix Rosenqvist, Marcus Armstrong and Callum Iltott among its number, as well as 1995 Indy 500 winner Jacques Villeneuve.

"Prema Racing, with their global reach and extraordinary presence in open-wheel racing, will be a great addition to our paddock," said IndyCar president Jay Frye. General Motors motorsport boss Mark Stielow added: "Prema brings global success to Team Chevy and winning organisation."

JOEY BARNES



Hurt Habsburg could miss out on Imola race

WEC

Alpine World Endurance Championship driver Ferdinand Habsburg suffered back injuries during testing at Motorland Aragon last month that threaten to rule him out of upcoming rounds of the series. The Austrian sustained two broken vertebrae in the accident aboard one of the French manufacturer's A424 LMDhs on 27 March at the Spanish circuit.

It is still unclear whether Habsburg, who was classified seventh in the 2024 WEC opener in Qatar last month aboard the Alpine he shares with Charles Milesi and Paul-Loup Chatin, will be fit to race at Imola on 21 April. A statement from Alpine said that his period of recovery "has not yet been defined".

A return to the cockpit for round two of the WEC in Italy appears to be a long shot, but the following event at Spa on 11 May remains a realistic target. Alpine has Jules Gounon in place as a reserve, although it is unclear whether his commitments as a



factory Mercedes GT3 driver in the GT World Challenge Asia on the Imola weekend would take precedence.

The accident happened at Turn 7 at Motorland during the course of a 30-hour endurance test with a single car. No cause of the incident has been revealed by Alpine because investigations remain ongoing, but the head-on nature of the impact that resulted in the injuries points towards some kind of technical failure.

Habsburg was taken to hospital in nearby

Alcaniz, and after undergoing checks was discharged in the evening. Further examinations on his return to his Austrian homeland revealed that he had sustained "two fractured lumbar vertebrae with no neurological damage", according to the statement from Alpine.

Chatin will step into Habsburg's seat in Cool Racing's LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07 for this weekend's European Le Mans Series curtain-raiser at Barcelona.

GARY WATKINS

BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Piquet at Virage for more ELMS

ELMS

Ex-Formula 1 driver Nelson Piquet Jr will contest the European Le Mans Series for a second straight year. The Brazilian moves over from United Autosports to Polish entrant Team Virage for the LMP2 campaign beginning this weekend at Barcelona.

The 38-year-old, who last year returned to European-based racing for the first time since his 2018-19 Formula E campaign with Jaguar, will drive an ORECA-Gibson 07 in the pro/am P2 sub-class. He will share the car with Brits Matt Bell and Tony Wells, who

had already been confirmed in the car.

"It wasn't in my plans to race in Europe this year, but I am very excited to be out there with Virage, and I hope we will be successful already in Barcelona," said Piquet, who is also racing for the Cavaleiro Sports Chevrolet team in the Brazilian Stock Car Pro Series this year, and was the inaugural FE champion in 2014-15.

"The team was looking for an experienced driver, and the possibility of competing for them arose. I'm delighted to participate in this ELMS season with Team Virage."

GARY WATKINS

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It's Jake Hill at
Graham Hill...

BTCC BRANDS TEST TOP 10	
DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
Jake Hill (BMW)	47.868s
Rob Huff (Toyota)	47.933s
Adam Morgan (BMW)	47.936s
Josh Cook (Toyota)	48.031s
Aron Taylor-Smith (Vauxhall)	48.151s
Ash Sutton (Ford)	48.168s
Dan Cammish (Ford)	48.201s
Aiden Moffat (Toyota)	48.210s
Tom Ingram (Hyundai)	48.367s
Mikey Doble (Vauxhall)	48.395s

Hill sets pace as Thompson shines in first BMW run

BTCC

While Jake Hill stamped in a late time to take first blood in British Touring Car Championship official pre-season testing at Brands Hatch last week in one West Surrey Racing BMW, it was the fate of the driver of another that dominated speculation. Bobby Thompson was given the chance to drive the Sunbury squad's surplus 330e M Sport as underfunded driver and top team continue to work flat-out on making the commercial numbers add up for 2024. Due to budget – or lack of it – the car did not run the Cosworth hybrid kit and therefore had no transponder, but WSR reported that Thompson circulated in the 48.3s, good enough for the top 10. Further, he lapped

at 53.50s in the wet during the opening hour, when pacesetters Hill and reigning champion Ash Sutton (Alliance Racing Ford) were in the mid-53.3s bracket, on his first taste of a rear-wheel-drive BTCC car. “The idea behind the test was to generate publicity,” said WSR chief Dick Bennetts. “Does that turn into money? We don't know. He did a very decent job considering it was his first day in a rear-wheel-drive touring car. He had a lot to learn, for example about brake balance, and that takes a while with anyone, but he did very well. We were very impressed with his feedback, his attitude, and he didn't have any spins.” Hill and WSR team-mate Adam Morgan shared the top four with Speedworks Motorsport Toyota newcomers Rob Huff

and Josh Cook. Neither of these teams, whose engines are supplied by Neil Brown Engineering, were running with the new turbo boost that will double ‘push-to-pass’ power in conjunction with the hybrid in 2024, but did fit soft tyres. Bennetts said that in WSR's case this was because “we had punctures on the left-rear around Brands last year. We think we've traced it back to what's causing it – something in the chassis, and needing to avoid kerbs early on when the pressures are low.” The Alliance Fords, all-conquering in 2023, are understood not to have been going for headline times, with Sutton instead venturing on a long race run that featured 22 laps in the 48s/low-49s. **MARCUS SIMMONS**

Byron triumphs on Hendrick's first-win anniversary



Byron leads on
the bullring

NASCAR

Hendrick Motorsports celebrated the 40th anniversary of Geoff Bodine taking its first NASCAR Cup win through a victory at Martinsville with another at the same track last Sunday by its emerging star William Byron. Byron's win on the famed Virginia short oval was his third victory in the season's first eight races. His

Chevrolet was the first car on the lead lap to make a final green-flag pitstop – uncharacteristic on this short track – in the middle of the final stage. When the cycle of stops was completed, he emerged as the leader for the first time. Byron quickly built a big lead and appeared headed to uneventful victory when a wreck with two laps to go brought out a caution and sent the race into overtime.

After a brief battle with team-mate Chase Elliott on the restart, Byron cleared for the lead and held on to beat the sister car of Kyle Larson to the flag by 0.550 seconds, with Elliott third in a Hendrick 1-2-3, while Alex Bowman in the team's other Chevy was eighth. Bubba Wallace was fourth in his 23XI Racing Toyota, with Ryan Blaney's Team Penske Ford next up. **JIM UTTER**

Kostecki is back.
Same can't be said
for the sponsors

EDGE PHOTOGRAPHICS
motorsport
IMAGES



Kostecki in shock Erebus return

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Reigning Australian Supercars champion Brodie Kostecki is to make a shock return to the series at Taupo in New Zealand next week with Erebus Motorsport.

Kostecki dramatically stood aside from the opening rounds of the series at Bathurst and Albert Park, with Todd Hazelwood driving his Chevrolet Camaro alongside Jack Le Brocq. Hazelwood is now expected to return to his original role as an endurance co-driver.

"I'm excited to be back behind the wheel again – I needed some time away to prioritise my health," said Kostecki in a team statement. "I'm grateful for the support, privacy and time Betty [Klimenko, team owner], Barry [Ryan, CEO] and the team have given me."

During the time Kostecki was sitting out the early rounds of the series, a number of the team's sponsors departed, including

Coca-Cola and legal firm Shaw & Partners.

In the statement, Ryan said: "On behalf of Betty and the team, we are pleased Brodie is ready to drive again. Having Brodie back to work alongside Jack as he becomes more familiar with our cars will be a positive for our entire team."

In the six races that Kostecki sat out, the team's best result has been a fifth place by Le Brocq at Albert Park.

Kostecki's return has infuriated Boost Mobile founder and long-time motorsport supporter Peter Adderton, who sponsored the 26-year-old and publically spoke of allegations of bullying within the team. As a result he has announced plans to withdraw from the sport. "The motorsport culture in Australia is toxic and all about people's own self-interest, which is fine, but stop as an industry pretending you are all about the fans and the sport," he said.

PHIL BRANAGAN & SAM HALL

MIKE COTTON 1938-2024

OBITUARY

Renowned sportscar journalist Michael Cotton has died aged 86. A career spanning more than 60 years included a stint as editor of *Motoring News*, occasional articles for *Autosport* and authorship of 30 books. Yet he will probably be best remembered as a fixture of the endurance racing paddock – he attended every Le Mans 24 Hours between 1968 and 2008 in a working capacity.

Less well known were Mike's rallying success as a co-driver: he was an outright winner of the Tanganyika Rally in East Africa and a class winner on the Tulip Rally in 1960 and 1975 respectively. During a stint as PR boss for Porsche GB he launched a one-make series for the 924, the roots of the current Carrera Cup GB.

Cotton joined Teesdale Publications in 1966 to work for *MN* and *Motor Sport*. He was editor of the former in 1967-76 and in 1983, after his PR foray, returned to journalism, still writing into his 80s.

GARY WATKINS



Cotton with Ickx at
1969 Le Mans 24 Hours

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Top rally teams tell FIA they need U-turn on rule changes

WRC

World Rally Championship teams have raised concerns to the FIA regarding the proposed sudden technical changes for 2025 and expressed a desire for the current rules to remain in place.

Sources have confirmed to Autosport that Toyota, Hyundai and M-Sport collectively wrote to the FIA last week citing a need for the current Rally1 technical rules to see out their original window of 2022 to the end of 2026. The letter was sent ahead of a planned WRC Commission meeting in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday.

In February, the FIA's working group revealed its vision for the future of top-level rallying, including a raft of proposals incorporating changes to technical and sporting regulations, and the promotion of the category. The proposals will be voted on at June's World Motor Sport Council meeting. While WRC Rally1 teams have shown their unanimous support for proposed changes to the sporting side of the championship, the FIA's plans to change the technical regulations for next year have been strongly opposed.

The FIA intends a series of changes beginning from next season until new regulations are introduced in 2027, with hybrid power removed from Rally1 cars along with a reduction in aerodynamics and air restrictor diameter. The aim is to bring the performance more into line with Rally2 cars, which will be offered more aero and performance through an upgrade kit, to boost the number of competitors capable of competing at the sharp end of rallies.

Chief among the teams' concerns



MCKLEIN

is the tight timeframe to enact these changes, with the proposed ratification of the regulations offering a six-month window to design, test and validate their revised cars.

Hyundai has been the most vocal, with team principal Cyril Abiteboul (above) saying it will not be possible to "do a good job" next year under this timeframe. The South Korean manufacturer stands to be most affected by the rule changes, with significant investment – which would be redundant – already committed to upgrading its i20 N Rally1 for 2025.

Speaking last month, Toyota team principal Jari-Matti Latvala admitted that he felt some areas of the FIA's vision were "too aggressive". "Ideally taking hybrids out will make the cars slower anyway," he said. "But at the same time changing the restrictor and aerodynamics is a bit too much because it means you need to start optimising the engine performance for the different restrictors and you need to do testing for the aero. I hope we can find a solution where we don't do that many things immediately."

TOM HOWARD

Wheldon Jr gets double victory

USF JUNIORS

The 15-year-old son of late IndyCar hero Dan Wheldon scored two race victories on his debut on the series' junior ladder at NOLA Motorsports Park last weekend.

Andretti Global protege Sebastian Wheldon had already triumphed in Skip Barber series races and the YACAcademy Winter Series (for F4 cars) before joining Velocity Racing Development's line-up for USF Juniors. He won the first and third races at the Louisiana track, with Briton Liam McNeilly triumphing in the other on his US debut after success in Ginetta Juniors and GB4.

"He did a test with us in December and they signed with us in January," said VRD's expat English boss Dan Mitchell of Wheldon. "We managed to get the deal done with Andretti to move forward. As soon as he got in the car with us we knew he was a very good talent."

"He's very, very determined – he really gives us a hard time! He's the first in the debrief room, and the last to leave, constantly chasing his engineer. And that's where he's finding his speed."

"Seb was probably a bit stronger on the second day than the first. He should and could have won all three races."

Wheldon was second in the race won by McNeilly, who is driving for the team of Indianapolis-domiciled Basildonian Jay Howard, leaving him nine points clear of McNeilly in the standings.

While it is unclear whether Wheldon's (below) relationship with VRD could stretch to the operation's UK-based arm in GB3, the team's Nikita Johnson – who has a dual programme on both sides of the Atlantic – played his part in a banner weekend for VRD with two wins and a second in the USF Pro 2000 races. Ex-GB3 racer Nico Christodoulou also took a win in the USF2000 triple-header to make it six out of nine at NOLA for VRD.

MARCUS SIMMONS



GAVIN BAKER/USF PRO RACING



Wickens won
Michelin Pilot Cup
TCR title last season

LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Wickens hurt again in accident

NLS

Former IndyCar star Robert Wickens's hopes of racing in the Nurburgring 24 Hours received a blow last Saturday when he was involved in a high-speed crash in the Nurburgring Langstrecken Serie opener at the fabled Nordschleife.

The Canadian's Target SRL-run Hyundai Elantra N TCR failed to slow down and vaulted the barrier at the Hohenrain chicane that ends the lap of the daunting 12.9-mile circuit, just before it rejoins the Grand Prix track.

Wickens, who suffered a serious spinal cord injury in an IndyCar crash at Pocono in 2018 that left him paraplegic, was sharing the car with compatriot Mark Wilkins. Wickens uses hand controls to manipulate the throttle, brake and clutch, a system that can be deactivated so his

co-driver can drive in a regular manner.

The Hyundai landed on waste ground behind the catchfencing, upon some discarded tyres, metal barriers and a small trailer. Wickens was airlifted to nearby Neuwied hospital for precautionary checks and kept in across the weekend for observation.

The car was taken to Hyundai Motorsport headquarters in Alzenau, where it's being investigated why it failed to slow down. Autosport understands that a new car is being built up to replace it for this weekend's N24 warm-up race, although Wickens will require medical clearance to compete. The accident occurred at the end of his 13th lap, meaning that he is still two laps short of obtaining the DMSB Permit Nordschleife licence that would allow him to start the 24 Hours in June.

CHARLES BRADLEY

Pipped Pepper potless in photo finish

NLS

Lamborghini ace Jordan Pepper was pipped at the post in the Sunday leg of the NLS opener on the Nurburgring Nordschleife by 0.042 seconds in a bizarre finish.

The South African was running low on fuel in the Abt-run Huracan GT3 EVO2 he shared with compatriot Kelvin van der Linde, and knew that if he crossed the line before the four hours had elapsed he would not make it around

another lap. He slowed in order to 'waste' a crucial few seconds, but could not prevent Laurens Vanthoor, in the Manthey EMA Porsche co-driven by Kevin Estre, surging past just as the chequered flag was unfurled.

The victory for the Manthey pair made up for Saturday, when they were narrowly beaten to honours by the Falken Motorsports Porsche of Joel Eriksson and Nico Menzel. Eriksson was third on Sunday with Tim Heinemann.



NLS

POURCHAIRE IN INDYCAR?

US media are reporting that reigning Formula 2 champion and Sauber F1 protege Theo Pourchaire is favourite to fill in at the Arrow McLaren IndyCar team for next week's Long Beach round should David Malukas still not be recovered from his mountain-biking injuries. Callum Ilott, who has subbed so far, is on Jota Porsche duty in the clashing Imola round of the World Endurance Championship. Pourchaire is racing this season in Super Formula in Japan, but has a lengthy gap before his next race and set the rumour mill abuzz by posting 'holiday snaps' from Indianapolis on his social media feed.

THREE BRITS IN MISANO FP

Britons Jack Aitken, Taylor Barnard and Jordan King are among the 11-strong field who will take part in the Formula E rookie free practice session before this weekend's Misano round, with Envision, McLaren and Mahindra respectively. Also on track will be Tim Tramnitz (Abt), Zane Maloney (Andretti), Robert Shwartzman (DS Penske), Mikel Azcona (ERT), Sheldon van der Linde (Jaguar), Yann Ehrlacher (Maserati), Caio Collet (Nissan) and Matt Campbell (Porsche).

RAY THACKWELL 1932-2024

Australian-based New Zealander Ray Thackwell, who has died aged 91, was a highly regarded racer in his own right before he became more widely known as father of 1970s/80s starlet Mike. After abandoning a speedway career, Thackwell moved into Formula 2 with Cooper-Climax machinery and was a leading contender in the late 1950s, racing with compatriot Ronnie Moore under the Kiwi Equipe banner. Amid a growing family, including racing daughter Lisa who married David Brabham, Thackwell raced on into the 1970s, latterly in touring cars.

QUARTARARO STAYS ON

Fabio Quartararo, the 2021 MotoGP champion, has ended speculation on his future by re-signing with Yamaha on a two-year deal for 2025-26. He had been critical of progress but recent staff changes swayed him.



GOLDANDGOOSE
/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Alonso's complicated F1 future

The fallout of the Aston star's Australian GP penalty still hung in the air at Suzuka. What price the Spaniard joining Mercedes for 2025 now?

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I think it was my best weekend. I don't know. Or the top five. Inside the top five ever, for me." At the classic, brilliant Formula 1 venue of Suzuka, we saw and heard both adjectives in and from Fernando Alonso, too. His assessment after taking his Aston Martin to sixth in Sunday's race – a day after he'd qualified fifth – brings in another one: *vintage* Alonso. His unique brand of hyperbole was back on full display. And deservedly so.

Suzuka was, after all, a venue where Aston trailed its frontrunning rivals badly on F1's previous visit just six months ago. Its 2024 position in the pecking order means that ninth place is its baseline expectation. And Lance Stroll's pitiful weekend in the other AMR24 again highlighted the heights to which Alonso can elevate the team single-handedly.

He capped his run to sixth with a superb effort to hold off Oscar Piastri and George Russell in the closing stages, having dropped back from the podium fight early on while keeping his fragile soft tyres alive, all while holding off Piastri. He then dropped the Australian before warding off McLaren's second-stop undercut attempt. Late on, Alonso evoked memories of Carlos Sainz's famous 2023 Singapore GP win in repeatedly altering his energy deployment in the long run to the chicane – at one stage even hanging back to wait for Piastri – to ensure the McLaren got DRS to aid its own attempt to hold off the charging Mercedes. Canny.

"I don't know what to say after Australia, let's see if I get disqualified for the rest of 2024"

"I don't know what to say any more after Australia, let's see if I get disqualified for the rest of the championship," he then joked post-race of his Suzuka tactics to Spanish television channel DAZN.

The F1 paddock knew that the decision to penalise him for his part in the 'brake test' controversy – after Russell dramatically crashed in the Aston's wake in the final moments of the Melbourne race – still rankled for Alonso in Japan. Just three days earlier, the reaction and fallout from the saga had dominated F1's news agenda. Alonso was defiant, if not fully fired up – at the same time wanting to draw a line under his botched tactics. What didn't help was the unusual split in the driving cohort regarding what the Spaniard had done in putting Russell off at an Albert Park corner that is being assessed for significant changes for

2025 as a result of the recent crashes there. Haas racer Nico Hulkenberg "wasn't very impressed with Fernando's tactics", while Sauber drivers Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu both called the decision to penalise the Spaniard "harsh". Max Verstappen – hardly a stranger to racing battle sagas – opted to deflect.

It seems that there hasn't been any further clarification on such tactics – the matter apparently not even discussed in the Suzuka drivers' briefing. But it has had an impact, nevertheless.

Mercedes was distinctly unimpressed by the whole affair. It backed Russell, who engaged in his own 'attack is the best form of defence' strategy to cover his part in the crash by saying at Suzuka that not penalising Alonso risked opening "a can of worms". But Autosport understands that Mercedes was additionally narked by Alonso's team radio and subsequent media suggestions that he'd been suffering from an engine issue during the Russell clash. The manufacturer apparently couldn't see that in the data.

Mercedes' position on Alonso matters. After all, with Lewis Hamilton heading to Ferrari, it has a seat available for 2025. And Alonso has made no secret of his availability as one of "only three world champions on the grid". The Melbourne matter simply hasn't helped his appeal to the Brackley team. But, in any case, it seemed at Suzuka that Alonso's window of moving there was closing anyway.

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said: "We haven't taken the decision yet and it's not something that we plan to do in the next few weeks. Some of the really good guys are about to sign for some of the other teams."

This has been interpreted as confirmation that Wolff is willing to wait to sign Formula 2 racer and Mercedes junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli. His underwhelming start to the 2024 F2 season actually works in Mercedes' favour, since it keeps the pressure on for the young Italian to maintain his massive career momentum.

In these pages next week, we'll be covering in additional depth how the 2025 driver market currently sits. Given what's now being said at Red Bull, and about Aston and Audi in the context of the fine form of soon-to-be free agents Sergio Perez and Sainz, Alonso isn't the only name in the silly-season mix.

But, away from the realm of speculation for now, there will be a certainty if Mercedes does indeed hire Antonelli for 2025 – even if he's parked at Williams for a Russell-like apprenticeship it seems Mercedes is open to at this stage. That means that one of the current crop would have to make way. And, despite Alonso's recent fault – to many not even that big a deal in what were legitimate, long-standing racing tactics – F1 would suffer without its Alonso factor. ❄️

➔ P14 JAPANESE GP REPORT

YOUR SAY

Ayrton Senna's 40% pole strike rate is probably beyond even Red Bull and Max Verstappen as the Dutchman will need another 68 poles to beat that!

KEITH WARD

Are strike rates the best measure of greatness?

For me, it's the percentages that measure brilliance and reliability in construction and driving skill. Surely Ayrton Senna's 65 poles from 162 starts (40%) is better than Michael Schumacher's 68 poles from 306 starts (22%)?

Right now, Max Verstappen's percentage of wins to starts is 30.2% whereas Lewis Hamilton's is 31.0% despite two years in the doldrums. But Max will surely better Hamilton's wins this season.

Pole positions are a different matter. Max, currently 19%, has just overtaken Charles Leclerc, needs nine to beat Schumacher, 14 to beat Stirling Moss, but needs to almost double his current tally of 36 to catch Hamilton, and that's assuming Leclerc and Hamilton have no more poles.

Senna's 40% poles? That's probably beyond even Red Bull and Max as he'll need another 68 poles to beat that!

I have the greatest respect for all F1 teams and drivers, and am not in any way diminishing their achievements, just trying to put them into perspective, my perspective.

Hoping that my figures stand up to scrutiny.

Keith Ward
London

We've tweaked these to reflect the Japanese Grand Prix results. We agree percentages are better than the normal stats but even they can't take into account the quality of the machinery at the drivers' disposal, strength of the opposition in each era or other factors such as reliability. And don't forget Juan Manuel Fangio's percentages of 47% wins, 57% poles, or Jim Clark's stats of 35% wins and 46% poles! – ed

Don't forget F1 at Oulton Park

I was interested in your comments on non-championship Formula 1 races (Pit + Paddock, 21 March). One I feel you failed to mention was Oulton Park's Gold Cup (still going today) that went from 1954 to the late 1960s for F1, then went to other classes. It has the honour of being the only F1 race won by a four-wheel-drive car, driven by Stirling Moss. But it's not an F1 track today.

As a thought, have a championship for year-old F1 cars and the winners being able to enter the F1 championship the next year



with year-old cars, but those at the bottom might complain.
Just a thought.

N Reason
Via email

We did consider the Gold Cup, but thought we probably had enough suggestions in the UK with the Brands Hatch Race of Champions and Silverstone BRDC International Trophy. But here's a nice excuse to run a picture of Moss and the 4WD Ferguson P99 heading to victory in the 1961 Gold Cup (above) – ed

Racers' thank you to the Webbs

It is with great sadness that both John Webb and his devoted wife Angela passed away this year within a few months of each other. John and Angela were the greatest of race promoters.

However, one of their greatest attributes was supporting women drivers in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly Lella Lombardi, Divina Galica, and myself Desiré Wilson.

To John and Angela – thank you so much for your contribution, we will always remember you. RIP my friends.

Desiré Wilson, Divina Galica, Sally and Jilly
By email

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RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

VERSTAPPEN VICTORIOUS DESPITE PEREZ REVIVAL

The world champion put his Australian hiccup behind him at Suzuka, although his team-mate at least gave him pause for thought

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Perez clambers out; Verstappen is already flexing his muscles after a race off from winning





MAIN IMAGE: MAUGER

In another world:
Ocon's Alpine follows
the race winner

SBLOXHAM

The story of the 2024 Japanese Grand Prix was one of changing seasons. Just six months ago, Formula 1 arrived at Suzuka under hot, blazing skies of the mid-autumn climate in the north-western Pacific region. Last weekend, it was back for the first Japanese GP to take place in the spring. That meant cooler conditions and a potentially very different race. New too to F1 eyes was the enchanting cherry blossom, which seemed to herald change in the air. Once again Max Verstappen emerged victorious, but this wasn't a crushingly dominant display from the Dutchman on his own. As in 2023, the teams arrived at Suzuka following a rare Carlos Sainz triumph for Ferrari. But this time Sergio Perez made it an all-Red Bull front row and a race 1-2. And Perez was a threat to Verstappen across the whole event, one that even seemed to have a season pass every day.

On Friday it was a touch of winter returning, FP1 chilly and blustery as Verstappen led Perez by 0.181 seconds, then the afternoon running washed out by constant drizzle and even colder temperatures. Saturday therefore felt like a spring breakthrough as the sun finally reappeared, before major race day temperature rises in strong sunshine brought a summer feel to this brilliantly brutal, rough-and-ready venue.

Ultimately, the history books will record this as yet another Verstappen walkover given his 12.5s margin of victory over Perez, and the opposition basically just as far behind as was the case last year. But the seeds of it as a recovery journey were planted during the 'spring' of Saturday.

And it was here where Perez actually held a very real advantage, which had Verstappen concerned. "So far, I haven't been happy with my long runs," he said after qualifying. "I think the pace wasn't what I would have liked [in FP3]. So, it's a bit of a question mark going into [the race]... Our race pace is still not too bad, but it's not how I have been feeling in some of the races this year, last year. As comfortable, let's say, like that."

At this stage, Verstappen was also talking up Ferrari's long-run potential – something Red Bull had been doing since FP1, when its motorsport advisor Helmut Marko called Charles Leclerc's performance there "a bit irritating".

With FP2 effectively lost, final practice played out rather differently to normal. The teams, generally, were forced to eschew the multiple qualifying simulation runs they normally complete at this stage, given the lack of representative long running completed to this point. Instead, once the initial installation running had been accomplished, they switched to lengthy race pace simulations. Here, Red Bull and Ferrari mirrored each other exactly, both focusing on only the medium tyres over similar stint lengths.

Ferrari led the way with an average of 1m36.204s, via Leclerc. This was a massive 0.482s better than Red Bull's leading time, which suggested rather differing fuel loads were at play. Although Verstappen claimed "Ferrari, they look very comfortable" based on this display, Sainz was soon scotching hopes of a second Maranello upset in a row.

"[The long runs] are not better," he said. "It's just, I think, probably we are a bit lighter. They always run really slow on Fridays, it always looks like we are gonna beat them on Sunday, and then they put 20 seconds on us. I think they sandbag a bit on the long runs because >>

they know it's their strength."

But what could not be denied for Verstappen and Red Bull was that, for once, he wasn't its leading driver in a vital aspect. That best FP3 long-run average had actually come from Perez, his 1m36.686s average shading Verstappen's by 0.122s. Perez started off quicker and maintained that edge, with Verstappen suffering notably more degradation. "I'm just not very happy with myself, with how my long run was," Verstappen explained. "So actually everyone else looks a bit better."

But even as he was speaking there in the post-qualifying press conference, two of three factors that would ultimately tilt Sunday's race in Verstappen's favour were already at play. The first was how Red Bull "did change the car around and that then just gave me more grip" after FP3. With the teams locked in on downforce packages by this technical, challenging course – where aerodynamic efficiency is rewarded – this was focused on aero balance adjustments via tweaking of the front wing's flap angle.

After encountering more sliding at the rear during Verstappen's long run in FP3 – hence his extra degradation at this tricky track for rear tyres

"IT ALWAYS LOOKS LIKE WE ARE GONNA BEAT RED BULL ON SUNDAY, THEN THEY PUT 20 SECONDS ON US"

– Red Bull's efforts were concentrated upon pushing its car balance towards understeer by reducing the front wing angle.

The extra grip of the soft tyres the team had preserved by not running at all in FP2 overrode pretty much everything come qualifying. And this is where the second important factor to Verstappen's 57th F1 career win and third in succession at Suzuka entered the scene.

In topping qualifying against a stiff test from Perez – around some inconsistent swings from the Mexican, mainly in Q1 and on the first Q3 runs – Verstappen locked in a critical advantage for succeeding at Suzuka. This is how dirty air massively impacts a chasing rival, increasing rear sliding and therefore adding thermal degradation.



But Verstappen had to protect that hard won advantage at the start. Twice, in fact. When the lights went out initially, he was utterly untroubled on the downhill run to Suzuka's famous opening turns. Perez launched well enough, but not to the extent that he could make any inroads into his team-mate's lead from pole. And any thoughts Perez had about how to go about eroding that were swiftly put on hold.

On the run to Turn 3 at the start of the Esses complex, Daniel Ricciardo – both he and RB team-mate Yuki Tsunoda getting swamped after starting on medium tyres while those around were on softs – was between Lance Stroll's Aston Martin and the Williams of Alex Albon. Ricciardo was seemingly aware only of Stroll's position, behind on his >>



Ricciardo heads for the barrier, Albon hidden in his tyre smoke



Quick exit for Ricciardo. Barriers came off much worse than either driver



Ricciardo's RB
skews sideways after
initiating contact with
Albon's Williams
behind him



Take two: Verstappen
kept ahead of Perez
once again into Turn 1

inside. With this in mind, Ricciardo swung across to the outside on the approach to the left-hander, which left Albon with nowhere to go. Albon hit the brakes as he recognised the impending trouble, but there wasn't enough time or space left to avoid what was coming.

The contact spun Ricciardo around and pitched both he and Albon into the gravel, then rapidly into the tyre barriers on the outside. As these would require rebuilding before any more racing could take place, let alone the need to ensure that the two drivers were unhurt – which they were – the red flags were quickly flying.

Verstappen therefore led the pack into the pits, where attentions turned to tyre strategy changes and car balance shifts, now that the parc ferme restrictions had elapsed.

The Red Bull pair remained on the medium tyres with which they had taken the first start, as did Lando Norris in third. Ferrari put both Sainz and Leclerc onto new sets of medium rubber.

For both Verstappen and Perez, said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner, “the red flag helped them reset their front wings after they had probably over-compensated” with those adjustments following FP3. But even so, the focus for the leader still wasn't settled, Marko revealing that during the red flag “there was a very long discussion about how many clicks of the front wing we had to change”.

The impact of this would be felt later, but first Verstappen had to survive another “critical bit: to stay ahead” at the second start. Perez felt he got away “a little bit better, but just not enough to get Max”. Indeed, the chasing RB20 did have a momentum advantage leaving the line, and so this time Verstappen chopped more aggressively

“I JUST UNDERSTEERED WIDE AND WENT OVER THE KERB. ONCE YOU ARE AT THE TOP, IT'S GAME OVER”

across to his right to cover off any faint threat of intra-team attack.

By the end of lap three of 53, Verstappen had scampered to a 0.991s advantage. Perez did enough to keep within DRS range when it was activated on the second lap after the restart – lap four. But that was as close he got because, after a single DRS activation on lap five, he dropped back to 1.2s adrift the next time by the pits. Furthermore, on lap six, he slipped wide out of Degner 2 and lost nearly a second.

“It was quite a tricky corner,” said Perez. “I just went in over the kerb and I was hoping to not pick up damage because it's so easy with these floors to go off and have damage. As far as I know, we didn't have any.

“I just understeered wide and went over the kerb. Once you are at the top of the kerb, it's game over. You just have to let the car roll, go over it – because it's better to be over than on top of it. I obviously picked up a lot of dirt on my tyres, which took a lap or two to really clean up, and I lost a couple of seconds with that.”

Indeed, by lap 10 Verstappen's advantage had grown to nearly 3s. And



THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

he carried on extending it to a maximum of 5.1s over the rest of the first stint. For the leaders this ended on lap 15, when Perez pitted for another new set of medium tyres. The gap Verstappen had built was decisive for Red Bull pitting its second driver first, given the considerable power of the undercut at Suzuka.

On his losses early in the race, Perez brought the focus back to the changing weather. “Unfortunately, I think we got caught out with the increase of temperature,” he explained of the track temperatures climbing 12C from qualifying to a race peak of 39C. “With the balance, we just couldn't get on top of that in the first stint, which meant that the degradation was a little bit higher.”

Horner felt “conditions maybe being a bit warmer wasn't a disadvantage for us” – but this is relative to the RB20 still having a major advantage in tyre preservation through a thermal deg contest. For its drivers, the added heat was still a big challenge, even in the best car.

“In general, everything is a little bit more difficult,” said Verstappen.



SUTTON

QUALIFYING



“When it gets warmer, you have a bit less grip. The first few laps you’re really trying to adapt to that. I think overall it worked out well for us. But, yeah, it’s always a bit more tricky when suddenly the whole weekend you’ve done a certain temperature and then suddenly it goes up a bit.”

And this is the third critical factor in completing Verstappen’s turnaround from what was a very real FP3 race-pace struggle. When the mercury rises, it adds an extra premium to his tyre management prowess compared to Perez. And he used it to excellent effect.

Not that things couldn’t still be better for Verstappen, who in a lap nine exchange with race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase, which Marko labelled “the old married couple coming out again”, asked for “one or two clicks” fewer in yet another adjustment of his front wing angle at his first pitstop. This would be for more medium tyres.

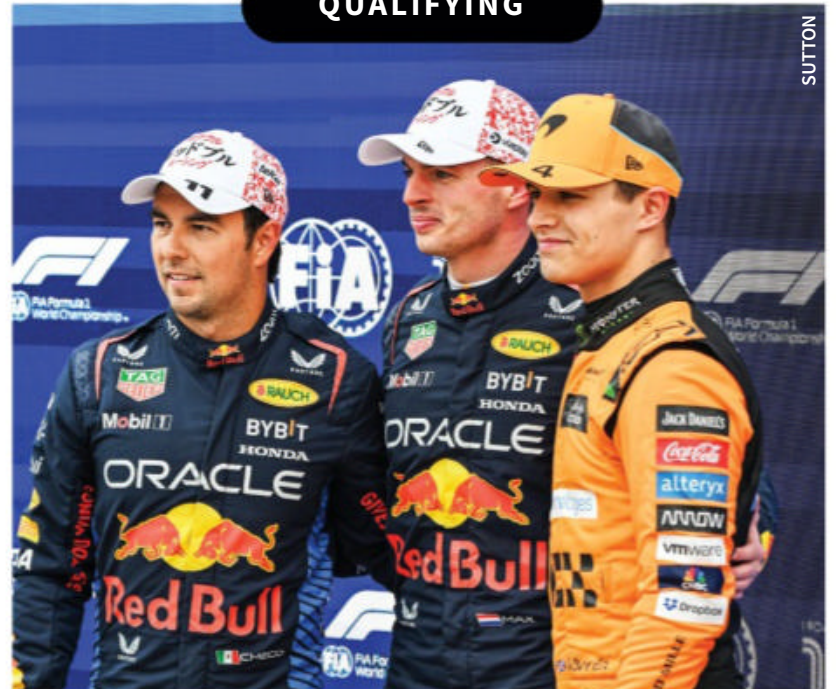
He emerged from this in second place, behind Leclerc. Unlike in the 2023 race, when Verstappen led all but a handful of laps after his first pitstop, this time he had to climb back to the front due to the field being closer in 2024, and Ferrari’s tactical excellence last Sunday.

“In clean air, the optimum was two stops,” claimed Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur. But, with Leclerc starting down in eighth due to his second underwhelming qualifying performance in a row, Vasseur added that “to save track position and to avoid being into the fight, for Charles the best one was to do one stop”. So Ferrari switched him from its ‘Plan A’ initial two-stop approach to its ‘Plan C’ alternative.

“The difference was not mega but it’s depending on your position on track,” Vasseur explained. “It’s probably a bit more difficult when you have to do one stop because you have to keep everything under control and you have always the temptation to push a little bit more. But he did it very well.”

Leclerc initially held a 3.7s advantage at the end of Verstappen’s out-lap, by which point Perez, having dropped back from the leader and been just 3.1s ahead of Norris when the McLaren became the first of the frontrunners to stop on lap 11, was now chasing the Briton.

Perez had already passed Lewis Hamilton on lap 17 with a blast to >>



For the first time in over year, there was a genuine scrap between the Red Bulls for pole position at Suzuka.

Key to this was Sergio Perez feeling “a lot more comfortable, a lot happier and the confidence slowly coming back” now that he and Red Bull have abandoned trying “to chase it too much with the set-up” when taking on Max Verstappen, as he did across 2023.

Heading into qualifying, Verstappen had enjoyed a commanding 0.269-second advantage over his team-mate in FP3, which followed the drizzly FP2 washout on Friday.

In Q1, Verstappen opened up a massive 0.437s ahead of Perez – a gap big enough for Fernando Alonso (eventually a fine fifth behind Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz in Q3) to slot into. But come Q2, there was just 0.012s between the two RB20s.

Then, on the first runs in the final segment, Verstappen took to the track first. He shot to a provisional pole time of 1m28.240s, with Perez’s opening effort 0.365s down. He’d pushed too hard at Turn 2 – the track’s first braking point – and paid the price with a lack of grip out of the Casio Triangle chicane much later, where most of the gap emerged.

Lando Norris was this time able to slip his McLaren between the Red Bulls, 0.249s down on Verstappen. But in the Esses on his second Q3 flier he “just tried and pushed that little bit more” and “just lost the front tyres a bit”. Norris therefore fell 0.096s short of his personal best and would slip to third.

That’s because Perez was about to achieve something he’d failed to do at every event since the 2023 Miami GP: qualify on the front row. Because of a red flag,

there hadn’t even been an intra-Red Bull battle that day. Neither had there been one when Verstappen was addled by the driveshaft issue that preceded Perez’s previous pole in Jeddah last year. Thanks to Perez’s underwhelming efforts against the clock so often last year and in the opening 2024 events too, this was the first time since the 2023 Bahrain GP that both Red Bull drivers were eyeing pole position.

And how close Perez came. He improved by taking Turn 2 slightly slower on the way in but faster overall, whereas Verstappen pushed “maybe a bit too hard in sector one”, and this time it was he who ran out of soft tyre life at the end.

Nevertheless, Verstappen improved to a 1m28.197s. Perez, meanwhile, reversed what had been a 0.2s deficit to his team-mate at the hairpin to nothing at the chicane. Had he got it just slightly better, tyres also again screaming enough, a close 0.066s defeat might have been averted.

“Had he got it just slightly better, tyres screaming enough, a close defeat might have been averted”

TRACKSIDE VIEW

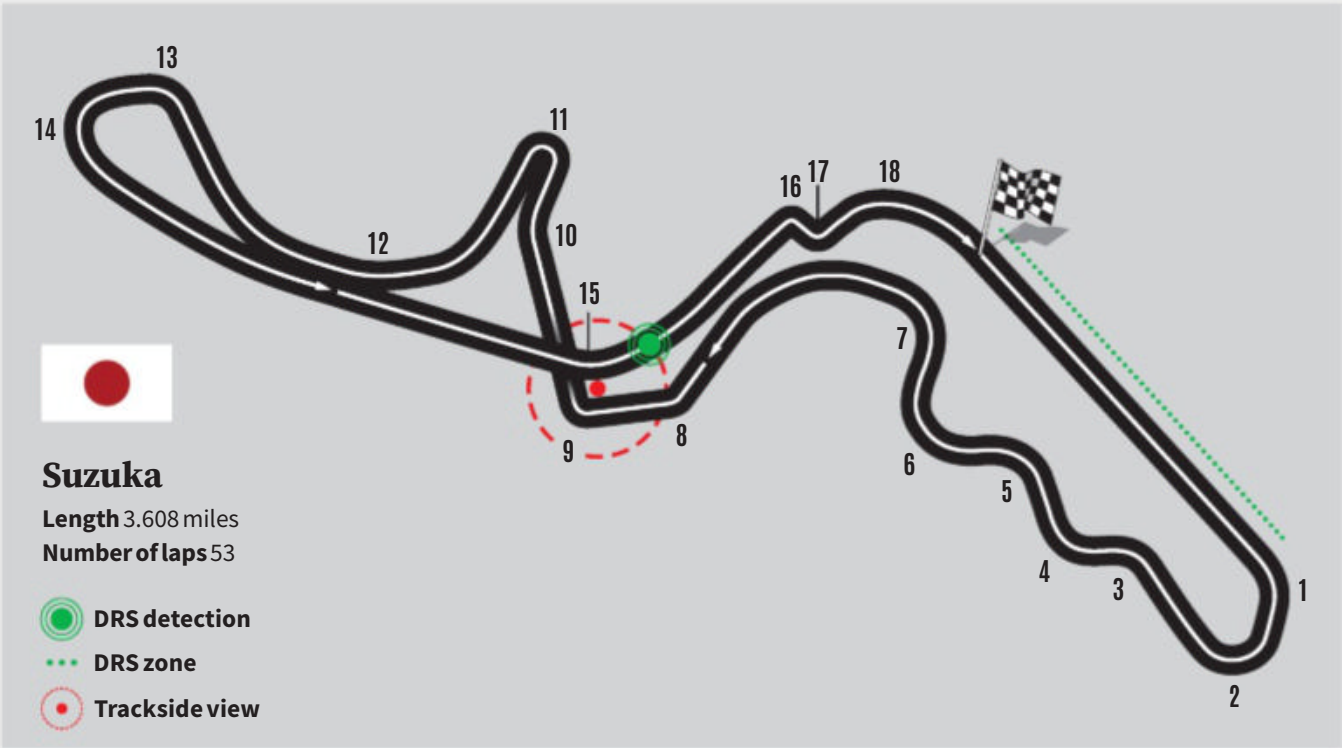


There's a particular pilgrimage to take at Suzuka. After you head north-west out of the top of the paddock, squeeze past rusting catchfences between the Casio Triangle chicane and Dunlop Curve at the top of the Esses, and cross the dividing asphalt of the track's split layout arrangement, you climb over a tyre barrier. After passing the small memorial to Jules Bianchi – this event is the 10th anniversary of the terrible crash here that claimed the Frenchman's life – and walk for two minutes more, the destination is partially in sight.

Degner 1. Climb the grassy knoll on its inside and you've made it – a 360-degree vista featuring the second part of the Degner complex in the foreground, behind the track's crossover bridge and the magnificence of 130R.

We split our joyful FP1 time here into three sections – punctuated by Logan Sargeant smashing the Williams that Alex Albon damaged in Melbourne into the Dunlop Curve barriers at the halfway point.

First up, we're monitoring Degner 1. The brutally fast and tight right-hander compresses the cars savagely, to the extent that they've carved scars into the asphalt. Early on, Fernando Alonso's rear goes light and loose each time he skips through, but the Aston Martin driver is typically unruffled. Alpine's Esteban Ocon and Mercedes driver



“The beefed-up catch fencing is a reminder of just how brutal this track still remains”

Lewis Hamilton hit the Degner 1 exit kerbs harder and wider than the rest.

Once Sargeant's wrecked Williams is moved, the session resumes for a final 20-minute blast, with Autosport now looking down on Degner 2. We're at such an angle above the cars that it offers a brilliant view of the drivers' hands working their steering wheels. With the pack now mainly running soft tyres, it's notable how

the Red Bull and Ferrari drivers aren't having to make adjustments as they accelerate out of the devilishly tricky tight right, while George Russell and the Aston pair are regularly catching squirms. Late on, on mediums and so lacking the grip of soft tyres, Lance Stroll saves a massive moment on the exit kerbs, his Aston nearly spearing right and into a costly crash.

We spend the final 10 minutes watching the cars swoop through 130R. It's obviously somewhat shorn of its fearsome reputation given modern safety-enforced changes, but it's still a delight to

watch the cars turn in at 185mph. The ground effect is on full display, more underfloor plank wear visible here too. The Mercedes pair are adding most, while the Haases are more smoke to the Mercs' sparks. No one makes it into onto the exit kerbs far to our right – these things are so planted.

There is one notable feature far to our right – the brand-new, beefed-up catchfencing behind 130R, which was installed following Ukyo Sasahara's terrifying Super Formula accident here last October. A reminder of just how brutal this track still remains.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



the inside of the 130R kink, then he faced five tours getting on terms with Norris and dispatching him with a controlled move on the inside line at the Casio Triangle chicane on lap 22. This was one lap after Verstappen had easily demoted Leclerc with DRS down to Turn 1 on the racing line, while the Ferrari jinked right.

Leclerc gamely hung on ahead of Perez, until a similar slip wide at the exit of Degner 2 to the one that had delayed the Red Bull driver earlier on allowed Perez ahead of the Ferrari.

The gap between the leaders was now 10s, but the middle stint then played out in a similar fashion to the first once the early action was dealt with. Verstappen gradually extended his lead by another 1.5s between the time he regained first place and Perez pitting again at the end of the 33rd lap. “The car just got better and better for me throughout the race,” Verstappen said, feeling that the arrival of late cloud cover had boosted him further since it gave the tyres a break.

The final stint was familiar for the Red Bull pair. Perez had again been undercut by Norris, but this time he only had a 0.4s deficit to erase, and he was ahead again two laps after his second service. Next up was Leclerc, who Perez despatched at Turn 1 just as swiftly on lap 36.

The Ferrari and McLaren drivers had become part of the race’s narrative thanks to the Italian team’s one-stop tactic. Just as Leclerc

“THE TRACK CONDITION CHANGED A LOT. WE WENT FROM A VERY SUNNY TRACK TO A VERY CLOUDY TRACK”

pitted after his Degner slip allowed Perez past on lap 26, McLaren was calling Norris in on the same tour for his second stop – wary of the threat of George Russell, after Mercedes had been able to run a much longer first stint thanks to taking on hard tyres during the red flag. Here McLaren was hoping to avoid losing time if Russell slipped ahead temporarily early in Norris’s final stint.

When Leclerc emerged from the pits ahead of Norris, the pair were in a race to the end and the faster Ferrari had the advantage, emphasised by Norris indeed having to slip past Russell on lap 28.

Sainz had by this time become a factor in the start of Verstappen’s final stint, because Ferrari had left him out on a longer middle stint of a typical two-stopper once McLaren had gone aggressive in pitting Norris early in the race. Sainz had stretched out his second stint on the medium tyres, while Norris was making use of the two sets of hards favoured by McLaren. When Sainz pitted out of Verstappen’s way at the end of lap 36, the Red Bull’s path to victory was complete.

Sainz now had a 7.7s deficit to Norris and 2.1s further on to his team-mate. He quickly ate into this, all while passing Hamilton, and despatched both his former and current team-mate with easy DRS-assisted runs down the pitstraight on laps 44 and 46 – in Norris’s case after the McLaren had locked up at the hairpin on the previous tour.

“The track condition changed a lot through the race,” Sainz said afterwards. “We went from a very sunny track that we hadn’t had all weekend to a very cloudy track.

“The degradation went down a lot [as a result of that] and you could push a lot more on the tyres halfway through the race. This changed the whole situation quite a lot. At one point, I thought the podium wasn’t possible, but then with a new hard [for the final stint], the pace was mega and I could get back on the podium.”



**NEXT
F1 REPORT**
Chinese Grand Prix
25 April issue

ALBON ADMITS SPARE PARTS CONCERN AFTER RICCIARDO CLASH

Alex Albon admitted to worrying about Williams's spare parts situation "before I even hit the wall" after his first-lap clash with Daniel Ricciardo, when the RB veteran showed the Anglo-Thai the door into Turn 3.

Williams will not have a spare chassis complete until May's Miami Grand Prix at the earliest, while Logan Sargeant had to roll back to an older-spec front wing after his FP1 crash at the Dunlop Curve.

Their incidents put further pressure on the Grove squad's sparse spare parts department, and Albon's car will be shipped back to the UK for check-ups and repairs before being sent to China for the 19-21 April weekend.

"He didn't see me, clearly," Albon remarked about the crash. "I tried to back out of it at the last minute. But I was almost too far alongside him and he was still coming across. I couldn't avoid it."

Ricciardo has started the 2024 season in poor form. Suzuka compounded this thanks not only to the crash, but also team-mate Yuki Tsunoda's superb drive to 10th at his home race.

The Australian described the Albon incident as a "singular moment". He noted that starting on the medium tyres, compared to a clutch of soft-tyre starters around him, left him vulnerable in the opening array of corners. "We definitely got gobbled up on that medium," he rued.



Alonso outfoxes Piastri and Russell in battle for sixth

Fernando Alonso headed off a late-blooming challenge from Oscar Piastri and George Russell as he successfully defended sixth place, hailing the Japanese Grand Prix as one of his "top five" performances.

Aston Martin driver Alonso had given up DRS to the chasing Piastri's McLaren on the main straight, only to counter it with energy deployment after charging up his battery over the rest of the lap. When Russell came to play behind them, Alonso let Piastri battle with the Mercedes, dropping both to cement his position.

The trio had all opted for differing flavours of two-stop strategy. Alonso began on the soft tyres, progressing through the mediums and then hards, while Piastri opened with the medium compound prior to two hard-tyre stints. The McLaren driver attempted to undercut Alonso with earlier stops, but the Spaniard's Aston

Martin team responded to each one a lap later to keep Alonso ahead.

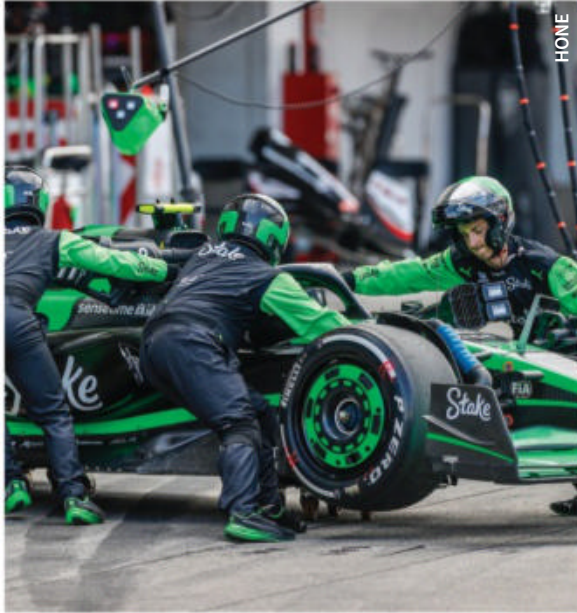
In the meantime, Russell's red-flag switch to the hard tyres offered little in early pace but, after aborting a one-stopper, his final stint on used mediums ensured that he had the pace to close in on the cars ahead. A botched move on Piastri at the final corner, where he ran the Australian out of road, was only a precursor to a later move, and the McLaren driver couldn't contend with the medium tyre offset towards the end.

While the Briton was then able to close down Alonso, he ran out of time to plot a move for sixth place. "I lost loads of time behind Lewis at the beginning," Russell suggested. "Once we pitted, the pace was quite strong. In line with Charles and Lando, I think. So had we started a few positions higher it would have been a different race."

10th

Yuki Tsunoda is the first Japanese driver to score a point at home since Kamui Kobayashi finished third for Sauber in 2012.





SAUBER STOPS STILL LACK SWISS WATCH PRECISION

Sauber reckoned it had made progress with its troublesome pitstops in Japan, with no repeats of the issues that plagued it in the opening three races of 2024.

The Swiss team's stops were slower than the other teams', its fastest service hitting 2.97s when switching Zhou Guanyu to the hard tyre on lap seven, while Valtteri Bottas's stops were all above the four-second mark.

Trackside engineering director Xevi Pujolar said the team wanted "pitstops to be reliable, consistent and then we will go for speed and performance".

Zhou's weekend had been earlier compromised by a chassis switch following an oil leak, and the Chinese driver subsequently retired with a gearbox issue. Bottas was in contention to rescue a point, but those slower stops cost track position in the lap 22 pitlane battle between himself, Yuki Tsunoda, Kevin Magnussen and Logan Sargeant.

Sargeant's practice bash adds to Williams woes

Logan Sargeant's "silly" FP1 shunt elicited disappointment from Williams team principal James Vowles, even though the crash did not cause damage to the American's chassis days after it had been repaired following Alex Albon's tangle with the wall in Australia.

Approaching the Dunlop Curve, Sargeant washed out towards the grass and could not regain control of his FW46, hitting the wall with both the front and rear corners of his car.

"It's at the top of the brow of the hill there – he struggled to see where his positioning was on track," Vowles reflected. "What you saw here wasn't a driver making a mistake because he

was pushing to the limits. It's a very different type of mistake, a frustrating one by all accounts, because it wasn't on the limit of what the car could do. There was far more turning potential, he just didn't know where the car was on track relative to where he expected it to be."

Further rankles were produced by Sargeant's near-miss during the grand prix, when the Floridian tousled the gravel at the second Degner and just about kept his car out of the wall. This prompted the abandonment of his medium-tyre stint and Williams put him on softs for his final pitstop, although this did not stop Sargeant finishing last.



Q&A

TOTO WOLFF MERCEDES TEAM PRINCIPAL

Not great results, but do you have new confidence in the W15?

When you look at the results, it's clearly not good. And everybody knows that. But we've definitely made a big step forward in how we want to run the car, and in our understanding. This was one of the worst tracks for us last year and we were



pretty close to the frontrunners – not Max, but the guys behind – in qualifying, and that came as a surprise. We were very quick through the Esses; last year we were nowhere.

What happened with the strategy?

When you look at how it unfolded, we were trying to make a one-stop stick. We probably over-managed the tyres and had an atrocious first stint, but a very competitive second and third stint the

moment we basically did what the others did. It would have looked completely different.

Is there a correlation between higher temperatures and performance drop?

The track temperature was three degrees different between stint one and stint two. So as much as I believe there is a relationship between our performance and the track temperature, I don't think it was the reason for our off performance in the first stint. That was trying to extend it to one stop, losing lots of time with the overtakes, more than the track temperature.

What have you learned about the car?

Where we put the car in terms of aero and mechanical balance is so complex for us. These two need to correlate. We got to the point of saying, 'OK, we've got to do something different here'. We're measuring downforce with our sensors and pressure taps, and it's saying we have 70 points more downforce in a particular corner in Melbourne than we had last year. But it's not a kilometre per hour faster, so it doesn't make any sense. We wanted to tick a few boxes to understand: is there any limitation we have spotted? And I think there is.

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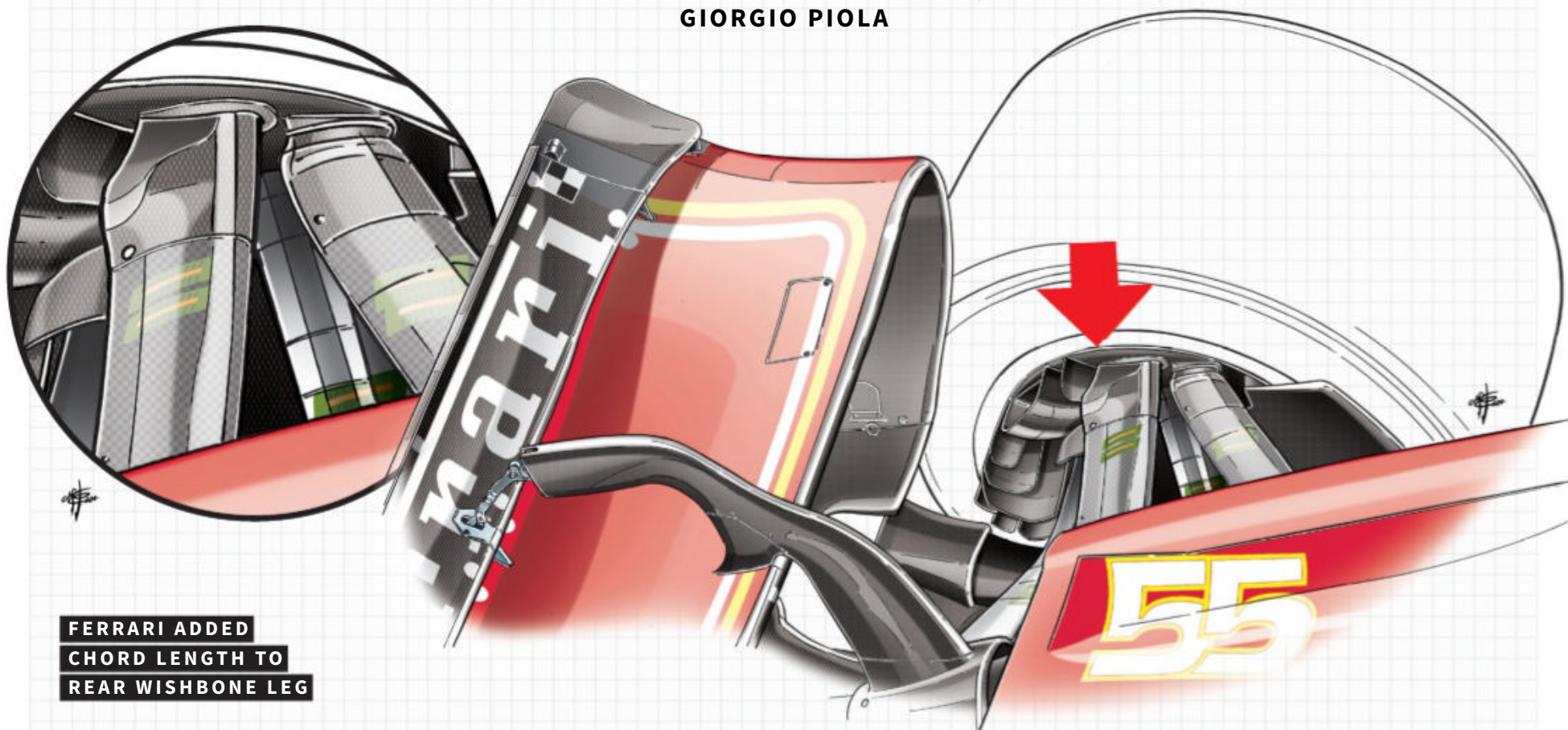
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WE'RE DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE CLASSIC FERRARI SPIRIT

DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



**FERRARI ADDED
CHORD LENGTH TO
REAR WISHBONE LEG**

FERRARI MAKING THE MOST OF UNUSUAL SUSPENSION

Ferrari's decision to persist with a pullrod rear suspension, despite the prevailing trend among many Formula 1 squads to switch to pushrods for 2024, prompted questions about its ambition. Yet the Maranello team has made great strides with its car and cured many of the issues it faced in the tyre-management department, perhaps vindicating that call.

Ferrari has now made improvements to the aerodynamic characteristics of its rear suspension package and brought a new fairing to the upper suspension wishbone, with an extruded chord length to the rear leg. In its pre-race technical notes, Ferrari stated that this would bring "local flow

conditioning improvements and positive interaction with surrounding components, bringing a small efficiency increase".

The team had also prepared for wet weather through bringing a 2023-spec higher-downforce rear wing, with "more loaded" upper wing elements and a deeper beam wing in the event that the SF-24 required the tools to contend with any low-grip conditions. Only FP2 was affected by rain, as reports of inclement weather subsided over the remainder of the weekend, so Ferrari stuck to its 2024 allocation of rear wing geometries.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RED BULL'S SIDEPOD INTRIGUE

Much of the intrigue in launch season centred around Red Bull's sidepod package, with the positioning of its air inlets obfuscated in the imagery of the RB20. Suggestions were that the team was to introduce a zero-pod solution at some point this season, but this is yet to come to fruition – if, indeed, that is the plan.

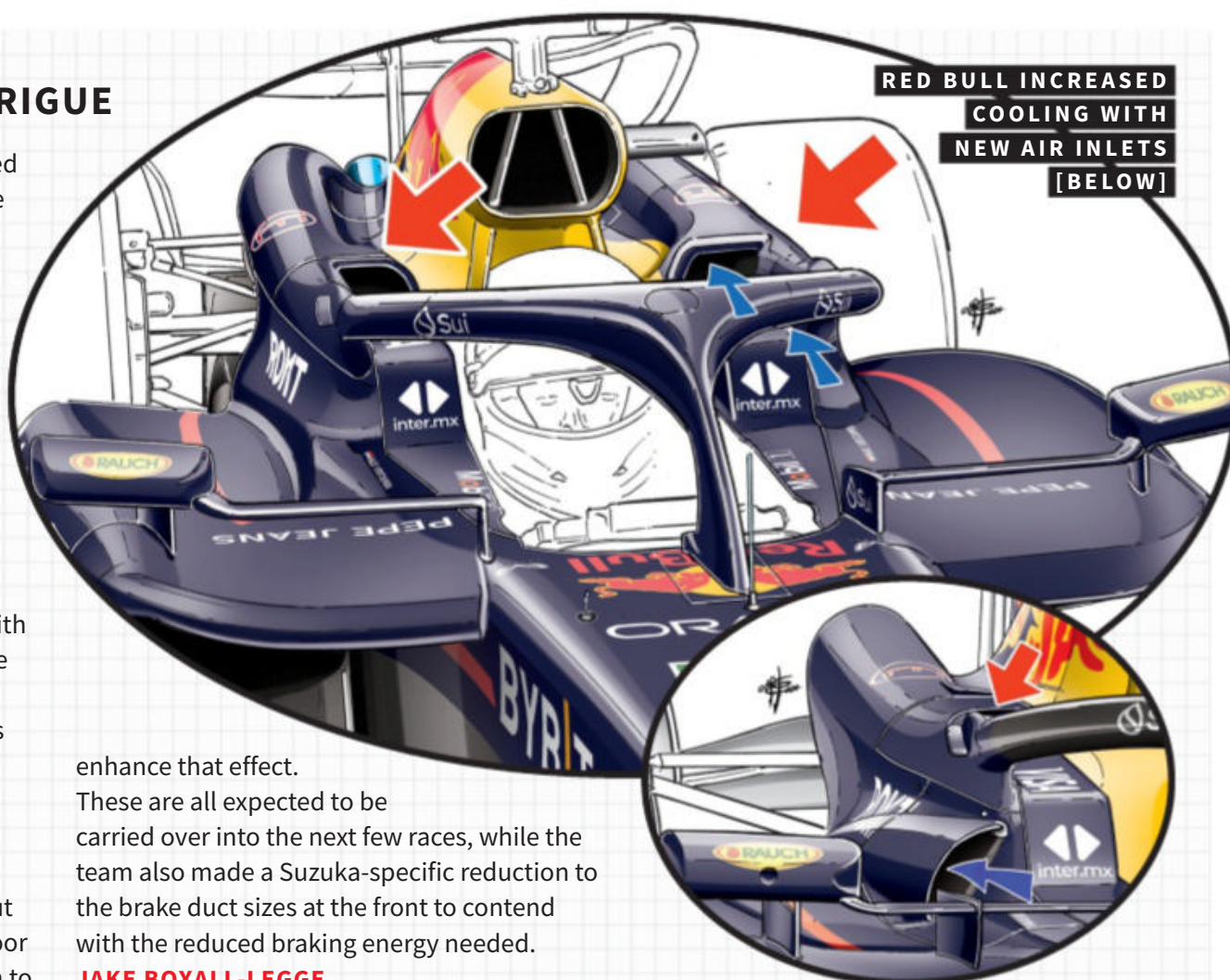
Small sidepod inlets were married with two inlets either side of the drivers' head; Red Bull added two more inlets to the outside of the cockpit headrests for Suzuka, with new bodywork to match. These are to feed the heat exchangers in the sidepods, with Red Bull noting that it had been "seeking the most efficient locations in terms of pressure inlet for the area", adding that the new inlets ensure that the car "needs less exit area, which is beneficial downstream".

The team also introduced small changes to the underbody, which it revealed had produced more load in the local area without compromising on flow stability, while the floor edge has more camber (ie curvature) built in to

enhance that effect.

These are all expected to be carried over into the next few races, while the team also made a Suzuka-specific reduction to the brake duct sizes at the front to contend with the reduced braking energy needed.

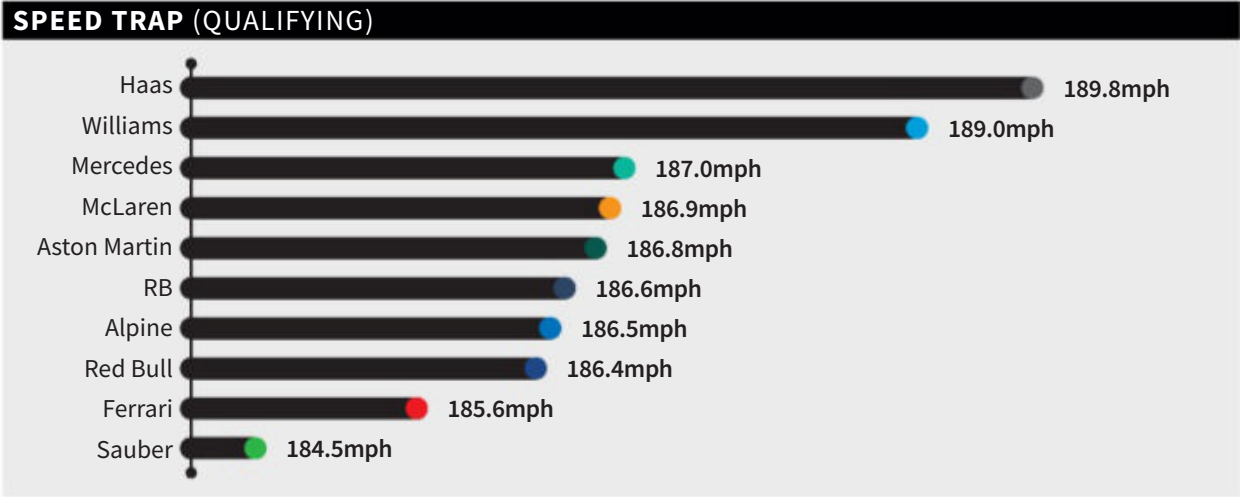
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m30.056s	1	Piastri	1m34.725s	1	Verstappen	1m29.563s
2	Perez	1m30.237s	2	Hamilton	1m35.226s	2	Perez	1m29.832s
3	Sainz	1m30.269s	3	Leclerc	1m38.760s	3	Russell	1m29.918s
4	Russell	1m30.530s	4	Tsunoda	1m40.946s	4	Hamilton	1m30.037s
5	Hamilton	1m30.543s	5	Ricciardo	1m41.913s	5	Alonso	1m30.082s
6	Leclerc	1m30.558s	6	Zhou	notime	6	Norris	1m30.137s
7	Alonso	1m30.599s	7	Bottas	notime	7	Sainz	1m30.171s
8	Piastri	1m31.165s	8	Albon	notime	8	Piastri	1m30.226s
9	Tsunoda	1m31.230s	9	Magnussen	notime	9	Tsunoda	1m30.341s
10	Norris	1m31.240s	10	Hulkenberg	notime	10	Leclerc	1m30.383s
11	Ocon	1m31.935s	11	Sainz	notime	11	Albon	1m30.533s
12	Albon	1m31.943s	12	Norris	notime	12	Bottas	1m30.546s
13	Hulkenberg	1m31.958s	13	Ocon	notime	13	Ricciardo	1m30.682s
14	Bottas	1m32.054s	14	Verstappen	notime	14	Ocon	1m31.022s
15	Stroll	1m32.055s	15	Perez	notime	15	Zhou	1m31.067s
16	Iwasa	1m32.103s	16	Russell	notime	16	Hulkenberg	1m31.139s
17	Gasly	1m32.277s	17	Alonso	notime	17	Gasly	1m31.141s
18	Zhou	1m32.638s	18	Stroll	notime	18	Stroll	1m31.342s
19	Magnussen	1m32.803s	19	Gasly	notime	19	Sargeant	1m31.452s
20	Sargeant	1m33.204s	20	Sargeant	notime	20	Magnussen	1m31.462s

WEATHER Overcast, air 17-19C track 23-25C WEATHER Rain, air 12C track 16-17C WEATHER Sunny, air 20-23C track 25-29C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m28.866s	1	Verstappen	1m28.740s	1	Verstappen	1m28.197s
2	Alonso	1m29.254s	2	Perez	1m28.752s	2	Perez	1m28.263s
3	Perez	1m29.303s	3	Hamilton	1m28.887s	3	Norris	1m28.489s
4	Leclerc	1m29.338s	4	Norris	1m28.940s	4	Sainz	1m28.682s
5	Piastri	1m29.425s	5	Alonso	1m29.082s	5	Alonso	1m28.686s
6	Sainz	1m29.513s	6	Sainz	1m29.099s	6	Piastri	1m28.760s
7	Norris	1m29.536s	7	Russell	1m29.140s	7	Hamilton	1m28.766s
8	Bottas	1m29.602s	8	Piastri	1m29.148s	8	Leclerc	1m28.786s
9	Hamilton	1m29.661s	9	Leclerc	1m29.196s	9	Russell	1m29.008s
10	Ricciardo	1m29.727s	10	Tsunoda	1m29.417s	10	Tsunoda	1m29.413s
11	Tsunoda	1m29.775s	11	Ricciardo	1m29.472s			
12	Russell	1m29.799s	12	Hulkenberg	1m29.494s			
13	Ocon	1m29.811s	13	Bottas	1m29.593s			
14	Hulkenberg	1m29.821s	14	Albon	1m29.714s			
15	Albon	1m29.963s	15	Ocon	1m29.816s			
16	Stroll	1m30.024s						
17	Gasly	1m30.119s						
18	Magnussen	1m30.131s						
19	Sargeant	1m30.139s						
20	Zhou	1m30.143s						

Next Race

21 April

Chinese GP

Shanghai

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	77	1	1
2 Perez	64	2	2
3 Leclerc	59	2	2
4 Sainz	55	1	2
5 Norris	37	3	3
6 Piastri	32	4	5
7 Russell	24	5	3
8 Alonso	24	5	4
9 Hamilton	10	7	7
10 Stroll	9	6	9
11 Tsunoda	7	7	8
12 Bearman	6	7	11
13 Hulkenberg	3	9	10
14 Magnussen	1	10	13
15 Albon	0	11	12
16 Zhou	0	11	17
17 Ricciardo	0	12	11
18 Ocon	0	13	15
19 Gasly	0	13	17
20 Bottas	0	14	13
21 Sargeant	0	14	18

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	141
2 Ferrari	120
3 McLaren	69
4 Mercedes	34
5 Aston Martin	33
6 RB	7
7 Haas	4
8 Williams	0
9 Sauber	0
10 Alpine	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	4	0	Perez
Hamilton	1	3	Russell
Leclerc	1	2	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	3	1	Piastri
Alonso	3	1	Stroll
Gasly	0	4	Ocon
Sargeant	0	3	Albon
Ricciardo	0	4	Tsunoda
Zhou	0	4	Bottas
Magnussen	1	2	Hulkenberg

Events removed when one driver in a team could not record a representative time for reasons outside their control

WINS

Verstappen 3

Sainz 1

FASTEST LAPS

Leclerc 2

Verstappen 2

POLE POSITIONS

Verstappen 4

SAM TODD/REDBULLCONTENTPOOL

10

Tsunoda #22

1m29.413s



8

Leclerc #16

1m28.786s



6

Piastrri #81

1m28.760s



4

Sainz #55

1m28.682s



2

Perez #11

1m28.263s



9

Russell #63

1m29.008s



7

Hamilton #44

1m28.766s



5

Alonso #14

1m28.686s



3

Norris #4

1m28.489s



1

Verstappen #1

1m28.197s



RESULTS ROUND 4/24 (53 LAPS – 191.05 MILES)				
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h54m23.566s	48 Mn,Mn,Hn
2	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+12.535s	Mn,Mn,Hn
3	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+20.866s	1 Mn,Mn,Mu,Hn
4	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+26.522s	4 Mn,Mn,Hn
5	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+29.700s	Mn,Hn,Hn
6	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+44.272s	Sn,Mn,Hn
7	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+45.951s	Mn,Hn,Hn,Mu
8	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+47.525s	Mn,Hn,Hn
9	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+48.626s	Mn,Hn,Hn,Mu
10	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+1.602s	Mn,Su,Hn,Hn
11	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+7.168s	Sn,Hn,Hn
12	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+11.233s	Sn,Sn,Mn,Hn,Sn
13	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+17.919s	Mn,Mn,Hn
14	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+18.893s	Sn,Hn,Hn
15	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+41.152s	Sn,Hn,Hn,Mn
16	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+55.066s	Sn,Hn,Mn,Hn
17	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+1m12.765s	Sn,Hn,Hn,Mn,Sn
R	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	12 laps-gearbox	Mn,Sn,Hn
R	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	0 laps-accident	Mn
R	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	0 laps-accident	Sn

WEATHER Sunny then overcast, air 22-30C track 32-39C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 100.209mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 138.624mph

FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Verstappen	1m33.706s	-	50
2	Sainz	1m33.841s	+0.135s	46
3	Perez	1m33.945s	+0.239s	35
4	Hamilton	1m33.952s	+0.246s	41
5	Russell	1m34.404s	+0.698s	39
6	Alonso	1m34.726s	+1.020s	53
7	Piastrri	1m34.802s	+1.096s	35
8	Sargeant	1m34.900s	+1.194s	43
9	Leclerc	1m35.044s	+1.338s	53
10	Norris	1m35.186s	+1.480s	51
11	Hulkenberg	1m35.325s	+1.619s	52
12	Stroll	1m35.798s	+2.092s	41
13	Ocon	1m36.232s	+2.526s	52
14	Tsunoda	1m36.342s	+2.636s	51
15	Bottas	1m36.608s	+2.902s	25
16	Gasly	1m36.642s	+2.936s	48
17	Magnussen	1m36.654s	+2.948s	24
18	Zhou	1m37.160s	+3.454s	9

RACE BRIEFING

147

Stroll has started one more world championship GP than Carlos Reutemann and Derek Warwick

38

Perez now has more world championship GP podiums than fellow six-time winner Riccardo Patrese

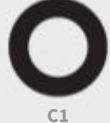
TYRES


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


HARD


MEDIUM


SOFT

















C1

C2

C3

C4

C5

INTERMEDIATE

WET

LAP CHART

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Verstappen

Perez

Norris

Sainz

Alonso

Piastrri

Hamilton

Leclerc

Russell

Tsunoda

Ricciardo

Hulkenberg

Bottas

Albon

Ocon

Stroll

Gasly

Magnussen

Sargeant

Zhou

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Classification

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Lap number

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Safety car lap

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Starting grid

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Lapped

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Pit entry

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Overtook

22

Overtaken

Retirement

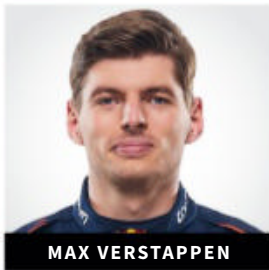
11 APRIL 2024 AUTOSPORT.COM 27

JAPANESE GP DRIVER RATINGS

Beyond the inevitable Verstappen, home hero Tsunoda stood out for us as he made his point (again) at the second Red Bull team

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

9 Hardly his most vintage win; looked assured but never entirely secure. Nailed both start and restart, and preserved lead with consistent pace, but arguably drove within himself and let strategy do the work. Margin over Perez in qualifying and race not as gaping as previous 10/10 scores.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **2nd** — Result **2nd**

8 Did his job as support act well, qualifying a scant 0.066s away from Verstappen and finishing just 12.5s off. Took too much out of medium tyres to make up for Norris undercut, but reeled off lap times on hards that were comparable with Verstappen's. Early Degner 2 slip his only real mistake.



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **7th** — Result **9th**

6 Team strategy cost Hamilton more than Russell, so willingly let his team-mate through. Disliked the hard tyre and felt early contact with Leclerc hindered him. Proved quicker than Russell on the medium stint at the end, but damage had already been done by poor opening stint.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **9th** — Result **7th**

6 Had a bit of a job on his hands dragging out his stint on the hard tyre early on as pace was poor, and lacked consistency on his second set of hard tyres. Came into the race on the last set of mediums, but clumsy initial effort to pass Piastri arguably cost him a shot at Alonso in sixth.



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **8th** — Result **4th**

8 Lowly grid slot, but recovery on effectively a one-stopper was superb. Managed his medium tyres brilliantly with consistent laps, and pre-empted Norris's second stop, which offered a chance at a podium. Hard-tyre stint also strong, but wisely didn't interfere with Sainz to claim fourth.

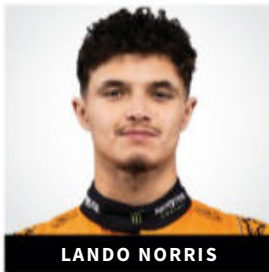


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **4th** — Result **3rd**

8 Strong form continued with a patient yet aggressive performance. Shook out behind Norris and Russell after they undercut his opening pitstop, but waited for their tyres to wane to claim track position. Final stint was devastatingly fast, putting Norris and Leclerc to the sword.

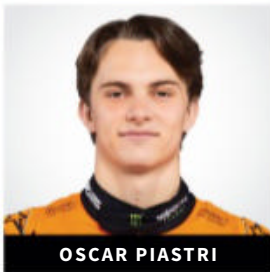
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **3rd** — Result **5th**

8 Early undercut was powerful, but he could not overcome degradation, which denied a podium chance. Beat Ferrari duo in qualifying with an excellent lap, but felt he was fighting a losing battle in race. Could have been more assertive in request to pit contrary to Leclerc to build tyre delta.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **6th** — Result **8th**

6 Like last year, couldn't match Norris for race pace as he was hit harder by tyre degradation. Undercut strategy proved less effective for him relative to team-mate when traffic limited his progress, and was being strung along by Alonso with DRS. Late error left him vulnerable to Russell.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **5th** — Result **6th**

8 Reckoned this was in top-five of his weekend F1 showings (which would surely score a 10 if true! – ed). Maximised qualifying with fifth on grid, and squeezed every inch from soft tyres in first stint. Kept Piastri and Russell at bay at end with Sainz-like DRS gift, before scarpering as cars behind fought.

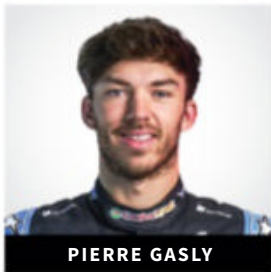


LANCE STROLL

Started **16th** — Result **12th**

4 Weak qualifying set him back and consigned him to flailing about in the midfield. Final stint on soft tyres gave hope, but this petered out and left him vulnerable to Hulkenberg at the end. Frustration over lack of straightline speed traced to wing choice. Did not live up to his Melbourne form.

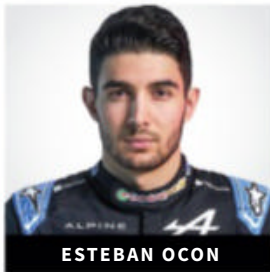
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **17th** — Result **16th**

5 See Ocon, but with less gusto. Dumped out in Q1 and played second fiddle to his team-mate in race. Made some ground early on, but poor car could not be overcome in the longer term. Hardly a bad race, but didn't quite reach the heights his team-mate managed with a cumbersome chariot.



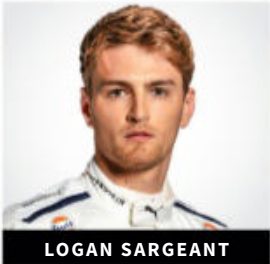
ESTEBAN OCON

Started **15th** — Result **15th**

6 Seems more on top of troubled Alpine than his team-mate. Vaulted his way up the order on the restart, but decision to employ hard tyres early on cost race pace and ultimately track position. Was involved in battles before stopping, proof of a valiant effort in tricky circumstances.



WILLIAMS



Started 19th · Result 17th

3 Dumped Albon's old car into the wall during FP1 and was lucky no chassis damage prevailed. Couldn't rise off back row of the grid in qualifying. Got as high as 11th in the opening stint, but fell to back of the midfield pack after his second stop. Almost binned his car again at Degner 2.



Started 14th — Result R

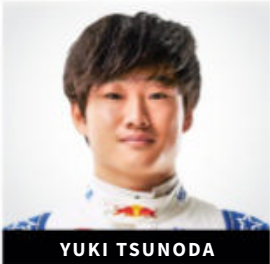
5 Could do very little to avoid Ricciardo during opening lap skirmish. Looked to pounce on Aussie out of Turn 2, but was guided onto the grass and into barrier. Adequate form in qualifying therefore undone, and must hope Williams can get repairs together for the Chinese GP.

RB



Started 11th — Result R

4 Looked left out of Turn 2 to assess threat from Stroll, but didn't bank on Albon to his right. A racing incident, but one that was avoidable had he checked right mirror. One-lap pace had been better relative to Tsunoda, but was "gobbled up" on medium tyre at the start before clash.



Started 10th · Result 10th

9 Decisive moves combined with flawless RB pitcrew to ensure the home hero made a point. Great launch at restart was almost undone by Bottas's undercut, but second pitstop proved the clincher – as did a series of stunning overtakes at Turn 6. Long final hard tyre stint was brilliant.

SAUBER



Started 20th — Result R

4 Endured series of unfortunate events after qualifying last: a fuel leak prompted a chassis swap. Got past the slow-starting Hulkenberg and Sargeant at restart, but gearbox issues started to sap at the Chinese driver's pace. This ultimately proved terminal, and he managed just 12 laps.



Started 13th · Result 14th

6 Very unlucky with traffic in second pitstop. Had looked like taking Sauber's first point of 2024 before that. Used undercut to leapfrog Tsunoda after opening stint, where he remained at tip of midfield pack. Slightly slow (though better) stops cost time in the pits, shuffling the Finn backwards.

HAAS



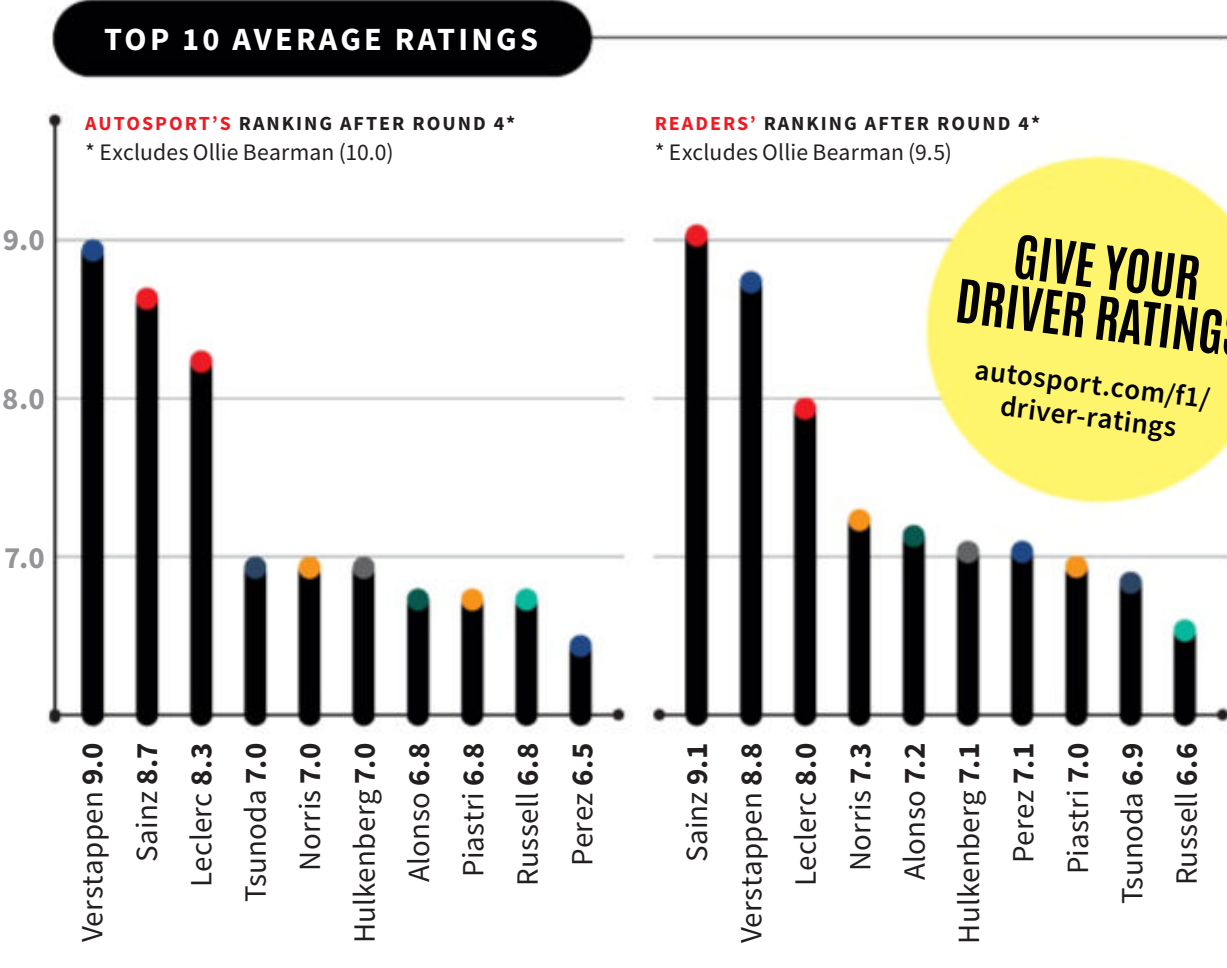
Started 18th Result 13th

5 Tasked with a long hard tyre stint over race's second half, so at a disadvantage relative to the other midfielders. Pace was consistent, but it was a struggle to make inroads towards the top 10. Made way for team-mate Hulkenberg when the German took fresher tyres towards the end.



Started 12th · Result 11th

7 Rose to 10th after the initial start, but had poor restart and abandoned soft-tyre opener. Well-managed stints on hards offered a way back into race, and overtakes late on brought him to the cusp of the top 10. Last-gasp move on Stroll offered one more position by the end of the race.



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09/07/2024 - Convoy Training Spa

10/07/2024 - Trackday Spa

07/08/2024 - Convoy Training Spa

08/08/2024 - Trackday Spa

09/08/2024 - Trackday Nürburgring Nordschleife

06/09/2024 - Trackday Nürburgring Nordschleife

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Winning M4 of Farfus, Harper and Hesse leads enormous gaggle at Ricard



SRO/JEP

Rowe has the vitesse in France

GT WORLD CHALLENGE ENDURANCE CUP

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

7 APRIL

ROUND 1/5

Smarting from last year's GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup title defeat, BMW bounced back to win the opening round of the 2024 championship at Paul Ricard. Once again, Rowe Racing outshone marque rival WRT, and it was Augusto Farfus, Max Hesse and Dan Harper who teamed up to win the three-hour race.

Qualifying had looked good for Lamborghini, with the combined efforts of Mirko Bortolotti, Matteo Cairoli and Andrea Caldarelli good enough for pole in the Iron Lynx Huracan, and it was Bortolotti who led away. It was a messy first hour, however. There was a first-lap safety car to replace bollards that had been scattered across Provence from Turn 1 zealotry, a second when the lighting gantry needed attention, and a third, longer period after David Pittard's Walkenhorst

Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage caught alight on the Mistral straight.

The interruptions meant that the race never really flowed, but Bortolotti held the lead to the first stops when he relayed Caldarelli. It was the chasing CLRT Porsche of Ayhan Guven that gained, the Turk having closed before the end of the first stint, and the black 911 GT3-R jumped ahead on its release, Dorian Boccolacci at the wheel. But the 911 still had an earthing cable attached, and hence a meatball flag was shown, bringing Boccolacci in for an unscheduled stop. That left Caldarelli in the lead, but the next threat came from Harper's Rowe BMW M4.

The Northern Irishman, carrying on the good work of a feisty Farfus in the opening stint, attacked Caldarelli wherever he could, but the wily Italian made the Huracan as wide as possible. Behind, Nick Yelloly in the second Rowe BMW was closing, prompting Harper to have a dive on the inside at Le Beausset on lap 43. Caldarelli fought back but it was to no avail, Harper making sure of the lead by the end of the lap.

Rowe couldn't relax yet, though, as there was an investigation into Farfus passing Jules Gounon's GetSpeed Mercedes-AMG on the opening lap with all four wheels over the track-marking white line, although the stewards found nothing untoward. And then, on the final round of stops, trouble hit the second car of Yelloly when he handed over to Philipp Eng. A slow stop, which cost around 19 seconds, was attributed to a fuel rig issue and dropped the car to eighth place, prompting a massive charge from a fired-up Austrian. Eng recovered to fourth, after a tough

fight with Sven Muller's Rutronik Racing Porsche, only to have to pit again to take on more fuel after the rig hadn't released the full amount. Twelfth was poor reward.

Behind the winning Harper/Hesse/Farfus BMW were Caldarelli/Bortolotti/Cairoli, the Lambo struggling for pace in the final stint, while third was the best Mercedes-AMG of Gounon/Fabian Schiller/Luca Stolz, which was never a true contender all day. "We are good in the corners but not in dirty air," opined Gounon. Points, at least, were banked. Fourth, after Turn 1 contact with the spinning Lamborghini of Christian Engelhart, were WRT BMW trio Raffaele Marciello/Maxime Martin/Valentino Rossi.

Gold Cup honours went to Jim Pla/Gilles Magnus/Paul Evrard (Sainteloc Audi R8 LMS), Silver to Tanart Sathienthirakul/Daan Pijl/Colin Caresani (Winward Racing Mercedes), and Bronze to David Fumanelli/Niccolo Schiro/Nico Rossi (Kessel Racing Ferrari).

DAVID ADDISON

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE ENDURANCE CUP

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

Augusto Farfus/Dan Harper/Max Hesse
Rowe Racing (BMW M4 GT3)

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES

PAUL RICARD (FRA)

Race 1 Etienne Cheli/Enzo Joulie
Matmut (Toyota GR Supra GT4 Evo)

Race 2 Hugo Sasse/Raphael Rennhofer
PROsport (Aston Martin Vantage GT4)

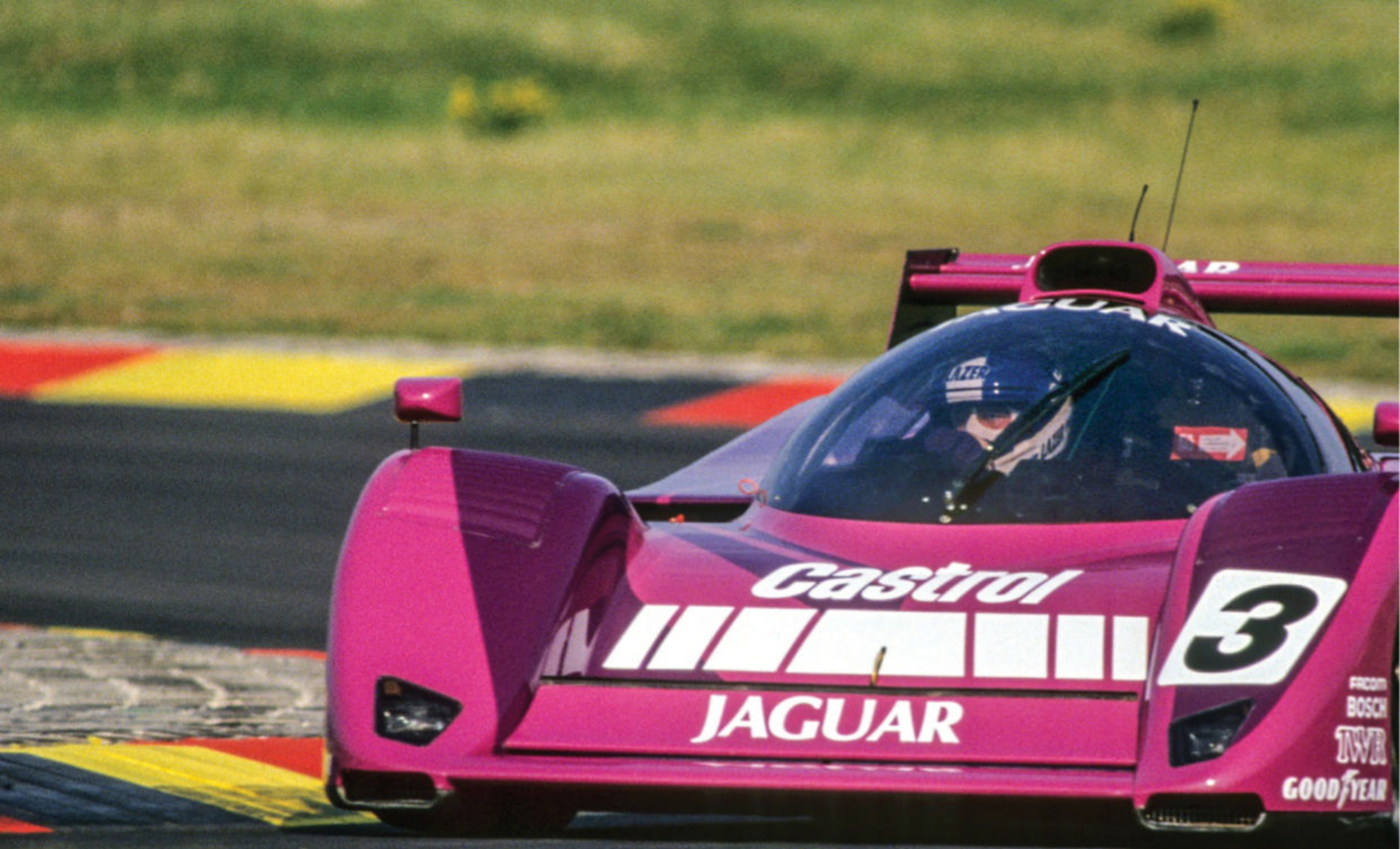


For full results visit motorsportstats.com



Lambo was second
after starting on pole

SRO/JEP



DEREK WARWICK'S GREATEST RACES

*The Formula 1 veteran, Le Mans winner and world sportscar champion
helps Autosport pick out the best drives of his career*

KEVIN TURNER

1991 NURBURGRING 430KM

JAGUAR XJR-14 STARTED 2ND | RESULT 1ST

10

Emotions were running high for round five of the 1991 world sportscar championship at the Nurburgring. Warwick had contemplated retirement following the death of younger brother Paul in a British Formula 3000 crash at Oulton Park just a month before. Then he was given a rude chop by Michael Schumacher's Mercedes during qualifying, taking his Jaguar's left-front wheel off. A furious Warwick reacted by famously chasing the German through the garages. And the TWR Jaguar team was under pressure, its XJR-14 having been caught thanks to significant developments from Peugeot and the Silver Arrows.

After Warwick qualified second to team-mate Teo Fabi, debutant David Brabham started the car. He fell to third at the start as Keke Rosberg's Peugeot came by. While Fabi led, there was a Peugeot-Jaguar-Mercedes battle for second before Rosberg spun thanks to an engine issue. That

handed second to Brabham, who almost immediately took the lead when Fabi had a spin in traffic.

Just before his pitstop, Brabham got baulked by a backmarker and Mauro Baldi's Peugeot moved to the front. Warwick was catching the leading Peugeot, now driven by Philippe Alliot, when the 905 hit engine trouble.

During a safety car period thanks to the V10's spectacular blow-up, Warwick was erroneously held at the end of the pitlane, handing the lead to Brabham, now in the XJR-14 started by Fabi. Warwick put on a charge and passed Brabham. He reeled off the remaining laps to take a highly charged victory. "We needed this," said father Derry.

"We raced hard all day and deserved the result, against a few problems," says Derek. "David was immense. He took as much pressure off me as he could in the media, knowing I was struggling with all the emotions of Paul's death and having family there."



MCKLEIN

1986 SILVERSTONE 1000KM

JAGUAR XJR-6 STARTED 3RD | RESULT 1ST

9

As a former president of the British Racing Drivers' Club, Warwick has a special affinity with Silverstone and played his part in one of the circuit's milestone moments.

Outqualified by a turbo Lancia and a turbo Porsche, Warwick's normally aspirated V12 Jaguar looked strong in race trim and chased leader Alessandro Nannini in the early stages of Silverstone's round of the 1986 world sportscar championship.

The Lancia was rapid, pulling away at a second per lap as Warwick and Tom Walkinshaw Racing team-mate Jean-Louis Schlesser quickly dropped the Porsches. Warwick upped his pace and caught Nannini before the end of the opening stint, Eddie Cheever taking over the XJR-6 and continuing the pursuit, with Andrea de Cesaris now in the

LC2. The American caught the Italian, took the lead, and built a 15s cushion before stuttering with low fuel on his in-lap. That, combined with a slower pitstop, put the Lancia back ahead.

Warwick soon snatched the lead, Nannini retook it, and then the Jaguar went back ahead at Copse in an enthralling dice. Warwick then broke off from the fight to pit with a suspected puncture, which turned out to be a loose wheel spat fouling the tyre.

That put the Jaguar out of sync with the Lancia. Cheever inherited the lead when de Cesaris stopped, and thereafter the Lancia slowed with flagging fuel pressure. That left Cheever and Warwick to cruise home, two laps clear of the Derek Bell/Hans Stuck 962 after nearly five hours of racing. It was Jaguar's first major victory since the 1957 Le Mans 24 Hours.

"Jaguar coming back and winning at Silverstone was emotional for everyone, including Tom Walkinshaw," says Warwick. "The car was great in race trim, we had a bit of a drama at a driver change – Eddie and I had this love-hate relationship and of course we blamed each other, really with tongue in cheek; it really annoyed Tom and we got a lot of fun out of it."

The success also came at an important time for Warwick before he made his way back to F1: "In 1986 I was in a pretty bad place, with the loss of the Lotus drive at the end of 1985 because of Senna. I just got in and just drove it as fast as I could, with an eye over the shoulder finding a way to get back into F1."



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1983 DUTCH GP

ZANDVOORT TOLEMAN TG183B

STARTED 7TH | RESULT 4TH

8

Warwick's early years in F1 were frustrating, due to uncompetitive and unreliable Toleman machinery. After 22 starts – not

to mention 14 failures to qualify – he had yet to score a point. But the Rory Byrne-designed 1983 T183B was decent and Warwick finally got his breakthrough at Zandvoort, where he had taken his first F1 fastest lap the year before.

Thanks to a sensational start by Renault's Eddie Cheever – he went from 11th to second! – Warwick dropped a place to eighth at the getaway. But the Toleman had genuine pace, and Warwick outbraked the Lotus of Elio de Angelis at Tarzan on lap three of 72. He rose to sixth when Andrea de Cesaris's Alfa Romeo suffered engine failure three laps later.

Having survived an attack from Nigel Mansell, Warwick allowed a flying John Watson (McLaren) past before making his pitstop. When Alain Prost inadvertently took out both himself and title rival Nelson Piquet on lap 42, Warwick moved into fifth. Then, in the closing stages, Riccardo Patrese's Brabham lost boost and Warwick went by to finish fourth and score points at last.

"It was a great car – we had reliability and speed," says Warwick, who went on to score in the final four races of 1983. "I was passing cars and not just picking up places when others dropped out. As the fuel came off it got better and better."

"The car responded to changes – unlike the 1981 and 1982 cars; you could put a JCB on the front and it wouldn't make any difference! It was pretty disheartening, so when it came together it was a massive accomplishment for all the team."



MOTORSPORT IMAGES



SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

1990 SPANISH GP

JEREZ **LOTUS 102** STARTED 10TH | RESULT **RETIRED**

7

This entry is less about a race performance and more about the human side of motorsport. Late in Friday qualifying, Warwick's Lotus team-mate Martin Donnelly suffered an enormous crash, the Northern Irishman thrown out of the destroyed car at one of the fast right-handers behind the Jerez pits. It was the worst

F1 accident for several years, and it was widely regarded as miraculous that Donnelly survived, albeit with multiple injuries.

Warwick had rushed to the scene and, with the exact cause of the accident unclear, didn't want to drive the following day: "I'd had that big crash at Monza [three weeks before], then we got to Jerez and Martin had his. I remember it vividly – I ran over to Martin because I wanted to be with him.

"That night I decided not to race, the car was too fragile and we had no idea what would break next. But when I went to the track I saw the guys had been up all night making a special titanium brace where the monocoque had broken. The team obviously wanted me to race and there was a lot of pressure from everyone, the team and sponsors. I shooed everyone out of the garage except my engineer and mechanics and asked them, 'Will it break?' and they promised it wouldn't. But added we're not sure about the rest of the car..."

Warwick went out and qualified 10th, matching his best grid slot of the season in the Lotus 102. "The first time through the corner where Martin crashed I was flat," he says. "To qualify 10th was a monstrous effort and the team was emotional when I brought the car in – at that point we still thought Martin was going to die. Without a doubt it's the bravest thing I've ever done."

Two years later, Autosport's long-time F1 reporter Nigel Roebuck wrote: "Warwick's behaviour that weekend was as plain courageous as anything I have ever seen in racing."

Perhaps understandably, Warwick doesn't recall much about the race itself. For the record, he ran ninth in the early stages following Jean Alesi's off at the first corner. A slow tyre stop dropped him to 13th, but Warwick was running seventh when his gearbox gave up with just 10 laps to go. "I remember the car being shite!" he says. "It was difficult to drive, but I gave it 100%."

1984 BRITISH GP

BRANDS HATCH **RENAULT RE50**

STARTED 6TH | RESULT **2ND**

6

Renault's pace should have yielded more in 1984, but unreliability often thwarted the promising RE50. At his home race, however, Warwick had things fall his way for once.

The British GP weekend didn't start like that, though. Turbo problems, a sticking throttle and a crash hampered his race preparation, and Warwick lined up sixth with his new chassis.

While carnage broke out behind, Warwick quickly rose to fourth before the race was red-flagged when Jonathan Palmer crashed his RAM.

Following the restart, Warwick held fourth. He didn't have the pace of the leading trio – Nelson Piquet (Brabham) and McLaren drivers Alain Prost and Niki Lauda – but was soon well clear of the scrap behind. It was quite a lonely race for Warwick, who inherited second when Prost retired with gearbox failure and Piquet hit turbo problems. It was his third F1 podium and his first (and only) on home ground, which is what gets it onto this list.

"It was the first time I had all my family there, so getting on the podium in front of them was a bit of a buzz and really made the week for me," says Warwick. "Finishing second in the British GP has to up there – it's the British GP and it's in F1! Mum was crying and I felt so proud. Of course, we had a few drinks afterwards to celebrate."



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ON THE RISE IN SINGLE-SEATERS



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Warwick was second in 1976
Formula Ford Festival

Between his successful short-oval career and arrival in Formula 1, Warwick blazed a trail in junior single-seaters, which provided many highlights.

Although no one moment stands out, Warwick fondly remembers his Formula Ford efforts, particularly in 1976 when he took more than 30 wins in a Hawke DL15. "All the races were just phenomenal," he says. "They were exciting and competitive. That's when I started

to believe I wasn't too bad."

Quality opposition that included David Kennedy, Derek Daly, Rick Morris and competitors from Europe, such as Arie Luyendijk, Michael Bleekemolen and Jan Lammers, kept things tight. "We did as many races as we could," adds Warwick. "We loved it. The cars were pretty equal so you had to be on form to win."

Warwick battled Nelson Piquet hard throughout the 1978 F3

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1992 LE MANS 24 HOURS

PEUGEOT 905 EVO 1 BIS LM STARTED 2ND | RESULT 1ST

5

After twice narrowly missing out on the world sportscar title with Jaguar, Warwick got the job done with Peugeot in 1992, and the Le Mans 24 Hours was the undoubted highlight. Having

suffered a disaster in the race the year before, Jean Todt's Peugeot squad left little to chance, completing extensive testing and arriving with three spare cars as well as the trio of race 905Bs.

Warwick had regular co-driver Yannick Dalmas and 1990 polesitter Mark Blundell in the #1 car and enjoyed the build-up. "It was my choice to get Mark in, as you can imagine we had a lot of fun heading into Le Mans," he says. "I was doing one of many stints at a Paul Ricard test and we'd put in a chicane before Signes – we wanted to simulate the two chicanes that were at Le Mans. It was late into the night and I turned into the first part of the chicane to find Yannick and Mark both pulling moonies! I chuckled to myself for the rest of the lap."

Come the 24 Hours, the main opposition came from Toyota and the sister 905 of Philippe Alliot/Mauro Baldi/Jean-Pierre Jabouille. "Alliot and co

wanted pole, but we didn't care about that, we wanted a good race set-up in all conditions," continues Warwick. "The car's weakness was the gearbox, which was fragile and all I kept saying in 'our' car's briefings was, 'Gearbox, gearbox, gearbox'. During driver changes, we shouted, 'Gearbox, gearbox!'"

Volker Weidler grabbed an early lead in the quickest of the Mazdas, but the two leading Peugeots were never far behind. Warwick took over during a quick pitstop in the third hour and emerged in the lead, while one of the Toyotas and the third Peugeot had already been involved in an incident that dropped them from contention.

The Michelins on the Peugeots and Mazdas also had an edge over Toyota's Goodyears in the damp conditions and Warwick led throughout a triple stint. During the night, the #2 Peugeot moved into second, and there was some concern for Blundell in the misty, spray-filled conditions.

"The weather was dreadful during the night," confirms Warwick. "Mark had done very little night racing and I'm not sure he'd driven the car in the wet and he was a little bit off the pace, so I got back



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in the car. But Mark gave us everything and definitely did his bit."

At dawn they led the sister car by two laps, avoiding errors as many others – including Alliot – fell off the slippery circuit. Aside from an electrical problem, the trio continued serenely on. And Warwick was given the honour of the final stint, despite this being a French team with a French driver in the line-up.

"Jean put me in the car so I could finish the race," says Warwick, who took the flag six laps clear of the second-place Toyota. "He knew there was something I wanted to pin Paul's memory to."

"It was one of the hardest races I've had. We raced hard against Toyota and the other Peugeot for 22 and a half hours, then they had problems and we could ease off. And then you start hearing noises because the pressure is off."

season, both in Ralts, and each took a title. He also defeated Lammers, on his way to the crown, in a dramatic European Championship round at Donington Park. "Jan was a great driver, he never got the chance he deserved," reckons Warwick.

A step up to F2 was more tricky but, after a difficult 1979 European campaign with Theodore Racing, Warwick joined Toleman Motorsport for 1980. Brian Henton tended to have the upper hand, but the team

dominated, finishing 1-2 in the drivers' table, and there were highlights.

Chief among those was the Marlboro Trophy at Silverstone. Henton claimed pole but Warwick took the lead at the start and was never headed. Henton had to pit with an electrical issue, leaving Warwick to cruise home to win by 16 seconds from Andrea de Cesaris. The following year, Henton, Warwick and Toleman would be in F1...



COLOMBO/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Warwick and Henton set the F2 pace with Toleman in 1980

1989 CANADIAN GP

MONTREAL **ARROWS A11** STARTED 12TH | RESULT **RETIRED**

4

The 1989 Arrows was a solid mid-grid car at Montreal in dry conditions, and rain on race day again provided Warwick with an opportunity to shine. "Ayrton Senna was the best wet-weather driver in the world, but I always thought I wasn't that far behind – I rated myself in the rain," he says.

Warwick's early progress was rapid, helped by Nigel Mansell and Alessandro Nannini pulling in for slick tyres before the race even started. After two laps, the Arrows had climbed from 12th to seventh.

The conditions were unpredictable – starting wet, drying, then raining again – and Warwick stayed on wets as others dived in and out of the pits. When Senna pitted for the second time, Warwick moved into second spot. He started catching leader Riccardo Patrese, and Warwick took the lead on lap 35 of 69 when the Williams came in for a new set of wets. It was the first time Warwick had led a GP since 1984.

Senna's McLaren soon blasted past, but Warwick was still clear of everyone else – more than 40s clear of eventual winner Thierry Boutsen. Given that the Brazilian retired with engine failure late on, this race might have fallen to Warwick had he not already suffered his own blown Ford unit on lap 41.

"We were on fire that day," says Warwick. "Ayrton would have won the race without his failure, but what pissed me off was that Boutsen won, and I was destroying him. I was furious after the race.

"The car was brilliant. We should have had more success that year but for reliability. The cockpit was very tight; typical Ross Brawn design, both Eddie and I struggled in it. I had to go down a shoe size to fit in the cockpit and my feet used to burn. I could hardly walk after a race."



1973 F2 SUPERSTOX WORLD FINALS

WIMBLEDON **WARWICK-BUILT SPACEFRAME SUPERSTOX** STARTED 7TH | RESULT **1ST**

3

Long before he thought he could be a professional driver, Warwick was a part of the competitive and tough world of stock car racing.

He had many memorable moments on the short ovals, winning the British, English and European championships. But it is his victory in the 1973 world final that stands out in his mind.

"I was racing with my dad and uncle – it was always a dream for the family to win the world championship, it meant so much to all of us,

everything we did that year was to win the world championship," says Warwick, who was then 19. "And the final was winner-takes-all.

"It was a random hat pick to set the grid, which we all disagreed with – I was pulled out seventh, with legends Dave Pierce eighth, Geoff Goddard sixth and Tony May towards the back, which was good for me. Dad was mid-grid.

"I soon got by Goddard and was chased all the way by Dave and Tony, so the pressure was massive. There was an electronic leader board and dad got so nervous with 10 to 15 laps to go he just pulled in and watched from the centre –

that's how important it was to our family. Uncle Stan was in the grandstands with mum, sister and all my friends, so it was very emotional.

"Superstox was my world at the time – you were always passing cars, there were almost 40 cars at the world championship, on effectively a quarter-mile oval, so taking risks was always a part of it. I learnt a lot from building my own cars, suspension and engines, so it was a good training ground. When I went to circuit racing, I could feel the car and knew what it was doing.

"It really was the most special moment of my life."



FRED BUSS



MOTORSPORT IMAGES



MCKLEIN

1983 BRANDS HATCH 1000KM

PORSCHE 956 STARTED 4TH | RESULT 1ST

2

“Warwick beats the works” said our cover following an event his co-driver later called the race of his life.

Warwick was a rising star in the second half of 1983.

He was impressing with Toleman in F1 and had shone on his Porsche 956 debut at the Spa 1000Km, qualifying and running third behind only the factory cars. At Brands Hatch just two weeks later, he would do even better...

Warwick joined John Fitzpatrick for the European championship round and the duo lined up fourth, behind the two works 956s and the Joest-run machine of Bob Wollek/Stefan Johansson. But rain swung the advantage away from the Dunlop runners and towards the Goodyear-shod Fitzpatrick car, which also had a special carbon-fibre nose and engine cooling fan to allow the underbody air vents to be closed, costing power but boosting downforce.

Warwick swiftly dealt with Wollek, Derek Bell and Jacky Ickx in the opening three laps before disappearing into the distance. After six laps he was 10s clear of Ickx, who then had a spin as he tried to keep the privateer in sight.

“Warwick’s driving was a joy,” reported Autosport’s Quentin Spurring. “Scything past the backmarkers whether they had seen him or not, he totally committed himself to the job of making hay while the rain fell.”

“The Rothmans Porsches were quicker in practice, but in the wet we had the better tyre and more downforce,” recalls Warwick, who lost some of his lead due to a safety car period. “It was magic. I lapped almost everyone except Ickx, an established rainmaster.”

And when Warwick came in for the car’s first scheduled stop, Fitzpatrick wasn’t keen to jump aboard: “At the first pitstop I was bursting for a pee, but Fitz said, ‘There’s no way I’m getting in the car, you do another stint and pee in the car if you have to.’”

Warwick lapped second-placed Stefan Bellof, another rising star, during that stint before the track started to dry and slicks were fitted when Fitzpatrick climbed in. Now the advantage swung towards the works Porsches, Fitzpatrick not helped by being forced to spin to avoid an errant backmarker.

Warwick took over once more and, despite the pace of the works 956s, the gap was still over a lap as the six-hour race approached two-thirds distance. Better fuel consumption also helped, and Fitzpatrick continued to lead during his second stint, though Bell (sharing with Bellof) and Ickx (co-driving with Jochen Mass) finally managed to get their 956s back onto the lead lap.

The Fitzpatrick car gained time at the final stops, during which Warwick once again climbed in. At one point he was forced off the road by a backmarker and the engine started to overheat, but Warwick held on to take a famous victory by 46s from a charging Bellof.

“As I left, Fitz was so excited and gave me a brown envelope with half the prize money,” adds Warwick. “It wasn’t part of the deal, I just wanted to drive the car, I loved sportscar racing mainly because I was normally in one of the best cars, unlike F1. Giving me that money really meant a lot and showed the sort of person Fitz was. That race put me on the map to do other sportscar races.”



FREDBUSS





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Ph. Mario Puledda



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1984 BELGIAN GP

ZOLDER **RENAULT RE50** STARTED 4TH | RESULT 2ND

1

The near-miss of the 1984 Brazilian GP, when Warwick got within 11 laps of victory on his Renault debut, is better-known, but his performance at that year's Belgian GP was better. On a rare off day for

McLaren that season, Warwick was the best Michelin runner in a Zolder event dominated by Goodyear.

He'd bruised his left knee in a karting accident, but qualified fourth, helped by aero tweaks to his RE50. Warwick stormed up to second at the start, getting between the Ferraris of dominant polesitter Michele Alboreto and Rene Arnoux.

The Renault briefly dropped to third behind Keke Rosberg's Williams when Warwick stopped for tyres, but was soon back to second, miles ahead of the rest. Alboreto won by 42.4s, but Warwick was the only non-Ferrari on the lead lap and the sole runner on Michelin tyres to score points.

"The car was very good and I didn't get hung up on the fact everyone was saying a Michelin car wasn't going to win," remembers Warwick. "I'd got those four points finishes at the end of 1983 with Toleman and I was on a high. I didn't think I got the kudos I deserved for that race."

Warwick rates the drive above his Rio race, which ended thanks to suspension failure: "Niki Lauda came by and I made it difficult for him. He came over and just clipped my left-front wheel, which I didn't think anything of at the time. Was it my fault? Yes and no. I could have made it easier for him, but you're not meant to make things easy!"

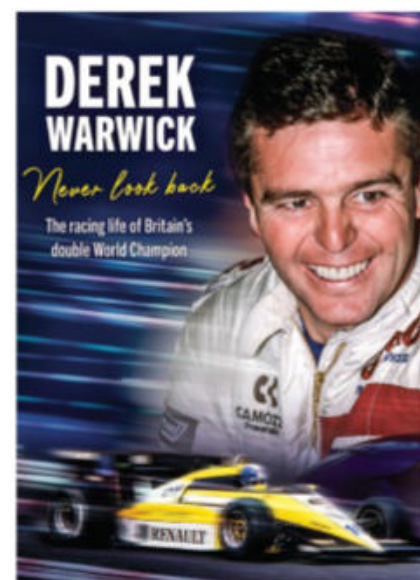
"But Brazil was easy – good car, good tyres. It's much easier winning in a good car..."

Zolder was the high point of arguably Warwick's best F1 season, one in which he was rated seventh in the *Autocourse* rankings, ahead of future world champions Ayrton Senna and Nigel Mansell.



Warwick battled against the tyre odds at Zolder

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Derek Warwick's autobiography, ***Derek Warwick: Never Look Back***, will be available from June, courtesy of Evro Publishing. RRP £60.

The 69-year-old will also give a talk about his remarkable career at **Brooklands Museum on 15 August**. Confirmed Member £15, non-member £20, livestream £5. For more info, visit: www.brooklandsmuseum.com/brooklands-members/Members-Area/member-events/an-evening-with-derek-warwick



ONE MAN AND HIS DOG (AND HYUNDAI)

Tom Ingram was deposed as BTCC champion last season by Ash Sutton, but he's confident that he can, ahem, whistle his way back to the head of the flock again in 2024

MARCUS SIMMONS

No longer can Tom Ingram's name be prefaced with the words 'reigning British Touring Car champion', but who's to say that can't be the case once again in 2025? After winning the 2022 title in his second season with Excelr8 Motorsport and its Hyundai i30 N Fastback, he fell only just short last term after what on the points chart appeared to be a season-long battle with eventual title winner Ash Sutton, but in reality was usually a forlorn struggle.

Ingram is chipper, as usual. And this time, at Excelr8's livery launch to celebrate the centenary of title backer Bristol Street Motors, he's accompanied by his beloved labrador. In fact, this is potentially the first time in Autosport history that a driver has been interviewed while holding a dog on a lead. The amiable Yuri trained as a guide dog, before it became apparent that he had some problems with his sight,

and he fell into the arms of willing adopters Ingram and his girlfriend.

Intentional or not, Yuri's presence bolsters the Ingram image. The 30-year-old was a disciple of Jason Plato's KX Academy in his youth, and has been frank that the BTCC's wins record holder was key in opening his eyes to the importance of maximising his commercial opportunities in this era where high-paid BTCC manufacturer drives are no longer feasible. But Plato's embracing of 1990s lad culture for his image would never have fitted the Ingram personality. Instead, he's the quintessential tea-drinking, biscuit-dunking, cheeky-chappy Englishman – with a dog. Yet he's fiercely determined.

Take Silverstone last September as an example. This is the event where Sutton screamed his Ford Focus through from 23rd on the grid to victory in just 36 miles of racing. Justifiably, the soon-to-be four-time BTCC champion was hailed as a magician for his



Ingram's best day of 2023 featured a genuine defeat of Sutton at Donington

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Cradling the BTCC trophy after finale in 2022

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

probably outperformed, and vice versa. But genuinely I think if you were going to put Jake [Hill] in the same car as Ash, if you were to put me in, we would all have done a good job. I'm not taking anything away from Ash in the slightest – he's very fast, we know that – but he had a strong car last year, he had a good engineer, he had a good team around him, he was driving well. When you're in that situation it's a perfect storm, and success breeds success. There were moments last year when you think, 'I could be doing that', but it's all right, you pick and choose your battles and know when and when not to say things. He was very, very strong last year, but by no means are he and they unbeatable."

A number of factors contributed to that 'perfect storm' including, appropriately, the dismal British climate. Ingram and his long-time engineer Spencer Aldridge had hit the ground running over the 2021-22 winter in development of the Hyundai to accommodate the new-for-2022 hybrid system, and the extra weight that would entail,

"Ash had a strong car last year, a good engineer, a good team, he was driving well. It's a perfect storm"

sensational racecraft. Yet Ingram, from 22nd in the starting line-up, had been running ahead of Sutton on the opening lap before he was torpedoed by an out-of-control Team Hard Cupra, rejoined five places behind the Focus, and stormed up to third position, just 1.405 seconds adrift at the chequered flag.

Much as they respect each other, does it annoy Ingram that Sutton gets all the plaudits? "Yeah of course!" he replies, as Yuri wags his tail at a passer-by. "Silverstone was quite annoying. I was actually disappointed because I was hoping that was going to be our race [as in, a battle between the two of them], because we never actually raced much other than at Donington – we didn't have many battles on circuit last year. I was a bit disappointed that Ash and I weren't able to have a doorhandle-to-doorhandle race.

"There were a number of moments last year that I think we

to the extent that they were testing with simulated weight almost as soon as the chequered flag dropped on the 2021 season. To that end, they enjoyed the benefit of Aldridge's work with Speedworks Motorsport, where he had worked on the Toyota hybrid test car before he and Ingram jumped ship to Excelr8 at the end of 2020. No one stands still in motorsport, and of course Aldridge and the team worked on developments over 2022-23 to try to remain one step ahead, only for Sutton sidekick Antonio Carrozza to produce a masterpiece of redevelopment on the NAPA-liveried Focus. Crucially, that team also got some decent dry-weather testing in...

"If I'm being brutally honest, our pre-season testing was rubbish last year," explains Ingram. "We got 'chaosed' by the weather, and every single place we turned up to we never got any dry running. So we did loads of development to the car, but weren't actually able to >>>



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develop the car because it was changeable – it never gave us any meat on the bones to go at it with. So it just meant that we were playing catch-up from the start and because of that, you're already struggling. We kind of already knew that we were on the back foot before we'd even begun, so because of that we always knew it was going to be tough. So far our pre-season this year has been strong. We've already done three days at Anglesey, and we were given summer in Anglesey!"

Indeed, before the catch-up with Ingram, Autosport has been yakking to veteran Excelr8 team manager Marvin Humphries – he's still yet to follow through on his annual promise to retire! – who has been raving about the early-March test in North Wales with Ingram and Tom Chilton. "Phenomenal, you could never ask for better pre-season testing days," continues Ingram. "Three days of consistent, bright sunshine, blue sky, fairly minimal wind. So actually it meant that we could do a bit of pre-season. Because of that we already feel stronger, because we've actually had a chance

"We've got two of the best engineers. Barry's been there, seen it, worn the T-shirt and bought another five"

to validate and rectify some of the bits and pieces that we weren't able to do throughout last year."

The Hyundai wasn't exactly slow last year; it was simply not as sharp a weapon as the Ford. That showed up particularly in qualifying, which was more important across the 2022 and 2023 seasons due to the replacement of success ballast for the championship leaders with hybrid boost penalties. Ingram always raced well last season, somehow clinging onto title contention until the final weekend. But while the competition has been purer with the demise of ballast, it has been noticeably more processional.

Has there been any particular area of development to zone in on? "It's been a combination of everything really," says Ingram. "We know that in the BTCC there isn't a silver bullet; there's not one thing that you unlock that gives you four tenths of a second. It doesn't work like that. It's a number of things all merged together, and that's everything from the bits of development that we've done to the car, to ourselves, the move to Dynamics. All of these bits and pieces that just need to stack up, and if all of those things give you half a tenth, then crikey, we've worked a lot over the winter to make sure that we've found that.

"I think the focus is on a) consistency, because we know that even last year without the fastest car, we were really the only one to be



Excelr8 is now working closely with Dynamics

EXCELR8



able to take it to Ash, mostly because of our consistency. So that remains our priority. And b) be faster. There were areas in the car last year that were very strong, and there were areas that were a bit weak, and like any development you just make the ones that were strong even stronger, and the ones that were weak better. It's been a start again with what worked and didn't work, and do what we need to do, not least from qualifying."

Ingram's mention of Team Dynamics highlights the biggest Excelr8 news of the winter: the decision of husband-and-wife owners Antony and Justina Williams to move their BTCC squad from rural Suffolk into the West Midlands workshops of the multiple championship-winning operation. That brings not only lanky three-time champ and Dynamics principal Matt Neal into the fold for advice, but also long-time technical chief Barry Plowman. On race weekends, Plowman is engineering Chilton, who he ran in a Team Dynamics Honda Civic in 2008; away from events, he's working with Aldridge.

The feeling is that Plowman's experience is already having an impact on the relatively youthful – and still comparatively inexperienced in title-winning campaigns – combo of Ingram and Aldridge. "Barry's a great guy," asserts Ingram. "I'd argue that we've got two of the best engineers in the paddock in the team. Because of that, it's a very strong place to be. Barry's had huge amounts of success in the BTCC. He's been there, he's seen it, he's worn the T-shirt and probably bought another five afterwards."

"The stuff that Barry's managed to bring to the team is about what we're doing currently better. There's always bits we can improve and Barry's done exactly that – he's brought stuff in to change the way we either approach things or change the way the car is running with set-up stuff or whatever it may be. Between Spencer and Barry, they've been two brains merged into one, which is very strong."

Ingram may no longer be 'reigning BTCC champion', but at least his 2022 success allowed him to cast off his long-time stigma of being 'the BTCC nearly-man'. He agrees that this made defeat in 2023 easier to swallow. "Yes I think so," he answers. "But I feel more hungry to win it now after last year than I kind of ever have done even before I won it, if that makes any sense. I'm trying to... I don't really know how to word it, but almost put right what we missed out on last year. Not that we were screwed over by any means, but just trying to make better what we did last year. And that's no one's fault – it's just generally we lacked a little bit everywhere, and that's part of the development race, that's how it works, that's what keeps it ticking along and busy for everyone."

Don't say it too loudly, but it's a dog-eat-dog arena out there... ❧



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10 THINGS NOT TO MISS AT THE GOODWOOD MEMBERS' MEETING

This weekend's 81st Members' Meeting is the 10th of the modern era. From an enticing menu, here's our pick of this year's bountiful crop

MARCUS PYE



1

CAN-AM THUNDER FORECAST IN WEST SUSSEX

The Canadian-American Challenge Series – known universally as Can-Am – was a no-holds-barred big-buck sportscar championship that reigned from 1966 until 1974. John Surtees won the inaugural title in his Lola T70 Spyder. Four years of McLaren domination followed – poignantly with Bruce McLaren himself and fellow Kiwi Denny Hulme – before Porsche and Shadow prevailed.

Lola T70s pepper Sunday's Surtees Trophy prototype encounter, but significant later cars are corralled in daily Can-Am demos. The Hepworth team's thuggish BRM-Chevrolet P154 and P167, Ferrari 712P, Lola T160 and T222, March 717, McLaren M6Bs, M8s and M20, plus a pair of Porsche 917/30s retrace history, but the Shadows will wow onlookers.

Not previously seen together in Britain, Don Nichols's AVS cars – from the wacky 1969 Mk1s to the ultimate DN4 of 1974 – have been shipped from the US by Jim Bartel and Kirt Bennett to be fielded by Kyle Tilley of ERA Motorsport, based in Indianapolis and Wiltshire. Fifty years after he won the final pukka Can-Am crown, Jackie Oliver drives his DN4, while Tom Kristensen samples its evolution.



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2

GROUP 1 TOURING CARS ON THE SPICE ROUTE

Rumbling V8 Chevrolet Camaro, Ford Boss Mustangs and Rover SD1s, and wailing Ford Capri V6s go head-to-head in the two-part Group 1 fest, remembering seemingly omnipresent Blue Oval rep Gordon Spice. Saturday evening's 45-minute double-driver 'pro-am' pitches star drivers and owners into battle. Owners return for Sunday's sprint race.

The Ford V8 ante has been raised, with four-time BTCC champion Ash Sutton sharing Craig Davies's Mustang, and Fred Shepherd partnering his father Bill. General Motors has Dario Franchitti/James Cottingham in David Clark's Camaro, facing Tom Kristensen/Jack Tetley and Marino Franchitti/Oliver Bryant, plus Gordon Shedden and Andy Priaulx in more roaring Z28s.

Tom Ingram/Michael Whitaker, Jamie Chadwick/Nick Sleep, David Brabham/John Saunders and Alex Brundle/Myles Poulton head the Rover line-up. Jake Hill/Ric Wood, Rob Huff/Richard Meins, Darren Turner/Mike Whitaker, Emanuele Pirro/Charlie March and Guy and Peter Smith uphold Spice honour in the Capris.

Trying to get among them will be rising star Seb Priaulx – making his Goodwood debut – sharing Alex Taylor's Mazda RX-7.



GARY HAWKINS

3**F3 SCREAMERS CELEBRATE DIAMOND JUBILEE**

Five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell won his debut race at Goodwood in a Lotus 7 in 1964, and F3 races in Lotus 31 and 41 in 1965 and 1966 respectively. The local ace's name graces the event, which opens the 60th anniversary 1000cc F3 'screamer' season in style.

Hot favourite is pro GT racer Michael O'Brien, who saddles father Mike's newly restored Titan Mk3. He takes on previous winner Andrew Hibberd and Dan Eagling (Brabham BT18s), Jon Milicevic (BT21), Richard Trott (BT28), Jeremy Timms (Chevron B15) and Peter de la Roche (Alexis Mk17).

Heading a strong continental contingent are Frenchmen Francois Derossi (Chevron B17) and Thomas Jamin (March 703), Italy's Enrico Spaggiari (ex-John Miles Lotus 41X), Swede Leif Bosson (Brabham BT28) and Switzerland's Austin Widmer (De Sanctis F3 69). Less well-known is Ludovic Ingwiler in a French Pygmee.

The real dark horse will be outright lap record holder – in a Can-Am Lola T70 – and FIA Historic F1 champion Nick Padmore who, while he has not raced these cars, will surely be on the pace in Ian Bankhurst's ex-Terry Ogilvie-Hardy Alexis Mk8.



MAWP

4**GERHARD BERGER IN BARNARD'S F1 FERRARI 640**

Thirty-five years after he raced the car for Ferrari during the 1989 F1 season, the first of the post-1500cc turbo era, Austrian Gerhard Berger – now 64 and a Goodwood regular – will be reunited with his 640 in daily demonstrations on the 2.4-mile circuit.

Designed by Briton John Barnard, mastermind at Ferrari's Guildford Technical Office (GTO), the original blueprint had to be reconfigured around Ferrari's 3.5-litre V12 engine for the new regulations after delays developing its advanced semi-automatic paddleshift transmission.

Berger's team-mate Nigel Mansell won the world championship opener in Brazil, but the result flattered to deceive. Eight races elapsed before Mansell added the Hungarian GP to his CV but, after a spate of unreliability, Berger triumphed in Portugal, the fifth of 10 career F1 victories.

The super-sleek Ferrari's progress will be traced around Goodwood by the magnificently shrill note of its power unit, which made a decent, though not world-leading, 660bhp in its heyday. McLaren-Honda's Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna won 10 of the 16 rounds to finish 1-2.

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

**5****BRAWN VS FINESSE IN SURTEES SPORTSCAR PAGEANT**

Seven years have flown by since the passing of John Surtees, who was a wonderful supporter of Goodwood's early new-era events. Two decades after he had called time on his frontline driving career, the 1964 F1 champion's sublime skills in Ferraris are a legacy treasured still by those who missed his heyday.

A lightweight 1500cc GP car and a hulking Can-Am Lola T70 are a world apart, yet Surtees mastered both, just as he had switched between 250cc, 350cc and 500cc motorcycles previously. The sportscar race in his name spans big V8s and two-litre Group 4 cars in a catchweight sprint. It could go either way.

While the T70s, McLaren M1s and Ford GT40s have the grunt for the long blasts, they are heavy. The 575kg Chevron GTs (B6 and B8s) weigh two-thirds as much, yet their BMW M10 engines make half the power of the best Chevrolets. The 'Bolton Wanderers' change direction better and carry more speed through the corners, and Andrew Kirkaldy and Ben Mitchell will put up a good fight. Watch for the Marina Rolls-Royce, Crossle-Oldsmobile 5S and Attila-Chevrolet among the oddballs.



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BINGHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

6

SIDECAR ACES BRING NEW MOTORCYCLE ACTION

World champion drivers and passengers on state-of-the-art machinery bring an exciting taste of the 150mph FIM Sidecar World Championship to Goodwood motor circuit for the first time in the form of a shootout sprint competition brought together by eight-time champion Tim Reeves.

Kentishman Reeves and Mark Wilkes, with whom he won his most recent crown in 2019, are competing on a German-made Adolf RS, powered by a 600cc Yamaha R6 engine. Current double champions Todd Ellis from Lincolnshire and French partner Emanuele Clement are the couple to beat on their Swiss

Louis Christen Racing Yamaha.

Nottinghamshire's Ben Birchall, who won four world titles with brother Tom between 2009 and 2018, is also in the fray with Frenchman Kevin Rousseau in the chair of his LCR, powered by a Honda CBR600 engine.

The teams will acclimatise to the circuit on Saturday, then take part in a knockout tournament on Sunday morning from which the quickest two will progress to the afternoon's final. The world sidecar championship was first run in 1949 – the year after Goodwood opened – when Eric Oliver and Denis 'Jenks' Jenkinson emerged victorious.

7

CENTENARIAN BOLIDES GUARANTEE THRILLERS

With every car in the field well over 100 years old, the twin Edwardian contests named for intrepid motoring pioneer Selwyn Francis Edge – one each day – are invariably among the most exciting of the weekend.

As ever, father-and-son Mark and Hughie Walker are at the centre of the action in mighty 1905 Darracq 200hp and 1914 Delage GP Voiturette respectively, but will it will be Julian Majzub's turn to triumph in his svelte 1916 Sunbeam Indianapolis?

An earlier Indy car – Ivan Dutton's 1913 Peugeot with Tom Wood up – and Ben Collings in the 1907 Mercedes 120hp won't be far from the front, but Duncan Pittaway's fire-breathing 1911 FIAT S76 – aka 'The Beast of Turin' – will be the fans' favourite.

Intriguing aero-engined hybrids include Matt Johnston's 1913 Curtis OX-powered De Dion Bouton and Francois van der Straten Ponthoz's Theophile Schneider of similar vintage. Andrew Howe-Davies brings his 1911 SCAT Targa Florio and 1914 Straker Squire TT Racer for Tim Greenhill. Towering over all but the FIAT will be the 1906 Bianchi of Wiggly Monkey Brewery proprietor Luke Roberts.



J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

GARY HAWKINS



8

KEN MILES REMEMBERED IN MUSTANG SALLY

Expat Briton Ken Miles's technical genius and Carroll Shelby's business acumen built the Shelby American enterprise into one of the most powerful forces on the world stage in 1959 Le Mans victor Shelby's post-driving days. Miles was a prolific race winner in the Cobras, Mustangs and Ford GT40s he developed during the 1960s.

Sunday's Miles-named 45-minute two-driver

race is for Mustang notchbacks, and the entry list reads like a touring car encyclopedia. Quadruple BTCC champion Ash Sutton – the reigning title winner – can expect to lock horns with Tom Ingram, Jake Hill, Josh Cook and Adam Morgan of his current rivals, plus returnee Rob Huff.

Triple world champion Andy Priaulx and fellow veterans Matt Neal, Andrew Jordan, Anthony Reid and Steve Soper are in there too, with Le Mans

winners Tom Kristensen, Emanuele Pirro, Neel Jani, Jochen Mass and David Brabham, whose father Jack raced a Mustang in the mid-1960s.

Fratelli Franchitti – Dario and Marino – join the star-studded cast with triple W Series champion Jamie Chadwick on her Goodwood debut, as is Audi legend Mike Rockenfeller. Watch too for the spectacular Kevin Abbring and Stig Blomqvist (still quick at 77) as the thunder unfolds.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

9

WILLIAMS RACE MARKS BUGATTI T35 ANNIVERSARIES

Ninety-five years – to the day – after Anglo-Frenchman William Grover ‘Williams’ won the inaugural Monaco GP in his British Racing Green Bugatti Type 35B, no fewer than 18 T35s celebrate the centenary of the introduction of Ettore Bugatti’s iconic series of cars as the Grover Williams Trophy turns the circuit mainly French blue.

Veteran Bugattiste Julian Majzub, versatile historic racer Mike Wrigley and Bo Williams saddle T35Bs, but face the more powerful T51s of marque specialist Tim Dutton and Matt Walton in Sunday’s race for Grand Prix cars of the 1920s.

The entry showcases the evolution of the cars, powered by straight-eight engines in both naturally aspirated and supercharged forms. Standing out from the set of 35, A, B, C and T models will be the sunshine yellow 35C of Channel Islander Jonathan Bailey, equally adept in a modern Nissan Skyline GT-R.

It’s not all Bugs though, for Chris Mann’s 1924 Alfa Romeo RLTF, Tim Crighton in Samik Mukherjee’s Frazer Nash, the Aston Martins of Jonathan Lupton (Team Car) and Marian Stoch (International) and John Polson’s Talbot AO90 square up to the Molsheim machines, bringing period correct opposition.

10

COLLINS TROPHY MIRRORS EARLY BARC MM RACES

The 71 British Automobile Racing Club’s Members’ Meetings run between 1949 and 1966, certainly in the early years, were focused on facilitating racing for enthusiasts with suitable sportscars. The Second World War had left the British Isles littered with redundant aerodromes such as RAF Westhampnett (Goodwood), ripe for repurposing as race tracks.

As the pastime became more popular and accessible, the size and breadth of fields grew. Sunday’s Peter Collins Trophy entry most closely resembles that of pre-1953 period events, with a fine mix of road-legal production cars and sports-racers. Aside from Maserati, Ferrari and Alfa Romeo exotica, Jaguar C and D-types and fast HWM-Jaguar and Cooper-Jaguar T33, there are Frazer Nashes (Le Mans Replicas and Mille Miglia) and Cooper-Bristol.

Sam Wilson is likely to humble potent opposition in the Cooper-Zephyr. Goodwood ace Gary Pearson will do likewise in a Mistral-bodied Jaguar XK120. The Cadillac V8-engined Allard J2s will take some beating, but nobody will have more fun than American returnee Ernie Nagamatsu in his faithful steed, Old Yeller II, originated by west coast special builder Max Balchowsky.



JBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

TIMETABLE (Note no race 13 for reasons of superstition)

SATURDAY 13 APRIL

0730	Gates open
0915	Parade: Governors’ Cars
0920	Parade: Alpine Cars
0930	Sidecar Shootout free practice
0950	Official practice
1150	Gordon Murray Automotive demonstration
1210	Official practice
1340	Can-Am demonstration
1405	Official practice
1505	Niki Lauda Tribute
1525	Official practice
1550	Gerhard Berger Ferrari 640 Moment
1605	Official practice
1645	RACE 1 Hailwood/Sheene Trophy for motorcycles up to 1983, part 1
1710	Sidecar Shootout
1810	RACE 2 SF Edge Trophy for Edwardian racing cars & aero-engined specials
1845	RACE 3 Gordon Spice Trophy for Group 1 saloon cars 1970-82 (45 minutes, two-driver)
2145	Fireworks

SUNDAY 14 APRIL

0730	Gates open
0900	RACE 4 Parnell Cup for GP, F2 & Voiturettes 1935-53
0940	RACE 5 Derek Bell Cup for 1000cc F3 cars 1964-70
1030	RACE 6 Hailwood/Sheene Trophy for motorcycles up to 1983, part 2
1100	Sidecar Shootout Knockout
1150	RACE 7 Surtees Trophy for sports-prototypes 1960-66
1225	Gordon Murray Automotive demonstration
1255	RACE 8 Ken Miles Cup for Ford Mustangs (45 minutes, two-driver)
1350	Can-Am celebration
1425	RACE 9 SF Edge Trophy for Edwardian racing cars & aero-engined specials
1455	Gerhard Berger Ferrari 640 Moment
1515	RACE 10 Graham Hill Trophy for closed-cockpit GT cars to 1966
1550	Niki Lauda Tribute
1620	RACE 11 Grover Williams Trophy for 1920s Grand Prix cars
1655	Sidecar Shootout Final
1735	RACE 12 Peter Collins Trophy for sports-racing cars 1948-55
1820	RACE 14 Gordon Spice Trophy Sprint for Group 1 saloon cars 1970-82
1900	Prizegiving in Great Hall

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PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Formula One

Main Duties and Responsibilities

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- Support Producers with the coordination and execution of UK-based and non-UK shoots;
- To maintain and coordinate contractor requirements; including processing paperwork and updating contractor information on relevant database in a timely manner;
- Be point of contact during UK and non-UK shoots; resolving queries on a timely basis utilising the relevant communication method;
- Occasionally assist on shoots, providing onsite support with logistics and coordination;
- Attend department production meetings, take notes and distribute where applicable;
- Ensure timely drafting and submission of all paperwork within Company deadlines, including but not excluded to: raising Purchase Orders as required, reviewing and matching invoices post event;
- Support Production Administrator in the organisation of race travel arrangements for departmental staff and contractors, ensuring timely completion and submission of travel plans within Company deadlines;
- Coordinating visas, hotels, travel, call sheets, equipment etc. for other non-race projects such as Fan Festivals, recces, race announcements, shoots etc.;
- Obtaining stock footage and the associated licenses for inclusion in Content Production edits;
- Obtaining the necessary filming permits (race & non-race);
- Liaising with agencies and recording studios where necessary to record voice overs;

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CHIEF SYSTEMS ENGINEER
GB3 Championship

Duties will include:

- Joining the early stages of developments / projects for vehicle and circuit-based systems with a view to ensuring that electronic, electrical and comms functionalities are addressed, and then to plan for their timely execution within budgets
- Being responsible for the development, planning & integration of electronic and electrical components within our race & performance vehicles
- Managing and developing a small team of electrically bias staff
- Attending all GB3 & GB4 race events in a pit lane support technical and troubleshooting role across car and engine electrical systems, electronic systems, and components
- Setting up and maintaining an inventory of all major electronic and electrical equipment on vehicles (ECU's, Dash Displays, Power Control systems, gear shift systems, ABS etc), leading to both development and appropriate updates, development, service, and maintenance

You will have / be:

- Degree educated in a related subject (Electronic, Electrical, Mechanical or Vehicle Systems Engineering)
- Extensive previous experience working on either racing or high-performance vehicles and be familiar with hardware and associated software manufacturers such as: Cosworth Electronics, MoTeC, AIM Technologies, Magneti Marelli
- Have experience of interrogating, operating, and acquiring data from devices such as ECUs, power control modules, steering wheel & dash displays, gear shift systems, ABS, traction control, DRS and other motorsport systems
- Be familiar with the specification and maintenance of motorsport sensors and wiring harnesses
- A full UK driving licence (essential)

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RACE TEAM SUPPORT GARAGE TECHNICIAN
Haas F1 Team

Key Responsibilities:

- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all personnel and departments.
- Construction of the garage environment at all tests and races including banner system, overhead lighting gantry, services and pit equipment
- Supporting the on-car race team during running sessions to ensure that the team operates in an efficient, professional and safe manner at all times.
- Ensure that all road, air & sea freight is correctly and safely loaded on time for transportation.
- Maintenance of all pit equipment in accordance with schedules and presentation standards.
- Provide support during the turnaround process of the car including the organisation of pit equipment, refueling, etc.

Education and Work Experience:

- Ideally holds requirements for Electrical Installation (17th Edition) Qualification / ATEX certified
- GCSE, High School diploma or equivalent required.
- Three years of work experience, in a professional motorsports environment.

Specialized Knowledge and Skills:

- Previous experience of working in a professional motorsport environment.
- Proven experience of working alone and within a team.
- Ability to diagnose equipment faults and create solutions to solve associated issues.
- The ability to consistently work to the highest standards with an exceptional attitude towards attention to detail.
- Ability to deliver solutions in a pressurised environment under tight time constraints.

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DESIGN ENGINEER
M-Sport UK

The Role

- As our company and projects expand, we have an exciting opportunity for a Design Engineer to join our ever-growing team in our Design team. The role will involve working on some of our primary whole-car design projects.

The role and responsibilities include:

- Delivering innovative engineering solutions.
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- Verification of designs through own calculations, analysis and CAE.
- Ensuring the success of the design from inception through to production.
- Liaise with the Chief Designer and Engineers to improve and confirm the design to achieve maximum car performance.
- Use theoretical knowledge of material science and mechanical engineering to resolve difficult problems.

Who We're Looking For

- We're looking to bring a group of self-motivated team players together with an enthusiastic and positive attitude.
- You should be educated to BEng or MEng level in Motorsport, Automotive or Mechanical Engineering, and have good knowledge of 3D CAD, preferably CATIA V5.
- Knowledge of the latest manufacturing techniques and materials is essential, and you should have meticulous attention to detail and a practical approach to problem solving.
- You should have excellent interpersonal, relationship and team building skills, and share our determination to deliver the very best results.
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OPERATIVE, SHOW CAR TECHNICIAN - 2 YEAR FTC
McLaren Racing

Purpose of the Show Car Technician Role:
Contribute to the build, assembly and deployment of static show cars and Heritage Formula 1 cars, collaborating across multiple Car Build functions and marketing departments at the McLaren Technology Centre.

Principal Accountabilities:

- Work closely with the McLaren Racing marketing team, providing technical support to the Show Car & Event Asset team.
- The build and preparation of show cars and Heritage Formula 1 car assets, sub-assemblies and support equipment.
- Supporting the supply, servicing and extremely high presentation standards of static show car assets and Heritage Formula 1 cars to partner events.
- Oversee checking in and out of all show car assets into McLaren technology centre.
- Carrying out and recording all static show car maintenance work.
- Compiling fault and damage reports and actioning corrective works.
- Application of minor branding updates (i.e. logo changes) and ensuring branding sign off is completed as per process and requirement.
- Support with livery applications often involving full dismantle and rebuild of cars.
- Ownership and point of contact for Pit Stop Challenge equipment, maintenance and service recording.
- Occasionally required to travel to oversee complex installs requiring dismantle and reassembly of cars on site at partner events.
- Liaison with marketing team, Partners and logistics teams to input into planning, presentation and deployment optimization of fleet.
- Building to extremely high McLaren presentation and quality standards.

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INDIRECT BUYER
Mercedes F1 Team

About the Role:

- An exciting opportunity has arisen for an Indirect Buyer to join the Purchasing department and participate in high value purchasing activities in line with company policy including:
- Provide guidance and assistance to stakeholders in all aspects of purchasing.
- Ensure that all purchasing is in compliance with the company's policies and procedures.
- Prepare commercial specifications for request for proposals, including (with support on Legal dept.) terms and conditions and evaluation criteria.
- Request competitive quotations and negotiate best value with Suppliers for indirect goods and services.
- Solicit information regarding a variety of purchases by telephone, meetings or written requests ensuring cost effectiveness commensurate with quality.
- Keep apprised of economic/business situations as they affect purchasing strategy; make recommendations to stakeholders to adequately meet those changing conditions.
- Review tenders and purchase award documentation with respect to quality, suitability, delivery and pricing.

To be successful you will have:

- Indirect purchasing experience with good stakeholder management experience and capability.
- Experience within commodity areas including HR, Marketing, Legal and IT would be advantageous.
- Previous knowledge of utilising SAP would be an advantage.
- In addition to this, the successful candidate will be committed, motivated and self disciplined in their work.

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COMPOSITE DESIGN ENGINEER
Red Bull Racing

Job Description
We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced and enthusiastic Composite Design Engineer to join our talented Composite Design Team. Working from our modern Milton Keynes campus, as part of our open minded, dynamic & inclusive working environment, we ensure everyone can make a valuable contribution to the constantly evolving design & manufacture of our F1 car.

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Your impact:

- Cover all aspects of Composite Design from clean sheet idea generation, tooling, detailed component design, assemblies, associated jigs, pit gear and supporting documentation.
- Be involved in material selection, laminate design, structural sign off and fault fixing.
- Show creativity, to suggest new ideas and concepts, and be involved in our wide ranging and ambitious composite R&D activity.

You will:

- Have an engineering qualification and relevant practical experience.
- Have recent and relevant experience of motorsport/F1 in a design and/or practical setting.
- Possess a broad understanding of current composite design & practical production/machining technologies, composite manufacturing techniques and assembly processes.
- Be familiar with the effective use of GD&T.
- Have experience using 3D CAD (Siemens NX is desirable but training will be provided)

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JUNIOR OPERATIONS PLANNER
Williams Racing

We are seeking a Junior Operations Planner to join our Operations Planning team, reporting into the Operations Planning and Scheduling Manager.

Role Purpose:

- The Junior Operations Planner will support the "last mile" delivery of key assemblies to freight on-time by clearing typical bottle-neck tasks.
- The role will also support fast turn-around of Class 5, repair or service items between races.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assist the Operation Planners to ensure parts progress through production in a timely manner.
- Adjust timing plans to communicate key milestones to different departments and stakeholders.
- Chase closure of NCRs, correction of paperwork, completion of picks or any other barriers to delivery to ensure the parts keep moving.
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The IMSA team boss tested the Wolf at Daytona this week

Daytona star Taylor to race Wolf WR4 F1 car at Monaco

HISTORICS

Multiple Daytona 24 Hours winner Wayne Taylor will make a return to the cockpit 10 years on from his last race aboard an ex-Jody Scheckter Wolf Formula 1 car at the Monaco Historic Grand Prix next month.

Taylor, who has won Daytona twice as a driver and four times as a team owner, purchased the 1978 Wolf-Cosworth WR4 last year to fulfil the twin ambitions to race an F1 car and to compete at Monaco. A full restoration has been completed ahead of the South African-born driver's racing return at the age of 67 on the streets of Monte Carlo on 11-12 May.

"When I set out as a racing driver, my ambition was to get to F1," said Taylor, whose single-seater career peaked with victory in the 1986 South African

Formula 2 Championship. "This kind of closes the book: I still wanted to drive an F1 car and thought I'd like to own one, and then go to Monaco."

Taylor described a Wolf driven by Scheckter as his "perfect car" because he grew up next door to the 1979 F1 world champion's elder brother, Ian. "I remember before the 1977 season, when Jody joined Wolf, he and [team owner] Walter Wolf came over to Ian's house for a barbecue," he said. "I was climbing up the fence to peak a look at them."

The car has been restored by Hudson Historics in New York State and was given a shakedown by Taylor at Putnam Park in Indiana in February before a first proper test this week at Daytona. Taylor insisted that he will be taking a cautious approach when he competes in the 'Gilles Villeneuve' event for F1 machinery built between 1977 and 1980. "I don't think I am going to be really racing; I won't be taking risks," he said.

The WR4 was the fourth example of the first proper Wolf F1 car designed by Harvey Postlethwaite. It was raced by Scheckter at the 1978 Argentinian Grand Prix and was subsequently run by the privateer Theodore Racing for another future F1 conqueror, Keke Rosberg. In the hands of David Kennedy and Desire Wilson the car then won Aurora British F1 Championship races.

GARY WATKINS



Kennedy was a winner in the Wolf in Aurora British F1

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

EX-STEWART MARCH SET FOR MONACO RETURN

HISTORICS

The ex-Jackie Stewart March 701 Formula 1 car from 1970 is due to return to racing at this year's Monaco Historic Grand Prix in the hands of F1 newcomer Tom Hartley.

Stewart took chassis 2 to victory in the 1970 Spanish GP and it has only been used in a handful of races since then. The March was raced at Monaco several times around a decade ago by Andrew Smith and now classic car expert Hartley will realise a long-held ambition to race around the streets of Monte Carlo.

Hartley said: "Monaco is the dream. I've done two years in the Ginetta GT Academy to build some racing experience but I want to do more historic racing. I've also got an AC Cobra to race at the Goodwood Revival."

The 701 from the fledgling March operation was built for Ken Tyrrell's team as a stopgap until the first Tyrrell was completed later in 1970. Stewart led from pole at Monaco that year before retiring with engine problems. The car subsequently spent many years in the Perth Motor Museum before being sold at auction and was returned to the UK.

Hartley had a test in the car at Donington Park at the end of last month and plans to run the March, now tended by Hall & Hall, again before it goes to Monaco. "It's probably only done around five races since the end of the 1970 season," added Hartley. "Andrew Smith also put it on pole at Monaco in 2012, so there's no pressure."

PAUL LAWRENCE



Stewart was on pole at Monaco and March has rarely raced since

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Top UAE F4 team Xcel joins British F4 for 2024

BRITISH F4

Successful UAE Formula 4 squad Xcel Motorsport is expanding into the British series this year and plans to run at least two cars.

The Dubai-based karting and single-seater operation, which has won the UAE F4 teams' title on three occasions, briefly joined the Spanish F4 series in 2019. But with its British owners having evaluated competing on UK soil "for a while", they have now decided to set up a base in the country. Zack Scoular, who initially began racing for Xcel in karts aged nine, has been confirmed as the team's first British F4 driver.

"It's all very exciting for us and we're looking forward to it," said team manager Paul Hardy. "We've shown some really good speed in testing and managed to be there for every official test day since the



Scoular is team's first British F4 signing



Xcel won UAE F4 teams' title on three occasions

first one at Silverstone at the beginning of last month. We were a little bit surprised by how fast we were [straight away], and it's all looking really good."

Hardy explained that the team is operating out of a workshop in Lutterworth in Leicestershire and is being staffed by the same mechanics and engineers who have worked on its UAE F4 campaigns, which he believes is helping to accelerate its learning process as it gets to grips with the British series.

Scoular, who finished 17th in the UAE F4 standings this year, was eager to be involved in the team's new project as soon as he first heard about it. "I've got such a strong connection with all of them at the

team, I know them all, and the team really feels like home to me," said Scoular, who is based in Dubai and will be commuting back and forth to the UAE during the season.

"It's a new team [to the series], and we've had a lot to learn over the past few weeks, but we were fast out of the box. I'm honestly really confident – the car's felt really good, the team's been doing a really good job behind the scenes, and I'm really excited to see what we can do."

Alongside Scoular, Hardy says that Xcel has recruited a second driver to tackle four rounds and is in talks with a third about either a full or partial season.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Dodds makes surprise F4 graduation

BRITISH F4

Former Ginetta Junior driver Maxwell Dodds is set to make a surprise return to racing this year after securing a British Formula 4 seat with Virtuosi.

Dodds was 13th in the Ginetta standings in 2021, but spent the following two years on the sidelines when he was unable to obtain the budget to continue. He now has the funding in place to become Virtuosi's third recruit for 2024, although Dodds admitted that he has faced a

huge learning curve given how late the deal was agreed.

"My first test was two weeks ago," he said. "I'm barely going to drive the car before the season, it's just going to be straight into it."

"It was always something I wanted to do and with the opportunity to do it, we couldn't say no. I still haven't processed it really!"

"Having these two years out reignites that fire and going back to school was almost like a reality check – because I'd done all the European [karting] races,

I didn't spend much time at school. To come back, I want to be fighting at the front, I want to be fighting for podiums, I want to be fighting for wins."

Dodds initially struggled when he first began testing the Tatuus F4 machinery, but felt a Silverstone run last week was key to unlocking performance. He finished ninth on the leaderboard, fewer than three tenths off the ultimate pace, and said that he is now beginning to trust the car more.

"Trying to get out of the



Ginetta mindset of just fighting the car all the time, that's the bit that's going to take a bit of time to get used to," Dodds (above) added.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Cowley confident Paddock can bounce back from tough Oulton

BRITISH GT

Reigning British GT4 champion Matt Cowley is targeting a strong fightback for the next event at Silverstone after his title defence got off to a rocky start at Oulton Park over Easter, when a litany of engine problems prevented him from starting either race.

The Paddock Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT4 that Cowley shares with Ed McDermott was stranded in opening practice on the Saturday by a broken torque tube and could not be repaired in time for qualifying. Replacement parts were sourced and fitted on Sunday, but

the engine seized when the team fired it up, leaving the crew sidelined for both of the Monday races.

“The car had run faultlessly all the way through testing, and the practice days we did before the season-opener, so it was a bit of a shock,” Cowley admitted. “The guys at Paddock did a fantastic job of changing the original part that failed, but unfortunately it had a knock-on effect.

“It’s not the way we want to start a title defence. I’m sure Paddock will do everything they need to back at the workshop to get this car 100% and ready to come out strong at Silverstone.”

JAMES NEWBOLD



Mixed British GT return for Lotus

BRITISH GT

The Lotus name endured a mixed return to British GT at Oulton Park earlier this month when one of two Mahiki Racing Emira GT4s was hindered by damage, team owner and driver Steven Lake has revealed.

The season-opener marked the end of Lotus’s six-year absence from British GT, and the car of

Lake and Nathan Harrison finished second-last and third from the bottom in the two races, after sustaining damage heading to the grid. “We had a bit of an issue with the brake where the pedal hit the floor before race one,” said Lake. “It’s an error that we’ve never experienced before.

“So, we tried to find out what was going on and we had to wind the bias all the way to the rear. That sort of fixed it to enable us to drive, but completely changed the balance of the car. We decided to carry on, it felt safe to do so, but not as quick as we could be.”

Lake still left Cheshire “really happy” and full of positives after Mahiki’s other Lotus finished seventh in class in the opening race, in the hands of Gordie Mutch and Ian Duggan. “Overall, yes, you could do better,” he added. “But actually, we’re racing, we’re fast, so it was quite a nice entry into British GT. It’s a good foundation. I’m confident we’re going to be competitive all year and one race won’t determine where we are.”

ED HARDY



MARDENBOROUGH TO REUNITE WITH RJN IN BRITISH GT

BRITISH GT

Jann Mardenborough will make his long-awaited return to British GT when he contends the three-hour Silverstone 500 with Team RJN alongside Chris Buncombe.

The 27-28 April event will end Mardenborough’s 10-year absence from the series since he last competed for RJN at Brands Hatch in 2014, two years after contesting a full season with the squad. He earned that drive after winning the GT Academy in 2011, which resulted in a professional contract with Nissan – a previous RJN partner.

“I’m looking forward to it,” said Mardenborough about the one-off Silverstone outing in a McLaren 720S GT3. “Since my time away racing abroad in Japan and other places, I’m pleased to see the championship expand and grow with more top drivers and teams in both GT3 and GT4.

“To do battle against them paired with Chris and RJN, our intent is to win, and we’ve been preparing on and off track to direct ourselves to that vision.”

The plan comes after Buncombe subbed for Simon Watts at the Oulton Park opener, joining brother Alex in the team’s full-time McLaren (below).

Watts and Alex Buncombe will resume their partnership at Silverstone, making the RJN McLaren attack a two-pronged one for the enduro.

Silverstone will also feature the series debut of Breakell Racing, which will field a GT4 Mercedes for former Ginetta pair Harley Haughton and Carl Garnett. “As a team, it’s been an ambition for a long time to get on the grid, so to get a programme together is hugely exciting,” said team boss James Breakell.

ED HARDY



Eaton joins the Carrera Cup fray at Team Parker

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Former W Series driver and 2014 Mazda MX-5 Supercup champion Abbie Eaton will move into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season, driving an entry run as a partnership between Team Parker Racing and her Rebelleo squad.

Eaton raced in the Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe last year, and also founded Rebelleo, which is designed to help make motorsport more accessible for people from a wide range of backgrounds and genders.

“We had several plans for this season, so it’s been a busy few months trying to get things organised,” said Eaton. “It feels like a fantastic car and to be on the TOCA package is ideal. I’ve seen the support and professionalism that Porsche offers, so when Stuart [Parker] said he had a seat available, I jumped at the chance.

“It will be my first time racing a Porsche so it will be a new challenge. Having



seen the high level of talent in the championship over the years, I know it will be an extremely competitive field.

“This will be an extension of Rebelleo Motorsport. The sport is getting more and more inaccessible, and Rebelleo aims to change that, from grassroots karting all the way up to GT3. Porsche have always given opportunities to young drivers, so it’s a no brainer to partner up with them.”

Eaton has entered the Pro-Am class and

will be joined in Team Parker’s Carrera Cup line-up by British Touring Car race winner Stephen Jelley – who announced in January that he planned to make a Porsche return, which has now been confirmed.

Meanwhile, Dino Zamparelli’s new Race Drive squad is due to run Harry Foster as its third driver. Foster won the 2022 Porsche Sprint Challenge GB title and took one Carrera Cup win with Parker last year on his way to finishing eighth in the standings.

Scholarship winner’s disbelief at victorious debut



GINETTA GT ACADEMY

PalmerSport Ginetta scholarship winner James Nicholas was left in disbelief after a remarkable victory in his first car racing start in the Oulton Park GT Academy opener over the Easter weekend.

Nicholas, who won a shootout to earn the drive

and a racing licence just three weeks beforehand, qualified on the front row and then swept around polesitter Mike Taylor at the start before resisting Harry Gamble’s late attack.

“I’ve no idea what happened, but somehow I’ve got a trophy in my hand,” he said. “At the end of the day, as much as I played it down, I’m very

competitive and once I was in the car, it just took over. It was like it was autopilot.

“Unfortunately, I’ve probably put a mark on my back, so I can’t slip past anymore. It doesn’t get much better than this; even winning another race wouldn’t be the same as winning on debut. It’s what dreams are made of.”

STEVE WHITFIELD

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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81ST MEMBERS' MEETING

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Former Hyundai driver will swap to Brickley's 2023 car



Shepherd secures late switch to Cupra Leon for TCR UK title bid

TCR UK

TCR UK frontrunner Adam Shepherd is targeting this year's title after securing a late switch to a Cupra Leon Competicion for the 2024 campaign.

Shepherd has been a race winner driving a Hyundai i30 N in each of the past two seasons, and was in contention for last year's title before slipping to fifth in the final standings. The second-generation Cupra has a proven record in TCR UK: Carl Boardley won the 2023 title, while Lewis Brown and Jenson Brickley were also race winners.

Shepherd will remain with Area Motorsport to pilot the car in which Brickley scored two poles and finished third in last year's points. "I'm really looking

forward to it," said Shepherd, who will not drive the car until Friday testing for the opening round at Brands Hatch this weekend, but anticipates receiving set-up assistance from Brickley's squad.

"If we get the set-up how I like it, I don't think I'd need a lot of seat time to be fast in it. Jenson was on pole there last year. We had a power problem with my car we could never sort [last year], so just having the amount of power you should have is a big thing!"

TCR Europe podium finisher Viktor Andersson will race Pro Alloys Racing's Lynk & Co 03 at Brands to help the squad build its experience of the new-to-UK car. A lack of testing with the sister car means Ryan Bensley will sit out the opening event.

MARK PAULSON

BRICKLEY'S SPANISH MOVE

TCR UK race winner Jenson Brickley is switching to the Spanish series for this year. The 2022 Fiesta champion placed third in TCR UK last season and has now traded his Cupra Leon Competicion for the brand-new VZ version, which he recently tested at Barcelona. "I think we had an amazing rookie season last year, and we've not really got anything to prove in the UK anymore," said the 19-year-old, who may also contest one-off rounds elsewhere to build his European experience.

RUDDALL/INGRAM TO SHARE

Seventeen-year-old Civic Cup racer Jack Ruddell is set to make his historic racing debut at Goodwood's Members' Meeting this weekend, piloting his father Nick's Ford Mustang. Ruddell will share the car, recently rebuilt after a 2019 crash at Spa, with 2022 British Touring Car champion Tom Ingram in the single-model Ken Miles Cup race that marks the Mustang's 60th birthday.

REDDICK'S RETURN IN C1

Former Ferrari Challenge and Alfa Romeo driver Ted Reddick had his first race for over 10 years when he joined the C1 Series grid at Snetterton last weekend. "I last raced in Fun Cup in 2013, before being diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis, which for a while left me paralysed from the neck down," he explained. Reddick had to teach himself to walk again, and has since been involved with Challenge TM, a charity to assist other sufferers. His Emax Motorsport car races in the charity's livery.

SMITH TO RACE BMW M1

Father-and-son racers Rob and Sid Smith finished second in the C1 Endurance opener at Snetterton last weekend and are planning to contest the majority of the season. While Sid will also race in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB, his father plans to tackle several Peter Auto events in a lightweight Jaguar E-type this year, as well as sharing Steve Osborne's BMW M1 Procar (below) with the owner and Chris Ward.



C1 Mk2 makes race debut at Snetterton

C1 ENDURANCE SERIES

Two Mk2 versions of the Citroen C1 competed in the C1 Endurance Series for the first time at the Snetterton opener last weekend.



The C1 Club entry was shared by Mike Harris and Matthew Parkes, with David Drinkwater trying the car in qualifying, while Allen Prebble and Greg Rose piloted the Silverlake car (left).

"We did a test day with it at Castle Combe in the dry and it went well," said Harris, after finishing 31st with a few teething problems. "It's a bit heavier than the Mk1, and feels like a more solid rear beam. But it's still in the development

stages and we are C1 boss Robin Welsh's guinea pigs."

The Silverlake car had a few issues too, but took the flag in 27th place. The three-hour Snetterton race was won by Alpha Trojon's Chris Freeman and Jonathan Munday.

Also taking part were Jim Edwards Jr and Kevin Taylor, who duelled in the Renault 5TS Championship in the 1990s. They shared an E3 Sport C1 to finish 25th.

PETER SCHERER

Flock wins twice on new Clio Cup car's UK debut

BRITCAR TROPHY

The new fifth-generation Renault Clio enjoyed a successful maiden UK race outing over the Easter weekend when Daire Flock scored two Britcar Trophy class victories at Donington Park.

Reigning Junior Saloons champion Flock had already been confirmed as racing in the new Clio Cup GB series this year with Westbourne Motorsport but, with the start of that championship pushed back to June amid delays in the delivery of the cars, he used the Britcar races as a way of getting to grips with the machinery.

"We were just wanting to test the car – it was about making sure, when we get to the first Clio Cup round at Brands Hatch, we can hit the ground running," explained Flock, who said the Westbourne team continually improved the set-up throughout the event. "Everything was fine with it and we weren't expecting to get two wins!"

Flock had previously tested older Clios and said the fifth-generation machine has strengths and weaknesses compared to these. "It's similar to the Gen4 in terms of handling but it's got a sequential 'box like the Gen3," he said. "It's not as quick on the straights but, through the corners and on the brakes, it's a lot better."



Junior Saloons champion enjoyed Britcar success

MICK WALKER

He added that the 50-minute Britcar Trophy races were a good way to keep fit ahead of the start of the Clio campaign. Flock is due to contest the next round at Snetterton this weekend as well and, depending on the results in Norfolk, could also continue in the championship.

Meanwhile, Mini Challenge Trophy runner-up Nicky Taylor is the latest driver to announce they will compete in the Clio Cup GB this season. He scored six podiums last year, having been a regular frontrunner in recent campaigns, and will now remain with the Graves Motorsport squad as he makes the switch to Clio competition.

"We had a great time in the Mini Challenge Cooper class and now we feel it's time to step up to the Clio Cup GB championship," said Taylor. "I'm thrilled to be driving a factory-built race car and am looking forward to learning it quickly so we can hit the ground running."

Graves boss Karl Graves added: "We've loved having Nicky as part of the Graves Motorsport family and look forward to strengthening our relationship as we take on the new championship together. Nicky has proven his pedigree in other formulae and we're sure he can excel in the Clio."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Mini ace Curley returns to Miglias after 20 years

MINI MIGLIA

Three-time Mini 7 Racing Club champion Ian Curley plans to contest a full Mini Miglia campaign this year, having returned to the category for the first time in more than two decades over Easter at Donington Park.

Curley won Miglia titles in 1998 and 1999 before spells in the Renault UK Clio Cup and a brief stint driving a Lexus in British Touring Cars in 2005. More recently he has focused on historic Mini racing but has now built a new

1.3-litre Miglia.

"There's not a lot of Mini racing in the historic [scene] at the moment so I want to go racing more," explained Curley. "Loads of my friends do this. One of my best friends is [reigning champion] Aaron Smith – his car is built in my workshop. So I'm like, 'Flipping hell, I might as well build one and go racing with them!'"

Curley's car was built over an intensive three-month period and had a brief shakedown at Brands Hatch before testing at Donington



Curley, Miglia champion in 1998 and 1999, was on the pace on return

MICK WALKER

on the Thursday prior to the M7RC opener. He qualified fifth the next day, then raced to seventh and second positions, despite his lack of recent experience in the more physically demanding,

slick-shod Miglia.

"I'm well chuffed," he said. "I'm a bit sore, to be honest with you, but that'll get going a bit better. It was really good."

MARK PAULSON

Yates has been a regular BRC frontrunner in previous years



Former WRC2 driver Yates plans rallying comeback on Rallynuts

RALLYING

Former M-Sport WRC2 driver Rhys Yates will return to the British Rally Championship at this weekend's Rallynuts Severn Valley Stages.

Yates hasn't competed since 2021's Roger Albert Clark Rally, as he chose to focus on business commitments, but has been enticed back for the second round of this year's BRC. The 31-year-old will drive a Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 from Dom Buckley RSC, with Craig Drew alongside.

"I really fancy getting back out," Yates said. "Watching the North West Stages, I got massive FOMO [fear of missing out]. I'm looking forward to getting out on some stages I know, which will help with the preparation. But, as sad as it sounds,

I'm almost looking forward to the preparation and doing a recce – that's how much I've got a buzz for doing the event."

Although Yates still longs for a maiden BRC victory, he's keeping his expectations in check: "I'm not going there targeting stage wins. I literally just want to get that feeling back in the car; of competing against the stopwatch. As long as I'm trading times with someone, I don't care where that is on the leaderboard. I say that now... but I'm hoping I can just enjoy it. I miss driving these R5 cars and that feeling on gravel of being fully sideways. You don't get that feeling anywhere else."

Yates has registered for the BRC but isn't planning a full season. However, he is evaluating further events later in the year.

LUKE BARRY

British Hillclimb opener postponed

HILLCLIMB

The British Hillclimb Championship will have a delayed start in 2024 after the opening event at Prescott was postponed due to ground conditions.

The BHC and the Midland Hillclimb Championship were both due to start at the Gloucestershire venue next weekend. However, the recent

extreme wet weather has left the camping and parking area at Prescott waterlogged. With more rain forecast leading up to the event, the Bugatti Owners Club made the difficult decision to postpone the meeting.

The event will now move to the weekend of 17-18 August, leaving the BHC to start at Craigantlet in Northern Ireland on 4 May.

A statement from Prescott said: "We appreciate this decision will cause disappointment, but we'd like to reassure everyone that it is not being taken lightly. Having assessed the ground conditions in conjunction with a long-range weather forecast, we felt there was no choice other than to postpone the meeting."

PAUL LAWRENCE

MORAN JOINS BRDC

Six-time British Hillclimb champion Scott Moran has been honoured with membership of the British Racing Drivers' Club. Moran, who stepped back from contesting the full BHC at the end of last season, is one of the first hillclimbers to gain BRDC membership. Tony Marsh, who also raced extensively in circuit categories, and Roy Lane are the only other two notable hillclimbers known to have been granted it. "It's a great accolade for hillclimbing," said Moran. "It's a big honour for me, and it's every driver's dream."

TIN-TOP HILLCLIMB EVENTS

The five events for this year's Tin Top Challenge, which runs alongside the British Hillclimb Championship, have been confirmed. The season is due to start at Harewood on 7 July and continue with rounds at Wiscombe Park, Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and Doune throughout the rest of the summer. The Tin Top Challenge is for the fastest closed-cockpit cars competing on the hills.

DEETH'S GOODWOOD MINI

Three-time Mini Miglia champion Rupert Deeth is due to share his recently acquired Datapost Mini 1275 GT with British Touring Car great Matt Neal in the Gordon Spice Trophy race for Group 1 tin-tops at this weekend's Goodwood Members' Meeting. The Swiftune-engined Mini was previously raced by Steve Jones, who commissioned Dale Racing to build the car in tribute to Alan Curnow's 1978 mount.

HAYES MAKES RACE DEBUT

Marcus Hayes, the son of John Hayes – a popular and extremely successful saloon racer for over three decades at Mondello Park – made his racing debut in a John Hayes Cars-liveried Fiesta ST last weekend. Not only did he run his father's iconic number 88, but he also sported a few Peugeot Talbot Sport decals on his helmet, evoking memories of days gone by for seasoned observers. Hayes Sr was always spectacular and would no doubt approve of Marcus' angle of attack (below) en route to a best result of 11th.





Peter Collins

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Pulling in the right direction

The F1 Academy opener was very encouraging for the Rodin racer as she heads into a busy season after a winter spent working on her mindset

STEPHEN LICKORISH

L eading the F1 Academy standings after the opening event. Setting fast times in British Formula 4 winter testing. There are clearly some encouraging early-season signs for Abbi Pulling this year. But things have not always looked so strong for the Rodin racer. Just two-and-a-half years ago, she feared for her career after her British F4 budget ran out. And even last season she endured some wildly varying results.

But now, Pulling believes she has turned a corner. Putting the highly rated Mercedes-backed Doriane Pin under pressure in the Saudi Arabian F1 Academy opener was very promising. And things got even better when she inherited the race-two win thanks to Pin being penalised for not slowing down after failing to see the chequered flag.

Pulling believes a fresh mindset is key to that improved performance. “Me and Rodin Motorsport have put in a lot of work over the winter – I think they’ve done an incredible job and I’ve really enjoyed working with my engineer,” she explains. “It’s just been about going into the season feeling weightless. I put a lot of pressure on myself and I’ve tried to have a mentality of getting the monkey off my back and just being focused on the process. I’m not focusing too much on, ‘I need to finish here’, or on the expectations, but more on how to get the outcome.”

“Last season, something would happen outside my control and I’d let it get to me”

“Last year I’d reset myself really well going into a race weekend. I’d let everything go and then something else would happen outside of my control and I would let that get to me. Motorsport is so unpredictable and so many things out of your control can happen. It’s about focusing on the controllables.”

Now Pulling is determined to put that theory into practice during a busy 2024. Alongside her Alpine-supported F1 Academy drive, she is also planning to contest the non-clashing British F4 rounds. More seat time is an obvious benefit for a driver wanting to improve, especially as she is relishing the prospect of being back in a mixed field of male and female competitors.

“I’m probably the most experienced driver on the [British F4] grid this year but, when I was in the championship in 2021, my biggest issue was always seat time,” Pulling acknowledges.

“Even in 2023 I did seven race weekends, and it was three 30-minute sessions. So I had barely done 10 hours of driving – and that’s not including red flags – in a year.”

Pulling does however caution that although both Formula 4 series she’ll contest in 2024 feature the same engine, they’re not as similar as they seem on the surface.

“They’re more different than you expect,” she says. “Although the tyres are from the same manufacturer [Pirelli], they’re a different compound. So it’s a different warm-up process. The F1 Academy races are also much hotter and F1 rubber is down.”

“The brakes are also different. That’s the start of the corner, so if the brakes are different, that makes everything else in the corner a bit different. Then the clutch is different, so I’ve got to do a different start procedure for each.”

“The cars do handle quite differently. It’s not like I’m driving a GT [going] to a single-seater, but it will be a little bit of adapting. It’s fine-tuning and I need to be hyper-aware of what I need to do for each car.”

So far, Pulling has only completed a handful of test days with Rodin’s British F4 team, having previously focused on Saudi preparation with the F1 Academy operation. But she is confident of being able to switch between the different machinery with ease. That will certainly need to be the case if Pulling wants to tackle the “unfinished business” she feels she has in British F4 – including scoring that elusive first series win – after the manner in which her 2021 campaign abruptly ended.

But F1 Academy very much remains the focus as Pulling seeks more consistency than she achieved last year when, for example, she went from being disqualified at Paul Ricard’s final race to finishing runner-up in Austin’s opener en route to securing fifth in the final standings. Such inconsistency was also evident in her previous British F4 outings, but the refreshed Pulling is eager to demonstrate she has tackled that weakness.

Now she is expecting a hard-fought battle with Pin but feels she has all the ingredients in place to emerge triumphant. “Doriane’s an extremely talented driver but I also think I can push her pretty far, if not be better,” states Pulling. “I think we have a really healthy and fun rivalry and it’s been nice to push each other on. I think throughout the year we’ll be constantly trying to have one up on each other.”

Being able to go toe-to-toe with her French rival over the remainder of the F1 Academy season would certainly be a major accomplishment for Pulling and a true indication of her ability on the single-seater stage. Yet achieving British F4 success could be just as important. It would also be a perfect riposte to her 2021 disappointment, proving all the hard work over the winter has helped Pulling head in the right direction. 🏆

Barrable shows he's a Mondello legend with Fiesta Zetec victory

Irish Legends conqueror Barrable just held off Maguire in Fiesta opener



MONDELLO PARK MPSC 6-7 APRIL

Irish Legends champion Peter Barrable entered the Fiesta Zetec opener at Mondello Park last weekend in the car raced by Tommy Byrne and Michael Fassbender in last November's endurance race and proved his own star quality.

A heroic late effort in qualifying enabled Barrable to grab pole on the capacity 26-car grid, while Northern Irish Zetec champion Michael Graham joined him on the front row on his Mondello debut. A pile-up at Turn 1 eliminated Graham and a few

others, and Barrable made no mistakes at the restart to take a fine win, with Dave Maguire and Andy Kavanagh shadowing him across the line.

With the top six reversed on the grid, Sean McGovern drove well to take the win in race two. Barrable had charged to third but was knocked back down the order to an eventual fifth after contact with Maguire at the first corner.

The Fiesta ST Championship enjoyed its biggest entry of recent years and provided superb racing in both bouts. Darragh McMullen was first across the line in the opener but fell foul of post-race scrutineering, handing the win to Ross

Barnes, driving the ex-Graham McDonnell title-winning car. Victor Cullen was second with Kian O'Brien third. Chris Grimes made an absolute flier from the second row to grab the lead of the sequel on the run down to Turn 1. From then on, he never put a foot wrong to delightedly take a first ST win, despite constant pressure from Barnes, who had Roy White for company.

Reigning BOSS Ireland champion Tony Greenan fought off an early challenge from the World Series car of Michael Connolly to streak away and cross the line almost half a minute clear in his F3 Dallara F317. Michael Roche completed the podium, having come out on top of a hectic scrap with the similarly F3-mounted Noel Robinson. The heavens opened before race two and, once again, it was Greenan who headed the pack away. Robinson, though, was relishing the wet conditions and, once he had dispatched Roche, he tracked down the leader and sliced by for an impressive win. Greenan and Roche were next.

Patrick O'Malley was on a charge in the opening Future Classics race as he fought through from the back after breaking the barrier time in qualifying. He stormed towards poleman Conor McElmeel but, despite a late race safety car, O'Malley couldn't quite challenge for the lead and crossed the line second, with a delighted McElmeel taking the honours on his class return. The Honda-mounted duo fell foul



Robinson was able to defeat Greenan in BOSS Ireland

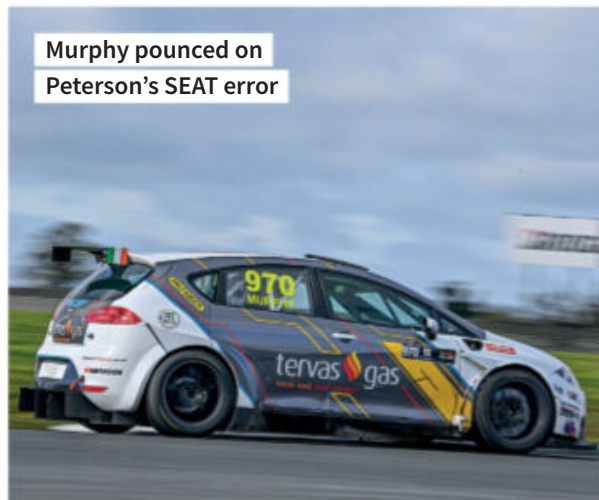
ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL CHESTER



Grimes (32) took a narrow Fiesta ST race-two triumph



Walsh was a double winner in ITCC contests



Murphy pounced on Peterson's SEAT error

of the barrier time penalty on a number of occasions in race two, leaving Garry Bradley to take his maiden win in yet another Civic. In the slower Future class, birthday boy Jack Connachy did the double on his debut in his Mini.

Cian Walsh's beautifully presented Honda Civic took the Irish Touring Car opener, despite the best efforts of 2023 champion Rob Savage, who had to fight his way past the fast-starting David Flynn. Towards the end, the rain came and Flynn's Honda Integra closed on the leading pair.

In race two, Walsh again blasted away, while Savage had Owain Drought's VW Golf to contend with. Despite looking unwieldy through the corners, the German machine was incredibly quick in a straight line. Once past, though, Savage eased away and hauled in the leader, both of them breaking the magic minute mark. A big effort down the outside into Turn 1 came to naught when Savage got out of shape and skirted the edge of the gravel trap! But such was their lead that second was still his, while Walsh crossed the line for the double.

Eddie Peterson looked set to take a fine SEAT Supercup win, having led from the off. A slight mistake coming out of Turn 2 on the final lap sent him wide, however, and multiple champion Shane Murphy didn't need a written invitation to grab the lead and the victory. Max Turley had charged from the back to challenge

Murphy, but a suspension failure sent him off and into the Turn 1 barriers. Paul Parr was an impressive third at the flag, right with the leaders.

The ultra-experienced Dave Maguire led away second time around but there was chaos in his wake. Former ITCC racer Paul O'Brien initially chased down Maguire but, when the rain came, Peterson – with Parr right on his bumper – closed in, before slicing past O'Brien to take second, while a delighted Maguire was triumphant.

Jack Fildes is the fourth generation of the famous family to enter the motorsport arena and, true to family form, he took a great win in the Junior Mini Challenge opener. Joshua Henry was an impressive second on his circuit racing debut, with 2023 class star Logan Hoey charging up to third. Fildes seemingly doubled up later, but the officials deemed one of his passing manoeuvres to be too physical and applied a 10-second penalty. This handed former karter Leo Richardson the win from Kyle Irvine, who smashed the class lap record in the closing stages.

Gareth Thompson was a double winner, dominating both Historic Racing Car Association contests in his rumbling MGB GTV8. Clive Brandon (Lotus) charged through from the back to take second in the opener, while Stephen Kelly – struggling with mechanical maladies on his Mallock – was runner-up in race two.

WEEKEND WINNERS

IRISH FIESTA ZETECs

Race 1 Peter Barrable

Race 2 Sean McGovern

IRISH FIESTA STs

Race 1 Ross Barnes

Race 2 Chris Grimes Jr

BOSS IRELAND

Race 1 Tony Greenan (Dallara F317)

Race 2 Noel Robinson (Dallara F307)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Race 1 Conor McElmeel (Honda Civic)

Race 2 Garry Bradley (Honda Civic)

IRISH TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Cian Walsh
(Honda Civic EP3 Type R)

SEAT SUPERCUP

Race 1 Shane Murphy

Race 2 David Maguire

JUNIOR MINI CHALLENGE

Race 1 Jack Fildes

Race 2 Leo Richardson

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION

Races 1 & 2 Gareth Thompson (MGB GTV8)

IRISH FORMULA VEE

Jack Byrne

IRISH STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

NI SEVENS

Race 1 Ethan Campbell (Locost)

Race 2 Richard Morgan (Westfield Megablade)

IRISH LEGENDS

Races 1 & 5 Lee Malone

Races 2 & 4 Scott Jackson

Race 3 Owen Lawlor

Race 6 Michael Barrable

For full results visit: [timing.ie](https://www.timing.ie)

When front-row occupants Ronan Doherty and Gavin Buckley made contact off the line, Jack Byrne sliced down the outside to grab the Formula Vee lead. From there on, he controlled the gap beautifully to take the win, from the recovering duo of Buckley and Doherty.

Michael Cullen started his 2024 Stryker season as he finished his 2023 one, with two strong wins. In contrast, the NI Sevens encounters provided two different winners, Ethan Campbell and Richard Morgan sharing the spoils.

Lee Malone and Scott Jackson scored two Irish Legends wins apiece from the six races with a delighted Owen Lawlor taking one also. For much of the paddock, interest centred on the progress of 2023 Fiesta Zetec champion Michael Barrable, who progressed over the weekend to the stage that he took a strong and popular victory in the finale.

LEO NULTY



A VINTAGE YEAR

The VSCC celebrates its 90th anniversary this season and a whole host of celebrations are planned as it continues to be an important home for historic vehicles

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Any organisation that reaches its 90th birthday is clearly doing something right and deserving of a celebration. And the Vintage Sports-Car Club, which was founded in 1934, is certainly planning to commemorate its 90th in style with a week of festivities later this year.

Starting with its traditional Vintage Prescott hillclimb event on the weekend of 3-4 August, the action is then due to transfer to in and around the Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse on the Monday, when a week's worth of activities kicks off. "There will be driving tours, rallies and a big gala day on the Saturday – car clubs are invited to come along to that," says VSCC secretary Tania Brown. "The public is invited to come in on that day and we will have lots of cars running. It's about making sure it's a showcase for anyone that wants to bring their cars along."

Plans are also being developed for something extra special at the event, with more details due to be announced nearer the time. But the celebration as a whole is designed to reflect the broad range of different disciplines that the VSCC is involved in, stretching far beyond its four circuit racing meetings and regular Pomeroy Trophy February fixture. "We've got something like 54 permitted events this year," Brown states. "We're putting something on all over the country nearly every weekend."

"One of the things we're really proud of is our programme of social tours. It's not competitive but gives friends a chance to get their cars out and be with like-minded people. It's getting people

out there – you can take the family out for a tour, or you can do a hillclimb or you can do a trial with the family."

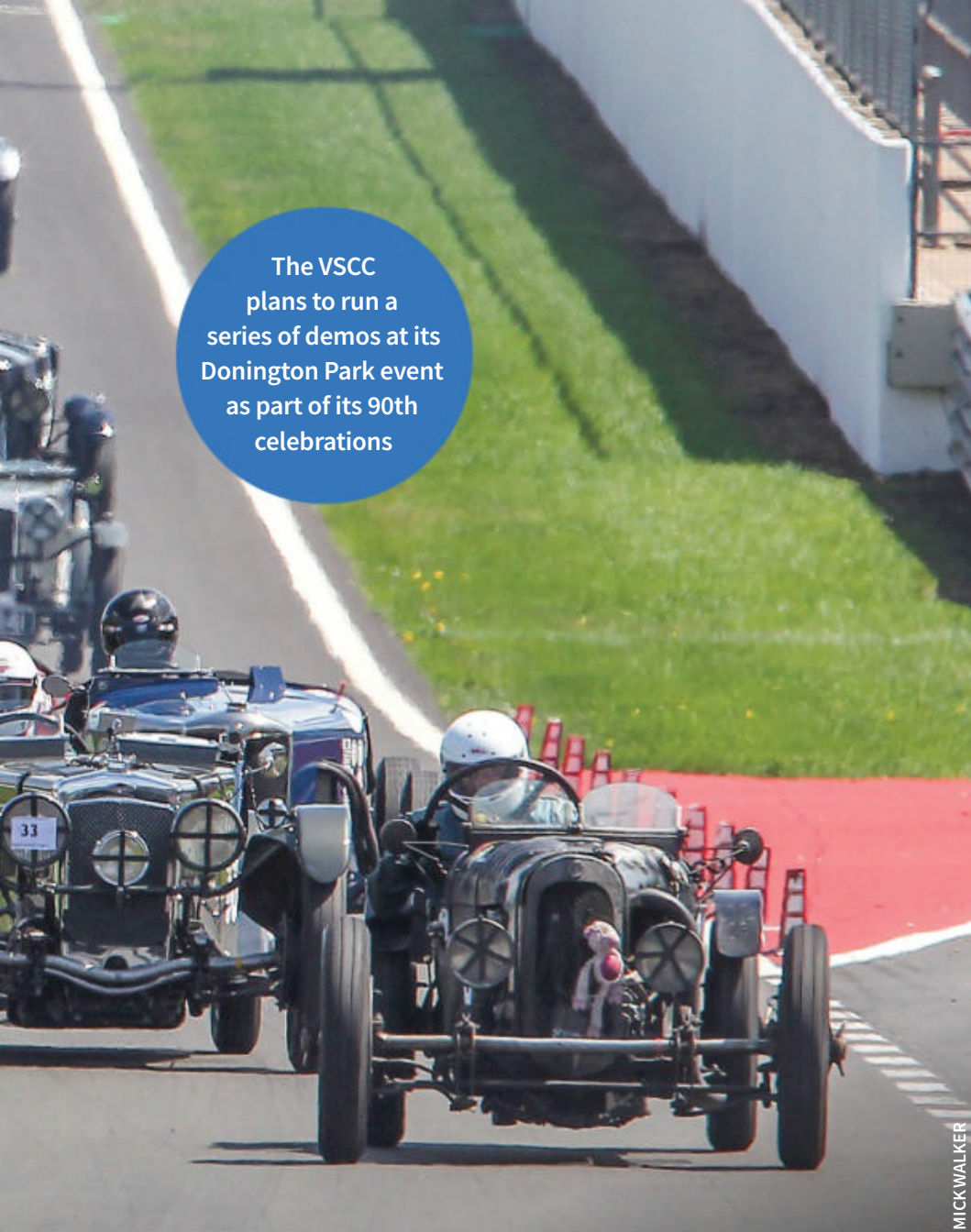
Some of the cars that compete with the VSCC across these varied disciplines even predate the club's own beginnings. And Brown believes it's vital that these machines still have the opportunity to get their wheels turning.

"I think it's really important because it's great to see cars in museums, but they were built to be used and raced," she explains. "It really gives a chance for other generations to learn about them when you see them being used in the way they were built to be used. There's nothing like a vintage car – it's something you can get your hands dirty with. You can be part of maintaining skills, educating people and making sure these cars are still around."

It's little wonder that Brown says some of the machines to be found competing with the club would be on the scrapheap if opportunities for contesting events did not exist. And that ties in with the ethos from the VSCC's 1930s origins, although the club has also sought to move with the times over the past 90 years and has recently led the way in developing sustainability initiatives.

"I doubt our forebears thought we would still be going 90 years later when they set it up with a bit of a pub chat in 1934!" admits Brown. "Back then, it was all about protecting the craftsmanship and having fun with our cars. But we know there's a social responsibility to it. We're doing this for fun, so we have our carbon offsetting and sustainability initiatives. We did our winter driving tests with Coryton Sustain 80 [sustainable fuel], which was very successful."

The VSCC plans to run a series of demos at its Donington Park event as part of its 90th celebrations



MICK WALKER



MICK WALKER



MICK WALKER

VSCC runs dozens of events each year across many different disciplines, including hillclimbing



PAUL LAWRENCE

“It’s great to see cars in museums, but they were built to be used and raced – it gives a chance to learn”

It’s important to us that [if] we do something for fun, we’ve got to do it responsibly. I think our members have really taken that on board.”

Many individual members offset their own emissions from competing, while the VSCC has various schemes in place to negate the harmful impacts of its events more widely. The first of its race fixtures comes at Silverstone next weekend and, to tie in with the celebratory theme, this has been expanded to a two-day meeting for this special year. The Saturday will be focused on vintage

(pre-1930) machinery, while slightly younger cars are due to be in action on the Sunday. Several other anniversaries are also being marked, including 90 years since the first ERA was built.

“We’ve got five or six ERAs [entered] with possibly a couple more as well,” says Brown. “We also have the Hesketh 308 [Formula 1 car] with Lord Hesketh as it’s 50 years since they won the International Trophy race at Silverstone. It’s something completely different and it will be wonderful to see. And we’ve got a parade of Frazer Nashes as it’s 75 years since their first race at Silverstone.”

Further celebrations are planned at the club’s events at Donington Park (which is set to feature a series of demonstrations of cars through the ages), Cadwell Park and Mallory Park, alongside an appearance at the Oulton Park Gold Cup. All of which will acknowledge the past and continue to write more history in these historic machines’ long stories. 🏁

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Silverstone takes fan sim experience to next level



EXPERIENCES

SIM SUITE

Silverstone Museum
£20-25

Silverstone Museum has opened a new sim racing facility, offering fans yet another way to get closer to the action on circuit.

The museum's simulators have already seen 11,000 people try their hands at sim racing since being introduced nearly a year ago, with 60 people on a normal day and 120 people on an F1 weekend turning some virtual wheels on the virtual track.

Now the sims have a dedicated home in the all-new Sim Suite at Silverstone. It offers seven simulators, live timing boards, and even multiple TV screens broadcasting the on-track action for those who aren't busy driving it virtually.

Autosport headed to last month's opening and enjoyed the chance to try the sims.

Jumping behind the wheel of a Radical SR10 XXR to tackle our first laps, we were impressed by the set-up. These weren't your average force feedback wheels – it was clear that no expense had been spared on the Simucube equipment.

"The pedals are the most realistic that you can buy out there," says simulator technician Max Fleckney. "They're hydraulic load cells, and we can emulate [the feeling] from a normal road car almost

all the way up to a Formula 1 car where you need about 140 kilos of force to get full brake pressure. We normally run them at about a Formula Ford level, which is about 40 kilos of pressure."

For someone who's used to the usual consumer pedals, the difference was considerable. It took a completely different style of braking to what I was used to – my system at home allows you to use your ankle to operate the brakes, whereas these required a firm press with your entire leg to engage. This really added a lot of difficulty and realism to the experience – though it's worth repeating that the pressure required can be adjusted to suit anyone who fancies a try.

This degree of flexibility also extends to the wheel itself, as the amount and strength of feedback – up to 17.1Nm, or around five times that of a normal wheel – can be altered on the fly.

"If someone says, 'I'm a sim racer' or 'I've driven cars before', we can absolutely change it," Fleckney continues. "We can go from 40%, which is what we normally run on, all the way up to full strength."

What's interesting is that far from simply making it harder to turn the wheel, running full feedback strength actually communicates much more detail compared to my increasingly inferior-seeming set-up at home. You could feel the bumps of the Silverstone circuit coming through your





hands, recognise the difference between the road and the kerb surfaces, and generally feel much more a part of the overall experience.

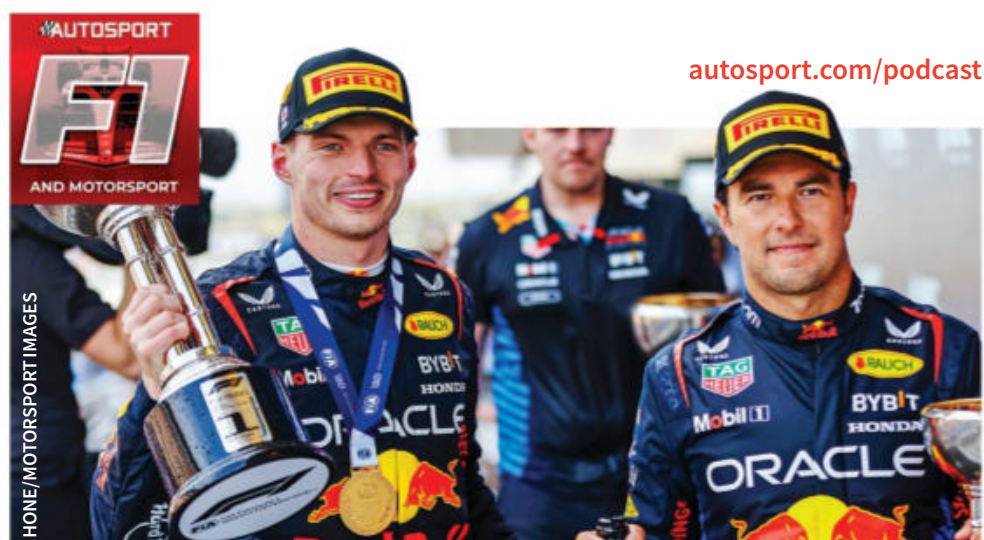
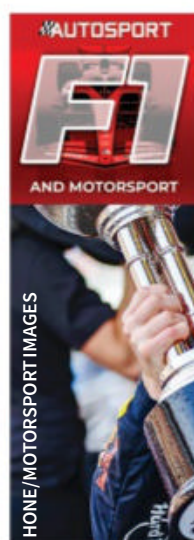
Sky F1 commentator and Mercedes AMG F1 sim driver Anthony Davidson believes that simulators have never been more valuable – and that the ones at Silverstone can actually get fans close to what F1 teams utilise. “Simulators are getting better and better all the time, and it’s still very early on,” he says. “When you think they’ve only really been around mainstream for 15 or 20 years, [and now] you can jump into a rig like this at Silverstone and get a true feeling of what’s going on.

“The sims we have here at Silverstone, high-end simulators that you might have at home, give the driver a very good feeling. And that actually can match, pretty much, the feeling you’d get in an F1 simulator.”

Silverstone Museum is celebrating the opening of the new facility with a competition to set the fastest lap time between 29 March and 14 April – yes, don’t hang about!

Drivers who set a time have the chance to win two Radical Cup hospitality tickets for the 27-28 July event at Silverstone. The simulator experience can be booked both on the day or in advance, with earlier bookings costing £20 versus £25 on the day for a 30-minute experience.

TOM JEFFRIES



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

Japanese Grand Prix review

Jake Boxall-Legge and Filip Cleeren join Bryn Lucas on the show and discuss Red Bull’s comfortable win, Ferrari establishing itself as F1’s #2 team, Fernando Alonso calling his sixth “one of the best five drives of my career”, more struggles for Mercedes, and the Albon/Ricciardo clash that caused an early red flag. Plus, what’s going on at McLaren after its technical director David Sanchez left after just three months?



WHAT’S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Americas Grand Prix

MotoGP

Round 3/21

Austin, USA

13-14 April

TV Live TNT Sports 2, Sat 2030, Sun 1915

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

Misano E-Prix

Formula E

Round 5/10

Misano, Italy

13-14 April

TV Live

TNT Sports 4, Sat 1300, TNT Sports 3, Sun 1300

NASCAR Cup

Round 9/36

Texas, USA

14 April

TV Live Viaplay 2, Sun 2000

NASCAR Xfinity

Round 8/33

Texas, USA

13 April

NASCAR Trucks

Round 7/23

Texas, USA

12 April

European Le Mans Series

Round 1/6

Barcelona, Spain

14 April

270R, Caterham Roadsport

▶ Livestream on [barc.net](https://www.barc.net)

Super GT

Round 1/8

Okayama, Japan

13-14 April

UK MOTORSPORT

Goodwood BARC

13-14 April

Goodwood Members’ Meeting (right) – various historic races (see page 44)

▶ Livestream on Goodwood Road & Racing YouTube

Oulton Park BRSCC

13 April

Super Classic Pre-’99 Formula Ford, BMW Compact Cup, Modified Fords, Fun Cup

Severn Valley Stages

13 April

British Rally Championship, British Historic Rally Champ.

Snetterton BARC

13-14 April

British Endurance Championship, Britcar Trophy, Mini Challenge Trophy, Caterham Seven UK, Caterham 310R, Caterham

Silverstone MSVR

13-14 April

Clubmans Sports Prototypes, Miata Trophy, Sports 2000, United Formula Ford, Bernie’s V8s & Historic Outlaws, EnduroKa

Brands Hatch BRSCC

13-14 April

TCR UK, Clubsport Trophy, Fiesta Junior, Metro Cup, Audi TT Cup Racing, Civic Cup, Fiesta ST240, Fiesta ST150 Challenge

▶ Livestream on [brsc.co.uk](https://www.brsc.co.uk)



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TOP FIVE



KINRADE/SUTTON

The Lola name is at last returning to competition as a powertrain supplier next season in Formula E. That got us thinking about the storied company's greatest achievements to date. Here we attempt to rank them

AUTOSPORT STAFF



5 ENDING ITS F3000 JINX
After six years of varying fortunes, Lola delivered the International Formula 3000 crown in 1990 with DAMS driver Erik Comas. An early adopter of carbon chassis, Lola was a winner in 1986 but couldn't deny March a third straight title despite claiming four wins in 1987. When March then fell away, Reynard took its place as F3000's dominant force, but with second-year driver Comas the T90/50 delivered the goods.



4 BIG-BANGER SUCCESS
The T70 is probably Lola's most famous design. As an open-top sports-racer it took the inaugural Can-Am title with John Surtees at the wheel in 1966, then scored successes in Mk3 and Mk3B coupe forms. Usually outgunned by bigger and better teams on a world stage, things were different when Penske got one for 1969. In a race of attrition, Mark Donohue and Chuck Parsons led a Lola 1-2 in the Daytona 24 Hours.



3 UNSER'S TRIPLE CROWN
Team boss Jim Hall and US Lola importer Carl Haas took the USAC Indycar plunge for 1978 off the back of F5000/Can-Am road-racing success, with Al Unser lured from Parnelli to drive. The long-wheelbase T500 – the first Lola Indycar for half a decade – wasn't quick, but Unser used fuel mileage to win three races. Remarkably, they were the Indianapolis, Pocono and California 500s – Unser and Lola had won the coveted Triple Crown.



PEC

2 F1 GLORY WITH HONDA
Lola teamed up with Honda in 1967 to produce the RA300, based on the Indy 500-winning T90. Codenamed T130, the 'Hondola' only did four world championship Formula 1 races in the hands of John Surtees, but won one of them. Thanks to Lotus problems and Surtees outfoxing Jack Brabham, the car won the 1967 Italian GP. Honourable mention to the 1962 Mk4 in which Surtees won an F1 race at Mallory Park!



SCHLEGELMILCH

1 MANSELL MANIA IN CART
After winning the 1992 F1 crown, Nigel Mansell felt betrayed by Williams signing Alain Prost and fell into the embrace of CART Indycar team bosses Paul Newman and Carl Haas for the next chapter of his career. Using variations of the Lola T93/00, Mansell was a sensation, winning on his debut at Surfers Paradise, claiming four more victories (on ovals) and the title – despite back injuries from a massive shunt at Phoenix.



SUTTON

FINISHING STRAIGHT



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Rickard Rydell (Volvo S40) locks horns with Jason Plato (Renault Laguna) in race two of the British Touring Car Championship's August 1997 visit to Thruxton.

The Swedish driver's initial attempt to squeeze past the Briton at Club on lap 16 of 20 was unsuccessful and, although he managed to make the move for sixth place stick at the same spot on the

final tour, Plato stole back ahead before the chequered flag. Go to [autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast) to find out who makes the cut in our BTCC Super Touring drivers top 10, and catch up on previous tin-top content.





Lotus 107

COLOMBO

Johnny Herbert won the Le Mans 24 Hours with the vivid Mazda 787B and three Formula 1 races in Benetton and Stewart machinery. But the car he selects from his career is one in which he never scored a podium.

The Lotus 107, designed by Peter Wright and Chris Murphy, arrived after the first few rounds of the 1992 F1 season and went on, in one form or another, until the middle of 1994, moving from Ford V8 power to Mugen-Honda V10. Along the way, Herbert picked up three fourth-place finishes and impressed alongside Mika Hakkinen (1992), Alex Zanardi (1993) and Pedro Lamy (1993-94).

“The most fun and adrenalin I got was with the 107 Lotus,” says the veteran of 160 grands prix. “We still had the massive diffusers and big fat slick tyres. You could attack every single corner. You could wrestle those cars and that’s how I thought it should be – you should fight these cars and they should fight back. I enjoyed that period.”

Herbert also liked its predecessor, the 102: “The 102 was actually a bloody good car – you could chuck it everywhere – but my it was slow! It was good in the wet, very forgiving, but the 107 was a car you could attack.”

Interestingly, despite (or because of) ongoing developments, such as active suspension, it’s the earliest version of



COLOMBO

the car that Herbert liked most. “The 107 lasted about 25 years – that’s what it felt like!” he says. “It got worse. It went active in 1993 and we had a good race in Brazil but it just wasn’t there.”

When it comes to sportscars, it’s not the screaming rotary-engined Mazda or the Audi R8 in which Herbert scored several successes, including the 2003 Petit Le Mans, that stand out. “The best car I drove at Le Mans was the Bentley, very nicely engineered,” says Herbert of the Speed 8 he shared with Mark Blundell and David Brabham to finish second in the French classic in 2003.

“Everyone said it was an R8, but it was more than that. The engine and gearbox, yes, but everything forward was new. Fundamentally it was a Bentley, it looked beautiful and it was better than the R8.”

KEVIN TURNER



J BLOXHAM

NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Goodwood greats return

ALL THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM
THE 81ST MEMBERS' MEETING

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES



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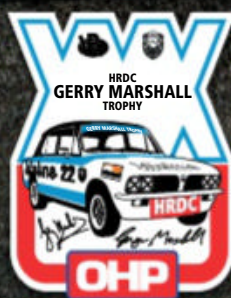
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