

# Goodwood BTCC aces star at Members' Meeting

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18 APRIL 2024

# AUTOSPORT

## F1 2025

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We take a look at the possible F1 2025 driver moves



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# F1 driver market shenanigans and Goodwood entertainment

Lewis Hamilton and Red Bull started it. For very different reasons, they have made the Formula 1 driver market silly season far more interesting – and at a much earlier time – than usual this year.

Having hit the paddock hard in recent weeks, Alex Kalinauckas digs through the various possibilities, some likely and some not so much, in this issue's investigation into what the 2025 grid could look like (page 18). Fernando Alonso re-signing for Aston Martin last week locked one more piece into place (p4) and there are sure to be other announcements over the coming weeks and months. It certainly makes a nice change from not a single driver moving this winter!

On-track, the big event in the UK last weekend was the Goodwood Members' Meeting. British Touring Car champions Gordon Shedden, Andrew Jordan and Ash Sutton were among those to star, while perhaps a surprise highlight came with the 75th anniversary celebration sidecar world championship shootout. Quite what it must be like to average more than 105mph around Goodwood while clinging on to a sidecar Autosport struggles to imagine. Marcus Pye was there and picks out the highlights on p36.

The Gordon Spice Trophy for Group 1 saloons (above) stood out and, sticking with tin-tops, we select the greatest BTCC cars on p26.

There was plenty of drama in Italy, where a chaotic Formula E opener appeared to have been won by Porsche's Antonio Felix da Costa. As Stefan Mackley reports on p32, the Portuguese was controversially excluded hours later, before team-mate Pascal Wehrlein took a last-gasp victory in the second race.



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
Chief Editor

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# PIT + PADDOCK

## Alonso commits to Aston Martin amid Newey intrigue

### FORMULA 1

Fernando Alonso has committed his Formula 1 future to Aston Martin by penning a fresh multi-year deal and could end his career there.

The new contract will see the Spaniard race for the Silverstone outfit until the end of 2026. Intriguingly, the deal also includes a path for Alonso to shift to a non-driving role once the two-time world champion decides to retire from F1 for good, calling it the “longest contract” he has ever signed.

The 2026 season will be the start of a new regulations era and Alonso explained it was an “important point” to secure a long-term deal that will give him a shot at success one last time with the new cars and power units. “To commit to a one-year project didn’t make sense for me,” said the 32-time grand prix winner. “For me it was a must to really enter new regulations with a new project. Part of the decision to stay at Aston is because they are with Honda for 2026, it is because they are with Aramco. We have incredible, talented people in the team. There were a lot of factors that made 2026 very appealing with Aston.”

Aston Martin team boss Mike Krack said the squad was delighted for Alonso to pledge his final years in F1 to the team amid vacancies at Mercedes and Red Bull. “Securing Fernando’s long-term future with Aston Martin is fantastic news,” said Krack. “We have been in constant dialogue and Fernando has been true to his word: when he decided he wanted to continue racing, he talked to us first. Fernando has shown he believes in us, and we believe in him.”

Significantly, Aston Martin will move to Honda works engines for 2026, meaning Alonso will be reunited with the manufacturer he endured a troubled working relationship with at McLaren between 2015 and 2017. But Honda’s current management had already indicated it has no issues with working with Alonso again, and the Spaniard is keen to make things work this time. “Honda is definitely a manufacturer that has so much success in Formula 1 and in the world of motorsport, it was always a company that I respected,” said Alonso. “It didn’t work for us at McLaren, in the years that they came to the sport, but right after that they fixed all the problems and they are currently dominating the sport.”

Both Alonso and Honda were convinced by Aston owner



Lawrence Stroll’s sky-high ambitions for the squad, having invested in a state-of-the-art facility in Silverstone and the construction of a new wind tunnel to help the team fight for the world championship. Autosport understands that, after attracting several of Red Bull’s key engineers, Stroll has also personally tried to convince Red Bull design genius Adrian Newey to jump ship and recreate what made the Milton Keynes team so successful.

Alonso, who turns 45 in 2026 and will become the oldest grand prix driver since Graham Hill, still feels no sign of slowing down but vowed to be “very honest” with Aston once he did: “If one day I feel that I’m not motivated, not in good shape or not fast; I think I have a very honest relationship with Aston. I will be the first one to raise my hand and we will find solutions. But I don’t see that coming for the next few years.”

FILIP CLEEREN

➔ P18 F1 DRIVER MARKET



Spaniard has scored 24 of  
Aston’s 33 points in 2024





#### FORMULA 1 CALENDAR 2025

RD	LOCATION	DATE
1	Melbourne (AUS)	16 Mar
2	Shanghai (CHN)	23 Mar
3	Suzuka (JPN)	6 Apr
4	Sakhir (BHR)	13 Apr
5	Jeddah (SAU)	20 Apr
6	Miami (USA)	4 May
7	Imola (ITA)	18 May
8	Monte Carlo (MCO)	25 May
9	Barcelona (ESP)	1 Jun
10	Montreal (CAN)	15 Jun
11	Red Bull Ring (AUT)	29 Jun
12	Silverstone (GBR)	6 Jul
13	Spa (BEL)	27 Jul
14	Hungaroring (HUN)	3 Aug
15	Zandvoort (NLD)	31 Aug
16	Monza (ITA)	7 Sep
17	Baku (AZE)	21 Sep
18	Marina Bay (SGP)	5 Oct
19	Austin (USA)	19 Oct
20	Mexico City (MEX)	26 Oct
21	Interlagos (BRA)	9 Nov
22	Las Vegas (USA)	22 Nov
23	Losail (QAT)	30 Nov
24	Yas Marina (ARE)	7 Dec

## Australian GP to kick of 2025 calendar

### FORMULA 1

The Australian Grand Prix will return to a season-opener slot for the 2025 Formula 1 season.

Australia last hosted F1's curtain raiser in 2019, with the 2020 edition cancelled on the eve of the event due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Bahrain has taken over the slot in recent years but, with Ramadan taking place throughout March next year, that has ruled out a start in the Middle East. Instead, Melbourne's Albert Park circuit

will begin the F1 campaign on 16 March.

Japan will keep its current spring date but will form the first of three triple-headers with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, before a short gap to the Miami GP. F1's European season kicks off in May, with the next triple-header including Imola, Monaco and Spain. Silverstone's British GP in July is twinned with Austria, while the traditional summer break is bookended by the Hungarian and Dutch GPs.

The second half of 2025 will look largely similar to this year's calendar. The triple-header in the Americas has been broken up, with a one-week gap between Mexico and Brazil. The feared triple-header of Las Vegas, Qatar and Abu Dhabi does return for a season finish in December.

F1 said "the changes made to the calendar in 2024 to create a better geographical flow of races have been carried over to 2025".

FILIP CLEEREN

## Bumps taken out for F1's China return

### FORMULA 1

The Shanghai Formula 1 circuit has completed work to grind down some surface bumps ahead of the return of the Chinese Grand Prix this week.

F1 will be racing in Shanghai for the first time since 2019, so its addition to the calendar this year means it will be the first time that the new ground effect generation of cars will drive there. The current crop of F1 machinery is more sensitive to bumps, which are a common feature at the Shanghai track built on swampland. Following an FIA track inspection at the end of last year, Shanghai worked with Herman Tilke's engineering and architect company to grid down and reseal areas of the track that were of concern.



F1 teams are still facing a great deal of uncertainty in China because there is so little data about the characteristics of the track surface. Things are further complicated by the fact it is 2024's first sprint weekend, so teams will have just one practice session before they start qualifying for Saturday's short event.

"It's like a new circuit," said Pirelli chief engineer Simone Berra. "We have new cars, new tyres, the 18-inch rims. The track was really not used in five years, so it will be really green and quite dirty. Even for the teams it will be a big challenge."

JONATHAN NOBLE



# Andretti targets F2 and F3 with new UK base

## FORMULA 1

Andretti Global aims to have a presence in both the Formula 2 and F3 championships whenever it eventually joins F1, so it can create a talent ladder for American drivers.

Andretti has started moving into a brand-new facility at Silverstone (right) as it continues working on its F1 project despite not securing an entry for 2026.

If it does prove successful on its second attempt to join for the 2028 season, the teams says it will create a full ladder with F2 and F3 teams so it can promote American talent.

“It’s not just American drivers, but it’ll be a good ladder for American drivers,” said owner and 1993 McLaren F1 driver Michael Andretti. “We’re going to still be looking for the best talent in the world.

“But it’s going to give an American driver a fair chance, because normally when an American comes over here, they’re not



treated the same. Here in our team, you’re going to be treated fairly, all the way up through the system. We’ll then be able to really tell the talent, how real it is or not.”

Regardless of its F1 fate, Andretti will use the Silverstone base as its European hub, intending to move its Formula E team over from its current base in nearby Banbury. A sportscar team could also be housed in the

facility. “This is going to be mainly for F1, but we also want to bring in our Formula E team and start integrating it here,” said Andretti. “Our goal is to have an F3/F2 team to help support the F1 team, and then maybe even a World Endurance Championship team, so we want to make this our hub for the European racing.”

**FILIP CLEEREN**

ANDRETTI

# Ferrari and Toyota get rules boost for Imola

## WEC

Ferrari and Toyota appear to be the biggest winners in the Balance of Performance issued for this weekend’s Imola round of the World Endurance Championship. They go into Sunday’s Italian round of the series with the biggest weight breaks in the Hypercar field.

The Ferrari 499P and Toyota GR010 will race respectively at 34kg and 29kg lighter than at last month’s curtain-raiser in Qatar. At the same time, maximum power for the two cars has been increased by 7kW and 6kW (9bhp and 8bhp).

Across the board weight reductions and power increases for all nine cars competing in the Hypercar class have been made, with the exception of the new version of Peugeot’s 9X8 LMH racing for the first



time at Imola. The Porsche 963 LMDh, which blocked out the podium positions in Qatar, has a 15kg reduction in minimum weight and a 3kW (4bhp) increase in maximum power.

The new Peugeot, known as the 9X8 2024, will be competing under a new homologation after its

technical overhaul with a switch of tyre sizes. In Qatar the previous version raced at the lowest possible weight (1030kg) and the highest power (520kW or 697bhp), whereas the revised car will run at 1061kg, making it the heaviest car in the field, and at 510kW (683bhp), the same as the Ferrari. The

deployment speed of the front-axle hybrid system on the Peugeot is now 190km/h (118mph), the same as for the other LMHs.

No explanation, as is normal on the publication of the BoP table before each WEC race, has been given for the changes. The weight reductions and power increases are likely the result of the differing track characteristics between the Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari at Imola and Qatar’s Losail International Circuit.

Introduction of the so-called ‘power gain’ component of the Hypercar BoP has been delayed. A plus or minus figure will be applied to the maximum power of each car above 210km/h (130mph) to more accurately match acceleration and top speeds.

**GARY WATKINS**





**GOODWOOD** Gerhard Berger was reunited with one of the Ferrari 640s he used during the 1989 Formula 1 season at the Goodwood Members' Meeting last Saturday. The 10-time grand prix winner only finished three of the 16 races that season in the car that pioneered the semi-automatic gearbox in F1, but did win the Portuguese GP at Estoril. "When we finished, we finished in good positions, but we didn't usually finish!" said the 64-year-old. Sadly, after smoking during its first demonstration, the 3.5-litre V12-engined machine was prevented from running on Sunday due to an oil leak. **Photo by J Bloxham/Motorsport Images**

## Gounon in Alpine Hypercar drive after Habsburg testing crash

**WEC**

Jules Gounon will replace the injured Ferdinand Habsburg in the Alpine Hypercar team for this weekend's World Endurance Championship round at Imola. The two-time GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup title winner takes up the seat in his role as official reserve for the Signatech-run squad.

Confirmation that Habsburg, who fractured two lumbar vertebrae in testing at Aragon in late March, will miss Sunday's race in Italy came with Alpine's pre-race statement on Monday. It gave no indication whether the Austrian can be ready to take up his seat in the #35 A424 LMDh alongside Charles Milesi and Paul-Loup Chatin for

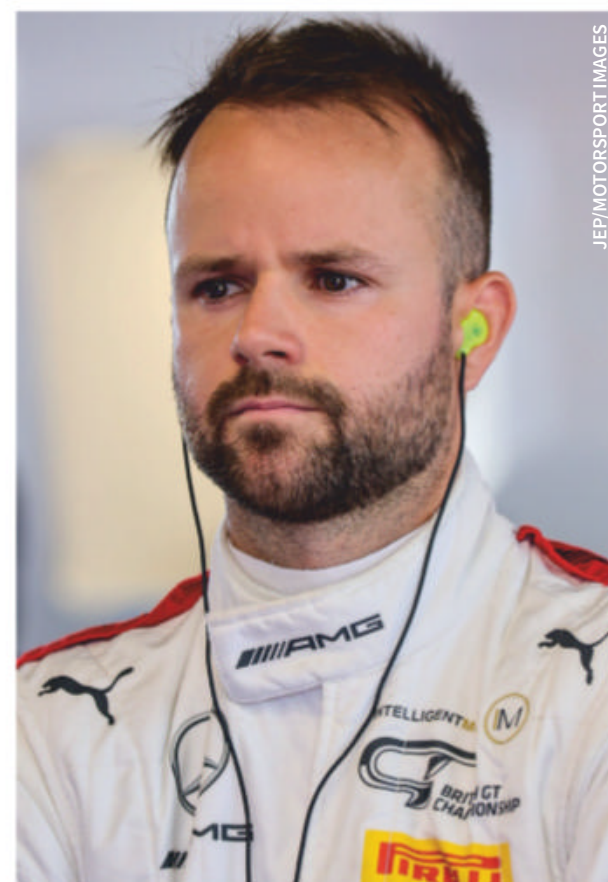
round three of the WEC at Spa in mid-May.

"It's never easy to make your debut in such a context, but Jules was identified, selected and signed to fill this role, even though we never imagined it would happen so early like this," said team principal Philippe Sinault. "He's ready but still has much to learn, even if he has already demonstrated his mastery of several aspects, given his track record in GTs."

Sinault added that Habsburg would "be on our minds" and that his absence is "a hard blow".

Alpine has yet to reveal the cause of Habsburg's accident, which happened at Turn 7 at Motorland Aragon during a 30-hour endurance simulation.

**GARY WATKINS**



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# Abt to run new Lola-Yamaha power for 2025 attack



Abt chief Thomas Biermaier (inset right, with Lola's Mark Preston and Yamaha boss Heiji Maruyama) runs Mahindras in 2024

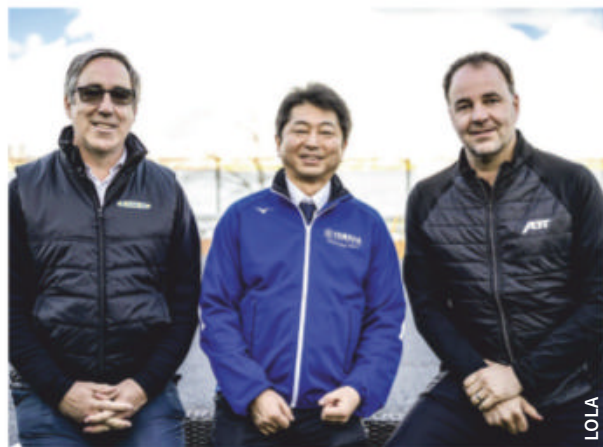
## FORMULA E

The Abt Formula E team will use the new powertrain developed by Lola Cars and Yamaha for the 2025 season.

The confirmation comes only weeks after it was revealed ahead of the Tokyo E-Prix that Lola would be returning to motorsport after more than a decade away, while Yamaha would be venturing into four-wheel racing again for the first time since 1997.

Ahead of last weekend's Misano E-Prix, Abt confirmed it will run the newly developed powertrain when its current partnership with Mahindra ends at the close of this season.

"We are delighted to have found two renowned partners for our future in Formula E," said Abt CEO and team principal Thomas Biermaier. "Of course, it will be a big challenge for a new manufacturer to enter and establish itself



in a world championship. But during our discussions and negotiations over the past few months, we have clearly sensed how skilled, motivated and determined Lola and Yamaha are to make this project a success – just like every member of our team."

Abt has enjoyed plenty of success in the all-electric championship since its inception in 2014, winning the drivers' title with Lucas di Grassi in 2016-17 and

the teams' championship the following season, all in partnership with Audi.

After the German manufacturer withdrew in 2021, Abt also pulled out of the category before returning ahead of the 2023 season in collaboration with Cupra.

Powered by Mahindra since rejoining, the team has struggled to find success and announced at the season-opening Mexico City E-Prix that it would end its collaboration with the Indian manufacturer.

The new Lola/Yamaha powertrain is currently being tested and is set to hit the track as early as June, before it will be used with the new Gen3.5 machines next season.

"Operating factory-backed programmes is Abt's bread and butter, and their experience in Formula E will give us a critical leg up," added Till Bechtolsheimer, chairman of Lola Cars.

STEFAN MACKLEY

➔ P32 MISANO E-PRIX REPORT



## King and Aron to get Formula E debuts

### FORMULA E

Joel Eriksson and Paul Aron will compete in the Berlin E-Prix double-header for Envision next month, with Jordan King also set to make his Formula E debut for Mahindra.

The trio of changes come as the event in Germany on 11-12 May clashes with the World Endurance Championship's Spa round, with Envision drivers Sebastien Buemi and Robin Frijns, as well as Mahindra's

Nyck de Vries, set to prioritise the Belgian event.

Eriksson is currently Jaguar's reserve driver, the manufacturer a supplier of powertrains to Envision, with the Swede having made eight previous Formula E starts for Dragon Penske in 2020-21.

Aron, meanwhile, will make his debut in Formula E having moved up to Formula 2 full-time this season with Hitech, where he currently sits second in the standings.

The Estonian got his first taste of Formula E machinery in the rookie session ahead of the Misano E-Prix double-header, finishing eighth fastest.

Ex-IndyCar driver King (left) will also make his Formula E debut having acted as Mahindra's reserve driver since 2021. He said: "My focus is on keeping the team's momentum going on the development front, and of course to enjoy the opportunity to be out there racing again."

STEFAN MACKLEY





## Ted Toleman 1938-2024

### OBITUARY

Ted Toleman, who died last week aged 86, was the figurehead of what still contends to be Formula 1's best-loved and most influential underdog team.

Toleman and his older brother Bob ran the family car transportation business in Essex from the mid-1960s. Encouraged by managing director Alex Hawkridge, the Toleman Group became a familiar sponsor in club motorsport in the following decade, and the brothers and Hawkridge also began racing themselves.

Tragedy struck in 1976 when Bob Toleman was killed when he crashed his Royale Formula Ford at Snetterton. Undeterred, Ted continued to race a Lola Sports 2000 on occasion while Hawkridge stepped up investment in motorsport as an entrant, the company backing South African Rad Dougall, who dominated FF2000 in 1977. The company then hired promising designer Rory Byrne from Royale and jumped straight into F2, running a March-BMW for Dougall in 1978.

Two years later Toleman stamped its mark with its own Hart-powered F2 designed by Byrne and John Gentry, running on Pirelli tyres and with backing from BP. Brian Henton and Derek Warwick swept to a 1-2 in the European F2



Championship, prompting Toleman to take the plunge into F1 for 1981.

From looking initially out of its depth with Byrne's Hart turbo-powered TG181, Toleman evolved into a genuine force. For 1984 Hawkridge signed British F3 champion Ayrton Senna, who almost won a rain-affected and controversially red-flagged Monaco GP.

Senna acrimoniously defected to Lotus for 1985 and the team initially found itself without a tyre supply deal. The team was sold to Italian fashion house Benetton, the name under which it then ran from 1986, and Toleman withdrew from motorsport.

Although Hawkridge was the driving force behind the Toleman team, its chairman was a key component of the success. "I owe everything to Ted Toleman, Alex and the team," said Warwick. "They were amazing to me. I wouldn't have been in F1 without them or had this amazing career. I owe this life to Toleman."

**DAMIEN SMITH**

## LEGGE BECOMES 34TH DRIVER FOR INDY 500

### INDYCAR

British racer Katherine Legge has secured a deal for next month's Indianapolis 500, becoming the 34th driver on the entry list and ensuring the jeopardy of qualifying 'Bump Day' for the 33-car field.

Legge will drive the #51 Honda-powered entry for Dale Coyne Racing that was campaigned by Colin Braun in last month's St Petersburg season-opener. It represents a return to DCR for the IMSA SportsCar regular for the first time since 2007 for her fourth attempt at the 500.

"She's had a good career since she first drove for us and we can't wait to start working with her again for this year's Indianapolis 500," said Coyne.

Legge, whose best Indy 500 finish is 22nd in 2012, took part in last week's Open Test (below) at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, where rain affected the first day and then wiped out the second.

Quickest was 2023 500 winner Josef Newgarden, who nailed a 228.811mph lap in his Team Penske car during the opening two hours of running. Second was an impressive Kyle Larson, the NASCAR star preparing for his maiden IndyCar start with Arrow McLaren and running a 226.384mph best.

**JOEY BARNES**



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## BARNARD GOES QUICKEST

Formula 2 driver Taylor Barnard topped the rookie session for McLaren ahead of the Misano E-Prix, having set a 1m18.762s with his final effort, which left the Briton 0.154 seconds clear of DS Penske's Robert Shwartzman. A full day of rookie running will take place on the Monday after the Berlin E-Prix double-header in May.

## CYAN STICKS WITH QUARTET

Lynk & Co works team Cyan Racing has stuck with an unchanged line-up for this season's TCR World Tour, which kicks off at Vallelunga this weekend. Tin-top world champions Yann Ehrlacher and Thed Bjork (the Swede's 13th year at the team!) are joined by Santiago Urrutia and Ma Qing Hua in the squad's four-car line-up. A field of 20 is set for Vallelunga, with 11 regulars joined by nine national contenders.

## CORNISH HASTY IN SPAIN

Briton Tommy Foster took victory in last weekend's opening round of the Le Mans Cup at Barcelona, sharing a High Class Racing Ligier with Dane Jens Reno Moller. Cornishman Foster passed the R-ace GP Duqueine of Hadrien David (co-driven by Fabien Michal) in the final 25 minutes. A notable name in the field was Darren Malkin – 25 years after finishing runner-up to Tomas Scheckter in the Opel Lotus Euroseries, the racing returnee was sixth in GT3 in a Steller Motorsport Audi.

## PEARSON TOPS TEST

Excelr8 Motorsport's Ronan Pearson topped last week's British Touring Car Championship official test at Croft. The Scot, who ran soft tyres on his quick run, took his Hyundai i30 N around the Yorkshire track 0.072s faster than the West Surrey Racing BMW of Jake Hill, who went off in the wet afternoon session. Next were Colin Turkington (WSR BMW) and Alliance Ford trio Dan Cammish, Ash Sutton and Dan Rowbottom, with Sutton quickest in the wet. Testing continued for the BTCC at Donington Park this week on Tuesday as we went to press.



## Pirro becomes two-wheel rookie

### GOODWOOD

Five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro made his motorbike racing debut at the 81st Goodwood Members' Meeting last weekend.

The 62-year-old Italian contested the Hailwood Trophy for 250cc and 350cc two-stroke grand prix and Formula 750 motorcycles that raced up to 1983.

Pirro qualified the Michael Russell-entered Yamaha TZ250 20th in the 34-bike field, 9.7 seconds off pole. After making tentative starts, he finished 18th overall and 10th in class in race one, then 21st overall and 11th in class in the second encounter. That gave him 16th overall and ninth in class on aggregate, with both races shortened due to incidents.

"Every metre I'm learning something," said Pirro, who started 37 world

championship Formula 1 races between 1989 and 1991. "It's incredibly exciting. I've never ridden with people around me so I was a bit nervous at the start. I had massive respect for riders before doing it and now I have even more."

Phil Atkinson followed up a narrow victory in race one, in which the top three riders were covered by 0.423s, by heading the second event, leading a Yamaha 1-2-3 on aggregate. Michael Russell topped the Barry Sheene Trophy for Formula 750 machines with fourth overall on a Norton Manx Commando.

The Members' Meeting also hosted sidecar competitors for the first time in a special shootout to celebrate 75 years of the sidecar world championship. Reigning world champions Todd Ellis and Emmanuelle Clement won (see page 39).

KEVIN TURNER

## Falken Porsche's qualifying double

### NLS

Preparations for the Nurburgring 24 Hours stepped up last weekend with two Qualifiers on the Nordschleife. Both counted for the NLS and were won by the same car, albeit with different drivers!

Sven Muller and Tim Heinemann took their Falken Motorsports Porsche to victory on Saturday. Falken scored a 1-2 on the road, but a penalty for overtaking under yellow flags dropped the second



car to fifth, and promoted Manthey EMA Porsche pairing Thomas Preining and Ayhan Guven to second.

Nico Menzel and Martin Ragginger took over the #44

Falken 911 GT3-R on Sunday and doubled its weekend tally, this time leading home the Rowe Racing BMW of Maxime Martin, Raffaele Marciello and Marco Wittmann.



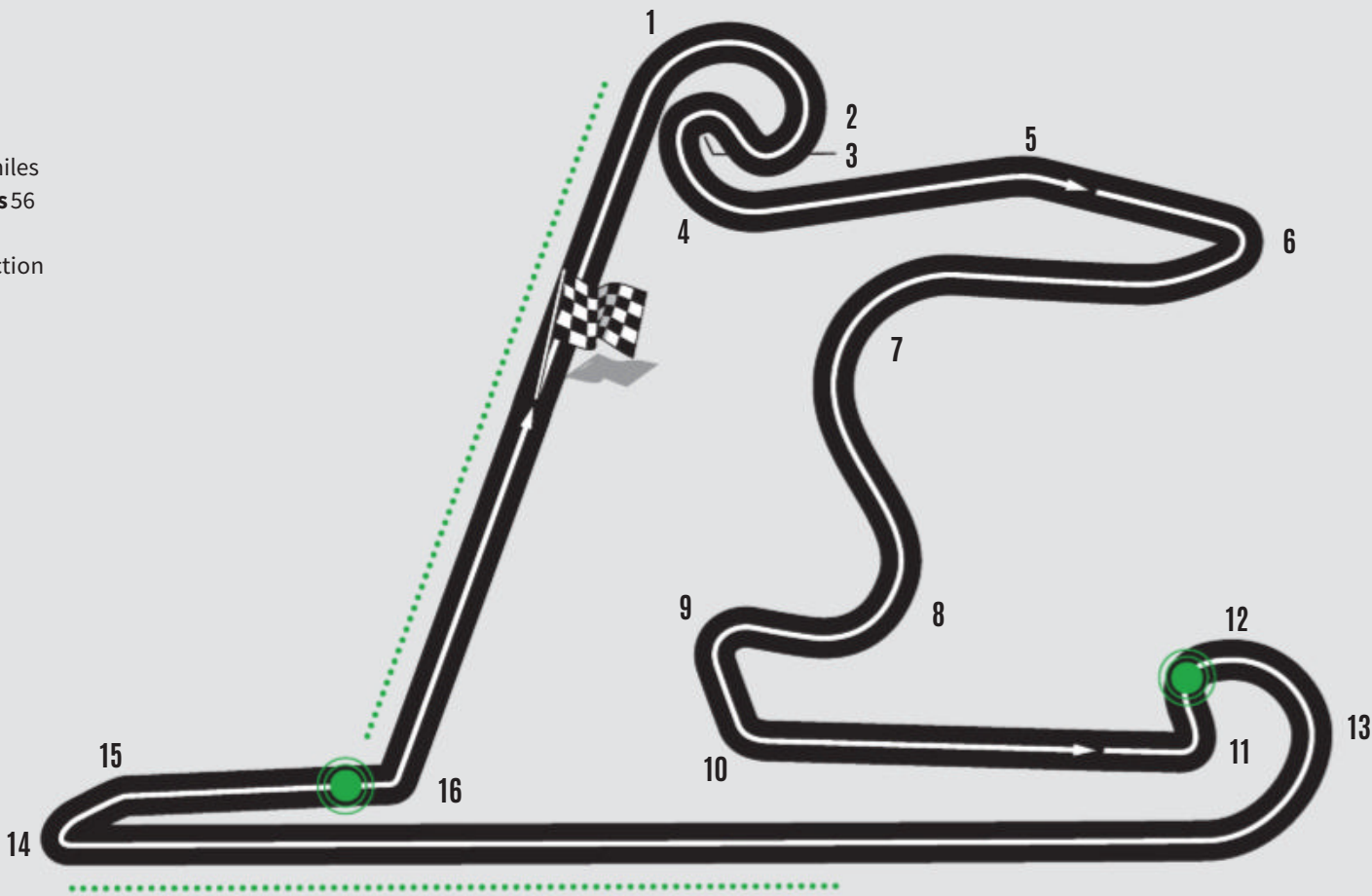
F1 CHINESE GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Shanghai

Length 3.387 miles  
Number of laps 56

- DRS detection
- DRS zone



UK START TIMES

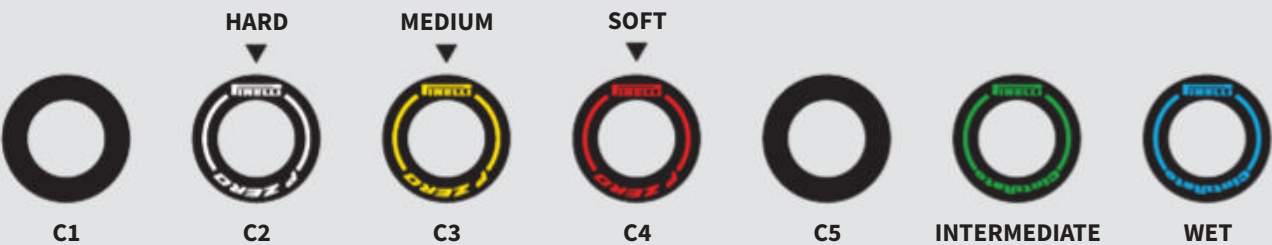
Friday 19 April  
FP 0430  
SPRINT QUALIFYING 0830

Saturday 20 April  
SPRINT 0400  
QUALIFYING 0800

Sunday 21 April  
RACE 0800

CATCH THE RACE LIVE  
SKY SPORTS F1  
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TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers			Constructors		
1	Verstappen	77	1	Red Bull	141
2	Perez	64	2	Ferrari	120
3	Leclerc	59	3	McLaren	69
4	Sainz	55	4	Mercedes	34
5	Norris	37	5	Aston Martin	33



SHANGHAI STATS

Previous winners

2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Fernando Alonso	Ferrari
2012	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2011	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2010	Jenson Button	McLaren

2019 POLE POSITION  
Valtteri Bottas  
1m31.547s

POLE LAP RECORD  
Sebastian Vettel  
1m31.095s (2018)

RACE LAP RECORD  
Michael Schumacher  
1m32.238s (2004)



...while in 2013 his mentor  
Ma Qing Hua drove in  
FP1 with Caterham

Podiums

Lewis Hamilton	9
Sebastian Vettel	6
Kimi Raikkonen	6
Fernando Alonso	5
Nico Rosberg	5
Jenson Button	4
Valtteri Bottas	2
Mark Webber	2
Felipe Massa	2
Daniel Ricciardo	1





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# What's going wrong for Leclerc

*The Monegasque is famed for his strong qualifying game, yet it's here, specifically in the dark art of 'prep laps', that he has a weakness he's determined to address*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**F**our races into the 2024 Formula 1 campaign, with the stunning, true test of a racing car that Suzuka poses reached earlier than ever before, the trends of the new season are established.

F1 has even progressed far enough into its 2024 offering that mini-trends within the main plots can be detected. And here we find two that are intriguingly intertwined.

The first is just how close things are behind Red Bull, where small driver mistakes in qualifying or on car set-up can make a massive difference to grid positions and race results. The second is how F1's current qualifying speed king – Ferrari's Charles Leclerc – has surprisingly struggled of late against the clock.

After qualifying three and four places behind team-mate Carlos Sainz in Melbourne and at Suzuka respectively, Leclerc declared, “two races now in a row, I've been struggling to put the tyres in the right window” when it comes to qualifying. What this meant in F1's compressed field is that a tiny 0.104-second gap at Suzuka resulted in a hefty difference between Sainz and Leclerc on the grid.

Dark art, pseudo-science. What Leclerc is getting at is the complex, but critical, focus each team places on extracting peak grip from the tyres in qualifying at each F1 event. This is what the drivers must do on out-laps – ‘prep laps’ in their collective lexicon – to get the rubber in the required shape to work with

**“Two races now in a row, I've been struggling to put the tyres in the right window”**

the aerodynamic packages. It's when this doesn't happen correctly that those nouns above get spouted.

The main focus on prep laps for drivers means working to get the front and rear axles in a tyre temperature balance to deliver the car handling sweet spot they all want. Hot enough for the rubber to be switched on but not overly so and risk the tyres cooking through thermal degradation. By reaching this point, it's easier to keep the tyres in the best shape on what Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola calls the “grip curve of a compound” that “can be flattened as much as possible, but it's still a curve”.

Historically, Leclerc has been a master of finding the peak of the curve to get best tyre performance in qualifying. His hefty, controlled-aggression driving style does leave him open to suddenly traversing the curve and those occasional wild

moments and crashes. That's if he can't modulate the big rear-end car movement he interjects with his steering inputs on the brakes in time.

It's worth remembering how Ferrari has changed its car for 2024 – with a particular focus on the floor breakthrough it made late in 2023, too – that appears to have led to a major improvement on in-race tyre preservation. It's therefore logical to expect its drivers to need different qualifying preparation tactics to stimulate the tyres to the ideal temperature windows we've outlined, which historically hasn't been a problem for Ferrari.

But Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur in Japan offered a different theory about his charge's recent qualifying struggles. “Where we missed a little bit the weekend [at Suzuka] with Charles was the first lap of Q1,” he explained. “He didn't do a mega lap, and we had to put the second set [of soft C3s] on because we were a little bit at risk. And then you go to Q3, you have only one set.”

This followed Leclerc's scrappy qualifying sessions in Melbourne and Bahrain – where he actually blew a pole shot against Max Verstappen, highlighting his one-lap potential again.

And so, replicating Sainz's more serene runs in the last two qualifying sessions will be a clear focus for Leclerc this weekend in China. He'll even have two attempts at re-establishing his proven qualifying might given the sprint weekend format.

Specifically, when it came to their Melbourne and Suzuka prep lap efforts for what would be their best qualifying times at each venue, the Ferrari drivers diverged in tactics. In Australia, where Sainz actually made an error on his quickest lap but nevertheless improved as he ended up adrift of Verstappen, both started slowly and built up to speed. But Sainz took the swoops of Turns 9/10 faster compared to the downshifting Leclerc here, then the Spaniard rather trickled out of Turns 11 and 13 before stamping on the gas, which will have given his rears an extra heat boost.

In Japan, Sainz used the same tactics out of the hairpin and Spoon Curve, while Leclerc also seemed to be later accelerating out of the final chicane to start his sole Q3 flier. The GPS traces of the subsequent laps show Leclerc losing time to Sainz at the start and end, which suggests the latter reached the axle-balancing temperature window more solidly on his prep lap and so had more tyre life left come the flier's climax.

Tiny margins again: a combined gap of 0.35s from Melbourne and Suzuka meant the difference between Leclerc starting alongside Sainz and not much further back in each case we've assessed. Given he's adamant it was on tyre preparation where these weekends went awry, that alone is noteworthy. It has, after all, exposed a rare and possibly temporary weakness in an otherwise excellent qualifying game from F1's one-lap king of recent years. ❄



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# The signs were there on Sainz

*In his first column for Autosport, the 2012 team boss of the yet-to-be-employed-for-2025 Ferrari star recalls his high-pressure season in Formula 3*

TREVOR CARLIN

**H**aving read Autosport almost all my life, I'm chuffed to have been given a regular column in a magazine/website that I respect. I am sure that I will return to what I know best before too long – running race teams – but for the moment, while

I recharge my metaphorical racing batteries, I plan to tell a few stories about my 40-odd years in the sport.

I'm going to kick off with Carlos Sainz, who has had a rollercoaster start to 2024. In February he learned that his Ferrari drive would be taken by Lewis Hamilton in 2025, and in March he underwent appendix surgery, causing him to miss the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix. But, rather than moan about those two setbacks, his response was to win his comeback race in Melbourne, then to finish best of the rest behind the Red Bull 1-2 steamroller at Suzuka two weeks later.

So why do so many people seem to underrate him? It beats me. When in 2012 he joined us at Carlin as a Formula 3 driver, he was just 17, and he carried on his teenage shoulders the heavy weight of expectation that all Red Bull-backed drivers experience. On top of that, the fact that his father was and is a motorsport legend – a double World Rally champion – inevitably piled extra pressure on him, especially in their native Spain, where sports fans can be passionate and unforgiving in equal measure. Worse, he had to cope with all of that despite not having the level of experience that previous Red Bull-backed drivers had been able to draw on.

Yet he showed remarkable mettle. Take Monza 2012, for example. The rain was torrential. We had three races that weekend, and I will never forget the first of them. All the cars went to the grid on slicks – and, as luck would have it, it began to rain on the parade lap, which meant that everyone had to dive into the pits straight away. That year was the first season in which Dallara had fitted larger wheel-retaining nuts, meaning that the teams all had to use pneumatic wheelguns for the first time. Gary Bonnor, our team manager, had made our guys practise a few pitstops – which no other team did – and it paid off. We split the crew into two groups, since we were running five cars, and Carlos was the first Carlin car in. We did his wheel change in seven or eight seconds, which was brilliant for an unexpected last-minute-dot-com pitstop. Then Carlos finished the job – no one could compete with him in those conditions, and he won the race easily.

Since the 2023 Azerbaijan Grand Prix, which was won by Checo Perez 12 months ago, Carlos is the only driver not called Max Verstappen to have won a grand prix, and he has done it not once but twice. Yet, despite his abundant talent and fantastic recent form, he has no race drive lined up for 2025. He certainly



Sainz claimed his first two F3 wins at Monza

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

deserves one – but one thing I'm certain of is that he will handle whatever comes his way extremely well. When he was with us at Carlin, Helmut Marko was always giving him and his father a lot of stick. That is Helmut's approach. He likes to apply motivation that way, and I'm not about to criticise him for it, but obviously it adds pressure not only to the driver concerned but also to the people around him. Yet, together, we handled it. Carlos Sr is great in such circumstances, because of his huge amount of experience. However, I was particularly impressed with the way Carlos Jr coped, despite being so young. Like father, like son.

One of Carlos's engineers that year was Jose Manuel Lopez Garcia. Racing is a small world – and, coincidentally, Jose ended up working with Lando Norris, also a former Carlin driver, when Carlos was his team-mate at McLaren. Jose is a brilliant performance engineer – and I think that Lando, who I also rate highly, had some of his best results when Jose was working with him. All three of them – Carlos, Lando and Jose – benefited massively as a result of the time they spent at Carlin in the all-important grassroots of motorsport. In fact, that period boosted Carlos's confidence in an important way, so much so that I don't think he would have thrived at Ferrari in the way he has without having had that important confidence boost.

If Carlos is given the right car, he can be Formula 1 world champion. I firmly believe that. He works as hard as any driver I have ever known – and I've known a hell of a lot. That is a legacy from Carlos Sr, who was one of rallying's great grafters. This season Carlos Jr is very much following in his father's footsteps, and he is proving that he has what it takes to be up there with the very best. If he carries on in his current form, he will be able to leave the talking to his very wise dad, who will surely be able to negotiate and secure for him a top F1 drive for 2025. ✎



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celebration of these wild  
machines at Goodwood

**P36 MEMBERS' MEETING REPORT**



PETER SUMMERS/GOODWOOD

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**Prepare for a dampener**  
Antonio Felix da Costa was overjoyed  
to win at Misano – then was disqualified

**P32 FORMULA E REPORT**



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**Sunset over the Nordschleife**  
An atmospheric backdrop  
for Nurburgring 24 Hours  
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# WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE F1 DRIVER MARKET?

*It seems early to be talking about who goes where for next season, but the F1 paddock is currently full of intrigue about potential shock driver moves for 2025*

**ALEX KALINAUCKAS**

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**  
IMAGES





**T**here's no chance of Formula 1 heading into driver transfer dullness for next season. In 2024, for the first time ever, the same drivers that completed the previous campaign lined up in the same seats for the season opener. For 2025, we already know that won't happen.

Lewis Hamilton's debut in Ferrari red tops the bill, but there is now set to be significant switching elsewhere too, with 11 other drivers facing an expiry of their current deals at the end of 2024. Add in the shock instability at Red Bull and the very real possibility that Max Verstappen could leave before his contract expires in 2028, and the 2025 silly season is instead seriously interesting. Thanks to Hamilton's move, it's unfurling at a surprisingly early stage too.

"The driver market has exploded in April," Red Bull motorsport advisor Helmut Marko said at this month's Japanese Grand Prix. "And normally no one talks in April..."

Here then, with many more twists still expected, is how things stand at each squad with openings, plus how their individual needs thread through the pictures for the many drivers seeking settled F1 futures. >>



Bearman and Antonelli – two rookie promotions in play





## RED BULL

### Options aplenty, but uncertainty abounds

F1 is now two rounds on from the Saudi Arabian GP, where the tantalising possibility of Verstappen dramatically walking out on the team post-2024 reached a particular fever pitch. The intense focus on Red Bull's management war in the aftermath of the scrutiny into Christian Horner's behaviour – and how that extends into Verstappen's future – has since cooled. But this is largely down to the two subsequent rounds being flyaway events, where news naturally filters out less, with many paddock regulars (such as Verstappen's father, Jos) absent.

The background chat Autosport heard at Suzuka suggests that this is merely the calm between storms, which could yet deliver a shock Red Bull driver change. After all, the outcomes of the FIA probe into the Horner situation and the appeal against Red Bull clearing him are yet to be heard. Simply put, the potential for major upheaval at Red Bull remains as possible as it was in Jeddah.

Yet it's also clear that Red Bull is still Verstappen's best chance of winning the 2025 title given the RB20's pedigree. Horner appeared more confident across the board in Japan, but complicating any discussion of Verstappen's future is the potential for the 2026 rule changes to massively change the pecking order. If the Dutchman, his father, and manager Raymond Vermeulen see a chance to switch to a clearly better prospect for the early years of F1's next design cycle, with Red Bull's Powertrains division still being built up, expect ruthlessness to follow.

The future of Red Bull's other seat was always going to be a major 2024 talking point. Sergio Perez has been comparatively poor since joining in 2021, and Red Bull is obviously aware that could be a liability should another team finally pose a regular threat. After all, it knows that his inability to match Valtteri Bottas's 2021 points haul for Mercedes cost a lucrative constructors' title in that famous season. But, so far, Perez is doing exactly what the team demands in 2024.

This is to back up Verstappen, which he has done with three second places from the team's three wins to this point. The glaring factor in that run is how Red Bull lost in Australia after Verstappen's freak brake issue. Perez's race run was hampered considerably by damage, but that he'd qualified third and then lost three more grid positions for impeding exposed him to a problem while recovering in the pack.

So, although Horner said in Japan that Perez "has the priority" to continue at a team where he's popular, he also insisted that the Mexican "needs to just keep doing what he's doing" to earn a third Red Bull contract. Marko even quipped at the Japanese GP that Perez's recent improvements could be because "next year's contracts are at stake". And, although bluntly put, there is logic in such a point. "It is going to be a few more races yet before we start to think about next year," Horner added.

## "THE BACKGROUND CHAT AUTOSPORT HEARD AT SUZUKA SUGGESTS THIS IS MERELY THE CALM BETWEEN STORMS"

This backs up Marko's bluster that, although he finds the early start to the driver market haggling "ridiculous" this year, both sides of the Red Bull management war feel "we won't jump into this game ourselves". In the words of Marko, the team will "wait and see" on its final 2025 line-up, and "only then make the best choice later on".



While Red Bull prefers to "wait and see", there's still potential for major upheaval



Alonso's decided to stay put, while Sainz isn't short of suitors

But Red Bull is engaging in talks with all available parties, and the headline discussions are taking place with the only other race winner so far in 2024: Carlos Sainz.

The Spaniard has known since mid-January that he'll be leaving Ferrari at the end of this year despite a fruitful stint in red. And he's essentially been flawless so far, with silverware accrued either side of his appendectomy, including that Melbourne win.

Marko is openly courting Sainz and his camp – with much made of their friendly entry into the Suzuka paddock ahead of practice getting under way. It is also understood that a further meeting took place over the Japanese event and, given how well Sainz has fared against Charles Leclerc at Ferrari since 2021, few would deny that he's a clear cut above Perez.

Any Red Bull move for Sainz is complicated by his history with Verstappen. Marko has been open in outlining the tensions that existed between the two camps nearly a decade ago. And yet, if Red Bull's desire to wait – which is something the Sainz camp doesn't want to happen – means it misses out on his services, and Perez's form goes off the boil, it might be forced into looking elsewhere, as was its original plan heading into 2024 concerning its RB stable.

As well as its internal options, there had been the potential for a blockbuster choice elsewhere regarding Fernando Alonso, but that avenue has now closed.





## MERCEDES

### Set to wait for its next star

The move of moves for 2025 – trumping even Hamilton’s guaranteed Ferrari transfer – would be if Verstappen ends up leaving Red Bull for Mercedes. Following the Australian GP, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said that finally signing Verstappen after missing out on his services for 2015 is “a kind of a relationship that needs to happen at a certain stage, but we don’t know when”.

The obvious problem is that Verstappen is currently tied to Red Bull, and would only be likely to leave should something massive happen to him or his allies there – or if its engine production runs into major difficulty. So, Wolff’s words could be interpreted as a tactic to keep pressure on destabilising Red Bull and Horner, as well as distract from Mercedes’ poor start to 2024.

In fact, it’s a further interpretation of Wolff’s comments on his team’s future driver line-up made at Suzuka that holds far more weight. This is Wolff’s statement that “we haven’t taken the decision yet and it’s not something that we plan to do in the next few weeks”.

He added: “It’s much too early for us to commit to a driver, whether very young or whether very experienced – I don’t want



Antonelli could follow in Russell’s footsteps and serve Williams F1 apprenticeship

to say old – [when] the next few months will give us more clues.”

Wolff was actually responding to a question regarding the possibility of Mercedes signing Sebastian Vettel back from retirement. Such talk helps all parties – Vettel has an energy drink he wants to promote, and then there are the discussions over what follows his Porsche Hypercar test – but Autosport understands that Vettel is not a major part of Mercedes’ current 2025 thinking.

Yet such chat was enough to keep the news churn focused elsewhere, and that actually helped Mercedes with what is understood to be its preferred option: to rapidly promote Formula 2 driver, and Mercedes junior, Andrea Kimi Antonelli to race alongside George Russell in F1.

It’s clear from Wolff’s other comments regarding how “some of the really good guys are about to sign for some of the other teams” that he’s willing to allow drivers such as Sainz or Alonso to commit elsewhere, and wait to see what develops with Antonelli. Also, he and his family have a close personal bond with the Italian, and there’s a clear desire to avoid missing a potential generational talent, as Antonelli is being branded, after what happened with Verstappen a decade ago.

Antonelli has made an underwhelming start to the 2024 F2 campaign. But the latest thinking about his F1 future is that this actually helps Mercedes. It can now monitor how he rises to the pressure of expectation, and removes the possibility of complacency.

Waiting also gives Mercedes a certain amount of power in the driver market. That’s even if it ultimately decides it wants to replicate Russell’s apprenticeship and place Antonelli at Williams for his rookie F1 running. It simply remains in the game and can pick up what may be left, even if the field is slimmer than it is now.

Williams is said to be open to such a development regarding Antonelli, where naturally there would be the expectation of a deal to be made with Mercedes – say, a discount on engine supply for the necessary years.

The clearest sign of what Mercedes is prepared to do can be seen in how last year Hamilton was only offered a 1+1 deal that covered 2025, with the possibility of an Antonelli promotion part of Wolff’s decision there. >>



Less-than-stellar start to Antonelli’s F2 campaign may actually help Mercedes





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## ASTON MARTIN

### Happy to continue the status quo

Obviously, there is no expectation of Aston Martin dumping Lance Stroll given his father owns the team – even among his continued poor performances. And while Alonso switching to Red Bull would have also been right up there in the excitement stakes, if Verstappen headed to Mercedes alongside Hamilton's Ferrari move, his announcement last Thursday of signing a multi-year extension (at least to the end of 2026) shuts such speculation down.

Sources have suggested that talks between Alonso's manager – Flavio Briatore – and Red Bull did indeed take place. But he would need the market to open in his favour for such a wave to start forming.

Last week, Alonso made it clear that “all the other conversations were just light and never came to any other conclusions, maybe more time was needed [for other teams, such as Red Bull and Mercedes]”, and how Aston making him feel “the most wanted” was what really drove his decision.

At Suzuka, where sources suggested that an Aston renewal had become his most likely option, any chance of Alonso heading towards Mercedes seemed near-dead anyway given what had occurred in Melbourne. There, the manufacturer was left distinctly unimpressed with his suggestion that an engine issue was a factor in his late-race tactics that ended with Russell crashing out. But in Japan, Alonso seemed just as cool on Mercedes anyway.

“Mercedes is behind us, so it doesn't feel that attractive,” he joked to Sky Sports F1 when discussing how it felt ending what he declared was yet another of his best ever F1 drives 44 seconds behind race winner Verstappen.

Sainz had also been a real possible candidate for Aston, since what makes him appealing to Red Bull was the same for this team too.

## ALPINE

### Current predicament doesn't help

At Alpine, both Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly are out of contract at the end of 2024, just as the team is in a dire situation with the A524 being slow and overweight. Now, there are also suggestions that its Renault parent company may consider offers to sell the squad – something the Alpine team hotly refutes.

Alpine's predicament is not one that would likely entice drivers from elsewhere, but it's also hard to see where its current line-up might move to. Ocon's career is still managed by Mercedes – indeed, he still calls himself part of the junior programme – but there appears to be little chance of him heading back to that fold unless he is willing to keep Antonelli's seat warm (with the caveat that strong results against Russell could impact the careers of both established drivers).

But Ocon is in a strong position at Alpine. He has raced there since 2020, showing well against Alonso during their time as team-mates,







taking the team's most recent victory, and leading Gasly in the only place Alpine can really shine so far in 2024, which is qualifying. At the same time, his jubilant team radio celebrations over his Australia and Japan Q1 escapes are understood to have not gone down universally well within the Enstone squad.

Gasly has made a decent start to his time at Alpine. As a grand prix winner he's a candidate for any open seat, but for now surely lacks the momentum required to force a way into any of the available high-profile positions, especially with so many safe bets also available.

## WILLIAMS

### Set to do deals with bigger teams?

The main reason why we didn't include Alex Albon in our assessment of Red Bull's 2025 driver requirements is Williams's insistence that it has the former Red Bull racer locked down, contract-wise, for next year. “Alex has signed with Williams until the end of 2025, that's signed,” team principal James Vowles was at pains to point out at the team's season launch.

But Red Bull has reportedly offered Albon an option for his services from 2026 onwards, because its Thai majority owners are naturally keen to get him back in the fold. This is boosted by Albon's fine overall performances for Williams since 2022 – Melbourne crashes aside. But, given Vowles's position, a Red Bull swoop for Albon for 2025 would have to come with a contract buyout, which strengthens Williams's hand.

It would also have leverage for any desire on the part of Mercedes for Antonelli to start his F1 career away from its works squad. And, given what happened in Australia and Vowles's obvious frustration with the Suzuka practice crash, it's hard to see Logan Sargeant being retained for 2025. In turn, this would mean that any driver squeezed out in the coming driver market shake-up could well view Williams as a viable option to prolong their career. »

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## RB

### Familiar themes at play

Daniel Ricciardo seems to be blowing what had appeared to be a golden chance of replacing Perez at Red Bull – a surprise development given how 2023 ended for each. Again, how the Red Bull management contest ends up is key to Ricciardo's future, since Horner's respect for his former driver is well known.

RB's US sponsors are also said to be massively tied to Ricciardo's major brand value and mass fan appeal. It's this more than anything that undermines recent reports in the New Zealand press that Ricciardo could be swapped out in favour of Liam Lawson for May's Miami GP and onwards. That said, there were further rumours of something brewing in this regard, albeit in relation to a potential swap later in the summer, in the Italian press last week.

But Marko's respect for Lawson is clear and, if a slot in Red Bull's F1 seats does open, then he is considered a shoo-in to race for RB full-time given how well he performed in Ricciardo's place last year.

In the other VCARB 01, Yuki Tsunoda is absolutely delivering, with his three Q3 appearances and points finishes in the past two races. Again, he needs things to fall his way, but it's not outside the realm of possibility that Red Bull's main team could come calling if it needs a fallback option for 2025 – say, if Sainz decides to commit elsewhere and Perez fails to keep up his current streak.

## HAAS

### Getting Bearman ready for full-time F1

In recent years, Haas has veered away from its bold 2021 call to run a double rookie line-up. In Nikita Mazepin's case, that was born out of necessity, while Mick Schumacher ultimately ended up proving too costly to continue. So Haas turned to the familiar, first with Kevin Magnussen and then Nico Hulkenberg.

The German veteran has led the line since 2023 with his starring performances in qualifying, but both drivers have scored this term. Yet Haas's attention was already set to turn to a driver now widely expected to earn an F1 promotion for 2025: Ollie Bearman.

Even before his successful F1 debut in place of Sainz for Ferrari in Jeddah, the 18-year-old had six pre-planned FP1 outings with Haas for this year – at the Imola, Barcelona, Silverstone, Hungaroring, Mexico and Abu Dhabi events. He's also its reserve racer, alongside his Ferrari commitments. For Haas, which was impressed with Bearman's technical feedback in his first FP1 F1 appearances last year, this programme is understood to be an in-depth way of analysing his ultimate potential. But, as with the Antonelli/Williams theory, it could provide handy business logic for Gene Haas at a time when the US machine tooling mogul is assessing his every F1 investment given Bearman's ties to his team's engine supplier, Ferrari.



Bearman's FP1 technical feedback has impressed Haas



Bearman's promotion to Haas would spell the end for either Magnussen or Hulkenberg at F1's youngest squad, but so far new team boss Ayao Komatsu has backed his incumbents. This is the only sensible strategy, with talks for all parties ongoing, and Bearman could yet lose momentum in an F2 campaign already hampered by his Jeddah absence.

Magnussen played the team game well in Haas's points runs in Jeddah and Melbourne, which will boost his case for staying. But for Hulkenberg, it's not just Haas where he has opportunities for 2025...

## SAUBER

### Audi's influence is already being wielded


So far, we've been running through the teams in 2023 constructors' finishing order, with Ferrari and McLaren obviously left out since they are locked in for 2025 – with Leclerc and Hamilton, and Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri respectively. But Sauber, with its impending Audi rebrand, is a special case.

We've covered how the driver market's early explosion, to Marko's chagrin, stems from Hamilton's shock Ferrari news. But at Suzuka Marko was specifically referencing now, having "heard that Audi is making pressure", before adding how it's "a little bit strange for a newcomer to make pressure on the driver market".

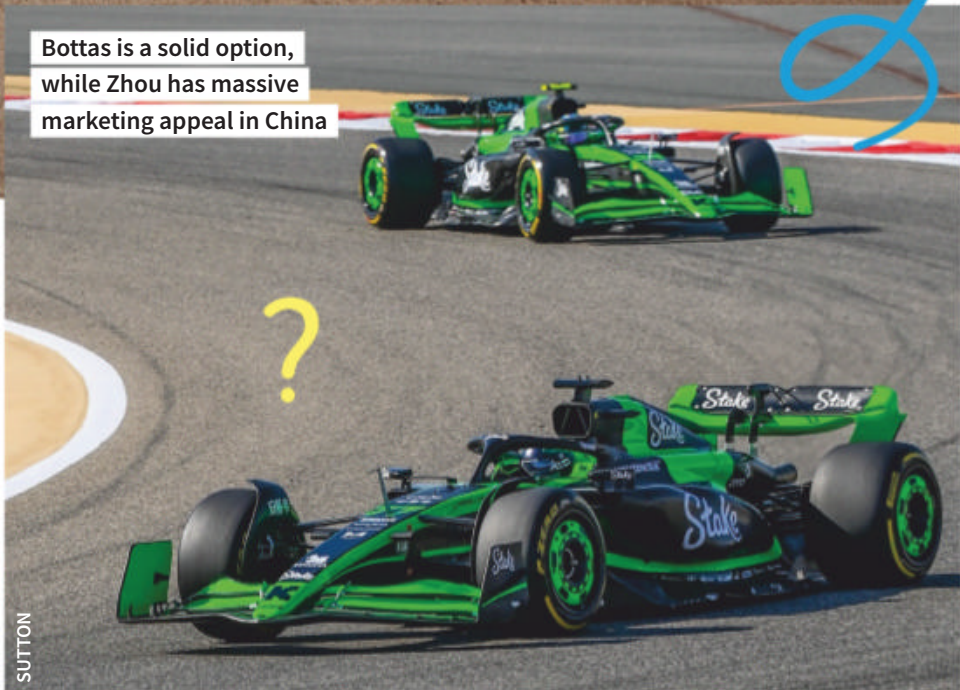
But Audi's position surely makes sense. Of course it would want its first F1 driver line-up embedded before its 2026 debut, which it can do for its final Sauber year now that it has accelerated its takeover plans for the Swiss-based team. The benefit of a full integration of newcomers is obvious, and outsider drivers might be able to bring engine and chassis knowledge from which its project could benefit.

Signing Sainz has long been on Audi's radar, and it's this that could force his hand to commit early, even with seats at historically proven F1 squads still available. This plays with Sainz's desired timeframe for deciding his future before the summer, which sits alongside what his





Will Ricciardo's brand value and fan appeal offset his lacklustre stint so far at RB?



Bottas is a solid option, while Zhou has massive marketing appeal in China

father has no doubt passed on about Audi's methods and backing from within its successful Dakar Rally operation.

Last year, Hulkenberg openly admitted to coveting an Audi drive, which would mean a reunion with Sauber after his one-year stint there in 2013. The team is also run by former McLaren team boss Andreas Seidl, who helmed the Porsche LMP1 project during Hulkenberg's successful one-off Le Mans 24 Hours in 2015 with the Audi/VW stablemate marque. And Audi itself was targeting a German driver when its F1 project was officially launched in 2022.

An Audi move for either Sainz or Hulkenberg – or proven winners such as Ocon or Gasly, adding in Albon's potential here too – would mean departures for Zhou Guanyu and Valtteri Bottas.

For Zhou, his case to stay is strengthened amid Audi's desire to boost its car sales in China. It surely won't have gone unnoticed that a Zhou-branded grandstand for his upcoming home race sold out in minutes – despite him never having raced at the Shanghai venue. Bottas has proven to be solid for Sauber, but equally has not blown Zhou away in their two-year stint as team-mates.

And this is the key takeaway of such a volatile driver market for 2025, with at least two rookie promotions in possible play. One or two long-term F1 stars could well be set to miss out as the championship heads towards its latest new era. ❄

## AUTOSPORT'S 2025 DRIVER MARKET DREAM

Cards on the table: this is purely what we'd *like* to see from the remainder of the 2025 driver market. Since Lewis Hamilton has already spiced up proceedings with his Ferrari move, we've decided to amp it up even further. Come with us, and gaze upon our crystal ball...

Ferrari and McLaren are already locked in, so their respective Hamilton/Charles Leclerc and Lando Norris/Oscar Piastri line-ups will remain. The biggest piece on the chess board is naturally Max Verstappen, so let's say that the Red Bull wrangling behind closed doors has pushed him towards the exit for a move to Mercedes. He'll partner George Russell there, and take the hit for 2025 before hoping that the new power unit regs in 2026 trigger a Silver Arrows fightback.

This leaves Red Bull with two unsigned seats. The team keeps Sergio Perez for continuity and, with Carlos Sainz a free agent, Red Bull opts to bring the Melbourne race winner into the fold for 2025 on a long-term deal. Fernando Alonso has extended his Aston Martin deal and, supposing Lance Stroll's lack of consistency wears out its welcome (and his father Lawrence realises his son might not be the answer to the team's future), the team casts its net out for a replacement. So it liberates Pierre Gasly from Alpine for a revised line-up as it pins its long-term future on the Frenchman.

Passed up for a Red Bull promotion, Yuki Tsunoda stays with RB for a fifth season and is partnered with Liam Lawson as Helmut Marko's promise of a race seat comes good. This leaves Daniel Ricciardo out of a drive. Nico Hulkenberg is picked up by Sauber, 12 years on from his first spell at the Swiss team, since Audi fancies a German driver to lead the line for its 2026 entry. He's joined by Barbadian Zane Maloney, who replaces Zhou Guanyu at the team after impressing in his second year of F2. Ollie Bearman joins Haas to assume the Hulkenberg-vacated seat, while Kevin Magnussen leaves F1 once more; Valtteri Bottas departs Sauber for the US squad.

Alex Albon stays at Williams for a fourth season because he's already under contract for 2025, while Mercedes offers the Grove squad a hatful of discounts on its powertrain bill to take Italian prodigy Andrea Kimi Antonelli. That leaves Alpine, which retains Esteban Ocon and promotes reserve driver Jack Doohan into the second seat, with few others willing to dice with the French team's managerial revolving door. The son of motorcycling legend Mick ensures Australia retains two representatives on the grid, while Ricciardo goes on to form part of Trackhouse's Project 91 efforts in NASCAR Cup. Zhou and Magnussen both get decent gigs in the World Endurance Championship, and Logan Sargeant returns to his roots Stateside to link up with Prema's nascent IndyCar project.

Outlandish? Certainly. But stranger things have happened.

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**



In Autosport world, Doohan's at Alpine



# THE GREATEST CARS OF THE BTCC

*The 67th British Touring Car Championship kicks off later this month. To get in the mood, we've picked out the series' best cars in a top 10 list, the first version of which appeared on autosport.com in 2020*

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES



J.BLOXHAM

## VAUXHALL ASTRA COUPE

BTCC WINS 62

10

The cut-price BTC Touring era tends not to attract the attention and kudos of the

exotic Super Tourers that preceded it. The cars were slower and many of the star names had gone, but it's hard to argue with the Astra Coupe's record during the period.

The Triple Eight Vauxhall was the class of the field for four seasons, taking 62 wins from 96 races – and that was despite not running at full throttle to help spice things up.

Jason Plato (2001), James Thompson (2002 and 2004) and Yvan Muller (2003) took the drivers' titles in the car and put on some

fine battles, but four other drivers also scored wins in the Astra Coupe. It even launched the tin-top career of future World Touring Car star Andy Priaulx, thanks to a cameo at Oulton Park in 2001.

The Astra was also involved in two of the great BTCC showdowns, in 2001 at Brands Hatch when Plato took the crown after Muller's car caught fire following an off, and the 2004 Donington Park finale in which Thompson beat Muller thanks to setting fastest lap.

It wasn't the most spectacular car, but the Astra Coupe got the BTCC through a tough time and helped the championship move onto a better footing in the second half of the decade.





## ROVER SD1

**BTCC WINS 39** (12 for 3.5 V8, 27 for Vitesse)

9

The big Rover ended the Group 1 Ford Capri's reign at the front of the BTCC (or British Saloon Car Championship as it was previously known) and

was only made obsolete in Group A by the arrival of the Ford RS500 in 1987.

The Rover became an increasingly potent threat during 1980, with Jeff Allam taking its first win at the British Grand Prix support race. Pete Lovett took his Tom Walkinshaw Racing Rover to the Class A crown the following year, and Allam narrowly defeated Capri rival Vince Woodman to the class laurels in 1982.

The 3.5-litre V8 won every round in 1983,



and rising star Steve Soper was crowned champion until being disqualified for his TWR machine running adjustable rockers.

The Rover then won nine of the 11 rounds the following year, when Andy Rouse took his third BTCC title with a Vitesse.

Its final victory – and class title – came with BTCC rookie Tim Harvey in 1987.

“I couldn’t have had a better first car in touring cars because it was a big, friendly, lovely beast,” says Harvey. “It was the perfect combination of grip, power and noise, and on-the-limit handling. It was a good car in the wet. It was well-balanced, very progressive on the limit, not stiff and snappy, but it still reacted very well to driver input.”





## VAUXHALL CAVALIER

BTCC WINS 19

8

Exotic gamechanger versus homegrown stalwart. This spot could have gone to the Alfa Romeo 155, which brought front splitters and rear wings to the BTCC in 1994, but the Italian car was surpassed by the opposition almost as quickly

as it had moved the goalposts.

The Vauxhall Cavalier arrived before the Ford RS500s had left the BTCC, and was still a championship contender after the Alfa had faded into the background.

The early Dave Cook Engineering versions took on the BMW M3 – another strong candidate for this list – in the two-litre category in 1990, John Cleland finishing second in Class B to Frank Sytner. Cleland was then in the overall title fight for the next two years, with Vauxhall pipping BMW to manufacturer honours in 1992 despite the controversial Silverstone finale, in which Cleland was denied the drivers' crown after a clash with Steve Soper's BMW.

The Cavalier was overshadowed by foreign invaders in 1993 (BMW) and 1994 (Alfa), the year RML took over the project. But Cleland knew that the bewinged 1995 version (above) was right from the moment he tested it, and six victories helped him finish comfortably clear of Renault driver Alain Menu in the drivers' championship. There were eight other factory-supported teams in the BTCC that season.

The Cavalier was replaced by the Vectra in 1996, but the newer car never got near the record of its predecessor and is not remembered as fondly.

## MINI

BTCC WINS 10

7

Alec Issigonis's iconic design probably launched more tin-top careers than any other. Its accessibility and giant-killing reputation also helped make it a fan favourite, a following it maintains to this day.

The Mini never actually won a BTCC race against the bigger-engined opposition (its outright wins were limited to days when the various classes were split into separate races), but it invariably punched above its weight. And the championship's scoring system, which gave as many points for a class win as outright victories, helped the Mini to a string of drivers' titles.

John Whitmore took the 1000cc and overall crowns in 1961 with an Austin Mini Seven and he was followed by John Love (1962), Alec Poole (1969) and Richard Longman (1978-79, with the 1275 GT) as Mini-driving BTCC champions. The spectacular John Rhodes (below) came close to adding his name to the list in 1966, only to be narrowly defeated at the Brands finale.

"We had trouble making the tyres last," said Longman in 2018. "We had to make the car very unstable at the start, with lots of oversteer, so it would be quick at the end. It was quite a frantic struggle but eventually we won."

Aside from its success, the Mini also helped set the template for many subsequent tin-tops, having proved the worth of front-wheel drive.



## HONDA CIVIC (FK2 NGTC)

BTCC WINS 66

6

The whole point of the 'Next Generation Touring Car' regulations was to keep costs under control and the field close. More than a

decade since they were introduced, you'd have to say that those rules have been hugely successful, but some cars have still shone brighter than others. Despite so many spec parts, there have been dominant periods from the BMW 125i M Sport, Subaru Levorg GT, BMW 330i M Sport and Ford Focus ST – but it's Honda's FK2 Civic that has to be considered as *the* NGTC machine.

Introduced in 2012, the Civic – in hatchback, Touring (nee estate) and Type R forms – won 66 races, as well as four

drivers' titles with works ace Gordon Shedden and Eurotech/Pirtek star Andrew Jordan. Between them Shedden, Jordan and Matt Neal scored 56 of those 66 victories, but six other drivers also crossed the line first in the FK2-model contender. It was almost certainly the best privateer BTCC machine of the 2010s.

An emphasis on aerodynamics and grip made the car almost unbeatable at some circuits, such as Thruxton, and the BTCC's boost adjustments sometimes had to be at their most draconian to keep the Team Dynamics-built cars in check.

The subsequent FK8 model was successful too, but not to the same degree as its predecessor, which was still good enough to score podiums during 2020 in the hands of Jake Hill.







## FORD LOTUS CORTINA

BTCC WINS 7

4

Jim Clark hurling a Ford Lotus Cortina around a British circuit, often on three wheels, is

one of the championship's legendary images, six decades after the car appeared.

The 1600cc machine, which Clark helped to develop with Colin Chapman and Harry Mundy, was one of the first super saloons and immediately dominated its class. More than that, it was capable of taking on the V8 hordes for overall honours, though the great Clark (below) scored all seven of the Cortina's outright series victories.

Its relatively light weight, enthusiastic engine and excellent chassis made it a potent weapon, and the Cortina has become a pacesetter and popular mainstay in historic tin-top competition.

"The thing that hits you first is how buzzy and nimble it is to drive," said current BMW BTCC star Jake Hill after driving a Cortina in a track test for Autosport last year. "The chassis is fantastic and so are the brakes. If you can keep it buzzing then it's good enough to keep up with the big stuff."

For Clark, who won Class B every time out in 1964 to take the overall drivers' title, it just made a nice change from F1. "I had a lot of fun on these occasions," he wrote in his autobiography *Jim Clark - At The Wheel*. "It was a great relief to find that I could still enjoy light-hearted dicing after the tremendous strain of grand prix battles."



## CHEVROLET CAMARO

BTCC WINS 53

5

The mighty seven-litre Ford Galaxie deserves credit for starting the V8 invasion of the BTCC and ending Jaguar's domination. The legendary Mustang then took over, but

it's Ford's big rival – Chevrolet – that created the most successful heavy metal of the era. The first Camaro win came in 1969, and the successes didn't stop until the big bangers were outlawed at the end of 1975.

The idiosyncratic points system – which rewarded class winners as richly as overall success – meant titles were few and far between, but Frank Gardner took his Camaro

to the outright crown in 1973.

"I loved the Camaros and they did well for us," says leading Camaro exponent Stuart Graham, who was the man to beat across 1974-75. "It was a good-handling car. People thought it was just about having more power than anything else, but it's no good if you can't get it around the corners. We could corner just as quickly as the smaller cars."

Brakes tended to wilt under the strain of stopping the 450+bhp monster, but by then the rest of the field was usually too far behind. "The Camaro was underestimated in period," added Graham. "By 1975 there was nothing that could touch it."



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





GRIFFITHS

# NISSAN PRIMERA

BTCC WINS 25

3

What was the greatest car of the Super Touring era? The Ford Mondeo could make a pretty strong claim, Prodrive's reputed £10-12million budget netting a 1-2-3 result in the final BTCC season run to those regulations. The cars were absolute engineering gems too.

The Renault Laguna was arguably the Super Tourer with the longest period of sustained success, first winning in 1994 and taking its 36th and last victory at Silverstone in 1999. But the car that gets the nod is the one that dominated that final season before the manufacturer exodus.

Ford, Honda, Renault, Vauxhall and Volvo were all still involved in 1999 when the RML-run Nissan Primeras of BTCC debutant Laurent Aiello and David Leslie swept to 13 wins from 26 races, and finished first and second in the drivers' championship.

The first Primera win had come courtesy of Janspeed and Kieth O'dor in 1993, but it was the RML version of 1998 that made Nissan a major BTCC player. Anthony Reid won seven times – more than anyone else – and could have been champion had it not been for some early-season engine issues.

"The Primera was the best Super Tourer I've ever driven," Reid told Autosport in 2012. "I developed the car from the outset in 1996 when we were racing for Nissan Motorsport Europe in the German championship. In hindsight one of my regrets was not staying in 1999, but I knew there was only one more year on the contract and Ford offered me two years on very good terms."

Reid drove the Mondeo for two years, but prefers the Nissan and still races one: "I never had quite the confidence in the Mondeo that I had in the Primera."

The Primera was so good that privateers could compete with the best of the factory opposition. Matt Neal famously won at Donington Park in 1999, scooping £250,000, and added to his tally at Brands Hatch the following year.

# FORD CAPRI

BTCC WINS 61

2

Once the big-capacity American V8s had been banned at the end of 1975, the three-litre Ford Capri (in Mk2 and then Mk3 forms) was the pacesetter

until the 3.5-litre Rover SD1 got into its stride.

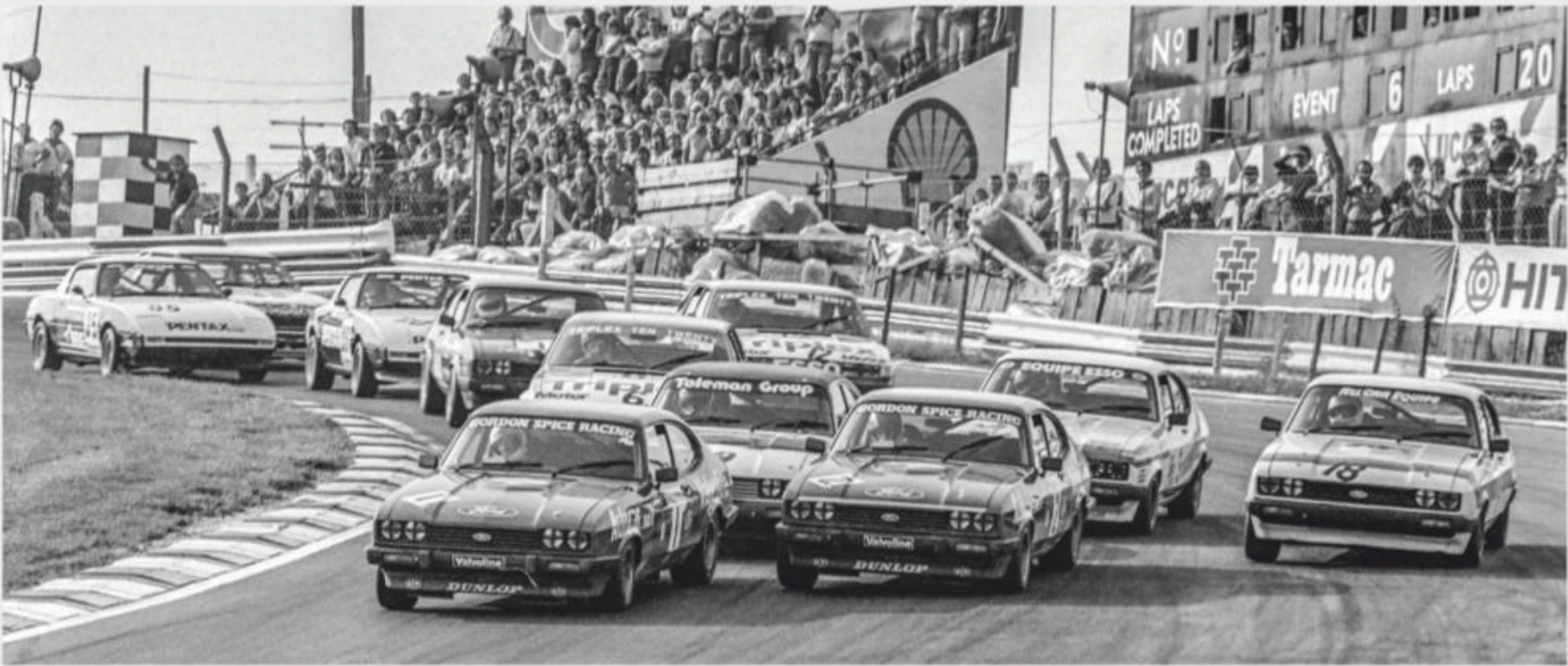
Gordon Spice was the Capri king and took six class titles, but the opposition from

drivers such as Andy Rouse, Tom Walkinshaw and Vince Woodman meant he always missed out on the overall crown to dominators in the smaller-engined classes. Some of the finest tussles in the history of the championship involved the Capri hordes.

"Each year they got a bit better because Ford was quite good at homologating the bits we needed," Spice, who died in 2021, told

Autosport in 2018. "It was a very, very easy car to drive – that was the secret of it. It was almost idiot-proof. You could drive it any style you wanted. You could drive it completely sideways. That was slow; the quick way was not to hang the tail out."

The V6 Capri was accessible, sounded good and looked cool. Few BTCC cars have been more popular with the wider public.







## FORD RS500

BTCC WINS 40

1

The Super Touring era remains the high-water mark of the BTCC, but no single car stands out. That's the point – the 1990s were highly competitive and the advantage swung back and forth between the leading players.

But there's no doubt about the BTCC car of Group A. The Ford RS500 took its first win in the series at Donington Park in September 1987,

and no other car would win a BTCC round until the arrival of the single-class two-litre era in April 1991. All other Class A cars became obsolete and almost every runner made the switch. That could have resulted in things becoming a bit boring – and the battling was not as dramatic as it would be in the 1990s – but the cars themselves made up for that.

The RS500, which had twin injectors and a bigger intercooler than the RS Cosworth that preceded it, produced more than 500bhp.

It also had relatively skinny tyres and a centre of gravity higher than was ideal. It always had more power than grip, making the sideways, flame-spitting Ford turbocar one of the most spectacular tin-tops of all time.

“As a racing car, probably the Rover SD1 was better, but in terms of fun the RS500 was unparalleled,” says Tim Harvey, who won two races in the RS500's heyday before going on to win the title with BMW in 1992. “560bhp and 175mph was pretty exciting.”

There were some legendary liveries too – Andy Rouse's Kaliber machine, Harvey's Labatt's car, Steve Soper's Texaco-liveried, Eggenberger-run example – and the fight between Rouse and Soper at Brands Hatch in 1988 remains one of the BTCC's best-remembered moments.

The RS500 was defeated elsewhere by the awesome R32 Nissan Skyline, but that car never made it to the BTCC.

There have been better British Touring Cars than Ford's RS500, but none greater.



### Autosport podcast BTCC Top 10s

This list is part of our current six-part series of BTCC Top 10s podcasts. Visit [autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast) to hear our debates about the greatest cars, drivers, season finales and liveries.



# RACE CENTRE

Wehrlein's victory in the second race had looked unlikely – until the final lap



FORMULA E

## Wehrlein strikes back after Porsche penalty

*Antonio Felix da Costa was controversially excluded from victory in the opening Misano race before his team-mate became the first two-time winner of the season*

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES

**T**he picturesque rolling hills and tranquil seaside resort atmosphere in which the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli is located could not have contrasted more with the chaotic on-track action that Formula E provided on its first visit to the Adriatic coast. A post-race disqualification for the opening race winner five hours after the chequered flag; another driver losing a seemingly certain win on the final lap in the sequel; and a frenetic, even manic, style of racing that divided opinion – the Misano E-Prix double-header had it all.

After seven races, and approaching the halfway point of the campaign, Pascal Wehrlein became the first driver this season to claim two victories and, with it, just holds onto the lead of the championship standings on countback. The Porsche driver's

outright success in the second of the weekend's two races had looked incredibly unlikely as the contest entered the 26th and final lap, with Wehrlein 1.4 seconds behind the Nissan of race leader Oliver Rowland. The pair had pulled clear of the chasing pack over the last five laps after Rowland took the lead from Wehrlein into the Turn 5 left-hander during a race which, by comparison to the day before, was much more structured.

Even so, the long straights and wide, fast corners offered by the Misano circuit meant a level of pack racing previously only seen on the same scale at Portland last year, with drivers drastically lifting-and-coasting in order to drop back into the pack and save energy in the slipstream.

Wehrlein had started third and remained towards the front of the field for much of the race, leading at various points before





He had doubts, but trusting his crew's info paid off for Wehrlein

conceding the top position to Rowland in the closing stages. It was a tactical decision, Wehrlein having been told by his team that he was up on energy compared to Rowland, but he was left to question the strategic call when the Briton began to slowly pull a gap as the race neared its conclusion. "I took over the lead and initially it was the plan to keep the lead, but he was putting a lot of pressure on me and I was sure if I was trying to defend, I would just lose energy," explained Wehrlein. "So in the end I didn't defend, I let him through and my team kept telling me I'm 2-3% up on energy, so I was very surprised about that and actually until the last lap I was not even sure if that was correct.

"Then his energy I guess was dying in the last lap and that's when we took over. Really good job and the right call to trust the information in the end."



The weekend went downhill for race-one polesitter Evans

## "His energy I guess was dying in the last lap and that's when we took over. Really good job"

As it exited Turn 5 for the final time, Rowland's Nissan slowed to a crawl, out of energy. It brought to an end another impressive performance. Rowland had started from 10th on the grid, and sat back in the pack over the opening laps as the race took shape. By the halfway point he had hit the front for the first time but, unbeknown to everyone including driver and team, his race strategy had quite literally been doomed from the start when a "mis-procedure" with the onboard lap counter meant that his energy targets were effectively a lap short.

Rowland stayed towards the front over the second half of the race before jumping back into the lead, and admitted that he wasn't aware of his dire energy situation until "it was telling me it should be the last corner and I was going into Turn 4".

"How it works is there should be a lap zero so it doesn't count [at the start], but for some reason when I crossed the startline it dropped to that, I think it was a mis-procedure," he continued. "I was quick in the corners and I was just following my target and I did the strategy as we planned. This sort of thing has never happened to us, nowadays it's such a simple [procedure]. It should have been checked and maybe we should have doubted it."

Rowland had been just nine corners away from a second win of the weekend, after taking his and Nissan's first victory since Berlin in 2020 the previous day. Not that anyone knew at the time, however, because it took a decision by the stewards well into the evening for the original result to change at the expense of Antonio Felix da Costa.

The second Porsche driver had taken his first Formula E win in more than a year after entering the weekend under something of a cloud, with speculation circulating that Abt racer Nico Muller had been tested by Porsche with a view to replacing the Portuguese for next season, if not sooner. A run of three non-scores to start his campaign had certainly put da Costa under pressure, but a sixth and a fourth in the Sao Paulo and Tokyo races had allowed him to build some momentum.

Starting 13th for the opening Misano race was not ideal, but the 28-lap contest, two laps longer than the sequel, proved to be chaotic from the start and driver positions fluctuated wildly. The Envision Jaguar of Sebastien Buemi hitting the front just halfway around the opening lap after starting on row five was the perfect example of what was in store over the remainder of the race, and 19 lead changes took place among eight drivers.

"Awareness is probably the key word of the day," stated da Costa, as the tight bunching of the field meant contact was an ever-constant occurrence. Da Costa initially made his move on >>





lap 21 but, as would be the case on Sunday, Rowland proved to be in contention for the win and claimed the lead into Turn 1 soon after. Da Costa bided his time and waited for the right moment before striking into Turn 5 just three laps from the end, then unleashing the full potential of his Porsche to win by less than half a second.

Victory had “come at the right moment” for da Costa, who celebrated in style with a backflip into the circuit’s swimming pool before the news of his disqualification came to light. The reason for the exclusion was a technical breach related to the throttle damper setting on his Porsche, the spring eligible for the Gen2 machine but not the current Gen3 specification. It was revealed that the component had been used by Porsche and da Costa since the start of the Gen3 era last year, but only found in post-race checks at Misano.

Team principal Florian Modlinger was left to question the stewards’ decision, with Porsche lodging an intent to appeal. This gave the German manufacturer 96 hours in which to decide whether to take further action, and had not been resolved as Autosport went to print.

“We have a bit of a feeling that not all teams are treated equally,” grumbled Modlinger. “That’s our personal impression and with the FIA, a world championship, this must be guaranteed for the future that all teams are treated equally. I think it’s a big loss for us clearly, but also for Formula E in general because these consequences are really harsh.”

Wehrlein, meanwhile, whose car it was later revealed was also fitted with the illegal spring, was left to record his first non-score of the season after a collision with the rear of Jean-Eric Vergne’s DS Penske into Turn 7 on lap six broke his front wing. He was not the only leading title protagonist to fall foul of Vergne or have to pit for a new front wing. Just one lap earlier Nick Cassidy had



## “It’s a big loss for us but also for Formula E because these consequences are really harsh”

found himself in a similar situation. The Jaguar driver had run side by side with Vergne through the tight Turns 8/9 chicane, with the resulting contact sending Cassidy to the pits, while Vergne was handed a five-second penalty for the collision.

Cassidy had entered the event just two points behind Wehrlein in the standings but on a difficult run of form, which was extended further when he retired from the opening race with a technical problem having never been in contention for points after his pitstop. But the Kiwi, who had a high-speed off in FP2 at the final corner after taking avoiding action for cars slowing ahead and lightly damaged his car, did manage to make it to the podium in the sequel – his first since winning in Diriyah in January.

After starting eighth, Cassidy was the first driver to take both Attack Mode activations, which he believed put him in a strong position, but a one-lap safety car – unbelievably the only caution period in either race – to retrieve Robin Frijns’s damaged car negated any advantage. Cassidy was stuck behind the Maserati MSG of Maximilian Guenther for the second portion of the race, and only moved ahead into Turn 8 with three laps remaining. Fifth soon became fourth, however, when Rowland slowed on the final lap before Cassidy grabbed the final podium spot by just 0.050s on the run to the line at the expense of Muller, who had put in another strong showing in his Abt Mahindra.

Cassidy’s team-mate Mitch Evans endured a generally torrid event. He could salvage only fifth in an opening race he had started from pole, and in which he was left unimpressed by Guenther’s defending. Any chance of further points in the second race were dashed when the Jaguar driver came to a stop out on track after suffering a brake-by-wire issue, which required a complete car reset before he retired.

Arguably somewhat under the radar over the course of the weekend, but with performances that signify a reigning champion intent on retaining his crown, Jake Dennis achieved two unlikely runner-up finishes.

The Briton had finished fourth on the road in the opener, which he started down on row nine, but Vergne’s five-second penalty and da Costa’s disqualification vaulted him up the order. The Andretti Porsche driver took the position on merit in the second race, in which he defended stoically against Muller over the closing laps despite suffering with balance problems. It’s a result that leaves him tied on points with Wehrlein in the standings as the championship heads to Monaco later this month. ❧







ERT'S STRATEGY  
MASTERCLASS...

Dan Ticktum claimed his first points of the season in the opening Misano race after a “simple” strategy decision meant he sat in the slipstream at the back of the pack before moving forward in the closing stages. “I had 10 minutes of feeling what it would be like to be in a Porsche,” said Ticktum, as sixth on the road turned into fourth after penalties. “It’s nice to actually lift later than other people, that’s a pretty rare occasion for us.”

...BUT SETTE CAMARA  
HAS TO WAIT

Sergio Sette Camara also finished in the points with seventh in the opener, but was handed a 50-second penalty in lieu of a drive-through for overpower usage, and this dropped him to 15th in the classification. The Brazilian rebounded the next day, though, putting in another strong showing to claim sixth and his third points finish of the season as ERT team-mate Ticktum finished 14th.

DARUVALA OFF THE MARK

Maserati MSG’s Jehan Daruvala scored his maiden points in Formula E when he finishing 10th in the second outing, before being promoted one position post-race. This was at the expense of team-mate Maximilian Guenther, who was slapped with a five-second penalty for contact with Jean-Eric Vergne’s DS Penske.

DISASTER FOR ENVISION

Sebastien Buemi and Robin Frijns endured a torrid double-header in Italy, both Envision drivers failing to score points in either race. The pair finished 12th and 17th respectively in the opener, but a nadir was reached in the sequel when Frijns was eliminated after a collision, then Buemi retired with steering damage.



RESULTS ROUND 5/10, MISANO (ITA), 13-14 APRIL (28 LAPS – 58.872 MILES)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	40m05.176s
2	Jake Dennis (GBR)	Andretti/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+3.003s
3	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	Maserati/Maserati Tipo Folgore	+3.788s
4	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	ERT/ERT X24	+4.554s
5	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+5.673s
6	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Penske/DSE-TENSE FE23	+7.559s
7	Norman Nato (FRA)	Andretti/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+7.588s
8	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	DS Penske/DSE-TENSE FE23	+7.639s
9	Sacha Fenestraz (FRA)	Nissan/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+7.768s
10	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Abt/Mahindra M10 Electro	+7.967s
11	Nico Muller (CHE)	Abt/Mahindra M10 Electro	+8.311s
12	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Envision Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+13.447s
13	Jake Hughes (GBR)	McLaren/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+13.705s
14	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M10 Electro	+18.051s
15	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	ERT/ERT X24	+57.526s
16	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+1m04.968s
17	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	+1m18.360s
DQ	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	-0.410s
R	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Maserati/Maserati Tipo Folgore	27 laps-accident
R	Sam Bird (GBR)	McLaren/Nissan e-4ORCE 04	25 laps-withdrawn
R	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-Type 6	23 laps-technical
R	Edoardo Mortara (CHE)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M10 Electro	0 laps-technical

Winner's average speed 88.117mph. Fastest lap Rowland 1m19.730s, 94.886mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Evans 1m17.068s; 2 Vergne 1m17.228s; 3 Wehrlein 1m17.143s; 4 Muller 1m17.284s; 5 Rowland 1m17.704s; 6 Bird 1m17.731s; 7 Guenther 1m18.583s; 8 Cassidy 1m18.280s; 9 Frijns 1m18.360s; 10 Buemi 1m18.496s; 11 Fenestraz 1m18.423s; 12 Nato 1m18.558s; 13 da Costa 1m18.536s; 14 Mortara 1m18.612s; 15 di Grassi 1m18.540s; 16 Ticktum 1m18.639s; 17 Vandoorne 1m18.557s; 18 Dennis 1m18.668s; 19 Daruvala 1m18.909s; 20 de Vries 1m18.794s; 21 Sette Camara 1m19.143s; 22 Hughes 1m17.864s.

RACE 2 (26 LAPS – 54.669 MILES) 1 Wehrlein 37m05.241s; 2 Dennis +1.933s; 3 Cassidy +2.221s; 4 Muller +2.271s; 5 Fenestraz +5.230s; 6 Sette Camara +5.727s; 7 Vergne +6.794s; 8 Hughes +8.236s; 9 Daruvala +8.714s; 10 Bird +11.912s; 11 di Grassi +12.415s; 12 Guenther +13.387s; 13 Mortara +14.171s; 14 Ticktum +17.875s; 15 de Vries +21.935s; 16 Nato -1 lap; 17 da Costa -1 lap; NC Evans +1m29.546s/withdrawn; R Rowland 25 laps-energy; R Vandoorne 22 laps-battery; R Buemi 14 laps-steering; R Frijns 6 laps-accident. Winner's average speed 88.443mph. Fastest lap da Costa 1m18.682s, 96.150mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Hughes 1m16.538s; 2 Vergne 1m16.783s; 3 Wehrlein 1m16.870s; 4 Muller 1m17.931s; 5 Bird 1m16.954s; 6 Vandoorne 1m17.094s; 7 Frijns 1m17.738s; 8 Cassidy no time; 9 Dennis 1m18.073s; 10 Rowland 1m18.064s; 11 Sette Camara 1m18.091s; 12 Guenther 1m18.072s; 13 Fenestraz 1m18.126s; 14 di Grassi 1m18.083s; 15 Evans 1m18.144s; 16 Nato 1m18.107s; 17 Buemi 1m18.255s; 18 Ticktum 1m18.216s; 19 Mortara 1m18.461s; 20 de Vries 1m18.410s; 21 Daruvala 1m18.720s; 22 da Costa 1m18.454s.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Wehrlein 89; 2 Dennis 89; 3 Rowland 80; 4 Cassidy 76; 5 Guenther 63; 6 Vergne 53; 7 Evans 52; 8 Bird 38; 9 Hughes 25; 10 Nato 23.

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Jaguar Racing 128; 2 Andretti 112; 3 Porsche 109; 4 Nissan 100; 5 DS Penske 75; 6 Maserati 65; 7 McLaren 63; 8 Envision Racing 41; 9 ERT 23; 10 Abt 19; 11 Mahindra Racing 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Porsche 190; 2 Jaguar 157; 3 Nissan 154; 4 Stellantis 128; 5 ERT 23; 6 Mahindra 19.



Five hours after celebrating a second-place finish, Rowland had an upgrade

NEXT  
REPORT  
Monaco E-Prix  
2 May issue



# Wild Mustangs at the Goodwood Corral

*A special race celebrated the 60th birthday of the famous Ford, and it also racked up a Gordon Spice Trophy victory thanks to Sutton and Davies*

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY J BLOXHAM



**G**oodwood Motor Circuit fell under the spell of rampant American V8 engines last weekend, with Ford Mustangs everywhere at the 81st Members' Meeting – 10th of the modern GRRC era – celebrating the iconic pony car's 60th birthday. Sunday's tremendous Ken Miles Cup feature, for first-generation notchbacks motivated by 289 cubic inch (4.7-litre) power units, gave 2013 British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan another consummate one-make Goodwood victory for his CV, and a first for car owner Michael Whitaker Jr, who started strongly.

But as the warm sun set over the Chichester Corral on Saturday evening, the scene had been set in the Gordon Spice Trophy Group 1 saloon slugfest, the entry for which was equally peppered by superstars teamed with talented amateur throttle jockeys, hungry to learn from motorsport royalty. Outnumbered two to five, the Blue Oval's reps came out fighting. Saddling monstrous 520bhp Boss 302 Mustangs, Craig Davies/Ash Sutton and Timo Bernhard/Fred Shepherd duffed up arch-rival General Motors' well-matched Chevrolet Camaro Z28 posse. Six seconds covered the top five at the chequered flag!

As the British Automobile Racing Club – which masterminded the first 71 MMs from 1949 to 1966 – dropped the Union Flag, Porsche ace Bernhard dumped the clutch on the polesitting Bill Shepherd Mustang entry and led the stampede to Madgwick. James Thorpe (Camaro) reached the double-apex right-hander second from P6 – but attracted a 10s penalty for bolting as the starter raised the flag – displacing Ric Wood's Ford Capri, on the front row of the 3-2-3 grid by courtesy of Jake Hill's ability.

By the end of the lap, GT racer James Cottingham had forged David Clark's Bastos Camaro – on pole for the 1981 Spa 24 Hours with Reine Wisell up – through to third, with Davies up from eighth to fourth in his Alan Mann Racing-built Frank Gardner tribute Mustang, in which

Davies and Sutton won a hard-fought Gordon Spice Trophy in Boss 302 Mustang

NASCAR fanatic (hence excited V8 debutant) Sutton's qualifying stint was thwarted by an oil down. Up front, Bernhard couldn't shake off Cottingham, tracked by Davies, who had overcome Thorpe on lap four.

A safety car deployed midway around lap 13, three laps into the pit window, helped early stoppers. The top three had all made their driver changes after 10 laps and the AMR team's tactics worked superbly,



Jordan was too quick for his Mustang rivals in the Ken Miles Cup



Buncombe's Cobra leads Graham Hill Trophy but will lose out to Griffiths's white TVR





Sutton relayed 11s quicker than Shepherd and 13s better than the Cottingham/Dario Franchitti handover.

Immediately into his stride, Sutton revelled in the car and while Gordon Shedden, making rapid progress to third in Jack Young's Camaro – liveried per James Hunt's 1973 Avon Tour of Britain winner – eclipsed his best lap seconds later, quadruple BTCC champion Ash was invincible. "Craig did a mega job from the start and to win with the sun going down was glorious – what more could you want?" said the popular 30-year-old.

Bernhard was also happy on his event debut. "For the first 10 laps I was driving with my eyes open – not blinking," said the German, having cheered young Shepherd home to a close second. Shedden, Franchitti and Andy Priaulx (in for Thorpe) put on a great scrap, Olly Bryant enjoying a grandstand view from his Camaro, started by Marino Franchitti. Thorpe's penalty did not change the order.

Hill howled Wood's twitchy Capri V6 back from midfield to seventh, ahead of the sister car of Rob Huff/Richard Meins. The top 10 was completed by Michael Whitaker Jr/Tom Ingram (Rover SD1) and the Crowne Racing Camaro of Jack Tetley (rebuilt since his roll at Woodcote last year) and Tom Kristensen. Kerry Michael/Andrew Watson (Escort RS2000) were top four-potters, pursued by Nick Swift's Mini 1275 GT.

Darren Turner qualified the Alan Mann Racing Mustang – the legendary late team chief's final car – on pole for the Ken Miles Cup

## **“Craig did a mega job; to win with the sun going down was glorious – what more could you want?”**

race, remembering the Sutton Coldfield-born engineer/driver who emigrated to California and was so influential in Carroll Shelby's racing programmes in the 1960s. Turner's 1m28.647s shot was shadowed by Jordan in Whitaker Jr's car, 0.094s adrift having had a time struck out for scraping the chicane.

Mark Mathieson/Rob Huff, Bernhard/Shepherd, Shedden/Thorpe and Rob Fenn/Hill were next up, with Priaulx seventh – within a second of pole – in Alex Taylor's yellow Rasser Racing car. Alas, Sutton did not get a run in Beau Parry's, stranded by a brake issue. Parry qualified out of session, while Ash was in by virtue of his Boss Mustang runs. Ford CEO Jim Farley (with Steve Soper), and David Brabham, whose father Jack finished second here in Alan Brown's Mustang on Easter Monday 1966, were also in the 30-strong field.

Davies blasted out of partner Turner's pole slot, with Shepherd, Whitaker, Priaulx, Alex Buncombe (in Alex Brundle's car), Thorpe, Brabham and Fenn shuffling the less experienced Mathieson down >>





Escaping early on was key to Majzub's success in SF Edge contest

the order. With Armand Adriaans parked on the exit of Madgwick on lap two and Shepherd now charging ahead, some expected the race to be red-flagged, but a three-lap caution ensued.

Priaulx zapped Davies for second between Madgwick and Fordwater and Buncombe was next past Craig, who soon had Whitaker and Brabham in tow, albeit with ace card Turner up his sleeve. Leader Shepherd and Priaulx pitted two laps apart, by which time Jordan's pace after taking over early from Whitaker had bought him a 5.7s cushion to Bernhard, harassed by Turner. Darren hurtled after AJ, and was brought closer by a safety car when Sutton arrived at the chicane sideways, rear end locked up, and headbutted the lightweight blockwork wall.

Marshals sprang into action and, when the track went green, Turner redoubled his efforts to catch Jordan, who nevertheless looked in command. Two laps from home, the red-and-gold machine slowed

– foam in its fuel tank disintegrating, stifling flow – leaving Turner powerless to keep an enthusiastic Brundle behind. And Hill, after a blinding climb from the anonymity of midfield, nicked third on the final lap, rewarding Fenn.

Shedden retired Thorpe's car while seemingly set for a podium finish, leaving Taylor to stave off Huff, Dario Franchitti (in for Andrew Haddon) and Ingram (finishing Jack Ruddell's car) in the fight for fifth behind the hobbled Turner. Bernhard and Bobby Verdon-Roe, for whom Marino Franchitti started, rounded out the top 10.

The roar of Ford V8s also coloured the Graham Hill Trophy GT thriller, in which Miles Griffiths – who first drove Kyle Tilley's TVR Griffith in qualifying – powered to victory having punished a half-spin at Fordwater by leader Buncombe (AC Cobra), contending with a baulky gearbox. Alex knocked the ignition master switch off while catching the tail slide and almost caught Miles. "It was like a wrestling match for 25 minutes," said Griffiths. "I was winging it, trying not to get too out of shape" in 1965 factory chassis 13, a wicked beast almost as wide it is long.

In a last-gasp change, Mike Whitaker in the ex-Tommy Entwistle Griffith, a period Goodwood racer, and Murray Shepherd (Cobra) seized third and fourth from impromptu autocrosser Adrian Willmott, who found his 5.3-litre Chevrolet-powered Bizzarrini less wieldy on the greensward. Behind Thorpe in another of Giotto Bizzarrini's svelte berlinettas, Olly Bryant (Porsche 904 GTS) and Nigel Greensall (Lotus Elan 26R) enjoyed a fine duel, humbling V8s aplenty en route to seventh and eighth.

As ever, the contrast between races was extraordinary as snapshots of a broader range of motorsport history than September's Revival, restricted by its first era pre-1966 timeline, played out. In the Surtees Trophy sports-prototype race, Chevron B6 and B8 of 1967-68 took on the McLaren M1s and early Lola T70s raced here in period. One of genial marque founder Derek Bennett's 'Bolton Wanderers' triumphed, through patience, clever driving and avoidance of silly mistakes.

Ben Mitchell qualified dad Westie's ex-Nikolaus Killenberg left-hand-drive B8 second to John Spiers's McLaren-Chevrolet M1B, pipping



Nuthall (left) and Ure put on a fine show in the Parnell Cup





Mitchell's B8 chased the big bangers and took a surprise win



O'Brien was the Titan of F3 as he left Hibberd and de la Roche behind

## “I'd got past two GT40s, but was squeezed by the third. I was pretty annoyed”

Andrew Kirkaldy in Sandy Watson's B8. Kirkaldy jumped the start, collecting a 10s penalty, but Mitchell was outdragged by the V8s he'd outpaced on Saturday and spent the first two thirds of the race catching Kirkaldy. Ben slipstreamed ahead momentarily a couple of times, and was loving the scrap when Spiers, 12s up the road, clipped vastly experienced Spaniard Joaquin Folch's original Ford GT40 on the second apex of Woodcote and spun.

“I'd got past two GT40s, but was squeezed by the third,” said John, who watched the B8s sail past, then set by far the best lap of the weekend trying to haul them in. “I was pretty annoyed,” he said, but the lithe two-litre Chevron-BMWs were gone. When Mitchell's racer brother Sam waved a finger excitedly at P1 on his pitboard, Ben knew that passing Kirkaldy was irrelevant, so backed off with his water temperature gauge rising as Andrew took the chequer. Spiers, a second down, and Ian Simmonds (T70) were promoted to second and third, ahead of Kirkaldy. “This was a race I least expected to win,” beamed Mitchell.

On a markedly colder Sunday morning, a hairy single-seater duel between longtime Cooper-Bristol protagonists Will Nuthall and John Ure warmed spectators up for 10 hours of non-stop entertainment. Ure growled Peter Mann's ex-Tony Crook car ahead until Nuthall – in Guy Plante's ex-Tom Cole version, subsequently raced by Australian muffler magnate Len Lukey – extended a winning advantage.

Watching the clock tick down, Nuthall slowed by five seconds expecting to see the chequer, but crossed the timing beam a fraction too early. Stuck in traffic he was caught again by Ure, who tried audaciously to go round him at Woodcote and rode the kerb. After a wriggle and brush of tyres Will prevailed, to land a hat-trick of Parnell gongs >>

## AN INTRIGUING SIDE HUSTLE



PETE SUMMERS/GOODWOOD

Goodwood hosted only one motorcycle race meeting – for solo machines, on 14 April 1951 – so a sidecar shootout 73 years later was a novelty for most onlookers. Engaging eight teams, the contest provided a fascinating window on the sport 75 years after Eric Oliver and Denis Jenkinson won the inaugural FIM world championship on a Manx Norton outfit in 1949.

Modern sidecars are very different animals, bespoke monocoque chassis evolved by specialist engineers headed by Louis Christen Racing in Switzerland and German rival Adolf RS. Powered by 600cc engines and enveloped in aerodynamic carbon-fibre shells, the 220kg machines can be geared for 170mph, but the quickest pulled 143.7mph on Goodwood's Lavant Straight. Led by reigning double world champions Todd Ellis and French partner Emmanuelle Clement, the field embraced Ben Birchall and Tim Reeves, winners of four and eight world titles respectively, and former British champions Gavin Kershaw/Ryan Charlwood. The energy and competitive quality drove them to push harder to perfect a single flying lap after a slick-warming exploratory circuit.

**“The energy and competitive quality drove them to push harder”**

Following Saturday's reconnaissance session, Ellis/Clement set the bar high, but Kershaw/Charlwood, brothers Sam and Tom Christie (LCR-Yamahs) and Birchall/Kevin Rousseau (front-engined LCR-Honda TT chassis) honed their game. On a colder track, Birchall/Rousseau (1m22.356s), the Christies (1m22.238s) and Kershaw/Charlwood (1m21.616s) left only Ellis/Clement (below) to go. Their sizzling 1m21.174s (105.55mph) sealed gold. Put into perspective, that's 2.5s from John Spiers's event best car lap in a McLaren sports-racer.





after previously winning in the ex-Bob Gerard Cooper-Bristol and ex-Peter Whitehead Alta F2. Ian Nuthall, Will’s father, was third in a Cooper-Bristol the family IN Racing team built. Front-row starter Nigel Batchelor made a tardy start in the unique Kieft-Climax V8 GP car, but regained fourth.

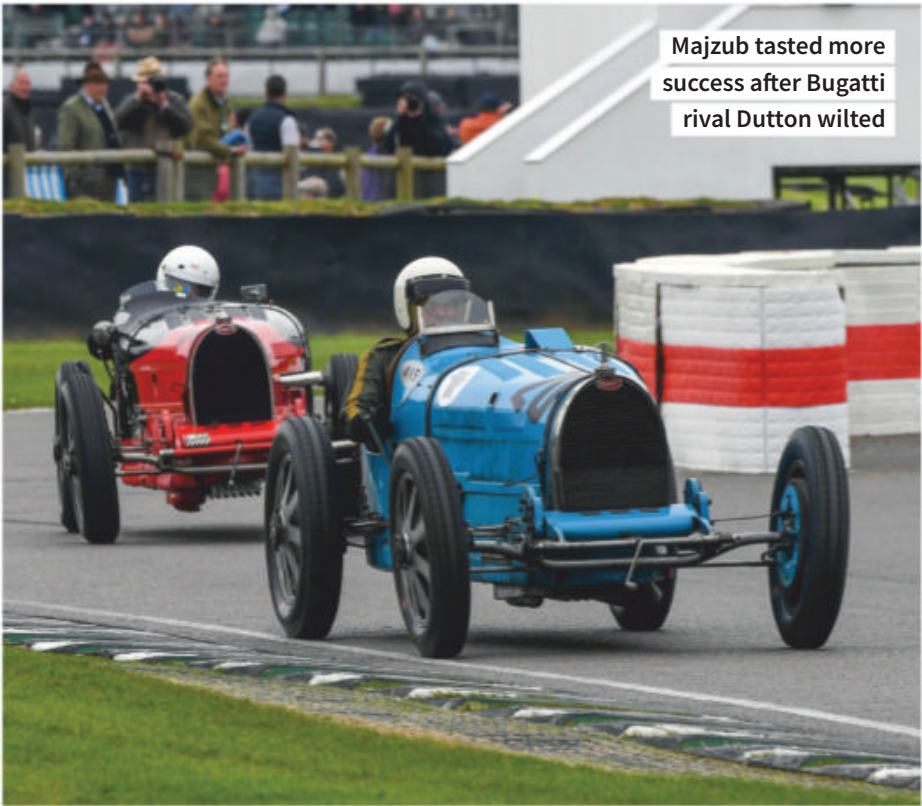
Opening the 1000cc F3 category’s 60th anniversary season, the Derek Bell Cup race was restarted after Jeremy Timms’s ex-Reine Wisell Chevron B15, running fourth, crashed heavily at Madgwick having hit oil from Simon Etherington’s ex-Manfred Mohr Brabham BT15 that the leaders managed to avoid. As before, Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18) and Peter de la Roche (Alexis Mk17) couldn’t match runaway poleman Michael O’Brien. The pro GT racer notched a debut victory for father Mike’s newly restored Titan Mk3, crashed by Dave Brodie in period but now in Charles Lucas’s works livery.

## “Walker and Pittaway, boasting more than 50 litres between them, left onlookers awestruck”

Jason Timms, Jeremy’s cousin, screamed through to finish fourth. After a core plug blew out of his ex-John Miles Gold Leaf Team Lotus 41X’s cylinder head in qualifying, Italian Enrico Spaggiari found help from rival Andrew Tart to fix it and claimed fifth from Swiss Christoph Widmer (Brabham BT18A) and American veteran Steve Nichols, 77, the fabled McLaren F1 designer in his Chevron B17.

Blockley Tyres founder Julian Majzub’s weekend could scarcely have gone better. Having resisted the resurgent Mark Walker’s 1905 Darracq 200hp in Saturday’s SF Edge Trophy Edwardian race in his Sunbeam Indianapolis – Belgian Josef Christiaens’s fourth-placed ride in the Indianapolis 500 108 years ago! – Julian lost out to the land speed record car on Sunday, but was close enough to wrest aggregate victory by 0.465s. The sight of Walker and Duncan Pittaway’s Fiat S76, boasting more than 50 litres of engine capacity between them, left onlookers awestruck.

With the afternoon’s ambient temperature dropping dramatically to a more typical April level, and his Bugatti T35B’s crank handle swinging



jauntily, Majzub added the Grover-Williams trophy to his Goodwood haul. Driving one of 18 Bugs in the field, marking the T35’s 90th anniversary, Julian shook off Duncan Pittaway’s unsupercharged version, while Tim Crighton jostled a snaky Frazer Nash Boulogne up to third. Retirements included early challenger Tim Dutton’s colorado beetle-hued T51, which he pulled up smokily, and Charlie Martin’s T35 parked on three wheels following half-shaft failure.

The contrast between John Pearson’s brawny Jaguar D-type and Richard Wilson’s agile Maserati 250S in the Peter Collins Trophy 1950s sportscar race fizzled when Pearson lost third gear. Jack Rawles thus went second, but UK-domiciled Californian Fred Wakeman powered his Jaguar C-type back past the Austin-Healey 100S on the final lap.

After the usual shenanigans in the reversed-grid Gordon Spice Sprint finale, stopped when poor Larry Warr’s Mini 1275 GT and Nick Sleep’s Rover touched then collided heavily at Lavant on the opening lap, it was third time lucky for Fred Shepherd in the Boss Mustang. 🍷

### RESULTS GOODWOOD MEMBERS’ MEETING, 13-14 APRIL

**GORDON SPICE TROPHY: GROUP 1 SALOONS 1970-82 (28 LAPS) 1 Craig Davies/Ash Sutton (Ford Mustang Boss 302);** 2 Timo Bernhard/Fred Shepherd (Mustang Boss 302) +2.637s; 3 Jack Young/Gordon Shedden (Chevrolet Camaro Z28); 4 James Cottingham/Dario Franchitti (Camaro Z28); 5 James Thorpe/Andy Priaulx (Camaro Z28); 6 Marino Franchitti/Olly Bryant (Camaro Z28). **Pole** Bernhard (Shepherd set time). **Fastest lap** Shedden 1m26.744s (98.77mph). **Starters** 26.

**SPRINT (9 LAPS) 1 Shepherd;** 2 Cottingham +6.507s; 3 Davies; 4 Jack Tetley (Camaro Z28); 5 Young; 6 Michael Whitaker Jr (Rover SD1). **P** Rupert Deeth (Mini 1275 GT). **FL** Shepherd 1m27.450s (97.97mph). **S** 20 (26 at first start).

**KEN MILES CUP: FORD MUSTANGS TO 1966 (31 LAPS) 1 Michael Whitaker Jr/Andrew Jordan;** 2 David Brabham/Alex Brundle +6.414s; 3 Rob Fenn/Jake Hill; 4 Craig Davies/Darren Turner; 5 Andy Priaulx/Alex Taylor; 6 Mark Mathieson/Rob Huff. **P** Davies (Turner set time). **FL** Huff 1m27.677s (97.72mph). **S** 30.

**GRAHAM HILL TROPHY: CLOSED COCKPIT GT CARS TO 1966 (18 LAPS) 1 Miles Griffiths (TVR Griffith);** 2 Alex Buncombe (AC Cobra) +2.091s; 3 Mike Whitaker (Griffith 400); 4 Murray Shepherd (Cobra); 5 Adrian Willmott (Bizzarrini 5300GT); 6 James Thorpe

(Bizzarrini 5300GT). **P** Buncombe. **FL** Buncombe 1m24.176s (101.78mph). **S** 30.

**SURTEES TROPHY: SPORTS-PROTOTYPES 1960-64 (19 LAPS) 1 Ben Mitchell (Chevron-BMW B8);** 2 John Spiers (McLaren-Chevrolet M1B) +1.002s; 3 Ian Simmonds (Lola-Chevrolet T70 Spyder); 4 Andrew Kirkaldy (B8); 5 Charlie Martin (T70); 6 Adam Sykes (Chinook-Chevrolet Mk2). **P** Spiers. **FL** Spiers 1m18.678s (108.89mph). **S** 26.

**PARNELL CUP: GP, F2 & VOITURETTES 1935-53 (14 LAPS) 1 Will Nuthall (Cooper-Bristol T23);** 2 John Ure (Cooper-Bristol T24/25) +0.555s; 3 Ian Nuthall (Cooper-Bristol T23); 4 Nigel Batchelor (Kieft-Climax GP); 5 Alexander van der Lof (HWM-Alta F2); 6 Charlie Martin (Connaught A-type). **P** W Nuthall. **FL** W Nuthall 1m29.965s (95.23mph). **S** 22.

**DEREK BELL CUP: 1000cc F3 1964-70 (6 LAPS) 1 Michael O’Brien (Titan-Ford Mk3);** 2 Andrew Hibberd (Brabham-Ford BT18) +8.584s; 3 Peter de la Roche (Alexis-Ford Mk17); 4 Jason Timms (Brabham-Ford BT21); 5 Enrico Spaggiari (Lotus-Ford 41X); 6 Christoph Widmer (Brabham-Ford BT18A). **P** O’Brien. **FL** O’Brien 1m21.819s (104.71mph). **S** 27.

**SF EDGE TROPHY: EDWARDIAN RACING CARS & AERO-ENGINED SPECIALS (5+5 LAPS) 1 Julian Majzub (Sunbeam Indianapolis);** 2 Mark Walker (Darracq 200hp) +0.465s; 3 Neil Gough (K-R-I-T Racer); 4 Ben Collings (Mercedes 120hp); 5 Duncan Pittaway (Fiat S76); 6 Hughie Walker (Delage GP Voiturette).

**SATURDAY 1 Majzub;** 2 M Walker +2.259s; 3 Collings; 4 Gough; 5 Pittaway; 6 H Walker. **P** Majzub. **FL** M Walker 1m56.531s (73.52mph). **S** 23.

**SUNDAY 1 M Walker;** 2 Majzub +1.794s; 3 Gough; 4 Pittaway; 5 Collings; 6 James Collins (Hudson Super Six). **P** Majzub. **FL** Walker 1m48.531s (78.94mph). **S** 22.

**GROVER-WILLIAMS TROPHY: 1920s GP CARS (14 LAPS) 1 Julian Majzub (Bugatti T35B);** 2 Duncan Pittaway (Bugatti T35) +6.800s; 3 Tim Crighton (Frazer Nash Boulogne); 4 Bo Williams (T35B); 5 William Way (T35); 6 Ben Bessade (Delage 15 S8). **P** Majzub. **FL** Majzub 1m39.998s (85.68mph). **S** 23.

**PETER COLLINS TROPHY: SPORTS-RACING CARS 1948-55 (17 LAPS) 1 Richard Wilson (Maserati 250S);** 2 Fred Wakeman (Jaguar C-type) +6.574s; 3 Jack Rawles (Austin-Healey 100S); 4 Josef Rettenmaier (Maserati 300S); 5 Oliver Mathai (Jaguar D-type); 6 Jonathan Bailey (D-type). **P** Wilson. **FL** Wilson 1m30.439s (94.73mph). **S** 29.



STAR CARS



**COOPER-BMC T72**

Sixty years after his debut race win at Goodwood in John Penfold's Lotus 7, five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell led 'his' 1000cc F3 field to the grid in Mike Cooper's T72, which Jackie Stewart tested here in 1964. Signed by Ken Tyrrell, they won the British championship and three F1 titles together.



**SHADOW-CHEVROLET DN4**

1960s Goodwood racer Jackie Oliver rose rapidly to F1 with Team Lotus and BRM, and won Le Mans with Jacky Ickx and JW Automotive's Ford GT40 before the decade was out. Now 81, it was great to see Oliver demo the Shadow DN4 in which he dominated the last first-era Can-Am Challenge Cup in 1974.



**PYGMEE-FORD MDB14**

Heating engineer Marius Dal Bo's Construction Mechaniques Pygme built Formule France, then F3 and F2 in Annecy, SE France, from 1964 to the 1970s. Son Patrick and privateers achieved little, but Dal Bo Jr finished sixth at La Chatre in 1969 with a tubeframe MDB14. Swiss Ludovic Ingwiller contested the Derek Bell Cup in it and finished 11th.



**OPEN FORD SPECIAL**

With strong Ford connections, Alan Mann Racing commissioned Len Bailey – of F3L fame – to design this Can-Am car for 1969. It appeared twice as McLaren dominated, triple F1 champion Jack Brabham, whose son David demoed it here for owner Tom Cantrell, finishing third in Texas World Speedway's finale. Frank Gardner also saddled it.



**JAGUAR XK120 MISTRAL**

A unique special built by Californian Bob Dahl in 1953, on a shortened XK120 chassis clothed in a proprietary Mistral body, with a C-type engine. Rebuilt by Pearsons Engineering, the intriguing hybrid – reminiscent of period MM entries – “pleasantly surprised” Gary Pearson on his way to eighth in the Peter Collins Trophy.



**CHEVRON B8 CH-DBE-56**

Barrie Smith's 1968 Danish GP winner was raced by Goodwood local David Purley in 1969, in his family's LEC Refrigeration colours. After three Targa Florios with Roy Seddon/John Raffo, Dave Brodie raced it in Barbados and sold it. Reimported by Chris Smith in 2010, the B8 finished 11th in the Surtees Trophy with current owner Ted Pearson.



Jakobsen takes the chequered flag after four hours of racing at Barcelona

## Cool running to ELMS victory

### EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES BARCELONA (ESP)

14 APRIL  
ROUND 1/6

Cool Racing claimed its first overall victory in the European Le Mans Series when Malthe Jakobsen fended off Alex Lynn and Ben Hanley to take honours with Ritomo Miyata and Lorenzo Fluxa at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.

The race started after a minute's silence in honour of Gerhard Freundorfer, the team manager of Le Mans Cup squad Proton Huber Competition who lost his life in a paddock accident during set-up earlier in the week. Once the race got under way, it was United Autosports' Filip Ugran who started from pole and led the early stages. The Romanian, who has moved to United after a year with Prema in the World Endurance Championship, soon found himself in the crosshairs of LMP2 debutant

Fluxa. The ex-Formula Regional racer put in an impressive opening stint to fight his way from fifth to second place.

Better still, when Ugran was caught napping at the end of an early Full Course Yellow, Fluxa was right there to take advantage. The Spanish teenager reacted more quickly than his adversary when green flag racing resumed and shot past on the main straight to take the lead. He would stay there until he handed over to Toyota protege Miyata. The Japanese soon had to deal with pressure laid down by Olli Caldwell, who had taken over the Algarve Pro Racing car from Matthias Kaiser and powered his way past into the lead in the third hour.

It was not a position that reigning LMP2 champion team APR held for very long. A shorter penultimate stop allowed rising star Jakobsen, now installed in the Cool ORECA, to leapfrog the APR ORECA of Lynn and retake the lead. Although the Cadillac WEC star quickly closed in on

the young Dane, he was unable to pass and spent the final minutes of the race defending from Hanley, in the United ORECA he shared with Ugran and Marino Sato. Jakobsen kept his 'Cool' for the Swiss squad, ahead of Lynn and Hanley. Behind fourth-placed IDEC Sport (Job van Uitert, Reshad de Gerus and Paul Lafargue) and Panis Racing in fifth (Charles Milesi, Arthur Leclerc and Manuel Maldonado), the AF Corse trio of Matthieu Vaxiviere, Alessio Rovera and Francois Perrodo kickstarted their LMP2 Pro-Am title defence with a class victory in sixth overall.

In LMG3, the dominant performance of the Iron Dames Porsche squad went unrewarded when Michelle Gattling stopped at pit exit and retired with 45 minutes to go. Gattling, Sarah Bovy and Rahel Frey had led the vast majority of the contest. Victory went to the Formula Racing Ferrari 296 GT3 of Nicklas Nielsen with Conrad and Johnny Laursen, the Danish squad ending an ELMS win drought of 3144 days since their previous success at the 2015 4 Hours of Le Castellet! They also led a 1-2 for the Prancing Horse, with Ferrari factory driver Davide Rigon combining with Riccardo Pera and Michael Wainwright to finish second in class for GR Racing. Andrea Caldarelli held off the Proton Porsche of Julien Andlauer in the final minutes to deliver third for the Iron Lynx Lamborghini squad.

LMP3 honours went the way of Polish operation Team Virage with its Ligier driven by Julien Gerbi, Gillian Henrion and Bernardo Pinheiro. Brit Matt Bell co-drove EuroInternational's Ligier to third.

DAVEY EUWEMA



First European win for Miyata (left), with Fluxa (centre) and Jakobsen



# Yamashita is a Supra star on TOM'S debut

**SUPER GT**  
**OKAYAMA (JPN)**  
**14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 1/8**

Toyota's flagship Super GT team TOM'S opened its title defence with a straightforward victory in the first round of the season at Okayama. Sho Tsuboi and his new team-mate in the #36 Toyota GR Supra, Kenta Yamashita, took the first pole under the Japanese series' controversial new aggregate qualifying format and were never threatened for victory over the course of the 82-lap race.

Around a track where the GR Supra has often dominated, Toyota made it a 1-2, with SARD pair Yuhi Sekiguchi and Yuichi Nakayama beating the Team Kunimitsu Honda Civic Type R-GT of Naoki Yamamoto and Tadasuke Makino.

Nakayama was forced to spend the entirety of his stint fending off Yamamoto, back in action after missing the final two races of 2023 due to injury. Yamamoto could never make a move stick and was forced to settle for third, also giving Honda an unexpected debut podium with the new Civic Type R-GT



that replaces the NSX-GT as the marque's GT500 challenger this year.

Nissan's top finisher was the NISMO Z of Katsumasa Chiyo and Ronnie Quintarelli in fifth, behind the Cerumo Toyota of Hiroaki Ishiura and Toshiki Oyu. Toyota newcomer Oyu got himself up to third in the opening stint ahead of the Kunimitsu Honda and was challenging the SARD car for second, but a slow pitstop undid his hard work.

Unlike last year's Okayama race, which featured three red flags amid changeable weather, this year's curtain-raiser was a relatively tame affair, with the only incident of note in GT500 occurring on the opening lap and bringing out an early safety car. That was when the Rookie Racing Toyota of Kazuya Oshima

was nudged into a spin by Bertrand Baguette's Impul Nissan exiting Revolver corner, with Oshima collected by the Real Racing Honda of Kakunoshin Ohta.

Both Oshima and Ohta were effectively eliminated on the spot, while Baguette was left with damage and was forced to make an early stop for repairs, condemning the Belgian and Kazuki Hiramine to 11th at the finish.

As expected, Bridgestone-shod cars dominated, with only the 10th-placed Nakajima Racing Honda, on Dunlops, preventing a clean sweep of the points.

**JAMIE KLEIN**



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# Elliott masters the overtime chaos

**NASCAR CUP**  
**TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)**  
**14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 9/36**

NASCAR's most popular driver Chase Elliott is once again a winner in the Cup Series, with a last-lap wreck in the second overtime of a crash-marred race at Texas Motor Speedway last Sunday bringing a dramatic end to his 42-race winless streak.



Elliott's drought dated back to his previous victory at Talladega in October 2022, and included several missed races for a leg injury and a one-race NASCAR suspension. After his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet had grabbed the lead late on from Denny Hamlin (Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota) late in the regulation distance, Elliott had to fend off first Hamlin and then Ross Chastain's Trackhouse Racing Chevy over three restarts, the last two of them in overtime.

The victory was ensured when a caution on the final lap of the second overtime froze the field and ended the race, with Elliott enjoying a sizeable advantage over the RFK Racing Ford of Brad Keselowski.

Elliott, with his 19th career win, becomes the third different driver from Hendrick to win in the first nine races of the 2024 season. The team has won five of them, with the Gibbs squad on three.

Elliott's team-mate William Byron, who triggered the final wreck after contact with Chastain, ended up third, ahead of Tyler Reddick and Daniel Suarez.

**JIM UTTER**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES BARCELONA (ESP)

**LMP2** Malthe Jakobsen/Ritomo Miyata/  
Lorenzo Fluxa  
Cool Racing (ORECA 07)

**LMP2 Pro-Am** Matthieu Vaxiviere/Alessio  
Rovera/Francois Perrodo  
AF Corse (ORECA 07)

**LMP3** Gillian Henrion/Bernardo Pinheiro/  
Julien Gerbi  
Team Virage (Ligier JSP320)

**LMGT3** Nicklas Nielsen/Conrad Laursen/  
Johnny Laursen  
Formula Racing (Ferrari 296 GT3)

**SUPER GT**  
**OKAYAMA (JPN)**  
Sho Tsuboi/Kenta Yamashita  
TOM'S (Toyota GR Supra)

**NASCAR CUP**  
**TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)**  
Chase Elliott  
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)



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## Vinales stakes his claim with Aprilia victory

**MOTOGP**  
**AUSTIN (USA)**  
**14 APRIL**  
**ROUND 3/21**

Maverick Vinales may be MotoGP's most enigmatic rider. Once the paddock's hottest prospect, in his 10 seasons in the premier class he had just nine grand prix victories to his credit – not to mention an acrimonious mid-season split with Yamaha in 2021. His career was thrown a lifeline by Aprilia, but all the winning was being done by veteran team-mate Aleix Espargaro. And, coming into 2024, it seemed that Vinales would continue to underwhelm on a bike that was clearly a strong contender, but upon which he had completely lacked confidence in pre-season testing.

Aprilia has now been able to find the balance sweet spot for Vinales, however, and from the Portuguese Grand Prix in March he started winning again. A first sprint victory was followed by a second last weekend at the Americas GP, but a first Sunday win since Qatar 2021 had looked

doubtful off the line in the 20-lap grand prix. A poor launch dropped the Spaniard from pole to 11th in the Turn 1 melee. After working his way up to ninth at the end of lap one, Vinales was seventh at the start of the fifth tour. That charge continued with an overtake on off-colour reigning world champion Francesco Bagnaia on lap nine for fourth position, which became third when Marc Marquez crashed out of the lead on the 11th tour.

Championship leader Jorge Martin succumbed to Vinales's advances on the same lap, with Pedro Acosta finally ceding the lead after a brief battle two tours later. Any thoughts that Vinales may have chewed up his medium rear tyre in his fightback through the field were put to one side when he posted a race best lap of 2m02.575s 14 laps in.

After describing his pole and sprint success on the Saturday as "magic", Vinales completed a stunning pole-sprint-grand prix triple emphatically, his lead swelling to 1.7 seconds come the chequered flag.

After becoming the first rider in the

modern MotoGP era to win with three different manufacturers (Suzuki, Yamaha and Aprilia), Vinales is now a big presence in the 2024 title battle as he leaps up to third in the standings. That was helped by a weekend of missed opportunity for Martin. Two crashes in qualifying left the Pramac Ducati star sixth on the grid when he was expected to take pole. He recovered to third in the sprint, but didn't have the pace to battle Marquez or Vinales. And in the GP, Martin was denied a 100% podium run in 2024 by a penultimate lap overtake from Enea Bastianini.

Martin still leads by 21 points, while title favourite Bagnaia fared even worse on the Circuit of The Americas. Hit by a lack of rear grip in the sprint, Bagnaia felt he was in the podium hunt in the GP for the first six laps before rear vibration issues common to the 2024-spec Ducati sapped his pace and put him on the defensive. Fifth was all he could muster, and his championship deficit grew to 30 points.

The sensational Acosta continues to defy all expectations for a MotoGP rookie and







Rookie Acosta shone again with second successive podium



Marc Marquez's brief lead was ended by front brake issue

earned a second successive podium on the Tech3 KTM. He was second in the race to Vinales, is only 26 points off the championship lead, and his credentials as a title challenger are becoming more legitimate, even if he thinks otherwise.

Third for Bastianini, now runner-up in the points, is a timely result as he doubled up his podium tally for 2024 while he fights to prove to Ducati that he deserves a contract extension for 2025.

For Marquez, the Americas GP promised much. As a seven-time event winner here in his Honda days, if there was one track where he was expected to return to the top step of the podium, it was Austin. Strong all weekend, Marquez hit the front of the grand prix on lap 11 after enduring a scrappy bunch of early laps that included contact with KTM's Jack Miller and some broken Gresini Ducati wings. There was also contact with Martin on lap five at the last corner.

But Marquez's keenness to hit the front was due to an "unexpected" front brake issue, which he hoped would be rectified by cooler air. When he grabbed the front brake lever into Turn 11 on the 11th tour, he got nothing. A second pull offered a bit more brake pressure, but the speed he was carrying overloaded the front end of his Ducati and he slid out of contention. Even so, he considered this a normal occurrence in his adaptation to a new project and is confident of a quick fix.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 3/21, AUSTIN (USA), 14 APRIL (20 LAPS – 68.512 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	41m09.503s
2	Pedro Acosta (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+1.728s
3	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+2.703s
4	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+4.690s
5	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+7.392s
6	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+9.980s
7	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+12.208s
8	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+13.343s
9	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+14.931s
10	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+16.656s
11	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+18.542s
12	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+22.899s
13	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+24.011s
14	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+27.652s
15	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+32.855s
16	Luca Marini (ITA)	Honda	+33.529s
R	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	10 laps-accident
R	Alex Rins (ESP)	Yamaha	10 laps-accident
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	8 laps-accident
R	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	7 laps-accident
R	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	6 laps-accident
R	Johann Zarco (FRA)	LCR Honda	6 laps-technical

Winner's average speed 99.876mph. Fastest lap Vinales 2m02.575s, 100.609mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Vinales 2m00.864s; 2 Acosta 2m01.192s; 3 M Marquez 2m01.266s; 4 Bagnaia 2m01.352s; 5 Bastianini 2m01.439s; 6 Martin 2m01.511s; 7 Espargaro 2m01.562s; 8 Di Giannantonio 2m01.667s; 9 Morbidelli 2m01.737s; 10 Bezzecchi 2m02.279s; 11 Miller 2m02.297s; 12 A Marquez no time.

QUALIFYING 1 Miller 2m01.541s; A Marquez 2m01.553s; 13 R Fernandez 2m01.726s; 14 Oliveira 2m01.844s; 15 Rins 2m01.893s; 16 Quartararo 2m02.089s; 17 Binder 2m02.140s; 18 A Fernandez 2m02.223s; 19 Zarco 2m02.380s; 20 Mir 2m02.829s; 21 Nakagami 2m03.114s; 22 Marini 2m03.249s.

SPRINT RACE (10 LAPS – 34.256 MILES)

1 Vinales 20m27.825s; 2 M Marquez +2.294s; 3 Martin +4.399s; 4 Acosta +6.480s; 5 Espargaro +6.657s; 6 Bastianini +8.621s; 7 Miller +9.237s; 8 Bagnaia +9.349s; 9 R Fernandez +9.637s; 10 Morbidelli +9.894s; 11 Oliveira +10.364s; 12 Binder +10.724s; 13 Bezzecchi +11.549s; 14 A Marquez +15.468s; 15 Quartararo +15.574s; 16 Rins +18.146s; 17 Marini +22.989s; R Zarco 6 laps-accident; R Mir 3 laps-accident; R Di Giannantonio 0 laps-accident; R A Fernandez 0 laps-accident; R Nakagami 0 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 100.439mph. Fastest lap Vinales 2m02.275s, 100.856mph.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Martin 80; 2 Bastianini 59; 3 Vinales 56; 4 Acosta 54; 5 Bagnaia 50; 6 Binder 49; 7 Espargaro 39; 8 M Marquez 36; 9 Di Giannantonio 25; 10 Miller 22.

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 96; 2 KTM 76; 3 Aprilia 72; 4 Yamaha 19; 5 Honda 8.



Martin (89) pipped to last podium spot by Bastianini

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

Sergio Garcia (below)  
MT Helmets-MSI  
(Boscoscuro)

MOTO3

David Alonso  
Aspar Team (CFMoto)



NEXT  
REPORT  
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Jota's first **Le Mans** racer back on track

# **AUTOSPORT** NATIONAL

CLUB RACING • HISTORICS • FEATURES

## A Capri's thunderous story

The 40 years of major modifications



The **1990s F1** cars  
set for battle



Pryce cashes in on  
home **BRC** event



Ferrari enters  
**British GT** for Silverstone





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Ph. Mario Puledda





Tempesta has raced  
Ferrari in GT World  
Challenge Europe



# Ferrari back in British GT with 296's series debut

## BRITISH GT

The Ferrari 296 GT3 will make its British GT debut at the three-hour Silverstone 500 next weekend as one of the Prancing Horse's GT3 machines is set to compete in the series for the first time in four years.

An AF Corse-run example of the previous 488 model contested much of the 2020 season, scoring points at Oulton Park and Donington Park. AF Corse will now oversee Tempesta's use of the 296 for the latter squad's first British GT race since contending the whole 2023 campaign with a McLaren. Last year's Silver-Am runner-up Chris Froggatt and GT racing veteran Alexander West will be behind the wheel.

"I'm very happy to be back in the British GT paddock," said Froggatt, who is also competing in the GT World Challenge Europe for Tempesta. "I am looking forward to sharing the 296 GT3 with Alex. I feel like we have a good foundation from which we

can challenge the other Silver-Am crews."

West added: "It is great being back in British GT for my favourite race of the season at Silverstone. Having previously raced the fantastic 488 GT3, I am really looking forward to trying the latest Ferrari."

Reigning champion Darren Leung will also return to the series for a one-off entry at Silverstone in Century Motorsport's BMW M4 GT3, alongside World Endurance Championship star Dries Vanthoor. Leung originally intended to contest Silverstone with former co-driver Dan Harper, but last month he received a last-minute call-up for the season in Century's other BMW.

"Fortunately, BMW has a very deep pool of factory drivers and Dries was available for Silverstone," said Leung. "Speed-wise, he's top tier, but I've also always admired his approach. We're not racing for points, a result or even a podium, I want to defend that win and that's the mentality we'll have."

Vanthoor is a three-time GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup champion and Silverstone will be his British GT debut amid WEC duties with BMW's LMDh. "It will be special," said Vanthoor. "Looking at last year's performance from Darren and Dan, there's not much we can do to do better than that, so for sure we will try and do the same."

Optimum Motorsport has also entered a second GT3 McLaren at Silverstone, with Le Mans Cup duo Fran Rueda and Andrew Gilbert as its Silver-Am crew.

ED HARDY



Vanthoor will make British GT debut alongside champion Leung

SRO/PATRICK HECQ PHOTOGRAPHY

## ASPIN JOINS RACE DRIVE

Will Aspin has become the latest driver to sign with Dino Zamparelli's new Race Drive Porsche Carrera Cup GB squad for this season. The former Ginetta racer finished fifth in the Pro-Am standings in his second Porsche campaign in 2023 with Team Parker Racing. "It was a very late decision to be on the grid this year, but I am extremely happy to be back," said Aspin, who suffered a disrupted winter due to an anterior cruciate ligament injury. "A lot was then pushed back after that injury but, once I could start training, I have been working hard and lost a lot of weight."

## SMITHS ON TRACK TOGETHER

Former Legends racer Sean Smith was joined on track for the first time by 16-year-old daughter Ruby – a graduate of karting and Ministox – in last weekend's Audi TT Cup races at Brands Hatch. "It's something I've wanted to do for a long time," said Smith Sr, who on his first weekend of front-wheel-drive racing finished fifth in race two.

## THURSTON'S TCR UK MOVE

British Endurance champion Brad Thurston was a late addition to the TCR UK field at Brands Hatch. Thurston, who won last year's BEC title aboard a Team Hard Porsche 991 Cup car shared with a rolling roster of team-mates, drove a Sport77-run Audi RS3 LMS Gen 1 car. He qualified 12th but was beset with engine issues and failed to finish a single race.

## MERRITT MAKES HIS BOW

The first Fiesta Junior championship round at Brands Hatch last weekend was particularly special for newcomer Thomas Merritt. The 14-year-old's parents Lucy and Jamie (below with Thomas) met while working at the circuit – Lucy in communications/marketing and Jamie for the racing school. Driving the Fiesta Mk7 taken to last year's title by Ben Mulryan, and tended by Race Car Consultants, he finished fifth in all three races.



GARY HAWKINS



# First car Jota took to Le Mans to compete again

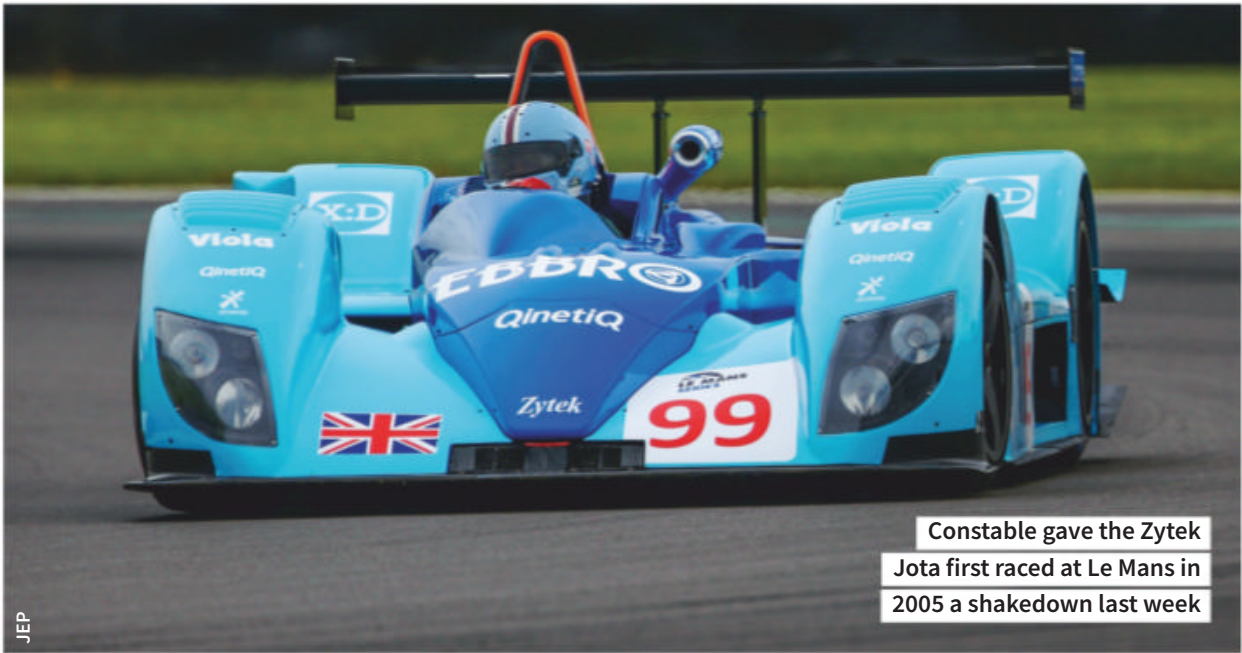
## MASTERS HISTORIC RACING

The British Jota team's first Le Mans 24 Hours car is returning to the track following a full restoration to its original specification.

The Zytek 04S LMP1 has been bought by historic regular Jamie Constable for an attack on the Peter Auto Endurance Racing Legends series after being returned to the configuration in which Jota began its illustrious career at the French enduro in 2005. Constable will drive the car in this weekend's Masters Endurance Legends event at Paul Ricard instead of racing his 2011 OAK Pescarolo-Judd 01 LMP1 as a precursor to his ERL campaign.

Constable revealed he had been searching for an 04S for some time. His pursuit came on the recommendation of former MG factory driver Warren Hughes, who advises him.

"I asked Warren what the best car for the Peter Auto series – which has a 2005 cut-off – would be, and straight away he said the



Constable gave the Zytek Jota first raced at Le Mans in 2005 a shakedown last week

Zytek," explained Constable. "I knew this car was in the USA somewhere but I couldn't find it. Then at the Silverstone Classic last year Xavier [Micheron from the Ascott Collection] told me he had it and I bought it blind."

The car, chassis 04S #02, had been re-engineered for 2006 into a Creation CA06/H with a Judd V10 in place of its Zytek V8. The restoration has been undertaken by Aaron Scott at Scott Sport and included the sourcing of a rear tail section Jota boss Sam Hignett mounted on a wall as an ornament.

The Zytek was given a shakedown at

Silverstone last week by Scott and Constable ahead of its return to competition with Martin O'Connell's OC Racing squad. "The feel you get is amazing," said Constable. "It's so light and nimble; it's like a big Radical."

The 04S started life as the Reynard 02S LMP675 and was raced as an IRM and a DBA4 before British engine specialist Zytek Engineering bought the rights to the design to build replicas. Jota bought the first car and initially raced it in the Le Mans Endurance Series in 2004.

GARY WATKINS

# Formula Woman winner Sore races Fiesta ST150



Sore took a podium as she plans a full campaign

## BRSCC

Formula Woman driver Steph Sore is planning a first full season of racing this year after making her debut in the Fiesta ST150 championship at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Sore was one of four women selected to share two GT4 McLarens in the GT Cup in 2022, although

the intended full-season programme was truncated to three events. Besides a one-off Birkett Relay outing last year, her only other race experience is in karting and Ministox on short ovals.

"I've gone for something that's more affordable to see where that leads," explained Sore who, after engineering last year's

Ginetta Junior champion Freddie Slater, will perform a similar role at R Racing for his younger brother Alfie this year.

Sore's weekend was hampered by an engine blow-up in testing on Thursday but sixth in the second race gave her pole for the finale, in which she claimed a maiden podium.

MARK PAULSON

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## AGS successor to run Time Attack Challenge contest for '90s F1 cars

### HISTORICS

Formula 1 cars from the 1990s will return to competition this year in a new against-the-clock contest run by the successor of the AGS team.

AGS Formule 1, which now runs a driving school and experience events, has launched the F1 '90s Time Attack Mediterranean Challenge for F1 cars built between 1985 and 2000 and Formula 3000 machinery from the same period. Four rounds are planned, starting at this weekend's Historic French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard.

The entry for Ricard includes two AGS chassis, a 1989 JH24 and a 1991 JH25, driven respectively by Le Mans 24 Hours winner Eric Helary and former British Formula Ford frontrunner Geoffroy Horion. Ex-F3000 and IndyCar racer Laurent Redon will take part in a Jordan 197.

Later machinery in the 11-car field includes a pair of Prost AP02s and an

Arrows A20, all of 1999 vintage. Invitational entries include multiple BOSS GP champion Klaas Zwart in a Jaguar R5 from 2004.

AGS, which also restores and operates historic cars including the JH24 and JH25, has launched F1 '90s in response to demand from its customers, according to Cedric Laurent, who runs its driving experiences.

"Some of our clients were asking us if there was anywhere they could compete in their cars rather than just doing demos," explained Laurent. "They weren't keen on racing, so we started thinking of some other kind of competition and came up with the idea of Time Attack."

Points will be scored for every thousandth of a second a driver improves a three-lap average between qualifying and the Time Attack final. The difference between the times in the qualifying session and the final cannot be more than 103-110% depending on the circuit.

GARY WATKINS

### POWER CUT STOPS PLAY

The Silverstone MotorSport Vision Racing meeting was disrupted by a power cut last Saturday. Clubmans Sports Prototype competitors were surprised by a red flag in their first race, which was caused by timing and other systems briefly going down rather than on-track mishaps. The outage apparently affected Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire, meaning the parts of the circuit that lie over the border in Buckinghamshire were unaffected, adding to the confusion.

### CHADWICK AT GOODWOOD

Three-time W Series champion Jamie Chadwick made her Goodwood racing debut at last weekend's Members' Meeting. The 25-year-old shared a Rover SD1 with Nick Sleep to finish 16th in the Gordon Spice enduro for Group 1 saloons, then finished 21st with Andrew Yool in the all-Ford Mustang Ken Miles Cup.

### TYRRELL SHED IS SAVED

A shed made famous as being the birthplace of the earliest Tyrrell Formula 1 cars has been relocated to Goodwood, with last weekend's Members' Meeting being the first chance people have had to see it in its new surroundings. Ken Tyrrell first established an F2 squad in the building within his family's timber business yard in 1958 and it continued to play host to the team until 1976. But, with the shed facing an uncertain future, Goodwood stepped in to preserve its history and painstakingly rebuilt it.

### 'NEW' LOTUS ON DISPLAY

The Lotus Type 66 made its UK debut last weekend when it was on static display at the Goodwood Members' Meeting (below). The car was unveiled last year and is heavily based upon a previously forgotten Lotus Can-Am design that was never built in period. Modern manufacturing materials and methods have been applied to the original drawings to create the Type 66.



J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

## Mills to defend Elite Cup title this year

### LEGENDS

Reigning Legends Elite Cup champion Connor Mills will defend his crown and is among the latest batch of drivers to be confirmed as racing in the series this year.

Mills topped the British Touring Car-supporting Elite Cup contest last season and will again face the likes of

regular frontrunners Chris Needham and Andy Bird. The 2000 Legends champion Robin Fountain is another driver who has pledged to race in the series again this year.

"It's fantastic news we're able to confirm almost 30 cars entered for our 30th anniversary season," said Legends Cars championship owner Phil Cooper. "We're

fortunate to have an excellent mix of experience, youth, frontrunning ability and raw talent, and we absolutely can't wait to see how the first two rounds of 2024 unfold at Donington Park."

The season is due to begin at Donington next weekend, the first of three events where Legends will appear on the BTCC support bill.



# Pryce bounces back with BRC Rallynuts win

## RALLYING

Osian Pryce made up for the disappointment of an early retirement on the North West Stages by taking a convincing win on round two of the British Rally Championship, the Rallynuts Severn Valley Stages, last weekend.

After scooping the BRC title in 2022, the Welshman returned in a Ford Fiesta Rally2 but was eager for redemption after a dismal start to his comeback and duly delivered in front of a home crowd, which had been attracted by a ‘Wales Rally GB flavour’ to the event. Classic stages such as Hafren, Myherin and Sweet Lamb made up the 62-mile one-dayer and it was Chris Ingram’s VW Polo that was fastest out of the blocks on the opening short, sharp Sarnau test.

But, from there on, it was Pryce and Rhodri Evans who took control with a gravel masterclass, winning each of the three remaining morning stages to head into service with almost 12 seconds in hand over round-one winner Ingram.

Just three tests made up the afternoon loop, which meant Pryce could not relax as the 2019 European champion was breathing down his neck. But he need not have worried. Set-up changes to Ingram’s Polo at the mid-point hindered rather than helped, and he fell into the clutches of William Creighton with one test remaining.

But Pryce was relentless, taking the final



The 2022 BRC champion was flying high in Wales

stage win to hammer home his authority. “It’s a big relief, I’m so happy to get the win today,” said Pryce. “It was so slippery – we certainly had some hairy moments just trying to keep it on the road.”

Creighton’s performance was flawless, leaving the Fiesta pilot to pick up his second runner-up score in the BRC this season to close in on series leader Ingram, who was left licking his wounds and rounded out the podium. James Williams secured fourth in his Hyundai i20, while Garry Pearson finally got points on the board with fifth in his Fiesta. Further back, former Formula 1 driver Jos Verstappen’s

British rallying debut ended with him eighth in his Skoda Fabia.

In the Junior BRC, it was a war of the Peugeots, with eight youngsters eager to get their 208 Rally4s on the top step of the podium. It could have well been an all-Welsh win thanks to Ioan Lloyd’s impressive 23s lead after four stages, only to get beached on a corner on the fifth, ending his charge on the spot. That left Robert Proudlock and Steven Brown to pick up the pieces and secure their first JBRC victory, adding to a North West Stages podium.

MATT COTTON

## Full BRC campaign now Pryce’s aim

### RALLYING

Osian Pryce is working to revise his 2024 plans and complete the full British Rally Championship season after all, following victory on last weekend’s Rallynuts Severn Valley Stages.

The 2022 British champion won the Welsh event by 20 seconds over William Creighton. Pryce had feared he would not be able to compete in either of the upcoming Scottish events (Jim Clark Rally and Grampian Forest Rally)

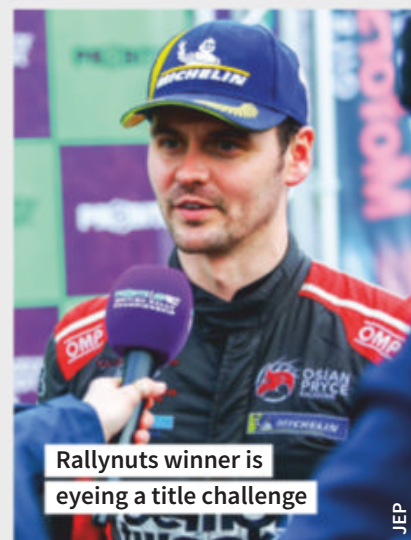
owing to budget constraints, but he has an entry in for next month’s Jim Clark.

“Hopefully we can get everything together and we’ll be there,” Pryce said. “It’s a rally I really enjoy. There’s a bit more work to do now moving forward but we had a great day, bouncing back from our North West disappointment and putting it behind us.”

Pryce retired from second on March’s season opener with a mechanical issue, but the Rallynuts victory reduces his gap to leader Chris

Ingram to 15 points, with Creighton four points off the summit in second. The hopes of another BRC champion, Keith Cronin, are looking more desperate, though. The Irishman struggled to seventh on the North West, and a puncture on the Rallynuts left him a measly 11th and in serious need of a good result on the Jim Clark.

Cronin said: “It’s not been a good start to the BRC for us. Last time we won it [2017] we had a similar start to the season, but we might need



Rallynuts winner is eyeing a title challenge

to do some other rallies on gravel if we want to be competing. I like the Jim Clark, so hopefully our luck will change.”

LUKE BARRY



# Perez's Porsche performs best on tough British Historic Rally event

## HISTORIC RALLYING

Seb Perez was the star of Wales in last Saturday's Rallynuts Severn Valley Stages when he took his Porsche 911 Carrera RS to British Historic Rally Championship victory on a truly tough event.

Perez and Irish co-driver Gary McElhinney emerged with a narrow five-second win over the Ford Escort Mk2 of Joe Price and Chris Brooks. Rain, thick fog, slippery stages and a long day all made this a tricky event, but Perez scored a memorable victory to put the Porsche into contention in the third round of the BHRC.

Perez said: "That was hard work! Challenging conditions: very wet and muddy in places and super dry in places. But it's been a good day and finally we've had some luck with the car."

While early leaders Nick Elliott and Dave Price slid off the road and out of the rally in their Fiat 131, a remarkable third in the historic section fell to three-time British Rally champion Mark Higgins and Phil Pugh in the David Appleby Engineering Triumph TR7 V8. On easily the car's best showing to date, Higgins finished less than half a minute behind the flying Porsche.

PAUL LAWRENCE



Perez mastered the tricky Welsh conditions for 5s win

PAUL LAWRENCE

# Igoe/Atkins end their season in style

## CIRCUIT RALLYING

Circuit Rally champions Michael Igoe and Will Atkins signed off their season in the best possible way with another victory at Anglesey last weekend.



Champions won by over two minutes at Anglesey

PETERSCHERER

Their all-conquering Citroen C3 Rally2 was quickest on each of the eight tests of the Altratech SMC Stages to win by two minutes.

Malcolm 'Tar' Jones and Rhys Jones's Darrian was five seconds down after the opening stage but, although they made it to the end of stage two still in second place, they were out of the rally having lost first gear. Paul Murro/Craig Simkiss' Ford Fiesta R5 was therefore left heading the pursuit for the rest of the day.

Murro had hit a truck tyre on the first stage, but his recovery left him a clear second, with 30s in hand over Will Owen/Chloe Thomas's Escort Mk2, despite Murro's car running in a more standard trim following his fire at Cadwell Park in the previous round.

Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon had been duelling with fellow Darrian crew James Garner/Jordan Joines for fourth. Merriman took the place, while Garner went out on stage seven with an alternator problem.

PETER SCHERER

## FLYING BENTLEY ON RALLY

Paul Dyas and Mark Appleton were victorious on The Flying Scotsman vintage rally, which ended on Sunday at Gleneagles in Scotland, having begun in Chester, after three tough days of competition for 60 pre-war cars. Dyas added to his extensive CV by putting his 1937 Bentley Derby Special ahead of the Lea-Francis Hyper of Kurt Vanderspinnen and Iain Tullie, and Clint and Brad Smith in their 3-litre Bentley.

## KNOCKHILL'S APPRECIATION

In addition to being the circuit's traditional Armed Forces Appreciation event, this weekend's Knockhill season-opener will also be free to attend for NHS workers and those who are employed by the emergency services. "We have had our complimentary Appreciation events for almost a decade but, post-pandemic, it is only right that this is expanded to cover workers within the NHS and the Blue Light services too," said Knockhill director of events Stuart Gray.

## NEW FUN CUP FACES

There were a host of new drivers and returnees in last weekend's Fun Cup opener at Oulton Park. Former TCR racers Jac Constable and Russell Joyce formed Skull Club Racing, while 2004 EuroBOSS champion Scott Mansell teamed up with father and series debutant Kevin. After a 27-year absence, ex-British Formula 3 and F3000 driver Guido Basile also joined the ranks. The MJ Tec crew of Scott Jeffs and Will Abraham were dominant winners, finally triumphing after four years of trying.

## OVENDEN'S SPECIAL ESCORT

Reigning Mini Challenge Trophy champion Tom Ovenden made his Modified Fords debut at Oulton Park last weekend in an Escort Mk1. The Sonny Howard-built car (below) was originally bought by brother Matt, who tragically died after a work accident, leaving the project unfinished. The whole family pulled together to finish the car and Tom took second to Jim Hutchinson's similar machine in both races.



PETERSCHERER



# Nova acquires Portuguese tyre firm Camac

## NATIONAL

The fledgling Nova Motorsport brand has acquired the Portuguese tyre firm Camac and its factory, which will enable Nova to restart manufacturing many of the old Avon and Cooper tyre ranges.

Nova, which is owned by the SPC Group, has been created following Goodyear's decision to close the Avon factory in Melksham last year, with the majority of Avon's senior figures also moving to the new company. It has secured the licence to manufacture the old Avon product range and is targeting September for the first tyres to be constructed.

Nova commercial director James Weekley described the Camac news as a "very, very significant milestone" and said the Portuguese facility was deliberately chosen. "We've acquired the Camac factory – we've bought that outright – and we will be moving all of the assets from the Melksham facility with immediate effect," he said.

"So all of the manufacturing equipment, moulds, tooling, all of the manufacturing processes, quality assurance procedures with a small army of people who are relocating to live in the factory with the existing team in Camac, who are all being retained.

"It's about dovetailing those two assets



Nova has also signed a title sponsor deal with British Hillclimb

and entities together to form a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility that is absolutely critical to our business plan of reindustrialising and re-establishing all of the Cooper and Avon products, but also continuing the products from Camac."

Avon was renowned as one of the few manufacturers of crossply tyres and Camac – which has been manufacturing its own classic and competition tyres for decades – also produces crossply products, making the factory ideal for Nova. "It's not just a road tyre plant that produces 10,000 road tyres a day, it's a plant that has crossply manufacturing capability," said Weekley.

"There aren't many manufacturing facilities in the world that have crossply manufacturing capability because there are almost no consumer road tyre products

that are made using that technology, so Camac was a godsend in some respects."

Weekley also highlighted the factory's size – which is larger than the old Melksham facility – and the fact it is based in Europe, which he sees as a huge market for Nova, as being other considerations. "It's an already operational manufacturing facility, which saves us a huge amount of time versus building one from scratch, and strategically and commercially, it's a really viable location for us," he added. "We're incredibly excited to have it."

The Palmeira facility, which has the capacity to construct 500,000 tyres per year, will work in tandem with Nova's UK headquarters in Holt, Wiltshire, where the senior management will be based.

**STEPHEN LICKORISH**

# Burns back into racing with Audi TT Cup

## AUDI TT CUP RACING

Former Renault UK Clio Cup and TCR Germany frontrunner Bradley Burns is the latest highly rated recruit to Audi TT Cup Racing, which began its first championship season with a capacity grid at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Burns was a race winner in the 2018 Clio Cup before graduating to TCR Germany, where he recorded a podium finish at Most in the Czech Republic. The 22-year-old's

racing has been sporadic in recent years; he contested a part-season alongside Rob Baker in Club Enduro in 2023.

Burns was also part of Baker's Area Motorsport squad that finished second in the Birkett Relay at Silverstone, a team that included Luke Handley with his TT. That inspired Burns to build his own and run under Area's awning in the burgeoning category.

"I thought I'd have a go in this for a bit of



fun really – that's all it's about," said Burns. "It seems to be going well; nice bunch of people, so that's all that matters."

Burns qualified fourth among the 35-car entry, which was due to be split to contest two from three races

due to Brands's 34-car limit. However, two withdrawals allowed the field to be recombined for two races, in which Burns finished fourth and then second after contact with team-mate Matt Luff.

**MARK PAULSON**





# Ups and downs

*After a month of the club racing campaign, it's time to take a look at how entries are stacking up compared to last year, and it is – perhaps unsurprisingly – a mixed picture*

STEPHEN LICKORISH

**O**ne month of the national racing season has already been completed and, while several clubs have yet to get their new campaigns going in earnest (the Historic Sports Car Club and Vintage Sports-Car Club are among those beginning this weekend, while the 750 Motor Club is hosting its first two-day fixture of 2024), there is now enough data to take a meaningful look at some of the early year entry numbers.

The headline figures are certainly very encouraging. Almost two-thirds (64%) of the English club series with comparable data have either attracted a larger grid or one the same size as their 2023 average for their opening event. Considering all the pre-season talk about rising prices having a negative impact, and there being plenty of doom and gloom in some quarters, it is undeniably a good start. Club bosses are always nervous as a new year starts – never quite knowing what to expect and whether they have booked the right amount of track time for their series. “It’s always a hunch and crystal ball when you’re planning the next year,” admits one, especially considering dates need to be locked in long before the current season concludes.

But, with this optimism, it is important to take those March and April grid sizes with a pinch of salt. It’s regularly the case that opening rounds secure larger entries than some of those later in the year as drivers are eager to get back on track after a long

**“Some of the largest grids are once again reserved for the low-cost endurance categories”**

winter and the coffers have been replenished. As enthusiasm and finances may dwindle during a campaign, numbers can start to tail off. It is also worth noting that all of these 2024 figures are based on events held at Silverstone, Donington Park, Brands Hatch, Snetterton, Oulton Park and Castle Combe. They are all traditionally well-supported venues and therefore the lower numbers that can be found at the likes of Cadwell Park and Croft have not been factored in. Nevertheless, it’s still been great to see so many grids pushing 40 cars or more, with some fantastic battles having already been recorded in Autosport’s pages this year.

Among the success stories so far have been the British Racing & Sports Car Club-administered Clubsport Trophy, Modified Fords and C1 Endurance Series contests, which have attracted opening fields of an impressive 45, 43 and 38 cars, respectively.

Among the British Automobile Racing Club portfolio, the Caterham Roadsport and Seven 270R divisions each boasted 41 cars at Snetterton last weekend, while the Classic Sports Car Club’s bustling curtain-raiser featured large Swinging Sixties, Tin Tops and Slicks Series numbers. Then the BRSCC’s Audi TT Cup Racing and the 750 Motor Club’s Ma7da championships have enjoyed some of the largest percentage increases.

However, 36% of comparable categories featuring a decline in popularity is still a sizeable chunk. And it’s concerning that some of the UK’s most notable and prestigious series are in that pool. For example, British Endurance Championship numbers have been noticeably down, while the British Truck Racing opener featured just a disappointing dozen of the behemoths for its Easter Brands event – worth remembering that it was only a few years ago that the Division 1 and Division 2 trucks justifiably had standalone grids. Then, TCR UK has also slumped and the British GT-supporting Ginetta GT Championship achieved a meagre 11 cars for its Oulton opener. In addition, the once unrelenting and seemingly exponential rise in Mazda MX-5 popularity appears to be over, with both BRSCC and MotorSport Vision Racing categories for the Japanese sportscars having dipped compared to last year. Autosport will closely monitor all of these championships and, if the trend continues, explore some of the specific factors in the coming weeks and months.

Equipe Classic Racing is another of the organisers to have had a modest start to 2024, with its new F2 Atlantic offering failing to get into double figures at Brands last month. However, racing such single-seaters in the colder months is not necessarily attractive and bosses are confident of entries picking up as we move into what should be warmer times. There are other perennial problems that can stymie early-season numbers, such as the classic ‘my car is not ready’ excuse, which undeniably plays a part in some cases. The CSCC has also taken the decision to write to all of its members following some criticism of shared grids at Donington, explaining the delicate financial situation and how it is more important than ever that each second of track time is maximised.

So, overall, it is far too early to leap to any conclusions. There are some very positive signs, and some slightly more concerning, based on the first 13 English circuit racing meetings of 2024. It is inevitable there are winners and losers, but it’s perhaps no surprise to see that some of the largest grids are once again reserved for the low-cost endurance categories that offer such good value for money and close racing. Yet, for the sake of the industry as a whole, it would be a fantastic result if that two-thirds proportion of series either growing or maintaining their 2023 numbers can continue. At a time of ongoing uncertainty, it would be the ultimate vote of confidence. 🌟



# Shepherd and Newsham enjoy early season TCR UK success

**BRANDS HATCH**  
**BRSCC**  
**13-14 APRIL**

Adam Shepherd bounced back from a difficult start to score a triple podium in the TCR UK season-opener at Brands Hatch, while maiden victor Callum Newsham finished the weekend happiest as the early points leader.

Shepherd's Friday testing – his first time driving the Cupra Leon Competicion – and qualifying on Saturday were blighted by driveshaft dramas that left him starting eighth and 14th for races one and three. But in Saturday's opener he immediately jumped to fifth before passing Joe Marshall's Audi RS3. Shepherd opportunistically snatched third from Newsham when the latter's challenge on reigning champion Carl Boardley (Cupra) – who had cut back inside the Hyundai driver for second earlier – was rebuffed.

Newsham had planted his i30 N on pole position but was beaten away by Swedish visitor Viktor Andersson's Lynk & Co 03. The TCR Europe regular had been drafted in by Pro Alloys Racing to help it get up to speed with the car on its first UK start. The newcomer was relatively cautious in traffic but withstood persistent pressure from the locals to claim a dream debut win. "I looked a lot in the side-view mirror, every lap," admitted Andersson, adding: "I can imagine it was exciting from [the outside]."

Race two's top-10 grid-reversal left Shepherd starting eighth, but a lightning getaway and outside-line slingshot propelled him into a decisive lead as the pack descended Paddock Hill. A sluggish getaway on the green-flag lap had prompted Shepherd to disable the car's launch control to "go old school, and it just took off like a bullet!". Luke Sargeant ran second before his loose-looking Cupra slipped down the order as Newsham and

Marshall filled the podium ahead of Andersson and Boardley.

Choosing not to rotate his tyres ahead of the finale helped Newsham's warmer front rubber convert pole into the race lead. As Boardley, who jumped Andersson for second, struggled for ultimate pace, Newsham charged to a nine-second victory. "I got off the line, which was all I wanted to do, and I knew I could stay ahead of the guys behind," said a delighted first-time victor. Andersson used the Clearways pass he had perfected in race two to beat Boardley to second, only to fail the ride height test – promoting the charging Shepherd to the podium's final step.

The entry for this year's Civic Cup is bulging with talent but reigning champion Max Edmundson's command over the field was as strong as ever as he twice scorched to victory from pole. While debuting former Fiesta and Mini Challenge racer Spencer Stevenson focused on fending off Josh Files, Edmundson escaped to a 2s victory in the opener.

Stevenson slipped inside Edmundson at Druids on Sunday afternoon's first lap but missing a gear on the next tour let Edmundson back in front, with Files and Lewis Kent also railroading through. Kent's fresh rubber helped him take second and briefly challenge the leader before holding station for an Area Motorsport 1-2-3. In between times, 2021 champion Alistair Camp manhandled his new FN2 to victory in a reversed-grid race that featured two red flags, ahead of Harvey Caton and Will Redford, with Edmundson rising to fourth.

The Fiesta ST150 championship's north-west roots meant many of its drivers were visiting Brands for the first time. That wasn't the case for double winner Mike Blackburn, although the multiple champion confessed that he remembered little from his last trip, nearly 30 years ago! After the first attempt was red-flagged,



Blackburn nailed his second effort to leap from third to first and ease to a comfortable win over Matt Pimlott. Blackburn converted pole to victory in race two, aided by Pimlott's expiring car delaying his pursuers on a safety car restart. Sam Watkins, who has much more recent experience – and success – at the circuit, won race three, completing a fine comeback from being nerfed into the barriers at the start of the opener, via a terrific getaway from eighth on the grid.

Two months shy of his 80th birthday, Dick Trevett was an MG Metro Cup winner. Mike Williams led most of the race, despite a late rush to complete his car's winter rebuild, only to suffer a big blow-up at the start of the final lap. His older turbo engine





## WEEKEND WINNERS

## TCR UK

**Race 1** Viktor Andersson (Lynk & Co 03)

**Race 2** Adam Shepherd  
(Cupra Leon Competicion)

**Race 3** Callum Newsham (Hyundai i30 N)

## CIVIC CUP

**Races 1 & 3** Max Edmundson (EP3)

**Race 2** Alistair Camp (FN2)

## FIESTA ST150

**Races 1 & 2** Mike Blackburn

**Race 3** Sam Watkins

## MG METRO CUP

**Race 1** Dick Trevett (MG Metro Turbo)

**Race 2** Robbie Kenning (Rover Metro GTI)

## FIESTA JUNIOR

**Races 1 & 2** Jenson O'Neill-Going (Mk6 ST)

**Race 3** Finn Leslie (Mk7 Zetec S)

## FIESTA ST240

**Race 1** Zach Lucas

**Race 2** Alastair Kellett (below)

**Race 3** Daniel Lewis

## CLUBSPORT TROPHY

Phiroze Bilimoria (Volkswagen Scirocco)

## AUDI TT CUP RACING

**Races 1 & 2** Carl Swift



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



Three podiums for Shepherd as he recovered from testing woe, while Newsham (inset) also won

suited the twisty Indy circuit, Trevett passed Jon Moore for second at Clearways before inheriting victory. Moore then lost out to Robbie Kenning when he slid wide on Williams's oil. Polesitter Kenning had made a tardy getaway on his first start in Rhys Claydon's K Series-engined championship winner, having ditched his A Series, but perfected the sequel en route to a maiden win from Moore and Trevett.

Jenson O'Neill-Going continued his fine Silverstone non-championship form as he was never headed in the first two Fiesta Junior races. A hat-trick was within reach until he lost third gear – then second too – in the finale and slipped to ninth. Finn Leslie's pass of Jacob Hodgkiss therefore earned him a first points-paying victory and consigned Hodgkiss to a trio of second places, frustrated by the earlier safety car finishes preventing him challenging O'Neill-Going in the closing stages.

Zach Lucas withstood pressure from Alastair Kellett to win the Fiesta ST240 opener, before the Irishman turned the tables on Sunday morning. With the top 10 reversed for race three's grid, Fiesta Junior graduate Daniel Lewis fired his car into the lead from row two and took a comfortable victory – his first in cars – from Lucas Hayden, as Lucas and Kellett climbed to third and fourth.

Debuting his Volkswagen Golf, Julian Daniel led the way in Clubsport Trophy until his new steed lost power – a possible

recurrence of a coil-pack problem that had struck in testing – after a safety car period and dropped to fourth. Phiroze Bilimoria took his Volkswagen Scirocco to the laurels over David May (Nissan 370Z) and Liam Crilly's BMW Z4 Coupe.

Carl Swift was never headed as he stormed to two wins in the Audi TT Cup's first-ever championship round, which featured a capacity grid.

MARK PAULSON



**BEST BATTLE: METRO MASTERS** It might be 40-odd years old, but that doesn't stop the humble Metro providing entertaining on-track action. Among plenty of scrapping through the field, Robbie Kenning (leading) and Jon Moore threw their Rover 100s through the bends, as Dick Trevett (right) got plenty of lean on his MG Metro Turbo in pursuit.





## Dickens and Wood star in latest Clubmans chapter

**SILVERSTONE**  
**MSVR**  
**13-14 APRIL**

After a year of dominance by James Clarke's Phantom last season, the 2024 Clubmans Sports Prototype campaign began with some of the closest lead battles of the Silverstone weekend.

Steve Dickens prevailed in his Mallock Mk29 in the opener, holding off the immediate challenge of Ben Mallock's slightly later Mk30PR model and Steve Collier's Vision, plus the growing menace of Clive Wood in his Mk23 Mallock. Wood had a spin on lap one after some contact, but quickly scythed through the field and pulled past Collier on the final lap of the shortened race (see News) for third.

Race two then went the way of Wood after a scrap with Mallock that lasted most of the distance, both of them having cleared Dickens early on. Dickens instead had to make do with third, ahead of Collier.

Wood and Mallock sparred again in the finale, dipping under each other at Brooklands until Wood made a decisive move on the Wellington Straight, charging past Mallock for a lead he held to the end. Dickens and Collier had a similar tussle behind, before Dickens broke free and snuck past Mallock on the last lap.

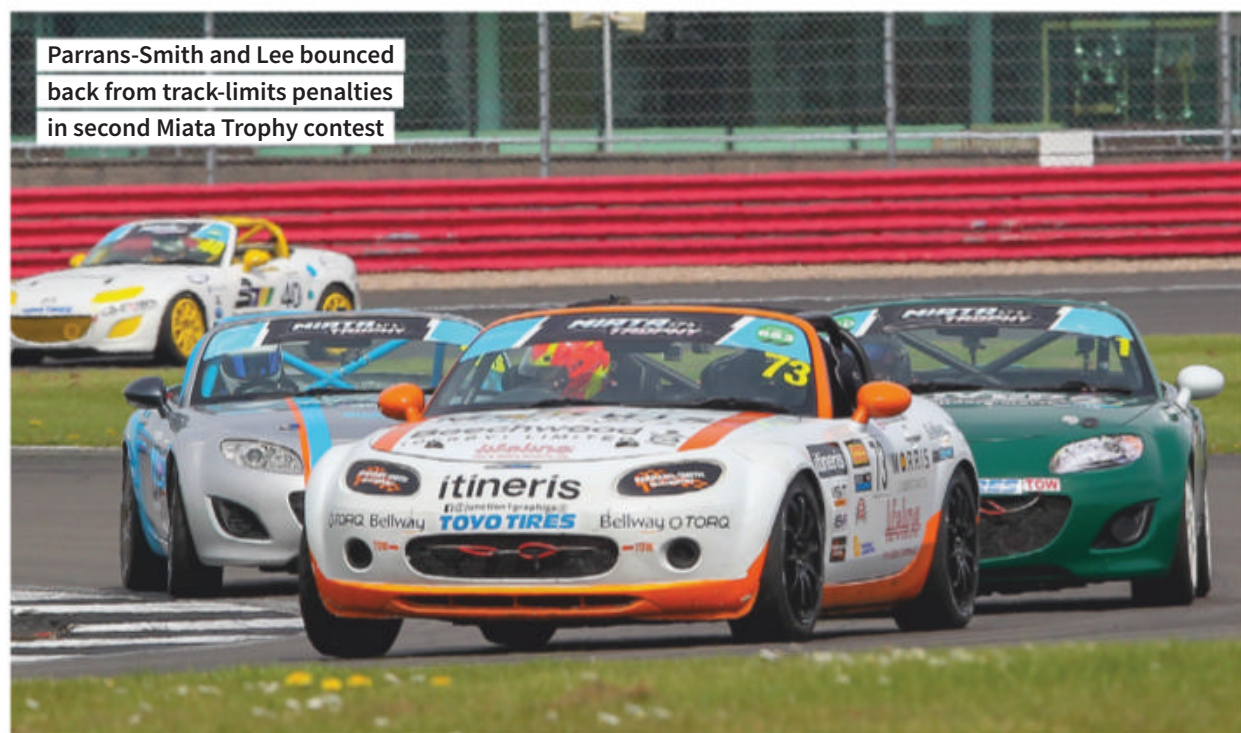
The first Sports 2000 contest went the way of Colin Peach's Van Diemen, despite a strong challenge from Steve Ough in an MCR and the similar car of Tony Barwell. Defending champion Michael Gibbins (MCR) looked a likely winner early on,

but a broken gear linkage opened up the competition once more.

Race two featured the added challenge of Joshua Law, who missed the first race due to a blown engine but managed to start from the back in his spare MCR, which he had fetched from his home in Essex. Law quickly materialised at the front and was on Gibbins's tail by the end, but a series of track-limits penalties dropped him to fourth, behind Ben Cater – who had a strong run in his MCR and didn't let Law past easily – and Peach. Gibbins won again in race three, by a large margin from Cater and Peach. Law had held second for most of the distance but his car expired on the last lap.

American newcomer Jason Pribyl (Ray GR20) won the first United Formula Ford race, despite never having driven a Formula Ford before or having raced in the UK. The first encounter was somewhat chaotic and red-flagged twice, partly due to oil on the track at Luffield and the ensuing crash involving frontrunner Andrew Rackstraw's Spectrum. Rackstraw was awarded the win in the sequel after Pribyl was penalised for exceeding track limits. Alex Ames was second in his Van Diemen RF90; he had been exchanging the lead with Pribyl, despite the 30-year age gap between the cars.

Penalties also decided the Miata Trophy results. Nicholas Stott took the opening spoils after a strong run from row three, although it was Daniel Parrans-Smith who crossed the line first by a clear margin. However, a 15-second track-limits sanction dropped Parrans-Smith to sixth, while



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MICK WALKER



## WEEKEND WINNERS

## CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPE

**Race 1** Steve Dickens (Mallock Mk29)

**Races 2 & 3** Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)

## SPORTS 2000

**Race 1** Colin Peach (Van Diemen RFS02)

**Races 2 & 3** Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)

## UNITED FORMULA FORD

**Race 1** Jason Pribyl (Ray GR20, below)

**Race 2** Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum KMR)

## MIATA TROPHY

**Race 1** Nicholas Stott

**Race 2** Daniel Parrans-Smith

## BERNIE'S V8s &amp; HISTORIC OUTLAWS

**Races 1 & 2** Stewart Robb (TVR Tuscan)

## ENDUROKA

Pro-Am Racing (Will Hillyard/Scott Thompson/  
Richard Jepp)



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

Declan Lee's charge was curtailed by another penalty, which demoted him to fourth. Parrans-Smith and Lee both had their revenge second time around as they dominated proceedings and finished 1-2, in front of a chasing Alex Miller.

Stewart Robb was the clear winner of both Bernie's V8s bouts in his TVR Tuscan. Mathew Smith in a TVR Chimaera was second in the opener, having worked his way up from fifth, and fended off Chris Tilly's Chevrolet Corvette and Gary Lapidus's older Corvette, which later retired.

Race two began with a reversed grid, but Robb wasted no time in hitting the front again. Polesitter Kevin Borland, driving a Chevrolet NASCAR, managed half a lap before spinning and not being able to start again. Matt Holben was second in another Tuscan, ahead of Smith.

The #12 Pro-Am Racing crew of Will Hillyard, Scott Thompson and Richard Jepp won the five-hour EnduroKa race, although their impressive final-hour nibbling away at MilnAir Racing's 30s lead wasn't needed in the end. MilnAir (George and Jack Wright and Jonny Milner) was docked two laps and thereby demoted to second for not following refuelling rules correctly, gifting Pro-Am the win.

**RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER**



**FROM ROCKINGHAM TO SILVERSTONE** This Chevy stock car came to the UK as one of Rockingham's fleet of oval trackday machines. Kevin Borland acquired it in 2015 as a rather battered rolling shell and got it race ready. When he removed its Budweiser Dale Earnhardt Jr wrap, he was surprised to find its original Gary Fountain livery, which he has kept. Fountain mostly raced in Modifieds in Florida and was still competing up to 2013. Borland won his Bernie's V8s class in the opener.



**JAVELIN THROWS A WOBBLY** This rare American AMC Javelin beast has a striking Mark Donohue tribute livery, although Donohue never drove it and it spent most of its life as a road car. Javelins competed occasionally in the likes of the Sebring 12 Hours, but were more successful in Trans-Am. This one sadly only managed seven laps of Bernie's V8s qualifying before overheating, its drivers Bradley and Oliver Jones-Chapman deciding to withdraw. Some major engine damage was later found.



**MYSTERIOUS DRIVER** This slightly mysterious Van Diemen Sports 2000 car has not been seen in competition since 2007, when its even more mysterious driver, 'Rollo Tomasi' last raced it. Tomasi may be a Kiribatan diplomat's son, or may actually be a middle-aged Briton with an over-active imagination. He describes his on-track role as "to finish in 28th, so whoever finishes 27th feels better about themselves". He surpassed his expectations by finishing in the top 20 (just) in all three races.





# THE MONSTROUS CAPRI

## BORN FROM 40 LIGHT YEARS OF WORK

*In the first of a new series looking at some of the most unusual and exciting cars in club racing, a heavily modified V8-powered Ford Capri is under the spotlight*

**MARK PAULSON**

PHOTOGRAPHY **MICK WALKER**

**S**imon Light's heavily modified Ford Capri V8 has been nearly 40 years in the making. The Middlesex native has taken it from Road Saloons in the 1980s, through constant development – via a lengthy sabbatical – to its current monstrous form.

And he's done it all, with help from fellow Capri enthusiast John Hutson, in a single garage at home in Greenford.

With no family racing background, the mechanical engineer was inspired to take to the tracks after watching Australian Touring Cars on television as a 21-year-old in 1985. Even the Capri's #17 is a nod to Aussie legend Dick Johnson, who was entertaining the masses back then in a Ford Mustang GT.

"The Aussies were first to put onboard cameras in the cars, weren't they?" recalls Light. "They were talking as well, and Dick Johnson's such a character. I just thought, 'Oh this is so cool, I've got to have a go at this'."

Light bought his Capri in 1986, debuting at Snetterton the following year. The burgeoning Road Saloon scene was the ideal starting point. Cars had to be driven to and from the circuit, retain their interior, and were allowed only limited modifications.

Where now a 520bhp Ford Mustang Cobra V8 is shoehorned into the engine bay, originally sat a humble three-litre Essex V6 motor that generated 138bhp off the production line. Even in Road Saloon-spec, Light managed to find almost another 100bhp in his





Light's creation now produces 520bhp, and he's planning further developments



COLIN PECKHAM

*"We got the circuit instructor to ride in our cars during testing and teach us. The Rover boys weren't happy!"*

circuit and smearing Light's Capri along the inner wall. "Oh God, not again," Light remembers thinking. "That's it, never doing it again.' But we had it re-shelled and back out again in three weeks' time."

Ironically, that shell – which the Capri retains – took Light to his first victory at the same circuit in 1990. A touch of gamesmanship assisted another at Knockhill. "The championship battle was very close between me and Dave Thomas in Capris and a pair of Vitesses," says Light. "On the quiet, Dave and I got the circuit instructor to ride in our cars during testing and teach us the lines to shorten the learning curve. It did the trick as we put our Capris on the front row. The Rover boys were not very happy when they found out!"

A year later, Light claimed the Road Saloons title after a season-long battle with Tony Harding's Rover Vitesse went to the wire at Mallory Park. He recalls: "I had to either win or come second with fastest lap, which I did by just 0.11 seconds."

Championship won, it was time to progress to Super Road Saloons, which allowed more development. "The turbo [Mitsubishi] Lancers ruled there, and a couple of Saab 9000s," he remembers. "You were allowed different wheels, bigger brakes, but they had to be off a road car, and could take the interior out. And I could run the RS rear spoiler, so that made a difference as well. Engine-wise, carburetion was free then so I put on the big IDA Group 1 carb. I think I had an all-steel bottom end, so I was revving it to 8000, for an old V6 Essex! It went well – it was about 300bhp." Despite more than doubling the engine's original power output, reliability wasn't an issue: "We'd >>



COLIN PECKHAM

Car's first season of racing was in 1987 (above), but it suffered a setback with Oulton Park crash two years later (left)

quest to keep up with the V8-powered Rover SD1s. "The engines had to be visibly standard, but you could bore out the carburettor and do what you liked inside," he explains. "I put the carburettor on the lathe at work and spent ages boring it out wafer thin, and putting bigger butterflies in. The cars were quite powerful but had standard brakes, which were solid discs and drums [front/rear]. But it made for a lot of fun. Still today, that was the most fun I ever had. Sometimes you nearly fell off laughing, the antics of everybody."

Among the scrapes, Oulton Park was a nemesis in Light's early years. A big off at pre-chicane Knickerbrook on his first-ever lap of the circuit in 1988 preceded a heavy smash exiting Old Hall a year later. A wayward Rover ran wide before spearing back across the



# RICHARD THORNE

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learned a lot by then, doing all our own stuff.”

After three years, many wins and two Class A titles, the next step was Modified Production Saloons. “I think I had the RS Turbo tail on then, a bi-plane one I couldn’t use in the Supers,” Light recalls, “and I think the Falkens [tyres] were worth a bit of time over the Toyos. But it was harder. In the Road Saloons and Supers, the limit was four litres; in the Mod Prods there was no upper limit. Gerry Cain, who was bloody good in a 4.5 Rover Vitesse, I don’t think I beat him once. At Croft I had a really good scrap with him, but I was giving away too much power really. And Peter Barnes in a five-litre Holden Commodore, and the turbo cars... I had some good results but I didn’t win one outright.”

With children Bryony and George on the horizon, Light parked up the Capri in 1997 and didn’t race it again until 2018 – save for an unsuccessful one-off in 2010. He tried satisfying the urge by

*“The racing gives you the buzz but the satisfaction comes equally from improving the car”*

building a 24-valve Cosworth-engined Capri for trackdays but “it just didn’t really give me a buzz so I sold the car and used the money to get the race car ready again once the kids were older”.

The old V6 unit cried enough on its brief return in Classic Thunder at Cadwell Park: “And then I thought there’s no point pouring loads of money in the Essex again because it was on the limit, power-wise.”

A relatively cheap supply of five-litre Mustang Cobra V8s became available after MG – which imported them for its XPower sportscars – folded. Light snapped up one of the Shawn Ireland-modified 385bhp versions used in the SV-R. “It had a lot of stuff done to it,” he says. “The heads were ported, forged pistons and rods, different cams, bored inlet...”

He installed throttle bodies and fabricated new exhaust manifolds before his comeback, contesting races in Classic & Historic Thunder and Modified Fords. “I did 11 years of chasing championships,” says Light. “I enjoyed it, and loved the pressure it put you under to be quick and not make a mistake, but now I just want to have fun.”

Further developments included new cams, while the suspension is now BMW M3-derived – E46 CSL front legs and an E90 rear subframe – with self-fabricated arms. Light downplays the engineering involved and is similarly self-effacing about teaching himself composites during the pandemic. “I bought a subframe off eBay, lay under the car, put it up, and thought, ‘Yeah, this’ll work!’” he quips, adding: “I was furloughed for four months so I stuck big blocks of foam on the side of the car, shaped them and made the moulds, and then did the resin-infused carbon fibre. I watched YouTube and was an expert in moulding!”

The car’s roof is its only steel bodywork left. The front undertray, dam and splitter are a single piece of carbon fibre, while the Dodge Viper GT3 rear wing was another eBay find. Light fabricated the



Light enjoyed a successful spell in Super Road Saloons

COLIN PECKHAM

generous diffuser from aluminium: “I may make a carbon one at some point but it probably won’t save a lot.”

When he broke the T45 Mustang gearbox – “awful; horrible ratios and really slow gearchange” – installed alongside the V8, Light replaced it with a Tractive six-speed sequential three years ago. “I had to modify all the bellhousing and we made the adaptor-plate ourselves to mount it,” he adds. “It’s a pleasure to use now.”

Over the past winter, work included carbon fibre diveplanes and new cylinder heads that further raised power. And despite the huge V8 and big wheels running second-hand British Touring Car rubber sourced from WSR, the car tips the scales at around 1030kg – not dissimilar to its original Road Saloon weight.

The passion and enthusiasm of Light and Hutson remain undimmed, with endless developments in the pipeline. “Power-wise with the engine, without sticking a supercharger on it or something, there’s not a lot more to come,” he admits. “The compression’s a bit lower than I’d like so maybe put some different pistons in at some point and get that up.”

Side skirts and a flat floor may be next. Bigger brakes, bigger wheels, a more modern dash... And with son George developing his own Mercedes 190, there could soon be two generations ripping up the tracks in their unique creations.

“John and me, we’re both proud of what we’ve achieved,” reflects Light Sr. “When we started, we were just messing about really and didn’t think I’d be any good. The two of us bat ideas off each other, some wild and stupid ideas, and some of them we might go with. But we’ve always enjoyed doing that.”

“The racing gives you the buzz but the satisfaction comes equally from improving the car and thinking of things that hopefully work, and the results.” ✎



The Capri can currently be found racing in Classic Thunder



# FINISHING STRAIGHT

A deeper dive on likes of Senna and Schumacher would have been welcome



motorsport  
IMAGES

## Hard to stand out on the bookshelf



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**FORMULA ONE:  
THE LEGENDS –  
CULT DRIVERS AND  
THEIR LEGACIES**  
Tony Dodgins  
RRP £35.00

There are many resources that you can turn to if you want to learn about Formula 1's most famous drivers, which left one key question when heading into this review – how is this latest offering different from the existing conglomerate?

*Formula One: The Legends – Cult drivers and their legacies* is an engaging read, with the familiar format where individual drivers are given their own segments making it easy to dip in and out in a non-chronological order.

As you would expect, the sections are informative, and *Autocourse* editor Tony Dodgins gives a good flavour of each of the 32 listed drivers' careers

and personalities across 235 pages.

But, while this may sound like a lot of room with which to work, the split sees drivers given between six and 10 pages of content, with half of this space taken up by pictures. These images are great and are a welcome addition, but it denies the opportunity to really dig into a driver's career and means that the written content reads more like a key notes summary than the deeper dive that the cover gives the impression it will be.

And this is a big problem. The question posed at the start of this review asked how *Formula One: The Legends* stands out from the pack. The simple answer is that it really doesn't.

In the introduction, the difficulty in selecting a relatively low number of drivers from the rich tapestry of contenders is made abundantly clear. Yet there is a reason why all but one or two of these names feature regularly in publications such as this – they are the true legends.

Yes, there will likely have been a temptation to add more names in – Lella Lombardi, for example, is conspicuous in her absence – but Juan Manuel Fangio, Sir Stirling Moss, Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton were among those that were always going to appear.

Sadly, the gripes do not end here. While the images are pristine and perfectly lovely to look at, all too often you'll find yourself midway through a sentence and then go through two, three

and occasionally four pages of pictures before continuing the narrative. Should you have taken time to appreciate the imagery, you will likely have to flick back to remind yourself of the thread you were previously following.

This, it must be said, is more of a personal annoyance than anything. But what this writer found most frustrating in the entries of Fernando Alonso, Hamilton and Max Verstappen was that *Formula 1: The Legends*, a book that was published this year, ends its storytelling in 2022. It must be asked, even with print deadlines, where was the update for the 2023 season?

This is especially evident in Verstappen's section, when there is talk of the records he gained in 2022, including dated statements of, "It all added up to a new record 15 wins in a single season" and, "Max's 15 from 22 worked out at 68.2 per cent (win rate), leaving him something to still aim at".

If this update was, as seems to be the case, not possible, then a disclaimer in the first pages to clarify that all information was correct to the start of the 2023 season would have satisfied this criticism.

Bringing some positivity, *Formula One: The Legends* is a thoroughly enjoyable book and, if you just want to look at some stunning visuals, it also fulfils that criteria.

There was simply too much of a sense of having seen this before and – looking at the bookcase next to me – there are several examples that confirm this feeling.

A good read, but not a standout offering.

**SAM HALL**





## WHAT'S ON

## INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

**Chinese Grand Prix**  
F1 World Championship  
Round 5/24  
Shanghai, China  
20-21 April

**TV Live** Sky Sports F1,  
Sat 0330, Sun 0755

**TV Highlights**  
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1130,  
Channel 4, 1230

**IndyCar**

Round 2/15  
Long Beach, USA

21 April  
**TV Live** Sky Sports F1,  
Sun 2000

**6 Hours of Imola**

World Endurance  
Championship  
Round 2/8

Imola, Italy  
21 April  
**TV Live** Eurosport 2,  
Sun 1430

**IMSA SportsCar Championship**

Round 3/11  
Long Beach, USA

20 April  
**TV Livestream**  
IMSA.com/tvlive

**NASCAR Cup**

Round 10/36  
Talladega, USA

21 April  
**TV Live** Premier 2,  
Sun 2000

**NASCAR Xfinity**

Round 9/33  
Talladega, USA  
20 April

**Australian Supercars**

Round 3/12  
Taupo, New Zealand

20-21 April  
**TV Live** TNT Sports 3,  
Sat 0400, TNT Sports 2,  
Sun 0400

**Brazilian Stock Car Championship**

Round 3/12  
Interlagos, Brazil  
20-21 April

**TV Livestream**  
on Motorsport.tv,  
Sat 1800, Sun 1600

**Croatia Rally**

World Rally Championship  
Round 4/13

Zagreb, Croatia

18-21 April  
**TV Live**  
TNT Sports 1, Fri 0715, 1045,  
TNT Sports 3, 1330, 1445,  
1615, TNT Sports 2, Sat 0700,  
0945, TNT Sports 3, 1415,  
TNT Sports 3, 1600,  
Sun 0600, 0730, 0915,  
TNT Sports 2, 1200  
**TV Highlights**  
TNT Sports 3, Fri 2230,  
TNT Sports 2, Sat 2330,  
TNT Sports 1, 2300

## UK MOTORSPORT

**Cadwell Park MSVR**

20 April  
Equipe (BCV8, GTS,  
Libre/70s/Pre-'63/50s,  
MG Cup)

**Brands Hatch MSVR**

20-21 April  
Ferrari Challenge UK

**Croft 750MC**

20-21 April  
5Club MX-5 Cup, Alfa Romeo,


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**Chinese Grand Prix preview – F1 2025 calendar revealed, and is Ferrari in genuine contention?**

After five years on the shelf, and 105 grands prix, Formula 1 is back at the Shanghai International Circuit for the Chinese Grand Prix this weekend. Joining Bryn Lucas are Alex Kalinauckas and Filip Cleeren as they discuss the new 2025 F1 Calendar, Fernando Alonso's contract extension and whether the nature of Shanghai itself will bring Ferrari into stronger contention.



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Chinese Grand Prix





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WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

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Villeneuve took the Renault drive that Montagny had looked "sure to get"

# MONTAGNY RACING FOR RENAULT

*All looked set for an F1 debut. Until Jacques Villeneuve became available...*

JAMES NEWBOLD

**J**acques Villeneuve's Formula 1 return at Renault for the inaugural Chinese Grand Prix in 2004 was a seminal moment in Franck Montagny's career.

Then a test driver for Renault, the Frenchman was a logical choice for the seat vacated by Toyota-bound Jarno Trulli – he had, after all, completed 14 days in the R24. Without the pressure of a full-time seat on the line – Giancarlo Fisichella had already signed for 2005 – race outings would likely boost Montagny's test input too.

Handing Montagny a debut was unlikely to impact Renault's constructors' championship ranking either. The struggles of Williams and McLaren meant third was secure. Although team boss Flavio Briatore harboured ambitions of beating BAR to second, it would require Trulli's replacement to hit the ground running and immediately match team leader Fernando Alonso.

"Everything was set, we had nothing to prove anymore with the car, the team was good enough for the year," reflects Montagny.

**"I WAS JUST A THIRD DRIVER, WITH NO BACKGROUND. HE WAS A WORLD CHAMPION"**

"I was sure to get in the car. I had a lot of mileage. It's a French guy, with a French team, it was good so nothing to lose."

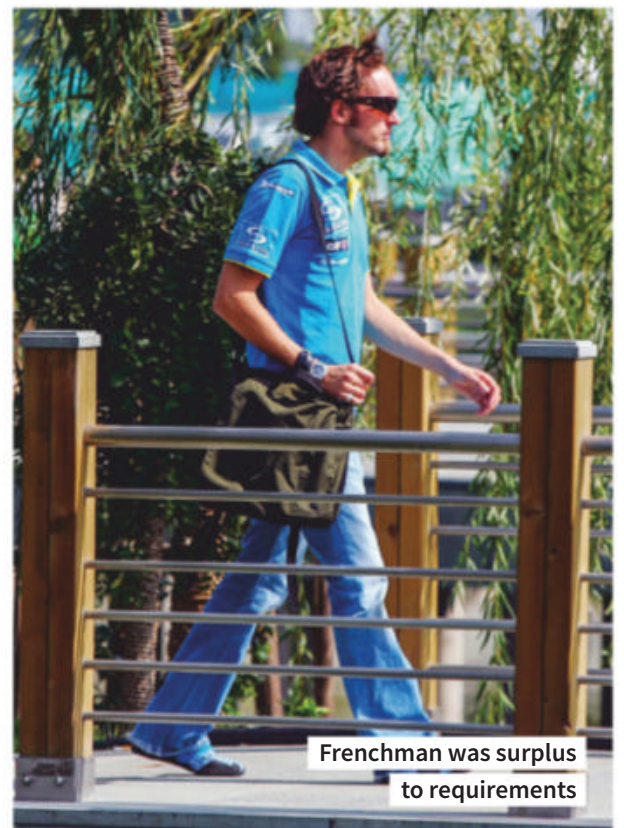
Villeneuve hadn't driven an F1 car in anger since his acrimonious departure from BAR on the eve of the 2003 Japanese GP, 11 months earlier. The 1997 title winner had never raced on Michelin tyres either. But the PR appeal of signing one of only two active world champions (Ferrari's Michael Schumacher was the other) was too much for Briatore to resist. Villeneuve got the nod for the final three races and an unfulfilling cameo, with no points and a best result of 10th.

Engineer Tim Wright worked for Renault's test team at the time and believes the two-time World Series by Nissan champion deserved the break. "He certainly had the talent," notes Wright. "His feedback was good, he was very popular with the whole team and would have fitted in."

Montagny is pragmatic and accepts there was little he could do: "That's the way it is, you can't deal with it. I was just a third driver, with no background. He was a world champion."

But he does point out that the biggest winners were F1 itself and Villeneuve, who secured a full-time return to the grid with Sauber for 2005. Montagny doesn't go as far as suggesting that he would have done a better job, as Wright believes he would have done: "You don't know how it goes, I'd never done a race before. If I'd done the same, it's already good."

But he does believe it had a profound



Frenchman was surplus to requirements

impact on his career. He says that talks with Peter Sauber over joining the Swiss squad in the seat eventually taken by Villeneuve collapsed when it became clear that he wasn't Renault's preferred stand-in. Montagny had to content himself with seven race starts for Super Aguri in 2006. For that, and his current involvement in F1 as a pundit on French TV, he regards himself as "pretty lucky". "I had the chance to be part of the Formula 1 circus, I'm still working in Formula 1, I'm a happy guy," he sums up. 🏁



## FINISHING STRAIGHT

### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Michael Schumacher inspects his damaged Ferrari F1-2001 as it's craned away following a dramatic crash during Friday practice for the 2001 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne. The reigning world champion had spun backwards off the circuit at Turn 6, his car dug into the gravel and barrel-rolled twice before coming to rest next to the barrier. Thanks to the efforts of his team, Schumacher swept to pole position the next day – “They had a late night and an early morning due to my problem yesterday and they have given me another fantastic car again,” he said. “They did a good job those guys” – and followed that up with victory on Sunday. The race was overshadowed by the death of marshal Graham Beveridge, who was struck by debris from the lap-four accident involving Jacques Villeneuve’s BAR-Honda and the Williams-BMW of Ralf Schumacher.









MARC SURER MY FAVOURITE... TEAM-MATE



Surer (left) raced with Winkelhock from 1977

## Manfred Winkelhock

**O**f far greater importance to Marc Surer than the results from his on-off partnership with Manfred Winkelhock between 1977 and 1985 is his friendship with the exciting German. The duo shared BMW, Ford and Porsche machinery in endurance racing, were team-mates in Formula 2 and rivals in F1. The choice of Winkelhock, who crashed fatally in 1985 at Mosport in their shared Kremer Porsche 956, as Surer's favourite team-mate was never in doubt.

The Swiss remembers "we became friends very quickly" when they joined the BMW Junior Team in 1977. Together, they won the two-litre class in the Nurburgring 1000Km and, with Surer based near Winkelhock's Waiblingen home, they met up frequently. That continued when racing against each other in F1 from 1982 onwards. "We went out in the evenings together, privately and also at the track sometimes we had dinner when we didn't have an engagement with sponsors," says Surer, who believes the pair "had a lot in common".

Winkelhock was "less sensitive for the set-up of the car, he could drive with the car which was not perfect" in a way Surer says he struggled to do. Both were happy to further the aims of their team, as demonstrated when their Ford C100s drove side-by-side for the opening laps



of the 1982 Brands Hatch 1000Km until slight contact on the increasingly wet road fired Winkelhock off. "We touched because of aquaplaning," recalls Surer. "It was really difficult to put the power down in these conditions and so it happened. But there was no blaming each other."

They continued to collaborate informally in F1, specifically during qualifying for the 1984 South African GP. There, Winkelhock's ATS-BMW towed Surer's Arrows-Cosworth to top the dwindling normally aspirated contingent.

Victory at the Monza round of the 1985 world sportscar championship when a fallen tree brought out an early red flag proved the high point. "It was a present," says Surer, who retains happy memories of their "unique" friendship. "It was very unusual," he adds. "Even fighting each other, it was always with no problem because you can trust the other one."

**JAMES NEWBOLD**



NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

## F1 back to China

WHO WILL REIGN SUPREME IN SHANGHAI?

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