

F1 What has happened to the Williams revival?

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

23 MAY 2024

AUTOSPORT

EMILIA ROMAGNA GP

SO CLOSE!

How Norris almost beat
Verstappen again in
late Imola contest

'It was a good effort,
a little too late'

LANDO NORRIS



Indy 500 Penske locks out the front row

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A tougher test for Verstappen with more yet to come?

It wasn't a classic, at least not for the first hour. But if a race can be judged on the finish, then the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix was one of the better Formula 1 events of 2024 so far.

As Jake Boxall-Legge shows in our report (p14), a combination of Red Bull getting its sums slightly wrong on the hard tyre, McLaren's new-found pace, and some fine work by Lando Norris made the final stages at Imola tense. Yes, Max Verstappen won *again*, but this time he really had to work for it. Given the team's struggles last Friday and Sergio Perez's performance, was this one of Verstappen's better wins?

The upgraded Ferrari SF-24 (see p25) also wasn't too far behind. The next stop is Monaco, where home hero Charles Leclerc has previously scored two superb poles but not had the luck. It's a race that can throw up strange events and results, so hopefully Ferrari and McLaren can challenge Verstappen again this weekend.

It's been a long time since Williams has featured at the front and it remains point-less in 2024. Nevertheless, work continues apace behind the scenes, as team boss James Vowles explains on p36.

This Sunday is one of the biggest in the motorsport year because, after the Monaco GP, the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 will take place. Despite all its recent controversy, Penske qualified 1-2-3 (p4) and there are plenty of other storylines to look out for. Joey Barnes is your guide to America's greatest race on p42.

Look out for our extensive reports on the Monaco GP and Indy 500, as well as British Touring Cars and Formula E, in next week's issue.



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PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 Penske sweeps front row for Indy 500
- 6 Ferrari tight-lipped on Newey talk
- 8 F3 aces get McLaren deals – and disasters
- 11 Monaco Grand Prix preview
- 12 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 13 Guest column: Trevor Carlin

RACE CENTRE

- 14 Emilia Romagna GP report and analysis
- 30 World of Sport: Formula 2; Formula 3; GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup; Porsche Supercup; Super Formula; Australian Supercars; NASCAR All-Star

FEATURES

- 36 What's happened to the Williams revival?
- 42 Indianapolis 500 preview

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 53 New Sprint Challenge Cayman
- 54 Silverstone GP event for smaller clubs
- 56 Higgins emulates Pond in TR7 on Manx
- 59 Opinion: Stephen Lickorish
- 60 National reports: Silverstone; Snetterton; Thruxton; Oulton Park; Mallory Park; Bishopscourt; Cadwell Park; Pembrey

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 1997 Super Touring Cup
- 74 My favourite car: Al Unser Jr

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PIT + PADDOCK



McLaughlin heads Penske clean sweep

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Scott McLaughlin delivered a memorable record-setting run last Sunday to claim pole position for this weekend's 108th running of the Indianapolis 500. And while the lights shone on a magical moment for the New Zealander, it was also a remarkable performance for Team Penske with a sweep of the front row – something done only one other time by the team, in 1988.

McLaughlin, driving Penske's #3 Chevrolet-powered entry, was the last of the drivers in the Fast Six to go out and nailed an opening lap of 234.526mph before tallying a four-lap average of 234.220mph – the fastest pole in Indy 500 history – to take the top spot from team-mates Will Power and Josef Newgarden. It is the seventh pole of McLaughlin's IndyCar career, and Penske's 19th for the 500. It comes after the team struggled in the midfield in qualifying for last year's race, although Newgarden went on to win.

"It's our first front-row sweep since 1988 [Rick Mears, Danny Sullivan and Al Unser Sr]," said McLaughlin. "It's been a tough

few years, at least with the car speed. Josef winning last year was fantastic, but a lot of the objective was to bring faster cars, and we certainly have. That was just a gnarly run. It was so cool, man."

Power, the 2018 Indy 500 winner, gathered up a magical run that hit a four-lap average of 233.917mph, and which knocked Newgarden from provisional pole. Like his team-mates, Newgarden nailed his first two laps above 234mph, before producing a four-lap average of 233.808mph.

Arrow McLaren's Alexander Rossi ended up fourth after Penske's trio knocked him off his perch and was clearly agitated enough to state "I'm annoyed", before declaring it "good motivation for next weekend". He will line up on the second row alongside Kyle Larson, the 2021 NASCAR Cup Series champion who is making his IndyCar debut in the sister Arrow McLaren-Rick Hendrick car and slotted into fifth. AJ Foyt Racing's Santino Ferrucci, who finished third in last year's Indy 500, was the final runner to make the Fast Six pole shootout.

First of those to miss out was Rinus VeeKay. The Dutchman saw his streak of three consecutive front-row starts in the 500 come to an end after qualifying seventh with Ed Carpenter Racing, but that was a strong effort after overcoming a crash in the opening day of qualifying to transfer into the top 12 battle on Sunday. "I was happy," said VeeKay. "This feels like a bonus lap after yesterday. I was nervous before this, but right now I feel like we got some really good ingredients and I can just kind of chill down and enjoy from here."

Arrow McLaren's Pato O'Ward ended up eighth, ahead of Meyer Shank Racing's Felix Rosenqvist, who narrowly shaded two-time Indy 500 winner Takuma Sato (Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing) to the honour of top Honda-powered driver. The Honda runners lacked ultimate speed, but did have consistency, with Sato's four laps the closest in speed among those in the top 12 phase of qualifying. Chip Ganassi Racing, usually Honda's top team, was mired in the midfield, with Alex Palou the best of its quintet in 14th, and Scott Dixon way down in 21st.

The real drama developed in the Last Chance, where four



VeeKay bounced back from wreck to qualify seventh



drivers battled for the final three spots in the 33-car field. Katherine Legge had a “terrifying” run that featured two moments that nearly led to disaster to top that session with Dale Coyne Racing. Andretti Global’s Marcus Ericsson, the 2022 Indy 500 winner and last year’s runner-up, was making a solid run until a blunder of backing out of the throttle after taking the white flag left doubt on his chances. He went out for a final attempt with just six minutes to go, and rattled off a four-lap average to place 32nd.

Graham Rahal, who was bumped out of last year’s Indy 500, once again found himself in the 33rd position and defenceless to make another run in the final minutes. Instead, it was 19-year-old rookie Nolan Siegel, who was knocked out with Ericsson’s late heroics, left to make one last attempt. Driving a back-up DCR car after nearly flipping his primary chassis earlier in the week, he pushed to the limit on his opening lap. But it all ended in tears moments later when he clipped the Turn 1 wall by the narrowest of margins, which caused him to lose control and spin into the barriers in Turn 2.

JOEY BARNES

[P42 INDY 500 PREVIEW](#)



INDY 500 STARTING LINE-UP			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM (ENGINE)	SPEED
1	Scott McLaughlin	Penske (Chevy)	234.220mph
2	Will Power	Penske (Chevy)	233.917mph
3	Josef Newgarden	Penske (Chevy)	233.808mph
4	Alexander Rossi	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	233.090mph
5	Kyle Larson	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	232.846mph
6	Santino Ferrucci	AJ Foyt (Chevy)	232.692mph
7	Rinus VeeKay	Carpenter (Chevy)	232.610mph
8	Pato O’Ward	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	232.584mph
9	Felix Rosenqvist	Meyer Shank (Honda)	232.305mph
10	Takuma Sato	RLLR (Honda)	232.171mph
11	Kyle Kirkwood	Andretti (Honda)	230.993mph
12	Ryan Hunter-Reay	D&R (Chevy)	230.567mph
13	Colton Herta	Andretti (Honda)	232.316mph
14	Alex Palou	Ganassi (Honda)	232.306mph
15	Callum Ilott	Arrow McLaren (Chevy)	232.230mph
16	Marcus Armstrong	Ganassi (Honda)	232.183mph
17	Ed Carpenter	Carpenter (Chevy)	232.017mph
18	Kyffin Simpson	Ganassi (Honda)	231.948mph
19	Marco Andretti	Andretti (Honda)	231.890mph
20	Helio Castroneves	Meyer Shank (Honda)	231.871mph
21	Scott Dixon	Ganassi (Honda)	231.851mph
22	Agustin Canapino	JHR (Chevy)	231.847mph
23	Sting Ray Robb	AJ Foyt (Chevy)	231.826mph
24	Christian Rasmussen	Carpenter (Chevy)	231.682mph
25	Tom Blomqvist	Meyer Shank (Honda)	231.578mph
26	Romain Grosjean	JHR (Chevy)	231.514mph
27	Linus Lundqvist	Ganassi (Honda)	231.506mph
28	Christian Lundgaard	RLLR (Honda)	231.465mph
29	Conor Daly	D&R (Chevy)	231.243mph
30	Pietro Fittipaldi	RLLR (Honda)	231.100mph
31	Katherine Legge	Coyne (Honda)	230.092mph
32	Marcus Ericsson	Andretti (Honda)	230.027mph
33	Graham Rahal	RLLR (Honda)	229.974mph

Vasseur coy on Newey-to-Ferrari speculation

FORMULA 1

Ferrari Formula 1 team boss Fred Vasseur is remaining tight-lipped on the chances of securing Adrian Newey after being linked with the departing Red Bull designer.

Newey is set to leave Red Bull after an extremely successful 18-year stint at the team, designing the cars that propelled Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen to seven world championships. Amid political unrest at Red Bull and a “whole host of other reasons”, Newey has decided to walk away from the Milton Keynes squad, and for now has shifted his focus to completing the RB17 hypercar that will be presented at July’s Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Newey, who has been heavily linked to a Ferrari role as teams lay the groundwork for the crucial 2026 regulation changes, has

negotiated a deal that allows him to join a rival operation in March 2025. Ferrari chief Vasseur remained coy at last weekend’s Emilia Romagna Grand Prix about the possibility of bringing Newey on board in some capacity. “Adrian has a mega record,” said Vasseur. “He’s the most successful engineer in the paddock, but I have no comment to make on this.”

At the recent Monaco Historic GP, Newey gave the firmest indication yet that he is not done with F1. “If you’d asked me 15 years ago, at the age of 65 would I seriously be considering changing teams, going somewhere else and doing another four or five years, I’d have said you’re absolutely mad,” he said.

But he then explained that he saw how his father “lost his mojo a bit” when retiring at the same age that Newey is now. He also took inspiration and advice from former F1



supremo Bernie Ecclestone, who is still very active into his nineties, and IndyCar owner Roger Penske, the most powerful figure in American racing at 87: “They both said that old thing that the brain is like a muscle –

it needs exercise and so you need to keep doing that. I guess I’ll have a bit of a holiday. I feel a little bit tired at the moment. But at some point, I’ll probably go again.”

FILIP CLEEREN & ROBERTO CHINCHERO



Albon pledges future to Williams with new contract extension

FORMULA 1

The Williams Formula 1 team has tied down Alex Albon to a multi-year contract extension until at least the end of 2026.

Albon’s previous Williams deal was due to end next year, but his excellent 2023 form for the team made him a left-field player in the ongoing silly season. Now the 28-year-old’s pledging of his future to the Grove squad has taken him off the market. “This is a long-term project that I really believe in and want to play a key role in, which is why I have signed a multi-year contract,” he said.

Team boss James Vowles was pleased to secure his lead driver for the foreseeable future as he continues to put the building blocks in place for Williams’s recovery plan. “He has exceptional talent, technical input and dedication, and this is a huge vote of confidence in Williams and the journey back to competitiveness that

we are on,” said Vowles.

After missing the 2021 F1 season when he lost his Red Bull race seat, Albon joined Williams in 2022. He quickly established himself as the team’s lead driver, and in 2023 he dragged the struggling Williams up to seventh place in the constructors’ table by scoring 27 of the team’s 28 points.

Albon and Williams are yet to score points in 2024 after a difficult start to the year, with the squad desperate for upgrades in a tight midfield battle. But with Albon becoming the latest domino to fall on the driver market, this is expected to yield more transfer action at this weekend’s Monaco GP. Sauber’s Valtteri Bottas has been linked to the second Williams seat, while Haas has built a shortlist that is topped by Alpine’s Esteban Ocon.

FILIP CLEEREN

P36 WILLIAMS STATE OF PLAY



FORMULA 1 Four-time world champion and F1 history buff Sebastian Vettel drove his 1993 ex-Ayrton Senna McLaren MP4/8 around Imola last Sunday before the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix to pay tribute to the triple F1 title winner and Roland Ratzenberger, who lost their lives at the track 30 years ago. While doing so, he brandished the flags of their respective Brazilian and Austrian nations. **Photograph by Sutton/Motorsport Images**

Aston OK with two-car plan

WEC

Aston Martin is ready to step up to run two Valkyrie Le Mans Hypercars in next year's World Endurance Championship if demanded by the regulations. The British manufacturer has made it clear that it will adapt to any rule shift for 2025.

One-car assaults on the WEC and the IMSA SportsCar Championship were announced back in October when the wraps came off the revival of the Valkyrie LMH programme in conjunction with the Heart of Racing squad. Stepping up to two cars for the WEC will not be a problem should a regulation mandating that manufacturers run two cars in the Hypercar class get the sign-off as expected.

"We fully support what WEC is doing as the championship grows," said Aston head of endurance Adam Carter. "We are committed to the programme: we will



review what comes with the regulations and adapt to that. It is all speculation at this point until the regulations are clear."

The expectation is that Heart of Racing would field two Valkyries in WEC, though Carter wouldn't confirm this. But he did say that the IMSA programme will be unaffected by any regulatory requirements in the WEC. The Valkyrie LMH is still on target for a track debut before the end of next month, the timeline revealed on the launch of the project. Proper track testing will then start in July.

GARY WATKINS

HYBRID DEBUT AT MID-OHIO

IndyCar has named the 7 July Mid-Ohio round as the competition debut for its much-delayed hybrid system. The hybrid will be used in conjunction with the existing push-to-pass facility, but with a limit on usage based on lap length. It means that IndyCar machinery can access over 800bhp for the first time in two decades, while "additional horsepower is expected in the coming years as hybrid unit development evolves".

THAI GP MOVES CLOSER

Thailand's bid to secure a Formula 1 race has edged forward, with the country's prime minister Srettha Thavasin attending last weekend's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix for talks with F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali and other stakeholders. Thavasin is hoping for a street race in Bangkok to join the calendar in 2027 or 2028.

SERB IN FOR TCR SEASON

Dusan Borkovic, the Serbian tin-top ace so lofty that he makes Matt Neal look like Laurent Aiello, is to contest the remainder of the TCR World Tour following his podium first time out in Marrakech this month. Borkovic will keep his ride full-time in the GOAT Racing Honda Civic squad alongside Esteban Guerrieri and Marco Butti.

ANOTHER AUSSIE IN NASCAR

Yet another leading light from Australia's Supercars series is to make his NASCAR Cup Series debut. Cameron Waters (below), a 12-time race winner in Supercars, will drive an RFK Racing Ford at the Sonoma road course on 9 June. He has already had two Truck Series outings this year. As already reported, Supercars points leader Will Brown will also be on the grid at the California track.



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Exclusion and race ban hit new McLaren juniors

FORMULA 3

McLaren has recruited highly rated Formula 3 rookies Alex Dunne and Martinus Stenshorne to its driver development programme, but no sooner had this been announced than they both hit dramas in their 2024 campaigns.

Irishman Dunne, who made a sensational F3 debut at last November's Macau Grand Prix after finishing as 2023 GB3 runner-up, qualified fifth at Imola last Friday. But the 18-year-old's MP Motorsport car was banished to the back of the 30-car grid for both races when it was found to have 'a non-conformity with the front anti-roll bar links', believed to be a simple case of parts intended for the rear being used. From there, he recovered to 14th and 16th positions in the two races.

Norwegian Stenshorne's setback came even sooner. The 18-year-old, who was runner-up to Andrea Kimi Antonelli in Formula Regional European last season, was banned from competing in July's Silverstone round within hours of the McLaren announcement. Stenshorne, who is racing in F3 with Hitech GP, contested last month's GB3 round at the British circuit, albeit with a different team. This came without the prior permission of the F3 series, which said that this would not have been given anyway "due to the similarities between the GB3 car and the F3 car and the sporting advantage gain for the driver".

Remarkably, the F3 statement added that, despite GB3 trumpeting the outing and Hitech running one of the top teams in that series, "the team representative explained that he was unaware of the

driver's participation in the GB3 test and competition in Silverstone until he received the summons from the stewards but admitted that Hitech was present in the event as they run three cars in GB3".

Hitech is appealing the decision.

A similar punishment was handed out to ART Grand Prix's Alpine junior Nikola Tsolov, who has been barred from the Spa round for competing in a Eurocup-3 counter at the Belgian circuit last month.

The recruitments of Dunne and Stenshorne to McLaren are the first under the team's new junior programme chief Stephanie Carlin, who in her former role at Carlin watched Dunne first-hand defeating her drivers to the 2022 British F4 crown and contending for last year's GB3 title. She described them as "both exciting and promising young talents within motorsport".

Consistency puts British pair into Euro series lead

GT4 EUROPEAN

British youngsters Tom Lebbon and Josh Rattican have moved to the top of the GT4 European Series after the opening two double-headers. Single-seater convert Lebbon and British GT graduate Rattican added a third and fourth at Misano last weekend to their second and third from Paul Ricard.

The pair are driving a

McLaren Artura GT4 fielded by Elite Motorsport, the team with which Lebbon won the 2020 Ginetta Junior title and fielded Rattican to the runner-up slot in the 2021 Ginetta GT4 Supercup. They fended off a challenge from a brace of Porsches to complete the podium at the Misano opener, won by the Mercedes of Lluc Ibanez and Alexandre Papadopoulos.

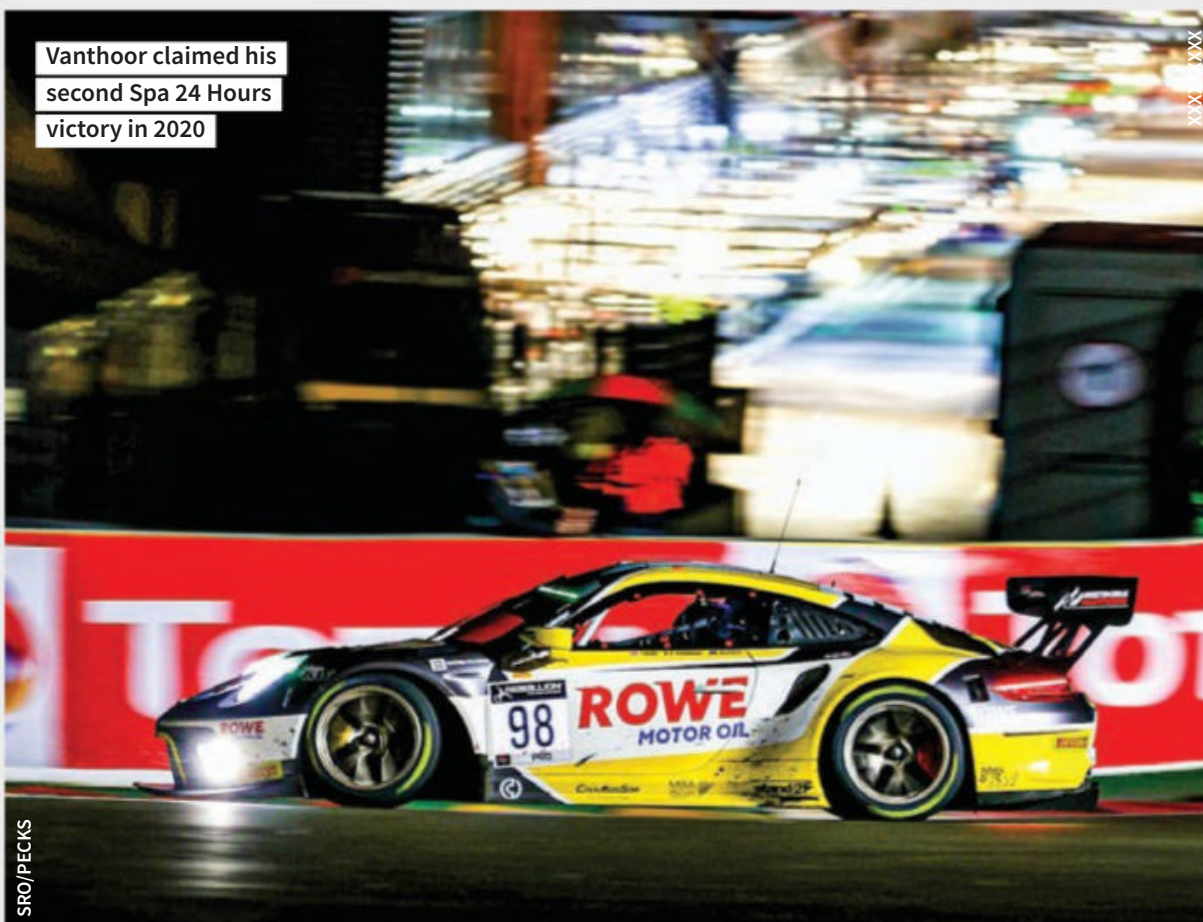
In the second race, early contact from Lebbon with a

Porsche enabled the sister Elite McLaren of Alex Denning to lead briefly, before that car, shared by Tom Emson, fell back down the order with damage.

Victory went to the BMW of 1999 Formula Ford Festival winner Ricardo van der Ende and Benjamin Lessennes after on-the-road winner Benjamin Lariche, in an Alpine, failed by just 0.334s to overturn a 10s penalty for contact.



Vanthoor claimed his
second Spa 24 Hours
victory in 2020



Porsche wheels out the big guns

SPA 24 HOURS

World Endurance Championship points leaders Kevin Estre and Laurens Vanthoor are among the Porsche drivers to join the entry for next month's centenary Spa 24 Hours. The German manufacturer has stacked additional entries for the double-points GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup round with stars from its factory roster.

Estre and Vanthoor, who have been on the podium every time out in the WEC so far alongside Andre Lotterer with Porsche Penske Motorsport, will contest the Belgian enduro on 29-30 June in a 911 GT3-R fielded by Taiwanese entrant HubAuto Racing. The Spa winners of 2019 (Estre) and 2014 and 2020 (Vanthoor) will be joined in the car, fielded with backing from Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific, by 2015 IMSA SportsCar Championship GT Le Mans title winner Patrick Pilet.

Two-time Le Mans 24 Hours participant HubAuto, which doesn't have a full programme in 2024, is returning to Spa for

the first time since it fielded a Mercedes-AMG GT3 in 2021. Logistical support for its entry will be provided by Manthey Racing.

Two more members of the WEC Hypercar squad will join SSR Performance on its return to the Porsche fold after switching to Lamborghini for its 2023 DTM campaign. Frederic Makowiecki and Matt Campbell will drive a 911, run in conjunction with Herberth Motorsport, with Mathieu Jaminet, who is taking time off from his IMSA GTP assault with PPM.

Reigning DTM champion Thomas Preining will take in Spa with Chinese entrant Phantom Global Racing, which has linked up with two-time Le Mans winner Timo Bernhard's Team 75. The Austrian will race alongside another DTM race winner, Joel Eriksson, and Supercars racer Jaxon Evans. The Swede and Aussie are both racing for Phantom in GTWC Asia and were part of its Bathurst 12 Hour assault in February, like Spa part of the Intercontinental GT Challenge, and which yielded a fourth-place finish.

GARY WATKINS

THREE-CYLINDER ENGINES MAKE 'OLD F3' DEBUT

SUPER FORMULA LIGHTS

Japan's Super Formula Lights series kicked off its spec engine era with last weekend's delayed opening round at Autopolis.

The second-tier Japanese series has switched to a new one-make, TOM'S-built 1.6-litre turbocharged three-cylinder unit, replacing the old two-litre normally aspirated formula. Also making its debut was the Dallara 324, an update of the 320 chassis produced for SF Lights and Euroformula Open to keep the spirit of 'traditional' F3 alive. Changes include a new engine cover with a more conventional air intake above the driver's head, without the side-mounted airbox of old, and revised sidepods.

Additionally, Kumho has taken over as the tyre supplier following Hankook's withdrawal in the wake of the plant fire that curtailed its involvement in Japanese motorsport.

SF Lights' intended Motegi opener last month was called off after cracks were discovered in the bell housing of several cars after pre-season testing. But after fresh parts were shipped to Japan, the Autopolis round went off without a hitch.

"Everything went very smoothly," said TOM'S technical boss Jun Yamada. "The cars are heavier now with the new engine, and we've not been able to fully understand the Kumho tyres yet, but looking at it from the championship's point of view, it was a good weekend."

TOM'S driver Seita Nonaka kicked off the season with two victories, with Honda protege Syun Koide scoring the remaining win for B-Max.

JAMIE KLEIN

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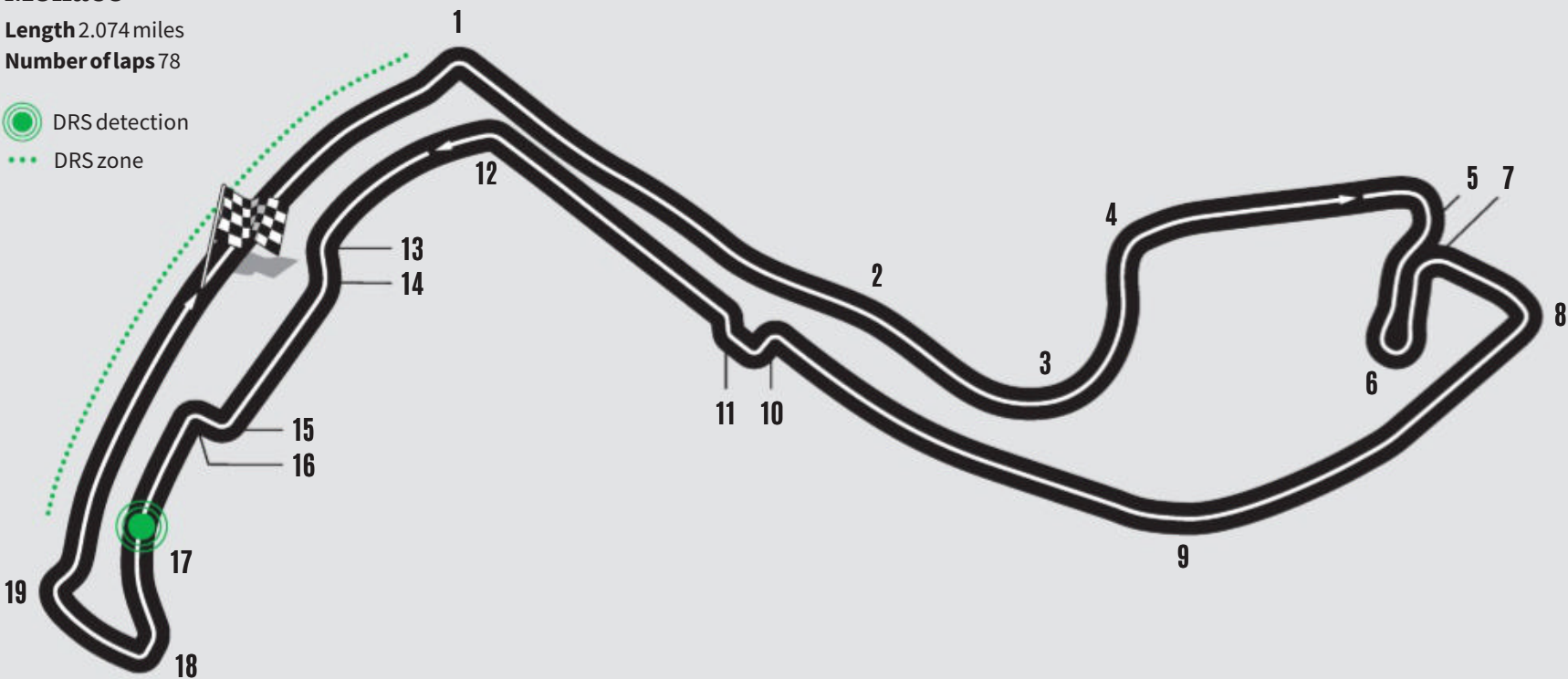
F1 MONACO GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Monaco

Length 2.074 miles
Number of laps 78

DRS detection
DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 24 May
FP1 1230 FP2 1600

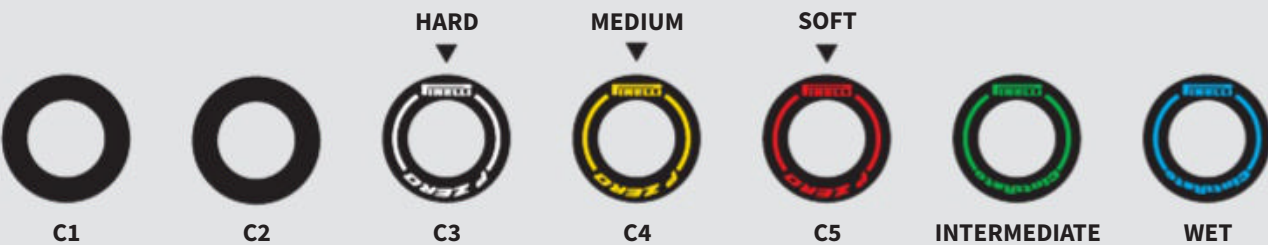
Saturday 25 May
FP3 1130
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 26 May
RACE 1400

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BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

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CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	161
2	Leclerc	113
3	Perez	107
4	Norris	101
5	Sainz	93

Constructors

1	Red Bull	268
2	Ferrari	212
3	McLaren	154
4	Mercedes	79
5	Aston Martin	44



Leclerc seeks to end home-track jinx

MONACO STATS

Previous winners

2023	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2022	Sergio Perez	Red Bull
2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull
2017	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes

2023 POLE POSITION
Max Verstappen
1m11.365s

POLE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton
1m10.166s (2019)

RACE LAP RECORD
Lewis Hamilton
1m12.909s (2021)



John Watson took pole in 1977 in Brabham-Alfa

Monaco podiums

Ayrton Senna	8
Michael Schumacher	7
Graham Hill	7
Lewis Hamilton	7
Sebastian Vettel	7
Alain Prost	6
Fernando Alonso	5
Jody Scheckter	5
Rubens Barrichello	5
Nico Rosberg	4



The problems with Imola?

While a thrilling last-gasp pursuit is to be celebrated, DRS trains and the choice of tyre compound contributed to the Italian track falling short for entertainment

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Yes, the coda was excellent. Lando Norris flinging his McLaren, Max Verstappen wrestling his Red Bull – both around a brilliantly brutal track. But if bad tonic makes up 90% of your G&T, it's going to leave an overly bitter taste. And that was last weekend's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

When any prospect of a 2021-style Tamburello tussle between the two front-row starters was lost, and it became clear that Verstappen had Red Bull's typical degradation advantage on the softer medium tyres after his practice struggles had raised hopes, any chance of a properly decent race appeared gone. Imola needs all the help it can get in this department, especially with the hosts of a new Bangkok race actually in attendance last weekend.

The narrow track, with all its history, has never had a reputation for thrilling overtaking fests (*well, not since the addition of chicanes in 1995 – ed*). But, as any overly complex Gen3 Formula E race will show you, this isn't the sole requirement for a good motor race. A decent amount of passing across the field even with just a tense, close thriller up front can be brilliant.

The early stages of last Sunday's event took away any hope of this. In the first third of the race, aside from the usual opening-lap jostling, there was just a single overtaking move: Lance Stroll's Aston Martin nailing Alpine driver Esteban Ocon for 12th position. Exhilarating stuff...

“It's tantalising what might have been if the C3 mediums and C2 hards had been in play”

DRS trains are a feature of every event at Imola in the current era. This makes overtaking very hard when all the cars are running tyres of roughly the same age. It was therefore baffling to discover that the DRS zone for this year's event was 100 metres shorter than the previous race here in 2022. What's interesting is that last weekend's race ended up with *more* overtaking than two years ago. According to Autosport's Forix database, the 2024 Imola race featured 29 passes versus 13 in 2022.

And this is down to the piece's other villain, the main body of F1's cocktail offering: the tyres. They're on every car and, as has long been the case, the ultimate difference between winning and losing in this formula. Pirelli's decision to bring compounds a step softer than in 2022 was to try to increase strategic variance. But when this backfired – the long pitlane plays a massive part, let's

not forget – it led to cars with much younger tyres later on being able to overcome the shorter DRS zone. As Aston team boss Mike Krack explained over Stroll's Suzuka moan about straightline speed: “Tyre conditions [mean] the acceleration out of the corners is different.”

But the softer tyre move just boosted Red Bull overall. All through this rules era it has been able to bring a degradation advantage to bear. McLaren and Ferrari in particular are much improved in this area, but the remaining deficit was exposed when they all ran the mediums on full tanks at the start. Verstappen just edged away to the tune of 0.3 seconds per lap.

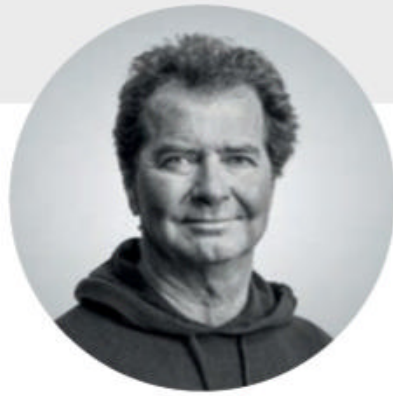
It's tantalising to think what might have been if the Pirelli C3 mediums and C2 hards had been in play, rather than the C3s as hards and C4s as mediums. Verstappen and Red Bull had things wrong on the C3s much later on, while McLaren and Norris got them so right. Indeed, the McLaren driver was left ruing how his front wing choices added oversteer through his first stint, preventing him pushing on the fragile C4 rubber.

The counter to this would be that, had it known that the C3 would become the critical start tyre with such a selection, Red Bull would have dedicated more time to understanding it in FP2. Christian Horner even admitted that “with hindsight we maybe would have been better running a hard long on Friday just because we opted to take two new hard tyres into the race and it would have been better to get the information on the tyre”. Verstappen would simply have adjusted accordingly to the sensitivities required to get the best out of the tyres last weekend, but his squad would still have had its early set-up issues to work around. This was what added the real intrigue across the Imola weekend, where qualifying was also a fascinating spectacle – pan-team tows and all.

The bid for different Imola strategies failed to make things more interesting. Again, the ending went some way to saving this, but potentially we could have had a race-long battle at the front had Red Bull's degradation advantage been reduced.

Of late, it just looks a lot more vulnerable than at the start of the season. As Ferrari team principal Fred Vasseur has highlighted, “they are not in the comfort zone of last year anymore”. And now Red Bull heads to Monaco – full of the kerb-riding requirement the RB20 still doesn't like. Then afterwards comes Canada, where even with the mighty RB19 Verstappen ‘only’ won by 9.6s due to the intricacies of the tyre dark arts on the faster but still kerb-heavy Montreal layout.

If it's beaten in these – a prospect made harder for the rest considering Verstappen's brilliance, such as he displayed with his faultless driving on cold, worn rubber last Sunday – we may have to revisit the depressing, predictable narrative 2024 kicked off with. Cheers to that. 🍷



When Max Mosley came calling

The late FIA president and one-time 'garagiste' had an important question to ask, which has resonance today in light of Formula 1 teams' resistance to new entries

TREVOR CARLIN

Today, Thursday 23 May, is the third anniversary of the passing of Max Mosley. While the youngsters hopefully reading this – probably some of my recent Formula 4 drivers! – possibly will not know of him, many other people will remember him, but not necessarily solely for good reasons.

Max courted controversy because of his upbringing, his family and his absolute self-belief. He was extremely intelligent, did not suffer fools lightly, and he made that very clear. He would have made a great politician, because he could debate better than anyone. But he chose to use his skills in the motorsport world, and we should be thankful for that. As team principal of the March Formula 1 team in the 1970s, he became pals with a certain Bernie Ecclestone, owner of the Brabham Formula 1 team, and, later, the commercial rights to F1. Bernie helped Max become the president of FISA – then the motorsport arm of the FIA – in 1991, replacing the highly disruptive Jean-Marie Balestre.

All of a sudden the old 'garagistes' had full control of F1 and world motorsport, and the rest is, as they say, history.

During my period of working with my uncles Vic and Steve Hollman at Bowman Racing in the British Formula 3 Championship, in 1990 we made a decision to build our own chassis to take on the mighty Ralt, Reynard and Dallara in the global F3 market. At exactly the same time, Eddie Jordan, who had run Johnny Herbert to the 1987 British F3 title and had gone on to great success in Formula 3000, had decided to build his own F1 car and team. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and, while we had some good results with the Bruce Carey-designed BC-1, it was never as successful as the beautiful Gary Anderson-pencilled 191. That began the demise of Bowman as an F3 powerhouse, while at Silverstone Eddie created the last true privateer F1 team on a wing and prayer.

By 2006, Jordan had become Midland, now run by Colin Kolles. While running Carlin Motorsport in numerous junior categories, I had a brief period in F1 working with Colin at Midland. However, despite having Carlin team members and ex-Carlin drivers, it became obvious that a small underfunded team could not compete anymore, so I swiftly returned 'home' to the junior categories.

Here is where my brief contact with Max came about. I received an email from the FIA asking if I could host the president Mr Mosley for a meeting at our workshop in Aldershot. Obviously I said yes; however, I was very conscious that we did not quite have the facility that he was used to seeing in the F1 world. Nonetheless, the date was set, and I had the guys constantly cleaning and tidying up to try to make the

best impression possible for when the FIA president arrived with his entourage.

Five minutes before the meeting was scheduled to start, I saw a Toyota Prius pull up and park right outside our office. I panicked, because I was expecting a large black German car to arrive with a chauffeur at the wheel, and did not want anyone blocking the parking space. To my amazement, Max jumped out of the car on his own and walked over to the workshop. I rushed

“It’s funny how things turn out. The scales have tipped to make F1 teams viable financially”

to the door and brought him in, and he was super-relaxed and friendly. After the niceties of offering a mug of builders' tea (no Earl Grey or saucers at Carlin), we started chatting.

Max cut to the chase and asked why one of the world's most successful junior teams had not placed a request for an entry for the 2008 F1 championship. My response was easy: I knew that Carlin did not have the funding to build the infrastructure needed to produce an F1 car, let alone compete with the manufacturer teams on running budgets. I told him I would love to run a customer car/engine package even if it was a year out of date, because that would enable a team like ours to grow into F1. Max, of course, had supplied customer March cars to teams including Hesketh and Williams in the 1970s, and wanted such an option to exist, and he also said that he was pushing for a cost cap on F1 budgets. He asked me to place a request for an entry, which I duly did, knowing full well that Prodrive were the absolute best option for the new place on the grid.

Prodrive got the entry and proposed a customer car team, but that was vetoed by some of the smaller existing F1 teams, so Prodrive withdrew. They were the perfect candidates for F1 and, if Max had managed to persuade the teams to accept the cost cap earlier, then maybe Prodrive would have joined F1 and would still be there today.

It's funny how things turn out. Max was pushing hard for new teams and encouraging them despite the financial difficulties they would face. Now the scales have tipped to make F1 teams viable financially and therefore valuable, yet F1 itself will not allow a super-credible entity in the form of Andretti-Cadillac to join.

It's a cliché, but Max will be turning in his grave. 🌿

RACE CENTRE

Just three quarters of a second separated the hunter from the hunted



FORMULA 1

MAX PASSES LANDO'S LATE IMOLA TEST

Things all looked pretty normal for the reigning world champion until a late charge from F1's newest winner made things more interesting

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES



f this year's edition of the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix had been held last season, Max Verstappen's victory from pole position at a circuit notoriously difficult to overtake on would have been a foregone conclusion. Even in races where a Red Bull's usual prodigious pace had been missed, Verstappen could be expected to control the race from the front lines.

It looked certain to go that way in the first 44 laps at Imola. Verstappen was 7.4 seconds clear of Lando Norris, the McLaren driver struggling for pace on the hard tyres and just about repelling Charles Leclerc's DRS-assisted overtures for second place. The gap to the front had been growing; not at a particularly rapid rate, but enough for Verstappen to look reasonably secure.

But there was a sudden change in the dynamic on the following lap. Norris suddenly chewed a second out of Verstappen's lead, guiding Leclerc out of DRS range in the process as a fightback – on a weekend full of them – suddenly appeared on the cards. The prospect of a late-race showdown had looked unlikely over the first two-thirds of the grand prix, but that's exactly what emerged.

What followed had shades of the 2005 race at the same venue – at least, to a degree. It came with its own modern twist, affected by the contemporary concepts of Pirelli degradation and the notion of performance windows. And, this time, it was the multi-time champion keeping the less-decorated driver at bay, a reversal from Fernando Alonso's 12-lap defence against Michael Schumacher at the business end of the race 19 years ago.

Verstappen had already enjoyed something of a fightback after a disappointing trio of practice sessions, and was now reaping the rewards offered by ex-F1 driver Sebastien Buemi's simulator stints back at Red Bull's Milton Keynes factory. The correct ride height settings continued to elude the team into Saturday but, thanks to the Swiss driver and the work of the trackside engineers, a fix was implemented in time for qualifying to help Verstappen battle his way to pole. Nico Hulkenberg's tow cemented the Dutchman's position at the head of Sunday's grid.

That Oscar Piastri, who narrowly trailed Verstappen in qualifying, was shuffled back three places for impeding in Q1 diluted McLaren's interest at the front of the order. Perhaps Verstappen could have been susceptible to a pincer movement, but it left just Norris to challenge into the opening chicane at Tamburello.

Both front-row starters seemed to enjoy comparable initial phases off the clutch, but Verstappen held the inside line while Norris came under scrutiny from Leclerc and had to focus on defending second. McLaren's hope of getting Norris ahead at the start had come to nothing, so it had to refocus on remaining within touching distance of Verstappen over the opening stint on medium tyres.

Norris seemed to do so, although sitting on the cusp of the one second needed for DRS rather than within it. But Verstappen began to flex a slender advantage and the opening laps were singing from the same hymn sheet: Norris could find a couple of tenths in the opening sector, but lost ground in the following two as the Red Bull's superior kerb-strike ability could yield lap time through Acque Minerali and the Variante Alta.

That advantage started to snowball more readily as the opening stint started to settle. McLaren team principal Andrea Stella



Polesitter Verstappen immediately started to build advantage

SUTTON

“IF YOU TOOK YOUR TYRES TO TOO HIGH A TEMPERATURE, THEN THE DROP WAS QUITE SIGNIFICANT”

suspected that tyre temperature had started to sap at Norris's pace, stating: “If you took your tyres to too high a temperature, then the drop was quite significant. For us, the tyres at the start of the race in the first stint were too hot and we were losing ground to Verstappen.”

While Verstappen was able to shake off Norris, the Briton could not offer Leclerc the same treatment and, instead, the Ferrari remained consistently within a two-second window. McLaren knew this could give Leclerc a potential undercut reward if Ferrari made the call to pit, so it decided to take the front foot and pulled Norris in for a switch to hard tyres on lap 22.

The kicker was that Sergio Perez, running to a contra strategy by starting his Red Bull on hard tyres, was ahead when Norris emerged back on track. McLaren suspected that this would be the case, but the threat of losing track position to Leclerc was too much of a risk.

“We wanted to make sure we could hold the position because, at this track if Leclerc pits, he finds Perez in the DRS zone, and he was going to try and undercut us,” Stella explained. “We checked with [Norris] a couple of times, he was comfortable that we would pass Perez, but it was important to retain track position. In fairness, at that time of the race, we were not thinking we would be in the question to beat Verstappen, we were more like, ‘We want to retain second position’”

Thankfully for Norris, his confidence that he'd successfully clear Perez was proven on the following lap with DRS, ensuring he wouldn't be at threat from a Ferrari overcut attempt either. On fresh rubber >>



McLaren admitted Piastri not making the podium was down to the team

MAUGER



At the start, Norris soon had to divert attention from attack to defence



Leclerc reckoned power strategy in qualifying hamstrung Ferrari in the race

Norris was the fastest man on track so, when Verstappen pitted on the 24th tour and emerged back on track, the gap had been cut to just 4.4s. But there was no way Norris could retain that sort of pace over the next 40 laps and, when Verstappen's tyres were up to temperature, the second stint started to reflect the first.

Leclerc wasn't out of the picture either, even though his pitstop culminated in the same Perez traffic that Norris had endured three laps prior. Just as Norris was trying to ward off a Leclerc undercut, McLaren had been trying to put one up on the Monegasque with Piastri; the Australian had been stuck behind the two Ferraris during the opening third of the race, and his heavy pressure on Carlos Sainz had come to naught. His undercut strategy brought him much closer to Leclerc, and crucially ahead of Sainz when the Spaniard eventually called in for his own stop.

It was Piastri who was told that "degradation is higher than expected" by race engineer Tom Stallard, with McLaren seeming to have a bead on the cars around it and their – by the Woking team's estimation – profligate use of tyre life. Despite Norris using his undercut to close the gap to Verstappen, the arrears were extended once more and Verstappen was over six seconds clear by the race's midway point. Add that to Leclerc studiously chipping away at the gap to second, and Norris started to get hot under the collar. He wanted to know why the cars around him were faster, and was told they were "using a lot more tyres than us". He didn't seem entirely satisfied by that response, but felt that he had to press on regardless.

"I was asking because I just felt slow and I didn't feel like I could push a lot more," Norris clarified. "So as soon as I started to push, I felt like I'd oversteer, I'd understeer, lock tyres. It was just the tyres were not in a good window. And I think it's clear that, as soon as they're not in the right window, you can't push. You don't have the confidence with the car. So I had to just manage things as best I could."

But the frustration was palpable, as Verstappen started to drift further away and Leclerc nudged himself into DRS contention. Lap 43 was arguably Norris's nadir at this phase; Verstappen was 7.5s ahead,

"AS SOON AS I STARTED TO PUSH, I FELT LIKE I'D OVERSTEER, I'D UNDERSTEER, LOCK TYRES"

while Leclerc sat gamely within a second and ready to pounce.

But Norris flipped the switch. Rather, he flipped a few; the effect of traffic ahead had knocked the hard tyres out of their ideal range and the Bristol-born racer had to paw at the steering wheel to imbue his car with a little more grip. He wanted to shift his balance slightly more rearwards "and try to kill the fronts", the car proving too pointy at the front end. Brake balance and differential settings were among those tweaked at the wheel, which seemed to bear the desired fruit.

And, with 18 laps to go, the dynamic of the race changed. Norris became the hunter, rather than the hunted, as Leclerc's power started to wane and Verstappen's tyres started to lose their lustre. For the Red Bull driver, his emerging struggles on the hard tyre were down to the after-effects of his miserable practice sessions, since the team had not gathered quite enough information about the Pirelli C3s to shape its predicted stint. "With hindsight, we maybe would have been better running a hard tyre long on Friday," Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said. "We opted to take two new hard tyres into the race, but maybe it would have been better to get the information on the tyre."

Leclerc eased the pressure on Norris by skipping across the Variante Alta on the 47th lap to lose about half a second, by which time the McLaren's tyres were starting to come on song relative to the cars around it. Norris said that the timing of his resurgence and Leclerc's mistake were "coincidental", but it nonetheless proved to be felicitous in the circumstances.

"When Charles was behind me, I didn't have a lot more than what I had," Norris reckoned. "And if I did, I probably would have made

HONEY



Piastrì's heavy pressure on Sainz didn't pay off, but thanks to the undercut...

SUTTON



...he was able to demote the Spaniard when the Ferrari pitted

TEE

a mistake and went off track. So yeah, it was tricky. But as soon as Charles made the mistake, it gave me a bit of breathing room. I was like, 'OK, maybe now I can try to push it a little bit more.' And it started to come back to me..."

Norris then started to hack away at the gap in front. The 7.5s delta soon shrunk to five seconds by the end of lap 50, and each further nibble at the gap loaded extra pressure onto Verstappen. It didn't help that the leader felt that his tyres had fallen out of the operating window, and had resorted to improvisation in order to try to keep them in. Verstappen noted that he had to take "weird lines" as a prophylactic measure and try to corral his white-walled Pirellis towards the ideal temperature window, but the grip did not seem entirely recoverable.

With seven laps remaining, a once-healthy barricade now stood at a mere two seconds. But these were the most difficult seconds that Norris had to break through, as the effect of dirty air started to work against the McLaren driver dancing his car on the limit. A couple of snaps at the wheel laid bare the amount that Norris was pushing, each one helping Verstappen's breathing become slightly less laboured.

Verstappen could not take the same liberties: he lacked grip and sat precariously on a black-and-white flag for track limits. Any further mistakes and a five-second penalty would come his way, one that would put Norris ahead. Straightline performance also came into play, a Red Bull strength that continued to keep Norris out of DRS range in the dying stages of the grand prix.

"You cannot suddenly try and force a half a second out of it when you don't have the balance," Verstappen explained. "So I was just trying to really not make mistakes, really try to drive around the balance issues that I had, and be quick on the straight. That's basically what I think helped me a bit at the end. Also, with the rear wing that we had, we were quite fast on the straight. That probably helped a bit in the last few laps to defend."

After a couple of tentative laps, Norris broke the back of that two-second deficit and sat 1.4s behind with three laps remaining. Then >>

QUALIFYING



MAUGER

Before the weekend, you'd hardly have got long odds on Max Verstappen matching Ayrton Senna's record with an eighth successive pole position. After Friday's sessions, however, it looked increasingly unlikely that the Dutchman would draw level with yet another Formula 1 record.

It's not an exaggeration to say that Red Bull was in trouble before qualifying started. A set-up miscue across Friday's sessions prompted a flurry of overnight work after Verstappen and Sergio Perez found their RB20s awkward to deal with across Imola's range of short-apex corners, but changes for FP3 threw the balance too far the other way; the car was too on-the-nose in FP1 and FP2, but this went too far rearwards for Saturday morning.

Further changes for qualifying brought the cars alive. Verstappen could start attacking the kerbs more, and the early deficits through the second sector had been ironed out to ensure Red Bull could start making a splash at Acque Minerali. Verstappen reeled off the fastest times in Q1 and Q2, but it was going to be close between him and the McLarens in the pole shootout; the championship leader threw down the gauntlet, composed of a 1m14.869s. Lando Norris got close, setting a 1m14.942s as Oscar Piastrì strayed slightly beyond the 1m15s boundary, but the second and final round of laps was even tighter.

Verstappen whittled his best lap down to a 1m14.746s, and Norris ended up just under a tenth shy. Piastrì split the pair with a 1m14.820s, McLaren ultimately proving unable to arrest Red Bull's turnaround from its Friday struggle, and the Australian was then subject to a three-place penalty for impeding Kevin Magnussen in Q1.

"The early deficits had been ironed out to ensure Red Bull could start making a splash at Acque Minerali"

The Ferraris had led the line on Friday, but hadn't really been able to factor in the battle for pole. Charles Leclerc was fourth fastest and over two tenths off Verstappen's final lap, with Carlos Sainz another quarter of a second away from his team-mate to ensure he could just about contain Mercedes' George Russell.

Yuki Tsunoda also starred in qualifying, easily making it into Q3 at the Imola circuit he knows intimately thanks to RB's proximity to the venue, although his hopes of breaking into the top three rows of Sunday's grid were dashed simply by the escalation of the other teams' pace. This proved enough for seventh, beating both Lewis Hamilton and Daniel Ricciardo.

Perez struggled more than Verstappen and failed to make it into Q3. The Mexican had to use an extra set of tyres to progress from Q1, compromising his first Q2 run as he pressed scrubbed tyres into service. He couldn't get the formula right on his last run of the session, falling short of the Q3 cut-off.

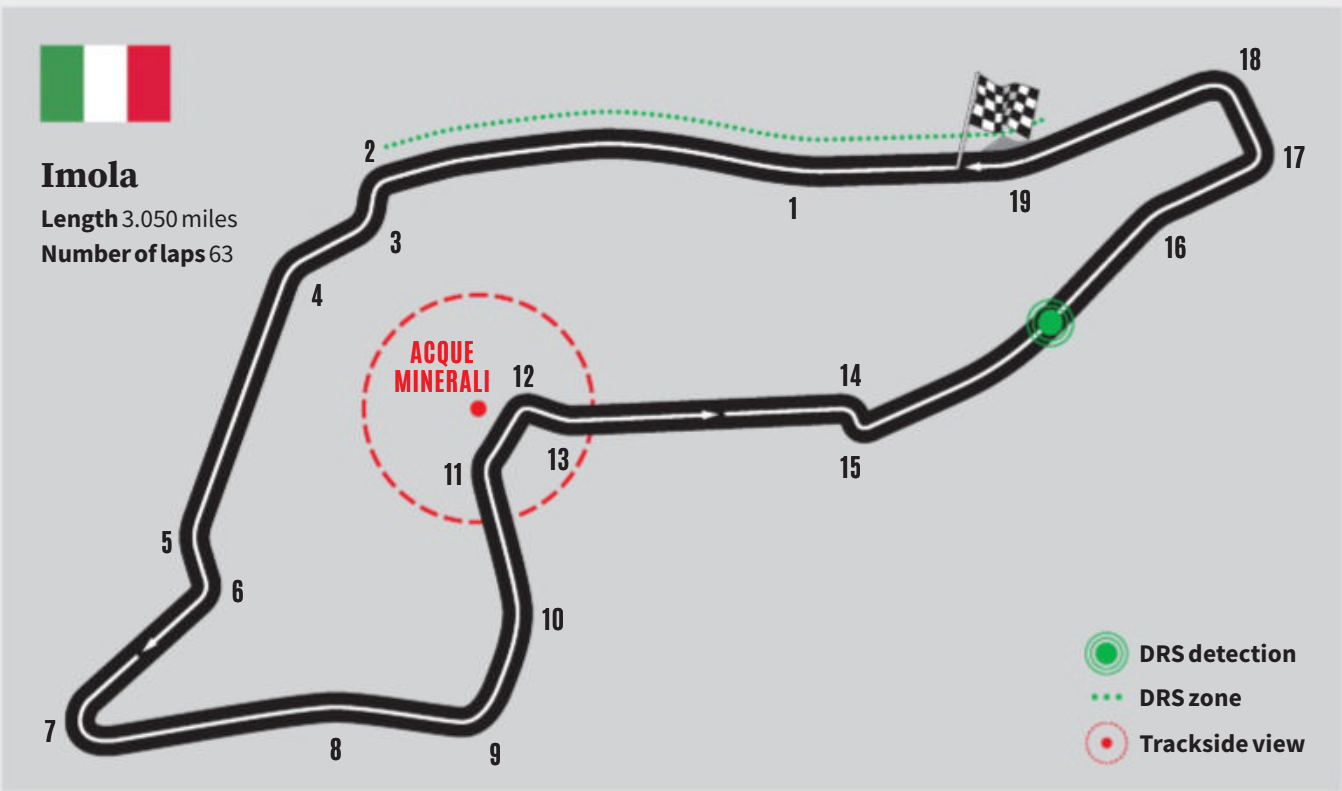
TRACKSIDE VIEW



To reach Acque Minerali, you actually have to walk up a slight hill. It's counterintuitive, but that's the nature of the undulating Imola course. It's one of F1's classic venues, wrapped in parkland, with a thin ribbon of Tarmac weaving between trees along the back end of the circuit. Why Acque Minerali? The worthy answer is that there are three distinct phases that we get to watch here: how each driver exits Piratella and meanders down the hill, determine how each car is sprung as they reach the compression at the bottom, and how much rear-end downforce they have on the corner exit. In reality, we're here it's because it's shaded and it's a sunny day.

FP1 opens, with a variety of cars carrying aero rakeage and other measuring devices, so they trundle into view at moderate speeds. Then there's a loud cheer that suffuses the atmosphere around the double right-hander: a Ferrari comes into view and induces an almost-Pavlovian reaction from the scarlet-robed fans. Charles Leclerc generates one round of audible fervour, and Carlos Sainz the other almost immediately after the noise dies down slightly.

How about the compression at the bottom of the hill? The Mercedes is running lower as it rattles the ground at the apex



“A Ferrari induces an almost-Pavlovian reaction from the fans”

of the first part of Acque Minerali, sparking profusely under the load. Haas reserve Ollie Bearman comes through as a comparison point, and the VF-24 is generating fewer specks of tangerine-tinged embers, while Yuki Tsunoda's RB proves even more parsimonious with the fireworks display. Even the Ferrari isn't as low-slung as the Merc.

Max Verstappen then comes through on a lap. A loud backfire

rings through the trees as the Honda powertrain's throttle is closed, before he returns to the gas pedal. Although his RB20 isn't generating the lap time at this point of the day, he still looks inch-perfect on the exit kerb and the suspension absorbs the rumble strip like a sponge.

There's a red flag shortly after; Alex Albon slaps a kerb and his car shuts down as it seemingly knocks a sensor loose. There's a slight wait in proceedings because the marshals can't touch the car to begin with, so for the restart we

make the very short walk to watch how the drivers take Piratella. Fernando Alonso comes out wide and bolts on the steering to draw his Aston Martin to the left for the next corner. George Russell, by comparison, has taken far less exit kerb and is pretty much set for Acque Minerali before the halfway point of the descent.

With the added bonus of grass and gravel, it's great to watch the drivers being challenged here. Track limits are clearly defined now – if you're off, you're off...

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



Verstappen's victory was no walk in the park thanks to Norris's pursuit

1.2 seconds. Then there was a wait as the final lap looked set to begin: a wait to see whether Norris could open the final pass through the main straight with DRS.

Instead, he was just a couple of hundredths shy. Without an overtaking aid, Norris had to rely on his battery power and positioning to try to make an unlikely break into the lead. Verstappen had purged most of his battery pack of energy ahead of the final lap, while Norris had a bit more and settled within a second of the leader. In attempting to force a mistake out of Verstappen, he shifted around in the Red Bull's mirrors to perhaps offer some degree of distraction.

But, as Michael Schumacher found nearly two decades ago, it's almost impossible to make a pass work in the final throes of the Imola circuit. The 0.725s difference at the line underlined a valiant effort and suggested that, had the race been one lap longer, Norris might have had half a chance to take a second consecutive win. Instead, the victory was Verstappen's – a few hours after he'd helped Team Redline to victory in the virtual Nurburgring 24 Hours with two stints either side of his Saturday night kip.

"Maybe we were not on top of things for the race still, because on the hard tyres, for sure, something was not optimised," Verstappen reflected after a breathless end to the race. "I just never felt like the tyres were working on our car. So that's something that we have to analyse."

"It just felt like they were not operating in the right temperature window. And that just got worse and worse. The last 15 laps for me was really like driving on ice. They were not responding anymore."

In the meantime, Norris felt that McLaren had perhaps anticipated

"I NEVER FELT LIKE THE TYRES WERE WORKING ON OUR CAR. THE LAST 15 LAPS WAS LIKE DRIVING ON ICE"

cooler conditions for the Sunday race and set itself up accordingly. He suggested that he'd "paid the price" for that decision, and taking out more front wing might have been a better step in the right direction. Regardless, he was lauded for "managing the budget of the tyres" by Stella, who particularly noted the easier tyre management conditions that Verstappen held in front.

Stella also took responsibility for Piastri's inability to beat Leclerc to third, despite a spell after their respective stops that handed the Melbourne a chance to hustle the Ferrari. The impending penalty for blocking Kevin Magnussen in qualifying was, by Stella's account, a team error. "Given the performance he deployed in qualifying, he had all the cards this weekend to finish on the podium," the Italian said of his younger driver.

Leclerc, meanwhile, felt that he might have been on for better than third had qualifying gone a little more to plan. He revealed that Ferrari had been on a different "power strategy" along the straights, which had cost time to both Red Bull and McLaren on the run to Tamborello, something that he had earlier noted had been an issue in other qualifying sessions this year. "We lost everything on the run down to Turn 2 [in qualifying]," Leclerc said. "When you only have a tenth in between Red Bull, McLaren and ourselves, we need to do everything perfect. And the third place [on the grid] cost us maybe a better result in the race."

Was this race a harbinger of further challenges to come for Red Bull, or was it a one-off set-up miss that caused the most damage? It's hard to argue that McLaren and Ferrari aren't much closer to the team that started off in such dominant fashion, particularly as their latest upgrades have come on song. And, although Red Bull had its own, their impact was masked by the set-up difficulties faced at the start of the weekend.

Monaco will be much different, although whether Red Bull retains last year's shakiness in low-speed, street-circuit conditions remains to be seen. But if the RB20 falters in the principality, McLaren and Ferrari will be there to pick up the pieces. 🏆



All smiles as Norris maybe wishes the race had lasted another lap

**NEXT
F1 REPORT**
Monaco Grand Prix
30 May issue

MERCEDES INSISTS PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE DESPITE MEDIOCRE SHOWING

Mercedes was left insisting that it had made progress with its W15 at Imola, despite Lewis Hamilton and George Russell gaining just one place between them and scoring sixth and seventh respectively in the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

Russell started sixth while, behind him, Yuki Tsunoda's RB headed Hamilton on row four. Hamilton gained seventh immediately off the line with RB's start problem, then ran just behind Russell until the lead Mercedes was the first frontrunner to pit on lap 21 of 63. This would have consequences for Russell later on, because Hamilton stopped six laps later and gained a big tyre life advantage.

The pair eventually repassed the yet-to-pit Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez, running a chunk down on Carlos Sainz. Sixth looked to be Russell's finishing position, but Mercedes, wary that its prediction tools were saying he would run out of tyre life, eventually persuaded him to stop for more mediums and successfully take the fastest lap running between Hamilton and Sergio Perez.

"I sort of lost the position for the sake of it," Russell said, with Mercedes never planning for Hamilton to slow down and move aside on the final lap.

"It's not possible to see it in terms of the result, but we have taken a small step forward this weekend," concluded team boss Toto Wolff. "Our closest competitors have also done so recently, but we have closed the gap to the front a little."



Perez struggles again but possible new contract still looms

Sergio Perez was left to reflect that eighth in the Imola race "was the best we could get" after his qualifying underperformance left him starting 11th. It capped a poor weekend overall for the Mexican, despite suggestions in the paddock that Red Bull is leaning towards retaining him for 2025.

Perez went through the same Friday practice struggles as Max Verstappen, with Red Bull's initial set-up needing considerable overnight simulator fettling from Toyota World Endurance driver and Formula E champion Sebastien Buemi, along with Formula E world champion Jake Dennis. But Perez's weekend got worse when he crashed at the Variante Alta chicane late in FP3.

After missing the Q3 cut, when he was caught out by a lack of rear grip on his final Q2 flier, Perez started the race on the hard tyres for the contra strategy. This heaped a lot on the possibility of a mid or late-race safety car transforming his

fortunes, but this never came.

Instead, Perez, who jumped Daniel Ricciardo's slow-starting RB off the line, felt he was "compromised a lot with the traffic initially, traffic at the end, people coming through" after they had stopped on the medium tyres up ahead. The fact that those ahead, from leader Verstappen to Lewis Hamilton in seventh, had rapidly gained a pitstop on Perez showed he was unlikely to recover to the higher places without an intervention. He also lost five seconds locking up and going off on lap 17.

Once he had stopped for medium tyres on lap 37, Perez rose back ahead of Ricciardo, Nico Hulkenberg and Yuki Tsunoda and came home eighth. Mercedes had so much margin over him that George Russell was able to make his unexpected second pitstop and stay ahead.

"I think it's just a blip," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "He's always gone well at Monaco so we'll see..."

8

Max Verstappen's consecutive pole position streak (sprints discounted) from the 2023 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix up to last weekend's Imola race. It puts the world champion level with Ayrton Senna's record from the 1988 Spanish GP to the 1989 United States GP.



Stroll scores for Aston amid Alonso disaster

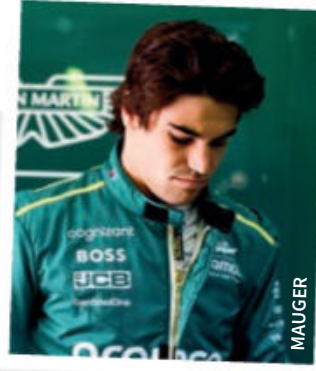
With Fernando Alonso's Imola race a glorified test session from the pits, Lance Stroll led the line for Aston Martin.

He qualified only 13th, and Stroll felt that Aston's introduction of an updated floor, front wing and diffuser at Imola wasn't enough to "catch those teams further up". He could not make any inroads at the start, so ran long on the medium rubber before using his hard tyre life offset to overtake Valtteri Bottas, Daniel Ricciardo, Nico Hulkenberg and Yuki

Tsunoda in the second stint.

Alonso's FP3 Rivazza 2 crash meant having his gearbox and engine swapped for pool parts and missing the start of Q1. There he was eliminated after another off exiting Tamburello that caused floor damage and confusion about his fuel load.

Alonso started on soft tyres in the hope of an early safety car. But when that didn't appear he moved to the hards for a long stint before two shorter runs on the mediums and softs, running at the back.



S BLOXHAM

RB SHOWS PROMISE BUT ONLY GETS A POINT AT HOME

RB left its home race frustrated about scoring only one point, with Yuki Tsunoda shining all weekend and Daniel Ricciardo joining him in starting in the top 10.

Tsunoda was immediately on it at Imola, finishing third in FP2 and repeating that result in Q2. The Japanese driver is boosted by his previous testing experience at Imola, just 10 miles up the road from RB's Faenza facility. Ricciardo struggled more on the punishing layout, but he found enough in qualifying to reach Q3 for the first time in 2024 and line up ninth behind Lewis Hamilton and his team-mate.

At the start, both drivers were sluggish away, which allowed Hamilton to jump Tsunoda, Nico Hulkenberg to get both, and Sergio Perez to pass Ricciardo. Tsunoda said that improving starts on the VCARB 01 had been a particular "topic for our team" of late.

From there, RB felt it had to make an "earlier-than-planned stop to try and recover" for both drivers, said technical director Jody Egginton. Tsunoda came in on lap 12, one tour after Ricciardo's similar mediums-to-hards service.

Tsunoda undercut Hulkenberg, but got trapped with yet-to-stop Logan Sargeant and Zhou Guanyu. He got both eventually at Tamburello, but his ageing tyres meant he was vulnerable to Lance Stroll's late climb and being pushed to 10th once things had shaken out. Ricciardo rose back from emerging 16th after his stop, but Kevin Magnussen dropped him to 13th with a late attack.



MAUGER

Q&A

ALEX ALBON WILLIAMS DRIVER

What happened at the first pitstop with your loose right front?

I didn't feel it coming down the pits, but as soon as I took the pit limiter off there was a vibration and I could tell something was wrong.

Did you feel it was safe to drive back to the pits?

Yeah. Because it was still attached. I think if I felt... when I was turning around corners you could see if the tyre was going to fall off. But it would only go to a point and stop. I could see it was quite safe. There was only about 10mm

of movement on the tyre.

So, was the race a test session after that?

Yeah, exactly. We were just trying some stuff – trying to figure out some of our braking feeling with the car and just trying to see if there were any solutions on a long run

with the car we've got, just playing around with the brakes. It was OK. Just driving around experimenting.

How frustrating is this period as Williams tries to make the car lighter to not lose 0.45 seconds a lap from excess weight?

What's positive is that – it's not really a positive – but

that midfield, they're not scoring a tremendous amount of points. So, it's not like we're falling away and we can't catch up. If you look at last year, we're in the same position. We'd scored I think one point at this point last year. And then we came on strong, albeit we had a big upgrade package that was coming to the car so it was a bit more. This year, now it's a bit more obvious, but it's more about taking the weight out of the car, and while we're taking out weight others are still upgrading and still performing. This weekend we took a little bit out of the car, which showed a little bit more competitiveness in qualifying, and honestly I don't know how my race pace was, but I was kind of OK.



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FERRARI'S NEW BODYWORK FEATURED RED BULL INFLUENCES



FERRARI UPGRADES ARRIVE BUT REMAIN UNPROVEN...

Ferrari's biggest upgrade package of the season so far had been teased with a series of spy shots from a Fiorano shakedown, before debuting at Imola. A series of bodywork changes set off by a reprofiling of the sidepod inlet were matched by changes to the floor and wings, as the Prancing Horse hoped to match McLaren's push for performance over 2024 and start pressuring Red Bull.

The sidepod inlet now features an overbite, a la Red Bull's and McLaren's designs, and the vertical inlet below has now been incorporated into the opening. As a result, the undercut around the sidepod is more pronounced, and the cooling outlets over the engine cover have received detail changes too.

Viewing the car from face on, Ferrari had a noticeably squarer

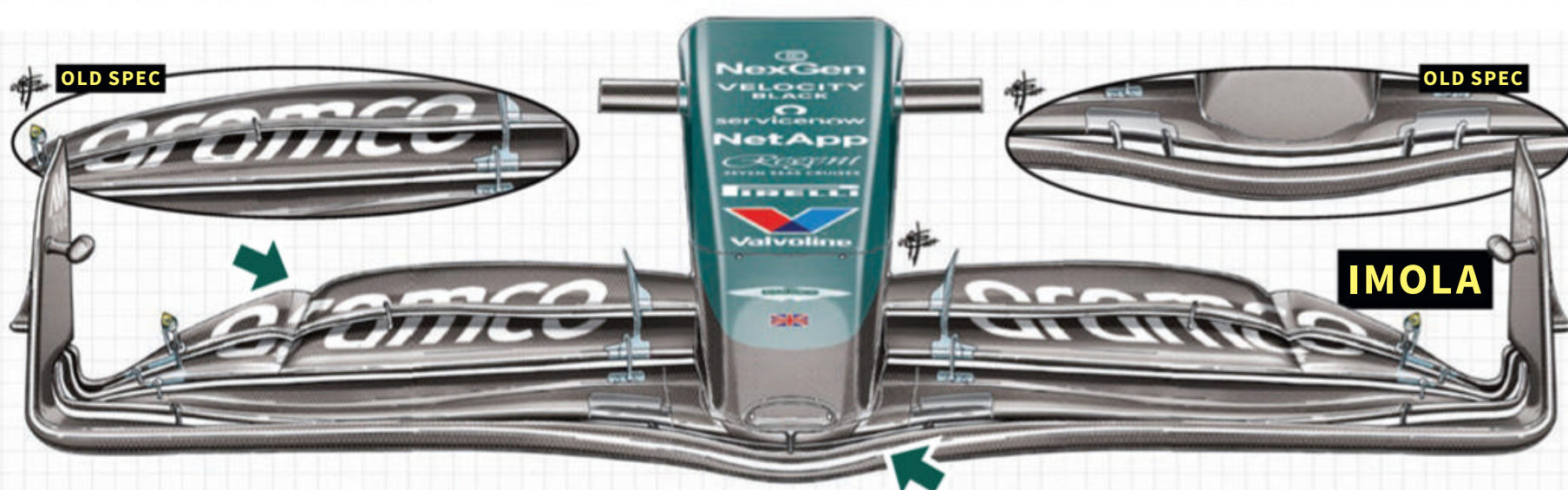
rear-wing arrangement to help improve efficiency, and it now attaches to the looping mainplane in a slightly different fashion.

Next to the cockpit, the complex aero furniture around the halo has been largely removed and replaced by a question mark-shaped vane to help control airflow in this region.

Team principal Fred Vasseur explained that although the

updates had shown potential, Ferrari needed more time to fully understand the picture, a point echoed by Charles Leclerc. "This is not the best track to judge upgrades, mostly because kerb riding is such a thing here," Leclerc said. "The good thing is that everything we expected from those upgrades, we had it in terms of data."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



...AS ASTON REMAINS UNSURE OF ITS UPDATES

A problematic weekend rather masked the efficacy of Aston Martin's new upgrades, as a series of updates to the front wing, floor and engine cover did not help the team achieve anything more than two points. These changes were wide-ranging and about bolting on more downforce to raise the car's level, culminating in a package that technical director Dan Fallows noted was "aggressive".

"We have an area of ground-effect cars where

they have specific windows of performance, and you're always trying to sort of broaden that," Fallows explained. "So you want to make sure when you bring an update that it does perform in all the different conditions."


The difficulty of the weekend left Fernando Alonso on the fence about the upgrades' potential, noting the experimentation done across the practice sessions, but Lance Stroll was more damning and mused that

"I think everything was working, it's just not good enough".


Among the front-end changes, Aston made the nose tip slightly less wide and installed a small driver cooling duct embedded into the wing's leading edge. Further to this, a small 'crease' was added to the top two elements about a third of the way along the wing, modifying the flow ahead of the front tyre.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE


20 Alonso #14
1m16.917s




18 Magnussen #20
1m16.854s




16 Bottas #77
1m16.626s




14 Albon #23
1m16.200s




12 Ocon #31
1m15.906s




19 Sargeant #2
times disallowed




17 Zhou #24
1m16.834s



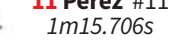
15 Gasly #10
1m16.381s



13 Stroll #18
1m15.992s



11 Perez #11
1m15.706s

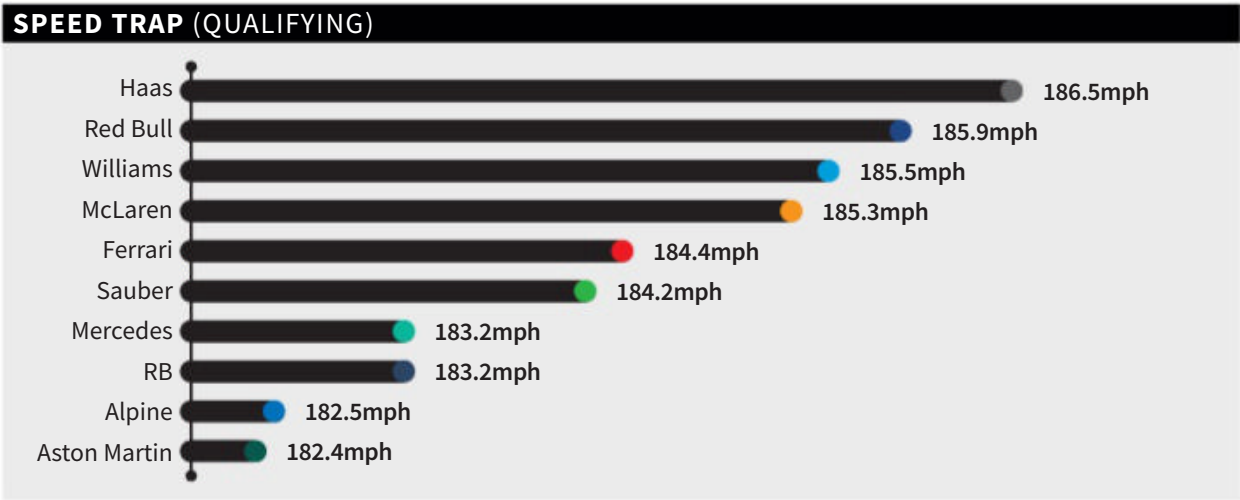


FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m16.990s	1	Leclerc	1m15.906s	1	Piastri	1m15.529s
2	Russell	1m17.094s	2	Piastri	1m16.098s	2	Norris	1m15.829s
3	Sainz	1m17.120s	3	Tsunoda	1m16.286s	3	Sainz	1m16.067s
4	Perez	1m17.233s	4	Hamilton	1m16.297s	4	Leclerc	1m16.087s
5	Verstappen	1m17.240s	5	Russell	1m16.311s	5	Russell	1m16.095s
6	Tsunoda	1m17.388s	6	Sainz	1m16.423s	6	Verstappen	1m16.366s
7	Hamilton	1m17.408s	7	Verstappen	1m16.447s	7	Albon	1m16.470s
8	Norris	1m17.602s	8	Perez	1m16.552s	8	Ocon	1m16.481s
9	Piastri	1m17.807s	9	Hulkenberg	1m16.826s	9	Stroll	1m16.543s
10	Alonso	1m17.867s	10	Alonso	1m16.838s	10	Hulkenberg	1m16.547s
11	Gasly	1m17.905s	11	Ricciardo	1m16.967s	11	Ricciardo	1m16.560s
12	Stroll	1m18.072s	12	Norris	1m16.980s	12	Perez	1m16.631s
13	Ricciardo	1m18.142s	13	Stroll	1m16.991s	13	Tsunoda	1m16.668s
14	Ocon	1m18.612s	14	Ocon	1m17.008s	14	Bottas	1m16.695s
15	Bearman	1m18.667s	15	Gasly	1m17.064s	15	Sargeant	1m16.794s
16	Bottas	1m18.827s	16	Bottas	1m17.088s	16	Magnussen	1m16.923s
17	Zhou	1m19.129s	17	Magnussen	1m17.129s	17	Hamilton	1m16.960s
18	Sargeant	1m19.901s	18	Albon	1m17.135s	18	Alonso	1m17.339s
19	Albon	1m20.050s	19	Zhou	1m17.606s	19	Gasly	1m17.361s
20	Hulkenberg	1m21.059s	20	Sargeant	1m17.848s	20	Zhou	1m17.891s

WEATHER Clear, air 27-28C track 49-50C

WEATHER Clear, air 26-28C track 36-42C

WEATHER Clear, air 28-29C track 51-53C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m15.762s	1	Verstappen	1m15.176s	1	Verstappen	1m14.746s
2	Leclerc	1m15.823s	2	Leclerc	1m15.328s	2	Piastri	1m14.820s
3	Hulkenberg	1m15.841s	3	Tsunoda	1m15.358s	3	Norris	1m14.837s
4	Tsunoda	1m15.894s	4	Norris	1m15.371s	4	Leclerc	1m14.970s
5	Norris	1m15.915s	5	Piastri	1m15.407s	5	Sainz	1m15.233s
6	Piastri	1m15.940s	6	Sainz	1m15.512s	6	Russell	1m15.234s
7	Sainz	1m16.015s	7	Hulkenberg	1m15.569s	7	Tsunoda	1m15.465s
8	Gasly	1m16.015s	8	Russell	1m15.671s	8	Hamilton	1m15.504s
9	Ricciardo	1m16.060s	9	Hamilton	1m15.677s	9	Ricciardo	1m15.674s
10	Russell	1m16.107s	10	Ricciardo	1m15.691s	10	Hulkenberg	1m15.980s
11	Ocon	1m16.361s	11	Perez	1m15.706s	WEATHER Clear, air 29-30C track 44-47C		
12	Perez	1m16.404s	12	Ocon	1m15.906s			
13	Stroll	1m16.458s	13	Stroll	1m15.992s			
14	Albon	1m16.524s	14	Albon	1m16.200s			
15	Hamilton	1m16.604s	15	Gasly	1m16.381s			
16	Bottas	1m16.626s						
17	Zhou	1m16.834s						
18	Magnussen	1m16.854s						
19	Alonso	1m16.917s						
20	Sargeant	notime						

NEXT RACE

Monaco GP
Monte Carlo
26 May

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	161	1	1
2 Leclerc	113	2	2
3 Perez	107	2	2
4 Norris	101	1	3
5 Sainz	93	1	2
6 Piastri	53	4	2
7 Russell	44	5	3
8 Hamilton	35	6	7
9 Alonso	33	5	3
10 Tsunoda	15	7	7
11 Stroll	11	6	9
12 Bearman	6	7	11
13 Hulkenberg	6	9	9
14 Ricciardo	5	12	9
15 Ocon	1	10	12
16 Magnussen	1	10	13
17 Albon	0	11	12
18 Zhou	0	11	16
19 Gasly	0	12	12
20 Bottas	0	14	10
21 Sargeant	0	14	17

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	268
2 Ferrari	212
3 McLaren	154
4 Mercedes	79
5 Aston Martin	44
6 RB	20
7 Haas	7
8 Alpine	1
9 Williams	0
10 Sauber	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	7	0	Perez
Hamilton	1	6	Russell
Leclerc	4	2	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	5	2	Piastri
Alonso	4	3	Stroll
Gasly	1	6	Ocon
Sargeant	0	6	Albon
Ricciardo	1	6	Tsunoda
Zhou	0	7	Bottas
Magnussen	1	5	Hulkenberg

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

WINS

Verstappen 5

Norris 1

Sainz 1

FASTEST LAPS

Leclerc 2

Verstappen 2

Alonso 1

Piastri 1

Russell 1

POLE POSITIONS

Verstappen 7

STARTING GRID

10 Hulkenberg #27
1m15.980s

8 Hamilton #44
1m15.504s

6 Russell #63
1m15.234s

4 Sainz #55
1m15.233s

2 Norris #4
1m14.837s

9 Ricciardo #3
1m15.674s

7 Tsunoda #22
1m15.465s

5 Piastri #81
1m14.820s

3 Leclerc #16
1m14.970s

1 Verstappen #1
1m14.746s

RESULTS ROUND 7/24 (63 LAPS – 192.03 MILES)					
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h25m25.252s	60	Mn, Hn
2	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+0.725s		Mn, Hu
3	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+7.916s		Mn, Hn
4	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+14.132s		Mn, Hu
5	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+22.325s	3	Mn, Hn
6	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+35.104s		Mn, Hn
7	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+47.154s		Mn, Hn, Mu
8	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+54.776s		Hn, Mn
9	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m19.556s		Mu, Hu
10	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+17.856s		Mn, Hn
11	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+25.277s		Mn, Hn
12	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+26.434s		Mn, Hn
13	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+27.661s		Mn, Hn
14	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+43.907s		Mn, Hn
15	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+44.933s		Hn, Mn
16	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+49.715s		Sn, Hn, Mn
17	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+51.051s		Hn, Mn
18	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+56.343s		Mn, Hn
19	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+1m15.124s		Sn, Hu, Mu, Sn
R	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	51 laps-withdrew		Mn, Hn, Mu, Mu

WEATHER Partly cloudy, air 32-33C track 47-50C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 134.885mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 139.728mph.

FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Russell	1m18.589s	-	54
2	Alonso	1m19.004s	+0.415s	62
3	Perez	1m19.686s	+1.097s	52
4	Piastri	1m19.907s	+1.318s	25
5	Leclerc	1m19.935s	+1.346s	27
6	Norris	1m19.994s	+1.405s	54
7	Sainz	1m20.220s	+1.631s	63
8	Hamilton	1m20.331s	+1.742s	43
9	Verstappen	1m20.366s	+1.777s	38
10	Stroll	1m20.570s	+1.981s	58
11	Tsunoda	1m20.936s	+2.347s	14
12	Magnussen	1m21.009s	+2.420s	58
13	Zhou	1m21.016s	+2.427s	37
14	Sargeant	1m21.229s	+2.640s	55
15	Albon	1m21.274s	+2.685s	48
16	Ocon	1m21.304s	+2.715s	37
17	Gasly	1m21.371s	+2.782s	10
18	Bottas	1m21.455s	+2.866s	11
19	Ricciardo	1m21.569s	+2.980s	13
20	Hulkenberg	1m21.700s	+3.111s	3

RACE BRIEFING

FP1

OLLIE BEARMAN replaced Magnussen at Haas

GRID PENALTIES

PIASTRI three-place penalty for impeding Magnussen

ALONSO required to start from the pitlane – suspension set-up changed under parc ferme conditions

RACE PENALTIES

ALBON 10-second penalty for car being released in an unsafe condition

104

Verstappen's 104th F1 GP podium puts him one ahead of Kimi Raikkonen and two behind Alonso

TYRES

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

HARD

MEDIUM

SOFT















C1

C2

C3

C4

C5

INTERMEDIATE

WET

LAP CHART																				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Verstappen	Norris	Leclerc	Sainz	Piastri	Russell	Tsunoda	Hamilton	Ricciardo	Hulkenberg	Perez	Ocon	Stroll	Albon	Gasly	Bottas	Zhou	Magnussen	Sargeant	Alonso
G	1	4	16	55	81	63	22	44	3	27	11	31	18	23	10	77	24	20	2	14
1	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
2	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
3	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
4	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
5	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
6	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
7	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	23	10	20	77	24	2	14
8	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	20	23	24	2	10	77	14
9	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	31	18	20	24	2	10	77	14	23
10	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	3	18	31	20	24	2	10	77	14	23
11	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	27	22	11	18	31	3	20	24	2	10	77	14	23
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13	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	27	18	31	20	24	2	22	3	10	77	14	23
14	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	18	31	20	24	2	22	27	3	10	77	14	23
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16	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	18	31	20	24	2	22	27	3	10	77	14	23
17	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	18	31	20	24	2	22	27	3	10	77	14	23
18	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	18	31	20	24	2	22	27	3	10	77	14	23
19	1	4	16	55	81	63	44	11	18	31	20	24	2	22	27	3	10	77	14	23
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26	55	44	1	4	11	16	81	18	63	20	24	22	27	2	3	10	77	14	31	23
27	55	1	44	4	16	81	11	63	18	20	24	22	27	2	3	10	77	14	31	23
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29	1	4	16	81	11	55	63	18	44	20	24	22	27	2	3	10	77	14	31	23
30	1	4	16	81	55	11	63	18	44	20	24	22	27	2	3	77	10	14	31	23
31	1	4	16	81	55	63	11	44	18	20	24	22	27	3	77	2	14	31	10	23
32	1	4	16	81	55	63	11	44	18	20	24	22	27	3	77	14	31	10	2	23
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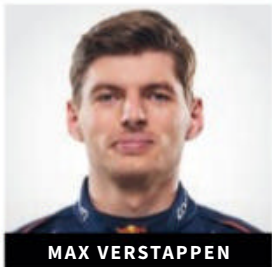
EMILIA ROMAGNA GP

DRIVER RATINGS

Norris and Tsunoda are the top scorers – and Alonso brings up the rear – on a weekend when no performance was worthy of full marks

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

8 Without lucky tow behind Hulkenberg, he'd have been outqualified by both McLarens. Had Norris licked in first stint, but track limits abuse was careless. Lost tyre performance window as hard tyres wore and cooled, and was nearly caught by Norris. Did well to see off the McLaren's charge.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **11th** — Result **8th**

3 Many poor things, but Tosa Q2 slide must go down as a massive error. Also crashed in FP3, was slow in Q1 so wasted a set of soft tyres, and lost 5s with Rivazza 1 off during the race. Did outdrag Ricciardo at the start, but just lacked pace on both hard rubber and medium.

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **8th** — Result **6th**

5 Outqualified by Tsunoda's RB, which marks him down here. Jumped Tsunoda at start, then chased Russell without DRS for most of first stint, where Acque Minerali lock-up and off was poor. Was nearly five seconds back from Russell before team-mate's second pitstop gifted him the place.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **6th** — Result **7th**

8 Just 0.002s short of beating Sainz's Ferrari in qualifying. He kicked off first pitstops for frontrunners, but its early timing meant Mercedes' prediction software said one-stop was imperilled, and he had a big slide at Tosa. So, after questioning why, he stopped for more mediums. Nailed fastest lap bonus.

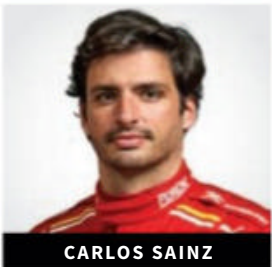
FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **3rd** — Result **3rd**

8 Ended up 0.224s off pole when Verstappen's Hulkenberg tow gained 0.266s. Held third at start, initially dropped back from Norris, then caught up to 1.4s off by pitstops. Caught up again on hard tyres and got to DRS threat before his Variante Alta off. This cooked his tyres and caps his score.

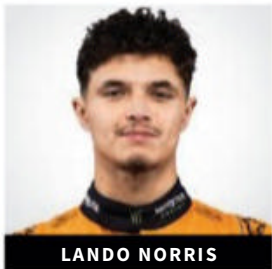


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **4th** — Result **5th**

6 Couldn't find consistent pace on qualifying soft tyres. In the race, was able to keep Piastri at bay even as he dropped back from Leclerc. Ferrari had him run long due to threat of Russell after Merc's early pitstop, which meant Piastri easily undercut ahead. Couldn't explain pace difference to Leclerc.

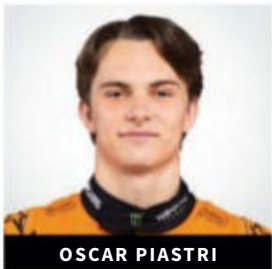
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **2nd** — Result **2nd**

9 Qualifying defeat to Piastri due to inferior Tosa exit costs maximum score. Fell back on medium tyres, but learned to bed in his rubber better second time around, and addressing of awful initial feeling with brake balance and differential settings changes meant hard stint was sublime.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **5th** — Result **4th**

8 McLaren should have warned him earlier, but loses a mark here for his penalty for impeding Magnussen late in Q1. Beat Norris in Q3 beautifully, and then harried Sainz relentlessly in first stint, where undercut pitstop got him ahead. Pursued Leclerc initially after pitstop, then dropped.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **20th** — Result **19th**

2 Gets our 'wasted weekend' score because race ended up being a glorified test session. FP3 crash preceded Q1 exit. Started from pitlane with altered set-up and took soft tyres hoping for early safety car. Aston felt very early stop meant others had to cover – including the RBs that Stroll later beat.

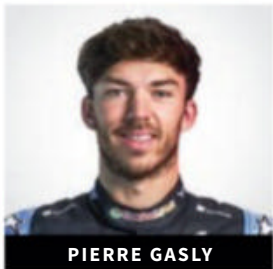


LANCE STROLL

Started **13th** — Result **9th**

6 Missed Q3 and got beaten by an Alpine in Q2 on a lap he somehow felt should have been good enough. Didn't progress at start, then ran joint-longest medium stint hoping for a safety car that never came. Did use late tyre offset well to pass Hulkenberg and Tsunoda nicely and earn ninth.

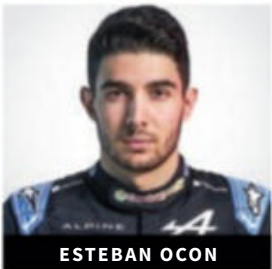
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **15th** — Result **16th**

6 Insisted traffic at final corners in Q2 cost Q3 shot, but times don't show that. At best he'd have headed Ocon. Was put on soft tyres for start in early safety car gamble that never came and struggled for pace. Alpine also left wondering why early blue flags cost Gasly more time than it expected.



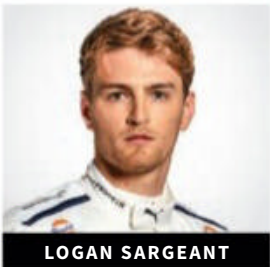
ESTEBAN OCON

Started **12th** — Result **14th**

7 Qualified 0.2s down on Perez. Held ground in 12th at start but, when Stroll got past on lap 10, couldn't keep with the Aston after losing touch with back of DRS train ahead. Extended first stint but was still vulnerable to Magnussen's late rise, the Haas pouncing after Piastri lapped them both.



WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started **19th** – Result **17th**

5 Lost all three Q1 times due to track limits abuse. Alonso's charge from pitlane put him in brief DRS threat while on hard-medium tyre strategy, after which he was stuck in various DRS trains. Did feel his pace was decent when in free air. Defended stiffly against Tsunoda and got Bottas late on.



ALEX ALBON

Started **14th** — Result **R**

6 Bonus mark for making Q2, but rued cross-tailwind at Rivazza 2 as tyres overheated with wide slides throughout qualifying. Race was destroyed by right-front tyre being 10mm loose after first pitstop, after which he toured slowly back, got lapped, penalised and parked early.

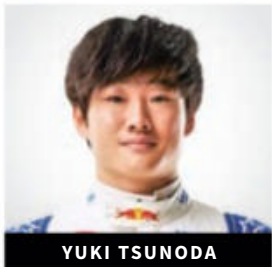
RB



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **9th** — Result **13th**

7 Couldn't match team-mate's strong start in practice and qualified two places back. Isn't penalised for sluggish getaway that let Hulkenberg steam ahead and pass Tsunoda at start. Didn't enjoy DRS train in first stint, or early pitstop that eased Magnussen's late progress.

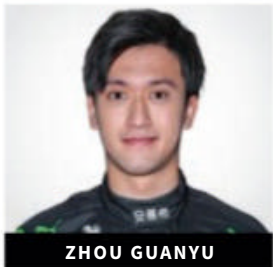


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **7th** — Result **10th**

9 Excellent overall, but couldn't replicate Q2 form in Q3 and cost stablemate Verstappen time when being lapped. Not penalised for slow start since it appears to be a car issue. Struggled to overtake Sargeant after pitstop, but eventual outside pass at Tamburello was stunning.

SAUBER



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **17th** – Result **15th**

5 Ended up behind Bottas in Q1, adjusting to new floor. On hard-medium tyre strategy, slipped behind Magnussen's rapid start, then lost touch with Bottas in first stint. Tsunoda and Magnussen battled past at Tamburello in second stint, but he resisted well, chasing Ocon late on.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **16th** – Result **18th**

5 Led team-mate in qualifying, where being caught out by gust at Acque Minerali cost him Q2 berth. Magnussen steamed through off the line, then he dropped Zhou. But being among the first to stop backfired when he lost the hard tyres' performance window and slid five positions in final 13 laps.

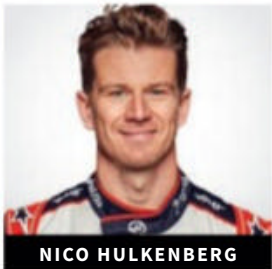
HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **18th** – Result **12th**

7 Never got a chance to show ultimate Q1 potential due to Piastri's impeding at Tamburello. Got stuck in as usual on lap one with a lightning-fast start. Ran equal-longest first mediums stint, which meant he chased down Zhou, Ocon and Bottas late. Nailed Ricciardo at the end with DRS blast.

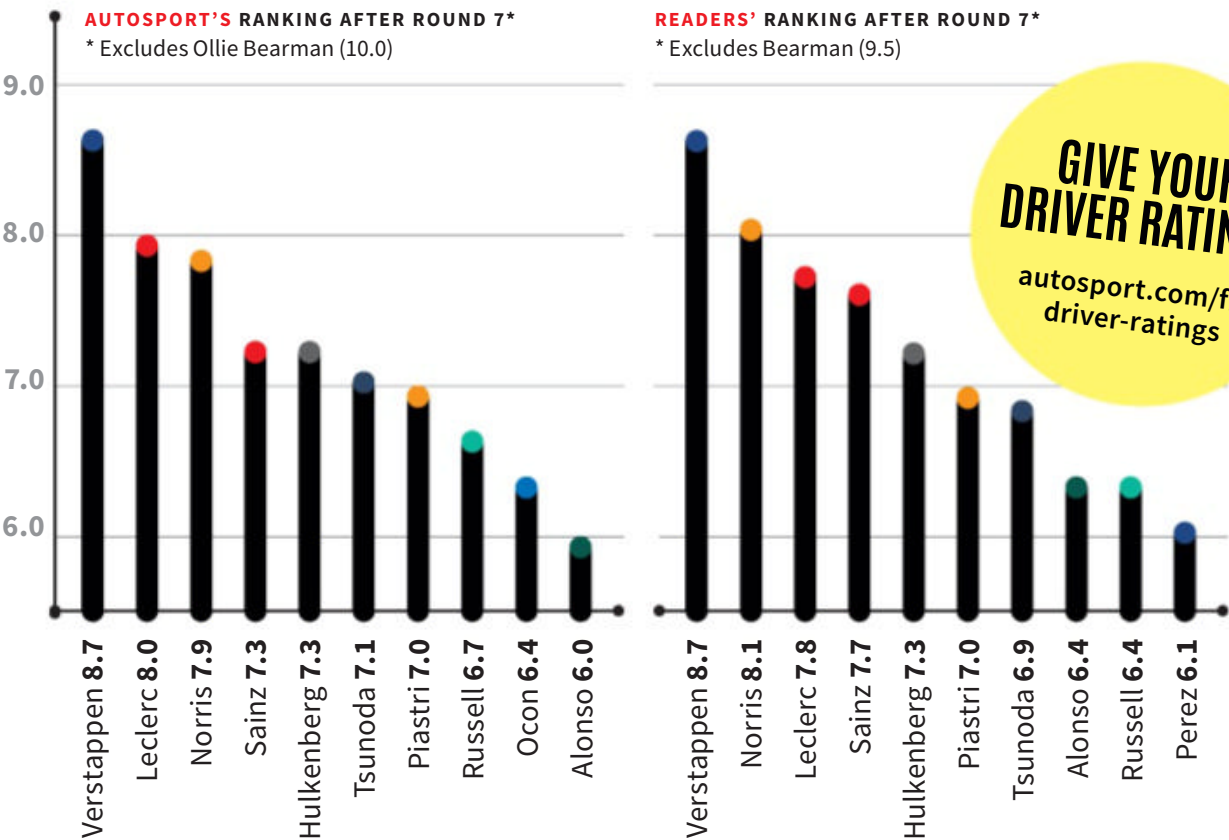


NICO HULKENBERG

Started **10th** – Result **11th**

8 Marked up here for reaching Q3 again, at a track he'd never raced at before. Roared past the RBs at the start and led them to pitstops, where he got undercut by Tsunoda. Struggled for rhythm on long stint on hard tyres, as faster runners nipped past late on. Pass on Sargeant at Villeneuve was awesome.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



Hadjar climbs the kerbs in time-honoured fashion at Variante Alta

Hadjar wins amid pit dramas

FORMULA 2
IMOLA (ITA)
18-19 MAY
ROUND 4/14

The good, the bad and the ugly of Formula 2 were on display across the Imola weekend, which featured a second consecutive feature race win for Isack Hadjar and a maiden F2 victory for Franco Colapinto at the eleventh hour in the sprint.

After a controversial qualifying session, Prema Racing pair Ollie Bearman and Andrea Kimi Antonelli were disqualified from second and fourth respectively for track-limit breaches, and later reinstated. But nothing could prepare for the madness of the opening exchanges of Saturday's reversed-grid sprint race, where five drivers were eliminated on the run to Tamburello. Colapinto was three wide with Roman Stanek and Dennis Hauger when a slight movement from the eventual race winner caused the Czech and Norwegian to spin dramatically off the track. Enzo

Fittipaldi was also eliminated, while Hadjar was left with nowhere to go other than into the Van Amersfoort Racing driver's gearbox. Hadjar continued to limp around but pulled off a handful of corners later.

Following the restart, Paul Aron led in his Hitech GP car, while team-mate Amaury Cordeel ran wide at Rivazza and was jumped for second by the MP Motorsport machine of Williams F1 junior Colapinto. That was how they ran until three laps from home, when championship leader Zane Maloney made a DRS-assisted sweep around the outside of Cordeel at Tamburello for third. Just over a lap from home, a mistake from Aron at Rivazza allowed Colapinto to muscle his way past for victory at Tamburello.

McLaren protege Gabriel Bortoleto, who was sporting an eye-catching Ayrton Senna tribute design on his helmet, finished right in the wheeltracks of fifth-placed Bearman. The Brazilian had claimed pole for the feature race in his Invicta Racing car, but a poor start dropped him to fourth, promoting Bearman into the lead, with Hadjar second and Joshua Durksen third.

Hadjar and Durksen pitted at the end of lap six to switch off the supersoft tyres and onto the mediums. Cautious of this undercut attempt, Bearman stopped on the next lap, and this was where disaster struck. The British Ferrari protege stalled, and then stalled again as he tried to pull away, dropping him to the tail of the field and ruling out any hope of points.

Campos Racing-run Red Bull Junior Hadjar was now holding the net lead, while Bortoleto had leapfrogged Durksen for

what was effectively second. But nevertheless the Paraguayan was proving a revelation for AIX Racing, on just his fourth weekend in F2 since stepping up from Formula Regional European.

Of those on the alternative strategy, Cordeel held on out front from Pepe Marti until they dived to the pits with five laps remaining. Cordeel's right-rear wheel fell off as he accelerated away, and bizarrely struck the left-rear waiting to be fitted to Marti's car and bounced high across the pitlane. This put a mechanic out of sync in Marti's stop and the Spaniard was also released with just three wheels secure.

When Hadjar was baulked by the last-to-pit Rafael Villagomez, that put Bortoleto right on his tail, but the Frenchman absorbed significant pressure to win. Durksen was third, while Antonelli beat Colapinto and Aron to fourth. Maloney took 11th, but still leads the standings.

SAM HALL



The first Argentinian to win an F2 race in modern era

Meguetounif gets mega tune of Marseillaise

FORMULA 3
IMOLA (ITA)
18-19 MAY
ROUND 3/10

Luke Browning lost his grip on the F3 championship battle at Imola while continuing the worrying statistic of failing to register a point in any sprint race this season. But it was better news for Oliver Goethe and Sami Meguetounif who took their first victories, meaning there is still yet to be a repeat winner in 2024.

Bernd Maylander led the majority of the Saturday sprint race, his Mercedes safety car sent onto the track on four occasions. Reversed-grid polesitter Kaper Sztuka was quickly thrust down the order and out of the podium places, with Noel Leon moving in front from Tim Tramnitz and sixth-placed starter Goethe. But the action was quickly frozen after Mari Boya spun into the gravel at the Villeneuve chicane after contact with Tommy Smith. No sooner had the action resumed when Charlie Wurz kindly assisted Callum Voisin off the track and into the barriers at Tosa, an act that, like Smith's, resulted in a 10-second penalty.

A trip into the gravel for Meguetounif, after making contact with the rear of Dino Beganovic, made it three interruptions, and then Maylander completed his private game of Connect Four with a 'phantom' safety car period when Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak pulled off the circuit. He had restarted and was motoring into the pits when the race was neutralised.



Meguetounif leads pack at Tamburello

Browning was sixth by the final restart, but a half-move on Sztuka at Tosa on the penultimate lap put his Hitech GP car out of the race, and the VSC was deployed as cars passed through the area on the final tour. Leon had remained cool on each restart, but the Mexican was caught napping by the ending of the VSC on the downhill run to Rivazza, and Campos Racing-run Red Bull Junior Goethe pounced on the Van Amersfoort Racing man to snatch the win with just two corners remaining.

The drama continued post-race when Goethe and Tramnitz, who had finished third, were handed five-second penalties for speeding behind the safety car. This meant Leon collected the winner's trophy on the podium, but these penalties were reversed an hour after the race, and Leon handed a 5s addition for weaving beyond what was defined as acceptable in the race director's event notes. That demoted him to third behind the MP Motorsport car of Tramnitz. Beganovic was fourth, but Prema team-mate Gabriele Mini's superb pass on Sztuka was cancelled out when he had to veer wide to avoid the errant Browning, dropping him

back behind the Pole into sixth.

Qualifying had been dominated by the Trident squad, with Santiago Ramos leading team-mates Leonardo Fornaroli and Meguetounif in a 1-2-3. The Mexican poleman led initially, but on his home ground Fornaroli got through on the third lap, and Ramos went on to suffer a significant mid-race drop off in pace, eventually finishing eighth.

Goethe, on a charge from seventh on the grid, was up to second when Fornaroli hit a kerb, causing the Italian's engine to shut off momentarily and dropping him to fifth. He eventually passed Prema's Arvid Lindblad and Ramos as he recovered to third.

Goethe now led, but Meguetounif managed his tyres beautifully and the French F3 rookie made a DRS-assisted swoop around the outside of the Campos car into Tamburello on lap 18 of 22. Another with pace late in the race was Browning, who finished on the gearbox of third-placed Fornaroli, to whom he has conceded the lead in the standings. Lindblad dropped back to seventh behind Prema team-mates Beganovic and Mini.

SAM HALL



Goethe beats Leon to flag on Saturday. The 'lead' changed twice after this!

DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY/REDBULL CONTENT POOL

Rossi held off Weerts
for another Misano win



JEP/SRO

Rossi flourishes on four wheels in WRT BMW 1-2

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE
SPRINT CUP
MISANO (ITA)
18 MAY
ROUND 2/5**

Hopeful they came, delirious they left. The omnipresent Valentino Rossi fans had much to celebrate last Saturday at Misano as their hero drove the best race of his short four-wheeled career to take a second GT3 win and underline his vastly improved car-racing prowess.

On one hand, it looked easy: Maxime Martin started the Team WRT BMW M4 GT3 from pole, led his stint and relayed Rossi for the win. Simple. The truth was more nuanced. For a start, their BMW wasn't necessarily the fastest – pole had initially gone to the sister car of Dries Vanthoor, only for the Belgian to be penalised for track-limit violations. Vanthoor slumped to sixth and elevated Martin to pole. As Martin led away, Vanthoor bagged fourth on the opening lap but lost time passing Ben Green, again

starring in the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari 296 GT3. Eventually, Vanthoor was ahead, although contact helped open the door to causing annoyance in the Swiss team's pit. No action was taken, leaving Vanthoor clear to chase the impressive Marvin Dienst in Dinamic GT's Bronze Cup Porsche 911 GT3-R.

Dienst was mighty and led, briefly, as the BMWs pitted. So good was the WRT pitwork that the stops from both cars were within a tenth of a second... So Rossi led the second stint, with Charles Weerts – in for Vanthoor – bearing down on him. The gap plunged, but Weerts was never able to find an opening. Rossi, in just his third full season of car racing, withstood intense pressure to score a popular win from Weerts and the Emil Frey Ferraris of Giacomo Altoe, who had taken over his car from Thierry Vermeulen, and Konsta Lappalainen, in for Green.

"I drove very well," proclaimed Rossi over the chanting from his fans. "I didn't make a mistake and I am soooooooo 'appy."

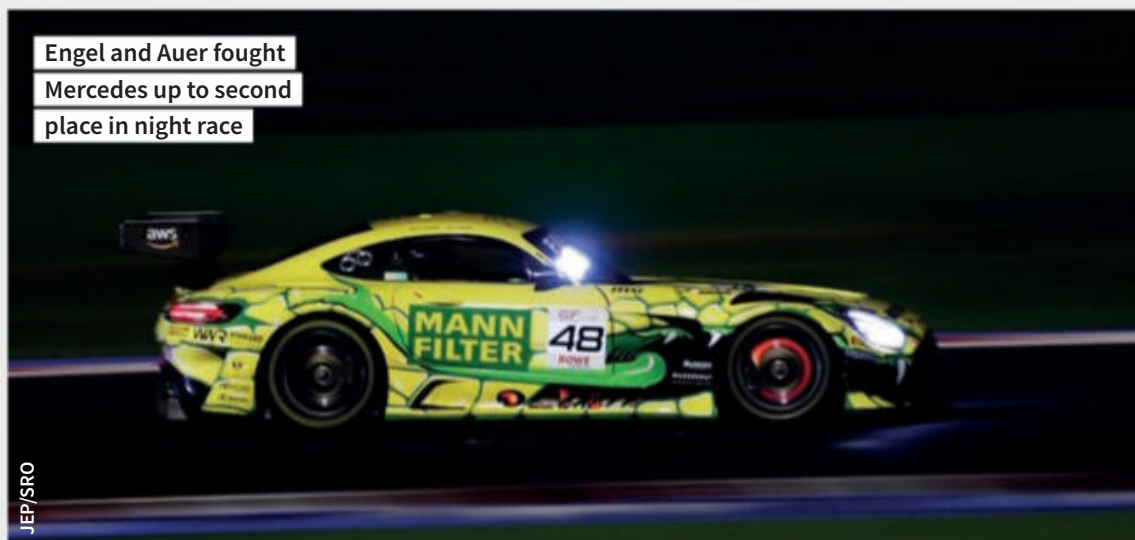
Weerts started race two from pole and bolted after an early safety car triggered by Alex Aka's Attempto Racing Audi turning around Nicolas Baert's Comtoyou Racing Aston Martin. Brands Hatch winner Lucas Auer chased, his Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo struggling to turn on its tyres as quickly as needed in this evening race, while Altoe ran third from Rossi, who had to jump past Simon Gachet's CSA Racing Audi during the early laps.

After the stops, it was Vanthoor ahead of Maro Engel (in for Auer) and Martin. Vanthoor looked comfortable, but a brake issue meant that the car wasn't consistent. The gap dropped to a gnat's under two seconds before Vanthoor pushed for a couple of laps to extend it, and was able to bring home the BMW for a second win of the season. Engel – "It was kind of Dries to wait for me..." – was second, reckoning it felt like a win having been only 21st on the grid for the opening race, in which he and Auer had charged up to fifth. Martin, who had jumped Vermeulen on the pitstops, shadowed the yellow Mercedes in third for a useful bank of points. Behind the fifth-placed Rutronik Porsche, the Garage 59 McLaren of Tom Gamble and Benjamin Goethe came home sixth.

"That was a cat and mouse race," reckoned Vanthoor. "I pushed but they came close." The BMWs, as Auer put it, were "on a different planet", but the star for the fans was Rossi. A win and a third underlined how far he has come. While he will always be known for his two-wheeled successes, a pukka GT racer he now is.

DAVID ADDISON

Engel and Auer fought
Mercedes up to second
place in night race



JEP/SRO

A perfect starter for ten Voorde

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
IMOLA (ITA)
19 MAY
ROUND 1/8

After Harry King took two wins in the Porsche Carrera Cup Germany opener at Imola last month, Larry ten Voorde exacted revenge on the return to the Italian venue for the German manufacturer's Formula 1-supporting flagship series last Sunday.

The Dutchman beat the Brit to pole on his first outing with Come Ledogar's CLRT squad, but King nosed ahead on



the run down to the Tamburello chicane at the start, before ten Voorde just about squeezed in front. Behind them, Marvin Klein jumped Robert de Haan to move up into third position.

Following an early safety car, ten Voorde built himself some breathing space over the Lechner Racing entry of King, who came under race-long pressure from Klein. At half-distance, the Frenchman probed at Tamburello, and his checked momentum in turn allowed de Haan to feint a move at Tosa. But there was no change among the top four, ten Voorde exhorting CLRT team-mate Klein over his radio, and in turn being warned by his engineer about track limits at Piratella.

Behind the leading quartet, Theo Oeverhaus made it three Lechner drivers in the top five, but only after Huub van Eijndhoven was penalised post-race for passing under the safety car. That dropped him to seventh behind Formula Regional graduate and Supercup debutant Kas Haverkort.

Alexander Tauscher was in this battle before a trip into the Tamburello gravel while defending fifth place from van Eijndhoven after the safety car restart.

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE SPRINT CUP
MISANO (ITA)
Race 1 Maxime Martin/Valentino Rossi
Team WRT
(BMW M4 GT3)
Race 2 Dries Vanthoor/Charles Weerts
Team WRT
(BMW M4 GT3)

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
IMOLA (ITA)
Larry ten Voorde
CLRT

SUPER FORMULA
AUTOPOLIS (JPN)
Tadasuke Makino
Dandelion Racing (Dallara-Honda)

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES
MISANO (ITA)
Race 1 Lluc Ibanez/Alexandre Papadopoulos
NM Racing Team (Mercedes-AMG GT4)
Race 2 Ricardo van der Ende/
Benjamin Lessennes
L'Espace Bienvenue (BMW M4 GT4)

SUPER FORMULA LIGHTS
AUTOPOLIS (JPN)
Races 1 & 3 Seita Nonaka
TOM'S
Race 2 Syun Koide
B-Max Racing Team



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Makino and Dandelion flower at last

SUPER FORMULA
AUTOPOLIS (JPN)
19 MAY
ROUND 2/7

Tadasuke Makino finally ended an agonising wait for his first Super Formula win in last weekend's second round of the season at Autopolis.

Now in his sixth season in the Japanese series and with six previous podium finishes to his name, Dandelion Racing driver Makino earned victory at his 39th attempt in dominant style as the season resumed after a two-month interval since the opener at Suzuka in March. From second on the grid, Makino got the jump on poleman and fellow FIA F2 race winner Ayumu Iwasa at the start, and was able to open up a comfortable lead as the Team Mugen car of Iwasa dropped to third and got held up by the slower Nakajima Racing machine of Naoki Yamamoto.

Iwasa was released into free air when



Yamamoto pitted on lap 10 of 41, allowing the Red Bull junior to halve the six-second cushion created by Makino, but Iwasa was starting to lose ground by the time both came in for their stops together on lap 24. Makino crucially resumed just ahead of Yamamoto, before sprinting clear to one of the most emotional first-time victories in recent years.

Despite having fresher tyres, Iwasa spent a number of laps stuck behind not only Yamamoto but also the second Dandelion car of Kakunoshin Ohta, and any chance of a first win in his second Super Formula start was long gone by the time he cleared Yamamoto for second.

Sho Tsuboi made good progress with a late-stopping strategy to claim his first podium with TOM'S, the only Toyota-powered runner in a Honda-dominated top five. Tsuboi picked off Yamamoto just after Iwasa's move, with Yamamoto and fellow early stopper Ohta next.

Suzuka winner Tomoki Nojiri finished a sub-par ninth and now shares the series lead with Makino. Ben Barnicoat was 13th in his first and possibly only SF start as Theo Pourchaire's replacement at Team Impul.

JAMIE KLEIN

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Mustangs gallop in the wild west (of Australia)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
WANNEROO (AUS)
18-19 MAY
ROUND 4/12

After eight races of Chevrolet dominance, Ford has finally broken through to take its first two wins in the 2024 Supercars Championship at Wanneroo Raceway in Western Australia.

It was Chaz Mostert and then Cameron Waters who ended the drought to register victories in the two races. Walkinshaw Andretti United racer Mostert won the Saturday race after taking pole position, and Waters replicated those achievements the next day in the Tickford Mustang, but only after a pitlane penalty demoted Mostert, who had finished ahead of him on the road, to second place. The WAU crew had released Mostert into the path of Waters's team-mate Thomas Randle, who was forced to hit the brakes. Mostert later put his hand up and explained that he had been slow away from the stop. It may have been Ford's weekend, but



once again Will Brown showed that he is the most consistent of the Chevrolet drivers by taking a second and then a third in his Triple Eight Camaro, in spite of a five-second penalty due to an on-track clash involving the unlucky Randle. His team-mate Broc Feeney had a more difficult weekend, claiming fifth and seventh. WAU showed consistent speed. Apart from Mostert, rookie Ryan Wood equalled his best result of the season with fourth on Saturday after leading the race early, and he was eighth on Sunday. Will Davison was best of the rest with fourth place in his Dick Johnson Racing

Ford on Sunday after a throttle problem on Saturday. Brodie Kosteci had a terrible weekend in front of his home fans, spearing off on the opening lap on Saturday, although he showed some speed when he qualified sixth on Sunday before retiring with overheating. The results mean Brown extends his points lead over Feeney to 136, with Mostert maintaining third. Waters has partially turned around a tough start to the season to move to fourth place. Waters and Brown next face their NASCAR Cup debuts at Sonoma. PHIL BRANAGAN

Logano wins \$1m before punch-up

NASCAR ALL-STAR RACE
NORTH WILKESBORO (USA)
19 MAY

Joey Logano's dominant win in Sunday night's NASCAR All-Star Race left little doubt, but a post-race brawl in the garage provided plenty of drama at North Wilkesboro Speedway. Logano capped an impressive day for Team Penske by leading 199 of 200 laps, and his Ford held off a late charge from the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota of Denny Hamlin to win the \$1million event for the second



time in his career. The victory came hours after team owner Roger Penske's IndyCar drivers swept the front row for the Indianapolis 500. Logano has yet to win a NASCAR Cup race this season, and it had been over a year since his most recent victory. "I wish this one counted for points, but a million bucks will work, as well," he said. "Denny gave me a run for my money. His short run was so fast, and my long run was so great, so I just had to battle him off." After the race, a frustrated Ricky Stenhouse Jr, who had been knocked out of the race in the opening laps by Kyle Busch, confronted Busch in the garage outside his team hauler. After a brief heated confrontation, Stenhouse appeared to strike Busch with his right hand and a brawl erupted that collected team members and Stenhouse's father before it was broken up. Chris Buescher ended up third, while Kyle Larson, who qualified fifth for the Indy 500 earlier in the day, started from the rear of the field to finish fourth ahead of Ryan Blaney and the rest. JIM UTTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
WANNEROO (AUS)

- Race 1 Chaz Mostert
Walkinshaw Andretti United
(Ford Mustang)
Race 2 Cameron Waters
Tickford Racing
(Ford Mustang)

NASCAR ALL-STAR RACE
NORTH WILKESBORO (USA)
Joey Logano
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)

EUROCUP-3
RED BULL RING (AUT)

- Race 1 Owen Tangavelou
MP Motorsport
Race 2 Bruno del Pino
MP Motorsport

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
CASCAVEL (BRA)

- Race 1 Eduardo Barrichello
Full Time Sports (Toyota Corolla)
Race 2 Bruno Baptista
RCM Motorsport (Toyota Corolla)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

FORMULA 1

Is the Williams revival still on track?

Turning around an ailing F1 team is a hugely complex, expensive and drawn-out process – especially when ambitions are sky-high

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES





Improvement in overall performance hoped for the FW46 has yet to appear



Albon has demonstrated his faith in the Williams project with a long-term deal

SBLOXHAM



Jacques Villeneuve won the team's last title in 1997

HONE SUTTON



Williams fell to the back of the pack in 2022

DUNBAR



Peak FW45's high-speed strengths were too limiting

HONE SUTTON

S

entimentality is in short supply in modern Formula 1, and so it should be; a rich heritage is not a prerequisite of success, and neither does it guarantee that. Just ask the spectre of Lotus, or Brabham, or any of the other teams whose past glories eluded them when their coffers became conspicuously bare in the early 1990s.

Williams was not far from enduring a similar fate just five years ago. The effect of underinvestment began to snowball: car development troubles rolled the team towards the rear of the field; sponsors began to flock to more successful teams; and the Grove squad had to look to drivers to fill the void in its precarious bank balance.

When Dorilton Capital acquired the team from the Williams family, it was tinged with bittersweetness. The team that Sir Frank Williams had built and taken to championship titles throughout the 1980s and 1990s was now enfranchised to do more than merely survive, but without the familial ties that had continued under daughter Claire's stewardship of the team.

But it took time to shake off the survival mentality, hence the appointment of James Vowles as team principal last year. Progress under ex-VW motorsport chief Jost Capito had stalled in 2022, and the team slipped to the bottom of the order once again, prompting a change of management. Vowles, a pitwall mainstay during Mercedes' period of dominance, had been tasked with steering the ship into more harmonious waters. It aligned with progress in 2023; like its predecessor, the FW45 was a particularly 'peaky' car and terrified its midfield rivals in the higher-speed circuits, yet was not entirely balanced across the board.

Vowles tasked the team with rectifying that for this year's FW46, all under a new framework that aimed to eliminate contingency measures that would speed up the car build process at the expense of performance. Have the opening seven races been a fair reflection of that? Yes, but also no. The push to cut contingencies – the process of cannibalising older parts or building new ones from easier to produce, but heavier, materials – ultimately pushed back the completion date of the FW46, as anticipated. But the overall performance hoped for has not come to pass, and the team currently sits pointless after the opening quarter of the season.

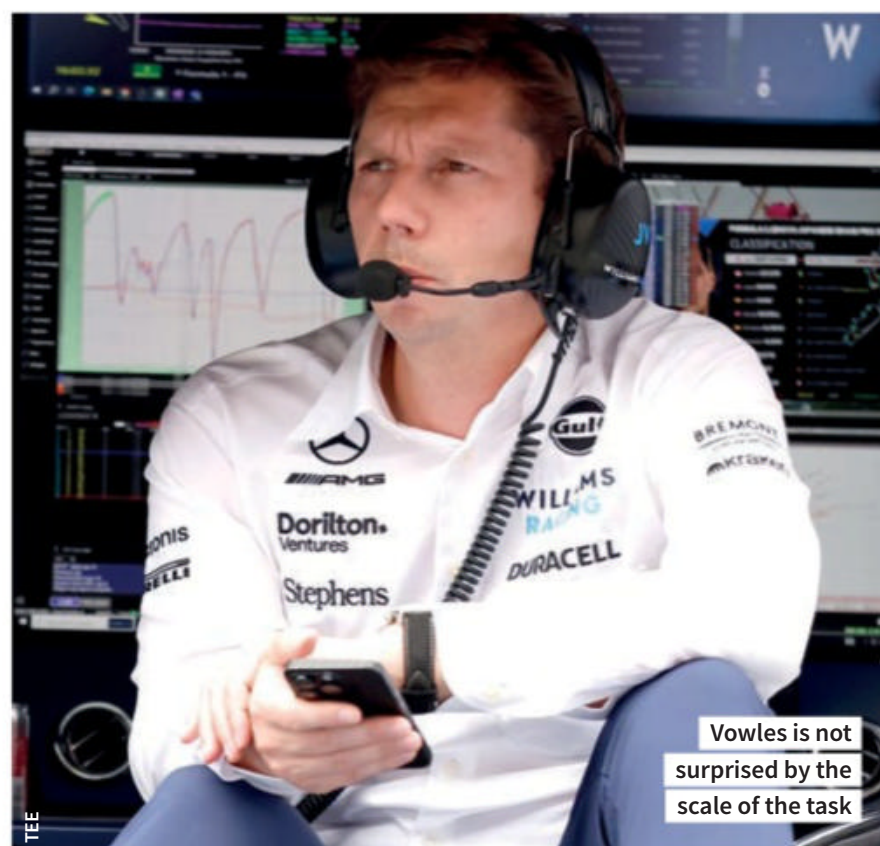
Lead driver Alex Albon, thanks to his impressive performances over the past two seasons, was linked to a potential Red Bull return for 2026. Perhaps, given Williams's recent form, he'd be inclined to

“We’ve got to add technology, we’ve got to add systems and process, and we have to undo 20 years’ worth of elements, and that doesn’t happen overnight”

hedge his bets and put pen to paper on a mooted exclusivity deal for 2026. Instead, the Anglo-Thai has thrown his lot in with Williams long-term. Evidently, there's something among 2024's disappointment thus far to hang his hat on, starting with the clearest takeaway from the team's lack of performance.

Vowles revealed last weekend at Imola that the new Williams was still overweight. He estimated that this was costing the team almost half a second per lap and, according to popular paddock maths, this puts the new car 10kg above its target. A new floor taken to the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix is the first step of many expected to cut the mass, but it could be considered alarming that this has been allowed to happen despite the new processes put in place.

But, Vowles says, this is still a byproduct of facilities that have not been fully updated to match the mod-cons that many of the teams among the upper echelon have in place. Over his past 15 months in



Vowles is not surprised by the scale of the task

charge, investment has been directed into the areas that Vowles has deemed worthy of immediate attention, but there's still a lot more that requires an overhaul.

“You can bring good concepts, ideas, you can change things,” Vowles begins in a conversation with Autosport. “But in an organisation that doesn't have the facilities, process, structure and systems, what happens is there's always an outlet. And the outlet is, in the circumstance that we have here, weight gets added to the car. So the disappointment is that the drivers are literally sitting there going, ‘It's a really good balance, I'm looking forward to using it.’ But when you're carrying around that much excess weight, you struggle to move forward. That's the disappointing bit.”

“Some of it is not a surprise to me. I knew that coming into it and, as I said to everyone, this isn't a journey of one year. We've got to add technology, we've got to add systems and process, and we have to undo 20 years' worth of elements, and that doesn't happen overnight. I'd like it to, but it doesn't.”

Those “20 years' worth of elements” that Vowles mentions were alluded at the very start of the Briton's tenure, where his first tours of the Grove factory had revealed some antiquated machinery that was first used in the BMW years. Autosport's flippant remark that Williams was set to uncover something worthy of *Antiques Roadshow* was met with Vowles's dry riposte of, “It has, I assure you!”

To a football fan, Williams's uptick in performance in 2023 that allowed it to reach seventh in the constructors' championship could be down to the “new manager bounce”, and Vowles is now experiencing “second-season syndrome” at the helm among a congested lower midfield pack. But running an F1 team is more nuanced; motorsport is an engineering competition disguised as a sport and, if the pieces at the factory are not in place, then it directly correlates to performance at the track.

It's also important to note that the FW46 is a very different prospect to its predecessors. Williams could have persisted with its previous lineage of top-speed monsters and that would net immediate returns at circuits such as Monza, Spa or Montreal. But, Vowles explains, the current calendar is so broad that this is an approach that cannot work long term beyond yielding more token results on a small subset of circuits.

“A peaky car works if you have 16 races and therefore, uh, five of them, a third of them, you can get [into the points],” Vowles explains. “We have 24 races now, [so that] won't net you much in the championship, except when you're fighting for a couple of points. So change has to happen at some point. And how do you go about that? A lot of it went back down to foundations. A lot of it was giving the wind tunnel team the breadth of, basically, ‘You can explore these areas. >>

These are your limits, but you can explore these areas.'

"The previous way of doing it, you would constrain the wind tunnel to say you can add SCz [a scaled force coefficient in the z-axis], you can add downforce, but this is the ratio of drag you can add it at, which is an incredibly tight ratio. And what it means is you throw away concepts and ideas that will actually produce a better car on average across all tracks.

"Second of all, you don't simulate across a very tight, narrow band of tracks. You simulate across all of them. Then you go back to more foundations of linking vehicle dynamics to vehicle performance, to aerodynamics. In other words, you create groups of individuals where performance is their responsibility. Not the responsibility of just aero, but the responsibility of that group of individuals. And when you do that, you set targets on it, which is this car at all races has to be competitive in its format. And that's how you achieve it fundamentally. You change where the accountability and responsibility goes, and you change the methods and systems of simulation, and you allow aero, frankly, to have more freedom than they had before."

It's difficult to square the circle when balancing short-term and long-term planning in F1, particularly when expectations are usually summarised as "we want results yesterday". Despite the shortfall in results this term, Albon's imagination has been sufficiently captured by the project ongoing at Williams, and that "the ceiling at Williams is higher than what we're showing at the moment".

As per the upgrade plan, there are further developments in the works to ensure that the FW46 is more malleable. Should the estimated 0.45-second shortfall be true, this would catapult the team above Haas and Alpine in the pecking order and pitch it around the RB level of performance. The focus is now on shedding that excess weight and getting the car to a level where it is no longer encumbered by the ramifications thereof. It's low-hanging fruit in theory but, where Vowles is concerned, there are still a lot of changes needed to streamline the departments in the team responsible for the car build.

One of the areas that he noted was 20 years off the pace of the top teams lay in the composites department, which he felt was of greatest importance when he joined the team. Williams had spent the best part of two seasons augmented by Dorilton investment before he joined the team, and the previous management had started to enact changes around Grove. Vowles agreed that the investment in certain areas of the team had value but, when asked whether he'd have done the same thing had he joined the team at the start of 2021, he noted that he'd have put the money into the composites department first.

"It's the exact same question the board asked me after I was in for

"We need to make sure we have a car that is continuing to add downforce in the wind tunnel at the right rate to a competitive level. That's got to be number one"

four months," he says. "And my answer is the same as I give you. The money has gone into areas that needed finance. Is it the first ones that I would have done? No, but it had to be done because it's not that you can't invest in any of these areas.

"I would have done it in a slightly different order. As an example, the machine shop is a really good machine shop. But composites isn't. The car is 75% composites. Focus on the composites first. Then, the metals second, from a priority perspective. I would actually also say that Williams was more advanced in terms of metals than composites – not advanced relative to benchmark, just more advanced, which meant that there was more structure in there about how we invest, and what we need to get out of it.

"All of the investment that has been done so far, none of it is wasted. It's just there's a lot more required."

Part of that desired investment into facilities formed the backbone of Williams's lobbying to expand the capital expenditure regulations dictated by the financial caps. When it became apparent that the financial rules would encroach upon capital expenditure (ie the funds available to acquire or maintain fixed assets, such as machinery or other infrastructure), the top teams could afford to sink money into improving facilities before the rules came into play. The likes of McLaren and Aston Martin spent big on planning new wind tunnels or, in Aston's case, an entirely new factory. Williams, on the other hand, did not have the funds to do so until its takeover was completed.

The previous universal CapEx allowance of \$45million (approximately £35m) over four years was changed to a sliding scale based on constructors' position, so the bottom four teams now get \$65m (or £51m) to invest on infrastructure over those four seasons. It's not the magnitude that Williams had wanted, but it was nonetheless a battle won in its pursuit of a revival.

It goes beyond the material stocked at the factory too, and Vowles explained that his first hire was actually to bolster the human resources department. Part of that was to challenge the personnel already at Williams with new training, and disposing of a chain of command where all of the decisions were made at the top. The team principal now no longer signs off on every decision – there are various heads of state who can now do so to improve the speed of those choices.

As one of F1's most decorated teams, Williams has a well-defined past, although the troughs have surpassed the peaks in recent years. In the present, it is attempting to unlock performance from a car that has its promise weighed down by... well, its own weight. And then there's the team's future – one that Vowles reckoned would take at least five years before it could realistically begin to match the upper half of the F1 grid on resource.

"Weight is the one that everyone out here will understand now, why we're saying we're on the right path, but we've got a lot of things we need to address and fix," explains Vowles. "And by the way, I said from the beginning, we're open about it. Weight is just the one that's slapping us on the face today, but that's not the main issue. We'll solve that very quickly. I think by 2026 we'll be in a sensible place, but even then 2026 has very interesting regulations at the moment that reward weight in a way that no other championship has, because it's such a low number. I don't believe anyone can hit that.

"But even beyond there, we need to make sure we have a car that is continuing to add downforce in the wind tunnel at the right rate to a competitive level. That's got to be number one. It's got to be that the vehicle dynamics of the car are ones that work well, whether you're striking a kerb, whether you're going around a slow-speed, mid-speed, high-speed corner, that you can balance it between low and high.

"We're not there yet. We still don't have the balance that I'd like between low and high-speed corners. We don't have the kerb strike ability that the Red Bull has, as an example. Weight's the one you can relate to and what you can portray to the world in a way that everyone will understand. But every single area needs to be brought up."

Assuming Williams is still on track, what's next for the British squad? Vowles doesn't just want the team to be on a par with the environment he had known inside-out at Mercedes – he wants to surpass it. Attempting to emulate Mercedes' or Red Bull's infrastructure from 2022 will be five years out of date by 2027, for example – development of the team's structure must be done through anticipating new trends.

"Where we are today, there's still a bit more work to be done," he adds. "The future state, I don't want to take this to just where I knew the best to be within Mercedes and Red Bull. They're very high standard, as you can tell, you win championships from it. What can we do that actually is elevated above that? And that's really the big question that comes out of it at the moment.

"That's the ongoing process that will take a while. And then you put everything around it. That doesn't mean you stand still. We still have better processes today, and systems and structure than we did before.

"That's not the end state. The end state is one that I think will be many years away." ❀



Focus is on weight-loss programme to address FW46's half-second-per-lap deficit





RACE

PREVIEW

Grandstands will be chocker come race day for 108th running of 'The Greatest Spectacle in Racing'

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN THE INDY 500

From a 49-year-old superstar to a NASCAR king making his debut, via a tarnished 2023 winner, there'll be plenty to keep an eye on in America's big one

JOEY BARNES

ABBOTT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



LARSON: 1100 MILES IN ONE DAY



CHRIS OWENS

There are very few things that Kyle Larson hasn't experienced in motorsport. He has long been notorious for bouncing from his main focus in the NASCAR Cup to various dirt tracks across the country to race late models, midgets or sprint cars. Now he adds IndyCar to his CV with the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 on 26 May.

The 2021 NASCAR Cup champion will be driving the Chevrolet-powered #17 entry that is co-entered by Arrow McLaren and Rick Hendrick, for whom Larson drives in NASCAR. At 31, he is the fifth driver to attempt 'The Double', competing in the Indy 500 and the 600-mile Cup race at Charlotte Motor Speedway on the same day. The last to do that was Kurt Busch in 2014; the first was the late John Andretti in 1994, with Robby Gordon (five times) and Tony Stewart (twice) in between. Stewart's 2001 effort remains the most successful, finishing sixth at Indy and third at Charlotte, and he remains the only driver to complete all 1100 miles.

"I'm not sitting here saying I'm going to win the Indy 500," says Larson, who qualified an impressive fifth. "I could run worse than 20th all race long and not be surprised at all. It would be hard for anybody to just come into a foreign

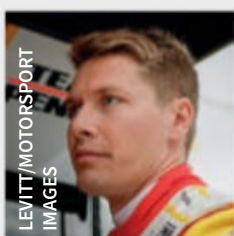
type of race car, foreign race procedures and everything, and win."

Tony Kanaan, the 2013 winner of the Indy 500 who now serves as sporting director for Arrow McLaren, has been frequently present in aiding Larson's transition. He also has Hendrick Motorsports technical director Brian Campe to lean on. Campe was the lead engineer with Team Penske for Juan Pablo Montoya's victory in the 2015 500, and guided Josef Newgarden to his first IndyCar Series title in 2017.

"I guess the thing that I know is I'm with a great team," adds Larson. "I know I've got a couple weeks of practice that will translate some to the race. I've got great team-mates [Pato O'Ward, Alexander Rossi and Callum Hogg]. I have Kanaan to talk to, a guy who has won the race. I have all these resources that are going to help prepare me.

"I really just want to finish the laps, enjoy the experience, gain the experience. No matter what the result is, I know I'm going to come out of it a better, more well-rounded driver. Just getting to see how a different professional form of motorsport operates, how their prep work is, all that, driving a different car, getting used to pulling the trigger and passing somebody at 220mph into Turn 1, there's the opportunity for me to cross through a different threshold of confidence after that."

NEWGARDEN'S REIGN UNDER THREAT



LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Josef Newgarden will have to block out the distractions if there are any hopes of making it back-to-back victories in the Indianapolis 500.

Momentum is not on the side of the 33-year-old Tennessee native, who comes into IndyCar's crown jewel with consecutive finishes of 16th and 17th at Barber Motorsports Park and the road course circuit of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Those results have come on the back of being stripped of victory in the season-opening Grand Prix of St Petersburg in March – along with Penske team-mate Scott McLaughlin's third-place finish – after both were found by IndyCar officials to be in violation of illegally using the overtake boost on restarts.

Will Power, the third member of Team Penske, also had the same software on his car, but data did not find him guilty of using it in a wrongful manner.

He was still docked 10 points, while the trio were fined \$25,000 each and forfeited their prize money. Additionally, legendary boss Roger Penske levied four two-race suspensions that run through the Indy 500, including Newgarden's race strategist Tim Cindric (who is also president of Team Penske) and engineer Luke Mason.

"I feel good now," affirms the two-time IndyCar champion who is part of Penske's 1-2-3 on the grid. "I felt good [at the Indy GP round]. I thought we qualified well, just didn't get the race results to back it up, but I think we're getting there. There's no doubt it's been a tough



ABBOTT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

couple of weeks, but I'm ready to move forward."

Porsche Penske Motorsport managing director Jonathan Diuguid will call the strategy for Newgarden's Indy 500 effort, while the IMSA programme's Daytona 24 Hours race-winning engineer Raul Prados handles duties temporarily in place of Mason. "I just don't think you can beat the history and, when you win the race, it just completely changes your perspective," says Newgarden. "So, it's been very cool to win it and to be here with this group trying to defend our title."



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A GREAT BATTLE FOR ROOKIE HONOURS

This year will feature one of the most talented rookie classes in the history of the Indianapolis 500. In total, there will be six drivers contesting their respective maiden attempts at ‘The Greatest Spectacle in Racing’.

While Kyle Larson is undoubtedly their headliner, Honda-powered Chip Ganassi Racing sports three rookies, led by multiple Formula 2 race winner Marcus Armstrong, who claimed the 2023 IndyCar Rookie of the Year title despite not running on the ovals. The highly touted Linus Lundqvist (above), the 2022 Indy NXT champion who recently took his first IndyCar podium at Barber Motorsports Park, and 19-year-old Kyffin Simpson are also on board.

Christian Rasmussen, who captured the 2023 Indy NXT title, has the reins of a Chevrolet-powered machine for Ed Carpenter Racing. Nolan Siegel, who is still a full-time competitor in NXT where he sits second in the standings, was to take part with Honda squad Dale Coyne Racing. But he was the one driver who failed to make the cut in qualifying and ended his effort in

the wall... Both Siegel and Simpson are also set to run in the Le Mans 24 Hours next month.



The final spot in the rookie class is Meyer Shank Racing’s Tom Blomqvist (left). He has a diverse resume that includes Formula E and the World Endurance Championship, but his biggest successes have come in the IMSA SportsCar Championship – he won the 2022 title and has two victories in the Daytona 24 Hours.

ILOTT: INDYCAR’S NEW SUPERSUB



Callum Ilott has renewed purpose. For starters, the Briton wasn’t even supposed to compete in IndyCar this season. After parting ways with Juncos Hollinger Racing, he opted for a move to the FIA World Endurance Championship. But the drama surrounding David Malukas’s off-season injury, which ultimately resulted

in his departure last month from Arrow McLaren, led to a return to IndyCar in the team’s #6 Chevrolet-powered Dallara.

Ilott drove for Arrow McLaren in the opening two events of the IndyCar season, the Grand Prix of St Petersburg and non-points race at The Thermal Club in March. He also participated in the Indy 500 Open Test with the team in April, ahead of getting the call for the race. He completes a massive effort by the team, alongside Pato O’Ward, Alexander Rossi and Kyle Larson.

“I’m P2 in the World Endurance Championship in a privateer team and just won a race,” says Ilott, fresh off his Spa 6 Hours victory in the Jota Porsche 963. “I have a 75% podium record in WEC. I’m here for the Indy 500 and two weeks afterwards I’m at Le Mans; I can’t complain. It’s not a bad life. Yeah, I couldn’t be in a better place.”



CASTRONEVES WANTS TO KEEP ON GOING



Helio Castroneves is on the shortlist of legends who make up part of the Mount Rushmore in the annals of the Indianapolis 500.

At 49 years old, the Brazilian shows no signs of relenting as he aims for a record fifth victory, after earning a place alongside AJ Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears as four-time winners of the Indy

500 following his stirring victory in 2021, which also happened to be his first race with Meyer Shank Racing.

A record-breaking fifth would not only put Castroneves alone at the top, but he would also become the oldest winner in the event's history; that honour is currently held by Unser, who won the 1987 edition just five days shy of his 48th birthday. It's worth wondering, though, if Castroneves were to pull his Honda-powered Meyer Shank Racing entry into Victory Lane once more, would he keep going?

"There's no way I'm gonna stop like that," says Castroneves, who also won the race in 2001, 2002 and 2009. "I was talking to Johnny Rutherford [three-time Indy 500 winner] and he's like, '50 years; that's when I stop'. I'm like, 'Come on, Johnny, 50? You gotta keep going. Why didn't you?' Then he told me he couldn't find a team and it was a good conversation, but I was amazed to find that out.

"There's people that say, 'Oh, you're getting older'. I don't think it has changed. The system is still pretty much the same with the drivers too, especially in this place. As long as you have the opportunity and the desire to keep it going, I don't see a reason to stop. Yes, I would come back to extend and try to get number six, which would be awesome."



JAMES BLACK

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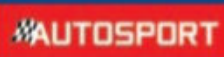
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- Create end to end project plans for all assigned projects, ensuring engagement from all stakeholders
- Use internal systems to ensure plans are enacted within Production & Technical areas in line with project plans

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We are looking for someone who has the following attributes:

- A positive attitude with the ability to engage with and motivate other people
- Commitment to improving the function of the Programme Management department, directly impacting the performance of the car
- Ability to interact, communicate confidently and build effective relationships across the team at all levels
- Excellent attention to detail with a desire for excellence across all activities
- Strong planning and organising skills, ability to multi-task, plan and prioritise work schedule and work within agreed timescales.

In terms of your technical skills, you will:

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- Maintain a clean and safe work environment
- Troubleshoot issues and make repairs as necessary
- Participate in design reviews and provide recommendations for improvements
- Monitor and report on project progress, particularly related to RP builds
- Work with design teams and engineers to determine material specifications and requirements
- Mentoring Junior members of the Team
- Work with internal stakeholders to ensure on time delivery

Requirements

- Extensive experience of working in an ADM department (Motorsports is preferable)
- Extensive knowledge across multiple ADM technologies
- Ability to read and interpret technical drawings and designs
- Strong attention to detail and quality control
- Excellent communication skills and ability to work collaboratively with design engineers
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- Ensure incoming emails are answered appropriately and promptly, and any issues escalated to Front of House Supervisor (FS)
- Contribute to the updating and maintenance of the Reception Manual.
- Support and assist (FS) with ad-hoc requests made by Senior Stakeholders, ensuring seamless service delivery, including but not limited to:- Administration, catering, and concierge service for VIP guests.
- Make meeting and room bookings and manage calendar, liaising with staff about changes and guests – Liaise with FS and reception team to ensure these are managed in an efficient and professional manner

About You

- Previous experience as a receptionist in a fast paced, demanding corporate environment
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- Proficient in MS Office
- Personable with excellent communication skills
- Ability to multi-task
- Strong attention to detail

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ERS TECHNICIAN
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Main Responsibilities

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- Collaborate with team members and collaborators to ensure smooth communication and carry out work.
- Information requested by other organizations within HRC for business purposes must be provided accurately and promptly.
- Liaising with other technical groups both within HRC and external suppliers.
- Recording and reporting of results in a clear and concise manner.

Knowledge, Skills And Experience Required

- Strong degree in Mechanical Engineering or similar discipline or equivalent experience.
- Experience in ESS Pack assembly and maintenance and problem analysis, and associated measurement and adjustment abilities.
- It is desirable to have experience with sub assemblies for electrical and electronic components at an automobile or racing related company.
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- Understand and follow detailed work instructions relating to the assembling of motorsport vehicles.
- Ensure that all build operations on each vehicle are completed to the required quality standards.
- Work as part of a team on the definition and solution of problems that may be affecting the quality, cost or productivity of the vehicles being produced.
- Support the development and launch into production future McLaren Motorsport vehicle platforms and variants.
- Support with the development of vehicle assembly processes for all assembly disciplines
- Support the team and wider business functions to ensure all quality targets are correctly specified and achieved.
- Support and participate in continuous improvement initiatives.
- Work alongside the Product Design Engineering team in identifying resolutions for product related issues during the pre-production build phases.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

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- Ability to use a wide range of measuring equipment and inspection techniques.
- Understanding manufacturing processes and sequences.
- Develop professional, positive relationships with all team members, with a focus on working collaboratively with all areas of the Machine Shop.
- Safe working within general Safety, Health and Environmental guidelines with specific attention and working to Departmental Risk Assessments.

Candidate Profile:

- Strong interest in engineering with an enquiring mind.
- Computer literate.
- Dependable, enthusiastic and willing to learn.
- Good communication skills.
- Reliable and flexible and punctual.
- A strong, positive work ethic with a 'can do, team focused' approach.
- The successful candidate will be self-motivated and be comfortable operating within a team environment.

Qualifications Required:

- Candidate must be eligible to complete a level 3 apprenticeship within a 42 month time frame.
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- Proven experience as a receptionist, front of house representative or similar in a professional organisation.
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- Having previous knowledge of computer-based switchboard and visitor management systems is a prerequisite for this role.
- Experience in a retail environment would be beneficial as the Guest Experience Team manage the onsite merchandise shop.
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- Booking flights, hotels, transfers, car rentals
- Arranging for transportation to and from the airport and/or to and from race tracks, handling travel issues, conflicts, complaints, cancellations
- Providing clear communication to all Team Members traveling both for trackside events or business trips
- Fulfil all the requests regarding necessary regulations (passports, visas, etc.)

Scouting and Negotiation

- Supporting the Travel Manager in negotiating of contracts with suppliers in order to provide the Team with the best stay at the most efficient costs
- Occasionally providing attendance to races/tests and perform site inspections when needed (around 20 days per year).
- Maintaining good relationships with suppliers

Professionalism

- Ensuring a high level service at all times, paying the utmost attention to details
- Keeping up-to-date records in the database
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Higgins realises dream by emulating hero Pond in **TR7**

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Charteris to race ex-Henton March **F2**



RS version of **Cayman** proves a hit



Silverstone plans new GP circuit event

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New Cayman RS gives drivers more bite

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB frontrunner Max Coates says the new RS version of the 718 Cayman GT4 being introduced to the series from its season-opening round this weekend is an “awesome” car to drive and a major step forward on its predecessor.

This year’s 22-strong Sprint Challenge grid will feature a mixture of RS and older Clubsport versions of the Cayman. Coates – the highest-placed driver continuing from last year after finishing third in the standings – is among an expected 14 RS entries for Snetterton’s curtain-raiser.

The RS is a substantially upgraded car and

features a four-litre engine that produces 75bhp more than the 3.8-litre motor of the earlier Cayman, while it also boasts a seven-speed rather than six-speed gearbox and improved aerodynamics.

Coates, who will remain with the Graves Motorsport squad, describes the RS as “a halfway house between the Carrera Cup car and the previous Clubsport”. “The power is the big change between the two,” he said. “It does feel different in terms of handling and I think that will only make the racing better.

“I think it will be easier to make a mistake with this car versus the older one and it’s probably a little bit harder to be quite as consistent with it. The previous car was

softer and more forgiving.”

Coates is relishing the challenge of competing in the new machine and believes the entire RS field are “all still finding our feet with the car”. Other likely championship contenders include Seb Hopkins – who has previously raced a Cayman in British GT – and his Team Parker stablemate Will Jenkins, who was a Sprint Challenge race winner last year en route to fifth in the points.

Fiesta Junior champion Ben Mulryan (Race Car Consultants) and Junior Saloons frontrunner Oskar Dix (Parker) are among the leading entries in the older Clubsport class this season.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

GB4 return for McNeilly with Fox Motorsport

GB4

GB4 race winner Liam McNeilly will return to the championship this weekend for the next round at Donington Park.

The now 18-year-old claimed his second victory of 2023 at Donington en route to third in the points with Fox Motorsport.

This term McNeilly has

focused on competing in America in the USF Juniors category, where he took pole and won on his debut at NOLA Motorsports Park and is currently third in the points.

He said: “My next USF Juniors race isn’t until the middle of June, so the chance to get back behind the wheel in racing conditions was just too good to miss.

“Donington’s a great track



and I’ve had some of my best wins in both GB4 and Ginettas there. Helping the Fox drivers this year has been a new experience for me and one

I’ve enjoyed, but nothing beats racing, so I’ll be aiming for the podium at the very least and trying to have as much fun as I can.”

Silverstone plans GP circuit date for smaller clubs

SILVERSTONE

Silverstone is planning to run a two-day event on its Grand Prix circuit next year at which smaller clubs will be able to buy track time.

The Northamptonshire venue intended to adopt a similar concept for a one-day meeting on the GP layout earlier this month, but was unable to fill the track time at relatively short notice so instead promoted three poorly supported Allcomers races. These sat alongside Historic Sports Car Club Classic Formula Ford and Derek Bell Trophy races on a short timetable.

Now, with costs of hiring the GP circuit having increased significantly, Silverstone is planning to run a race weekend in 2025 for clubs unable or unwilling to commit to a full day.

“We’ve had some enquiries and would like a mix of different content,” explained Charles Grattan, the circuit’s club meeting event manager. “What we want to do is find something that doesn’t have a home on the GP circuit because a club doesn’t want to hire the whole day, so let’s give them an opportunity to buy a bit of time off



us. We can still make the GP circuit accessible to those drivers and teams that aren’t the likes of GB3 or F4 – I want to see good club racing on the GP circuit.”

Grattan acknowledged the higher prices clubs face for booking dates on the GP layout, but says the longer nature of the track mean “there’s a lot of costs that go with running the GP circuit”.

In the Allcomers races on 4 May, an

initial 10 entries were whittled down to just two starters for the final 20-minute contest. “We wanted to get other club organisers involved but, unfortunately, couldn’t fill that time so decided to put on Allcomers races – it all came quite late,” Grattan said. “I was disappointed by the attrition because I would have liked to have kept at least 10 cars.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Disabled drivers secure scholarship

MOTORSPORT UK

A record number of disabled drivers took part in a special Motorsport UK StreetCar scholarship event at Bicester Motion earlier this month, with four of them securing fully funded seasons for competing in autosolos.

Sixteen drivers were involved in the shootout, organised in collaboration with Loughborough Car Club. Dean Linnell, Dominic Pearson, Ian Dance and Luke Delahunty were successful and will each contest autosolos with a StreetCar-affiliated club in their local area,

and they will all have access to a specially adapted car.

“It’s incredibly important to us here at Motorsport UK that we are able to diversify and improve accessibility for drivers to come along and try our sport,” said Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers.



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SMITH'S SPECTACULAR EXIT Jeff Smith crashed out of last Sunday's second Mini Miglia race at Snetterton in spectacular fashion with this roll at Nelson. Smith, who led the standings coming into the event and finished second to Kane Astin in the opener, was in a three-way lead battle with Astin and the unrelated Aaron Smith when he ran too deep into the left-right sequence and was launched over the sausage kerb. **Photos by Richard Styles**



Audi TT regular Laidlaw joins TCR UK, while others are absent

TCR UK

Audi TT Cup regular Steve Laidlaw made his TCR UK debut at Snetterton last weekend, driving a Hyundai i30 N prepared by Capture Motorsport.

Laidlaw, who also races in Clio Cup Middle East and was formerly a CityCar Cup frontrunner, planned to compete in TCR and the Audi series in Norfolk, but for Saturday's

races handed his TT over to son Sam, whose own was damaged in Friday testing.

"I bought this i30 but hadn't done anything with it for ages," said Laidlaw, who qualified 10th among the three-year-low 12-car TCR entry and steadily improved his pace, taking a best result of eighth. "The car's absolutely unbelievable. The difference between a road car that's been converted to be a race car versus a purpose-built race car is pretty phenomenal."

Meanwhile, British Endurance champion Brad Thurston will return to TCR UK at next month's Oulton Park round. He will switch from the Gen 1 Audi RS3 he raced at the season-opener to a second Sport77 Honda Civic FK7 alongside team boss Will Powell. Powell also missed last weekend's event after having knee surgery while he awaits delivery of a new engine. In addition, Ryan Bensley now expects to make a belated TCR UK debut aboard his ex-Viktor Andersson Lynk & Co 03 at Silverstone in August.

MARK PAULSON



Laidlaw took a best result of eighth in i30

RICHARD STYLES

HAYWARD ENJOYS A WINNING RETURN IN CLUBMANS

CLUBMANS

Former Clubmans champion Michelle Hayward enjoyed a winning return to racing at Donington Park earlier this month on her first weekend back following cancer treatment.

Hayward won the CSP2 title in 2018, 2021 and 2022 before stepping up to the top CSP1 division last year. But she had to miss April's season-opener at Silverstone while she recovered from surgery, with Tom Commander instead piloting the upgraded Phantom P82TR.

Hayward was instantly on the pace upon her return in Leicestershire, qualifying on pole and winning the opener. "I'm totally stoked for getting back after everything I've been through and to put it on pole and win my first race – I'm chuffed to bits," said Hayward, who added that the off-season tweaks had made a significant difference. "Last year, we were struggling for rear-end grip and downforce."

Hayward's weekend then turned sour when she suffered brake failure while leading race two. Fortunately, she was able to scrub some speed by taking to the gravel rather than trying to make the corner, but hitting the barriers still ended her event early. "Having brake failure at 130mph into the chicane was a scary moment," she said. "Quite often when you start losing the brakes, the pedal starts to go long. But I had no warning."

The bolt that held the rear caliper together had completely sheared, while a brake bias problem meant the front brakes did not work either, so an upgrade is now planned and Hayward seeks to enjoy more success in the rest of the season.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



JOYRICHINGS

Higgins realises boyhood TR7 dream on Manx

HISTORIC RALLYING

Three-time British Rally champion Mark Higgins recently lived out a boyhood dream by tackling his native Manx Rally in a Triumph TR7 V8 like Tony Pond used to drive – and he almost came away with a victory.

After several years away from rallying to focus on his new career as a movie stunt driver, and claim a British Rallycross title in 2018, Higgins is competing in the British Historic Rally Championship this year in the David Appleby Engineering TR7 used by current BRC leader Chris Ingram on last November's Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Higgins, who has won the Manx Rally five times in four different cars, is the only driver to win the famous island event more times than the late Pond, who secured four Manx victories between 1978-86. Higgins's father Tony competed on the 1980 Manx, which Pond won with the TR7, making this year's rally an emotional affair for Higgins. "I was there as a very young boy when Tony won and my dad also competed on the same rally, so



Higgins set impressive times at the wheel of TR7 before problems

PAUL LAWRENCE

quite a special memory," he said.

He and co-driver Carl Williamson scored maximum BHRC points on the first part of the double-header round, running as high as eighth overall after posting a third-fastest stage time. A mechanical problem denied Higgins a top result and he eventually finished eighth historic and 28th overall.

"This car is very special, and it was so great to be back out on my home event again," said Higgins. "The car was an absolute pleasure to drive and it's hard to believe it's 45-year-old technology. This was actually my first real

stage rally on Tarmac in a rear-wheel-drive car and I loved it!

"We unfortunately had a wire come off the distributor on day two, which lost us eight minutes in the stage, and then a gear selector issue but, even stuck in fourth gear for a stage and a bit, the car didn't lose too much time.

"The highlight was the Baldwins stage in the dark where we had a top-three time overall, which was great to confirm the older eyes still work OK!"

LUKE BARRY

New Thruxton owner in action aboard Camaro



Thistlethwayte has taken ownership of circuit

STEVE JONES

THRUXTON

Thruxton's new owner Alex Thistlethwayte raced at the UK's fastest circuit on Saturday for the first time since he bought the venue.

The 57-year-old Hampshireman finished 13th and ninth in the Classic Sports Car Club's

Special Saloons/Future Classics races in his 1968 Chevrolet Camaro.

Grandson of Tom Thistlethwayte, who raced his three-litre Bentley in the 1926 Le Mans 24 Hours as a works entry shared with factory driver Clive Gallop, Alex has previously competed

at Thruxton in his Ford Mustang notchback and Aston Martin DB4 GT.

The 5.7-litre Camaro looked very different to the last time he took it to Thruxton, having been restored by Alan Mann Racing into its 1971 Ovaltine livery.

MARCUS PYE

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Charteris took his new purchase out for some laps at Silverstone



PAUL LAWRENCE

Ex-Henton March 782 undergoes shakedown ahead of Zandvoort

HISTORIC F2

Historic Formula 2 racer Mark Charteris has targeted next month's big Zandvoort event for the debut of his ex-Brian Henton March-Hart 782 following a post-restoration shakedown on Silverstone's National circuit last Friday.

Charteris reimported chassis 23 from South Africa in 2022, and entrusted its rebuild to Richard Evans, who previously restored the ex-Project Four Racing/Eddie Cheever BMW-engined 782 he found in the US and shares with Andy Smith.

Henton bought his car for 1978, finishing fifth at the Nurburgring and sixth at Enna-Pergusa. Signed by Toleman Group Motorsport alongside Rad Dougall for 1979, he raced the March – repaired after a clash with Cheever at Hockenheim – at the Argentinian Temporada races.

The Briton retained the 782 for 1979, and raced it, with ramped sidepods, to second on the 'Ring's Nordschleife, when the Toleman Ralt-Hart RT2s were still not up to speed. After further outings at Vallelunga and Mugello, Henton rented it to Dutchman Boy Hayje's sponsor F&S Properties for Zandvoort's F2 round.

While Henton won the 1980 F2 title for Toleman, his March was sold to South Africa where it was raced by Dino Scribante with a Mazda rotary engine. While the monocoque and bodywork have now been renewed, the Hewland FT200 gearbox, link plates, front uprights and anti-roll bar, oil tank, dash and gear lever are original.

"I couldn't believe how easy it is to drive after my 742, which dances around," said Charteris. "I did 54.5s in a few laps, with a fuel system issue holding the engine back."

MARCUS PYE

MINI RACES RESCHEDULED

The Mini 7 Racing Club has rearranged its cancelled races from last month's rain-hit Cadwell Park meeting. Its Miglia and Se7en championships will contest an extra race from a combined grid at its Silverstone event on 13 October. The Se7ens, who had both Cadwell races cancelled, also had an additional race at Snetterton last weekend. The S-Class joined the back of the Miglia opener, and the main Se7en class gridded with the second Miglia race.

TWO MORE FOR CLIO CUP GB

Ray Honeybone and Kevin Stirling will race in the Clio Cup GB this season, but will drive older fourth-generation cars. Honeybone joins after competing in the Trackday Trophy and Trackday Championship, which included wins and titles, while Stirling also raced in both series. "It was always a dream to be part of the original Clio Cup, but I never had the budget, sadly," said Stirling. "I am most certainly going to enjoy the moment."

DEBUT FOR HOUSE'S AUDI

Phil House debuted his ex-George Jaxon/Darron Lewis Audi RS3 TCR in the Darlington and District Motor Club meeting at Croft last weekend in Northern Saloons, taking a win in his first Class A & E race before claiming third in the sequel. "I wanted to see what sort of pace I had with the car as I am considering entering the TCR rounds at Croft," said the classic racer and Tarmac rally driver, who will join Saturday's CityCar Cup grid at Oulton Park.

DOLOMITE SPRINT BACK OUT

The Triumph Dolomite Sprint raced by Australian Brian Muir in the latter part of the 1975 British Saloon Car Championship, with a best finish of second at Brands Hatch, returned to the tracks recently in its distinctive ShellSport livery (below). It finished the recent three-hour race at Spa first time out before Matthew Sanders competed in Saturday's Classic Sports Car Club Future Classics races at Thruxton.



STEVE JONES

Equipe 50s series gets standalone grids

EQUIPE 50s

Equipe Classic Racing organisers have decided to run standalone grids for their 50s series, which will begin next month at Silverstone.

The 50s series was launched during the 2020 season but quickly lost momentum due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with cars for the category placed alongside Pre-'63 machines on the same grid.

With numbers having grown over the past four years, and after consultation with drivers, the decision has been taken to move back to standalone races, beginning with the Silverstone event on 8-9 June.

Equipe partner Rob Cull said: "The 1950s produced some of the most iconic racing cars that deliver close and exciting racing. We think these standalone races will give some great racing with an emphasis

on competitive yet high driving standards."

Cars run on Dunlop historic tyres to FIA Appendix K specification are eligible, with FIA papers welcome but not mandatory.

Races feature a rolling start, with most events having a 40-minute pitstop format for one or two drivers, while two-day meetings have a 20-minute qualifying and a 30-minute race each day.

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Calendar congestion

Having a weekend overflowing with 10 club car racing events, following one with hardly any, is an unsustainable situation that puts pressure on a creaking system

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Unsustainable, unnecessary and unhelpful. They may sound like strong terms, but – to this writer, at least – they perfectly describe the three-week spell of the national calendar we are currently in the middle of. And especially this past weekend of club motorsport.

Let me explain. Over 18-19 May, there were 10 separate car racing events across the UK. From Thruxton to Bishopscourt and Snetterton to Oulton Park, almost every one of our race tracks was playing host to a car fixture. On the surface, that sounds great. After all, surely it's proof that these venues are doing what they were built for. However, such a menagerie of meetings puts strain on a limited number of officials, marshals and other vital volunteers – and not to mention divides a finite pool of competitors. If each of those 10 events (and we are not even talking about the scores of other grassroots contests held) was overflowing with entries and inundated with volunteers, then happy days. But that simply is not the reality.

We've already discussed the wide-ranging fortunes of different club categories in the early stages of this year (Autosport, 18 April), but the fact that six series in action last weekend did not even reach double figures, while a further 19 grids attracted a measly 10-15 cars, is proof of the potential problem. Although it's also worth highlighting there were some fantastic entries achieved,

“Championship organisers, clubs and circuits need to see the bigger picture”

particularly at the Silverstone 750 Motor Club gathering.

Now, I'm not foolish enough to think that grid numbers would universally increase had there been fewer events last weekend to create less dilution. Some races were held at circuits such as Pembrey and Cadwell Park that are never likely to draw in the crowds, regardless of how many alternative offerings there are for drivers. However, there are some examples of apparently poor planning – such as both the Classic Sports Car Club and Historic Sports Car Club Special Saloons and Modsports categories being in action on the same weekend, hampering the numbers in each. Or three of the four main 'modern' one-make MG series heavily based around the ZR having clashing rounds. For classes where there is a limited number of cars available, such scheduling is unhelpful.

But what makes the sheer number of events this past weekend even more baffling is a glance at the calendar the week before. Just four car circuit racing events were held over 11-12 May – and two of those were very small fixtures. It seems an obvious answer, but couldn't some of the events have been held a weekend earlier, thereby avoiding this unnecessary congestion? Yes, there are plenty of other demands on the tracks' time, but having such an overflowing weekend ultimately helps nobody.

And it is the same with this weekend's clashing British Touring Car Championship and British GT events, at Snetterton and Donington Park respectively. It seems madness that the UK's two premier car racing categories are competing on the same weekend, dividing spectators and creating challenges for teams fielding cars in both championships and their supports. Yet it is not as bad as the even more ridiculous clash between the two last month when just 66 miles separated the BTCC at Donington and British GT at Silverstone. Considering the BTCC has already released its calendar for next year – and was similarly early in unveiling its 2024 schedule – there is no excuse for clashing events. One of the many reasons for the roster being published so early is to help other categories with their planning.

So, what is the solution to this calendar conundrum? “Do we really want to go down the route of saying get AI to work out what's the best way of spreading the events out and so everyone gets their fair share?” suggests one observer, jokingly. “It would be very difficult for one person to try to coordinate.” Ultimately, it needs championship organisers, clubs and circuits to work together and see the bigger picture rather than getting lost in their own individual worlds. Some argue that Motorsport UK should get more involved and have a direct role in organising who races where and when (such a suggestion has been debated). Some are also in favour of the governing body taking a firmer hand on those launching new series, too. But that takes us back to the old argument of whether it should be direct intervention or market forces that determines the picture. Having Motorsport UK heavily involved also risks adding further complications to what is already a challenging process. And how would it be decided who gets priority without causing tantrums?

This clearly is not an easy situation to resolve, but that does not mean it's a problem that should be ignored. At a time when race events are being cancelled or shortened due to a lack of entries (see the axed C1 24 Hours at Anglesey as one example), it is unsustainable to keep churning out calendars that feature 10-event weekends. Instead, the sport needs to explore every avenue to ensure its long-term future, and how the calendar is constituted is just one element of that. Ultimately, as with so many areas of life, communication and collaboration are key. 🏁

Harbot (33) gives chase to Farmer. Both took a win in Formula Vee

Formula Vee action headlines 750MC event

SILVERSTONE
750MC
18-19 MAY

It was a weekend of contrasting fortunes for Matt Harbot, who bounced back from mechanical dramas to claim his second Formula Vee victory during the 750 Motor Club meeting at Silverstone.

The Volkswagen-based single-seater series boasted a strong 33-car field for its first visit to Silverstone's National circuit

in 12 years. On his first appearance of the season, three-time champion Martin Farmer was unable to beat his own lap record from 2012 but still recorded a superb triumph from 12th on the grid in Saturday's contest.

Farmer avoided a first-lap melee that eliminated several drivers, including championship contender Ben Cressey, to climb to sixth in his GAC. After making up four more places over the next two laps, he snatched the lead into Brooklands from

Harbot, who was struggling with a gearbox issue. After losing a further place to Craig Bell, Harbot retired his AHS Dominator. "It was a very long day, everything was long bar our race," said Harbot. "We changed the gearbox [after qualifying] but it kept jumping out of gear. I was driving with one hand, which broke the engine."

Bell applied pressure on Farmer in the race's second half, but came home 0.395 seconds behind, while Dan Polley (Sheane) prevailed in a five-way battle to score a first UK podium in his second weekend.

Harbot took a lights-to-flag victory on Sunday, breaking clear early on after Polley spun at Copse and delayed the cars behind. Farmer climbed from 12th to second but was one of many to spin on oil at Brooklands, with Bell finishing runner-up after battling past Bill Garner late on. "After yesterday, it makes it feel so much better," said Harbot. "It was difficult as we didn't have anyone in front of us to gauge where the oil was, but it was a good result."

Reigning champion Adam Lockwood and four-time conqueror Shaun Traynor took a win apiece during two hard-fought Toyota MR2 encounters. Lockwood led the opener as Traynor tried to make up for a lack of straight-line speed. Slight contact between the pair at Copse allowed Andrew Ruthven to briefly move ahead, but they soon resumed their lead battle and were separated by just 0.003s at the beginning



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JONATHAN MILLS



Garrett eased to both
Locost victories



Kirkpatrick brothers were
unstoppable in Minis



Traynor and Lockwood
engaged in another
thrilling MR2 battle

of the final lap, with Lockwood prevailing for his fourth straight victory.

Traynor made the better start to lead race two and made his MR2 “the widest car I’ve ever had” to hold off Lockwood for a first win of the season, while Ruthven repeated his race one result in third.

Ryan Yarrow and Rich Miles replicated their opening-round form by taking a victory each in Sports 1000 in their Spire GT-3s. Dan Clowes’s Mittell led the pair in race one before Yarrow, having set up his car to be quicker in the latter stages, eventually won a three-wide battle into Luffield and pulled clear. Miles retired with an issue, and Clowes held off Carl Austen for second.

The sequel featured an early seven-car lead train before Miles and Yarrow broke away. Miles lost the lead to Yarrow in a wheel-to-wheel scrap from Becketts to Brooklands, but he inherited victory post-race when his rival was demoted to second for overtaking under yellow flags. The Sports 1000 field was joined on track by Cup 200, with Mittell Cars owner Scott Mittell pipping John Cutmore by 0.053s to win on his debut, and David Watson edging Cutmore by 0.176s in race two.

Shane Stoney was denied a chance to add to his double victory from the opening round during two dramatic Bikesports contests. He dominated the partially reversed-grid race in his Radical PR6 after

climbing from eighth, breaking Josh Smith’s lap record from five years ago by 0.8s in the process. His task was made easier after closest pursuers Charles Hall and impressive Brazilian car-racing debutant Pedro Oliveira suffered weekend-curtailling engine issues with their Mittell MC-41Rs early on.

After taking the chequered flag over 50s clear of the rest, Stoney was subsequently disqualified for failing to slow for yellow flags, handing Steven Larkham his first win ahead of Philip Brown and Leon Morrell. Stoney pulled away again in the pitstop race before retiring with mechanical gremlins, while Morrell passed Brown to take victory and former Formula Ford and former BRDC F4 racer Daniel Headlam finished third.

David and Neven Kirkpatrick shared the spoils during two frenetic Super Mighty Minis races. The opener featured a five-way lead fight, with Steven Rideout looking set for victory after breaking clear late on, only to slow entering the Wellington Straight for the final time. David beat his older brother to the win, and Neven was demoted to fourth by a 5s track-limits penalty, with Ian Slark and Greg Jenkins promoted. Despite suffering front bodywork damage in an early collision with Ben Butler, Neven later prevailed in a feisty sibling scrap to edge David by 0.135s, with Slark a close third even though he battled a brake issue.

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA VEE

Race 1 Martin Farmer (GAC Vee)

Race 2 Matt Harbot (AHS Dominator)

TOYOTA MR2s

Race 1 Adam Lockwood (Roadster)

Race 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

SPORTS 1000/CUP 200

Race 1 Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT-3)

Race 2 Rich Miles (Spire GT-3)

BIKESPORTS

Race 1 Steven Larkham (Radical PR6)

Race 2 Leon Morrell (Radical SR3 RSX)

MIGHTY MINIS

Race 1 David Kirkpatrick (Super)

Race 2 Neven Kirkpatrick (Super)

116 TROPHY

Mack Priestwood

116 SPRINT TROPHY/120 COUPE CUP

Races 1 & 2 Anthony Seddon (120i)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Race 1 Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTI)

Race 2 Jason Wood (Vauxhall Nova GTE)

LOCOST

Races 1 & 2 Daniel Garrett

ALFA ROMEOS

Race 1 Jamie Thwaites (Giulietta, below)

Race 2 Steve Deeks (4C)

ROADSPORTS

Scott Parkin (Audi TT)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

A huge 44-car field took part in the 116 Trophy, with the 90-minute contest turning into a duel at the front between Mack Priestwood and Peter Keen. Priestwood won by 2.2s after Keen lost time in traffic late on. William Abraham beat Priestwood to finish best of the 116 runners in the two sprint contests, with Anthony Seddon twice leading home fellow 120 competitor Rob Carvell for a double victory.

The first Classic Stock Hatch race featured a lengthy red flag due to a heavy crash involving Ewan Lince and Rick Groom. Stewart Place edged Jason Wood in the restarted encounter in his Peugeot 205 GTI, before Wood (Vauxhall Nova GTE) took a long-awaited maiden triumph in race two. In contrast, the two Locost races were unusually one-sided, with Daniel Garrett dominating both.

STEVE WHITFIELD

Civic Cup spoils for Files and Edmundson

SNETTERTON
BRSCC
18-19 MAY

Area Motorsport duo Josh Files and Max Edmundson were the class of a quality Civic Cup field at Snetterton, as the former broke his championship duck and the latter maintained his lead atop the standings.

Multiple TCR champion Files had scored two podiums at last month's season opener despite a faulty differential but, with that diagnosed and fixed, he raced to a brace of wins from pole position at his local circuit.

Edmundson twice followed his illustrious team-mate home, which sandwiched a superb drive to victory in the reversed-grid encounter. He started it ninth, but was fourth within a lap, before passing Spencer Stevenson, who was hampered by damper trouble, then Alex Kite with an audacious outside charge around Coram.

Edmundson eventually pressured team-mate Liam McGill into some mistakes and dived ahead at the Wilson hairpin on the last lap. McGill beat Files to second, the only driver to halt the pair's dominance.

Carl Swift extended his Audi TT Cup winning run to four before the streak was finally broken. After jumping polesitter Rob Boston, Swift was imperious in Saturday's races, with team-mate Bradley Burns twice second. Sunday's partially drawn-grid race was won comprehensively by Adam Blair before he was disqualified for using a non-compliant part, handing Mazda MX-5 champion Steve Foden a maiden success.

Boston's weekend unravelled when contact affected his geometry, before losing out in more rumbustious racing. After getting spun down the order in race one, 2022 Civic Cup conqueror



Matt Luff impressed as he returned to 10th, rose to fourth in the sequel, and inherited second in the finale.

Adam Shepherd came close to a TCR UK hat-trick, easily beating champion Carl Boardley's similar Cupra Leon in the opener, then rising to second from 10th on race two's reversed grid. Third within a lap, he set about Boardley, getting a run out of the Agostini hairpin and completing the move into Hamilton. Boardley's retaliation resulted in contact at Oggies and, although he finished second on the road, the clerk reversed the positions. Ahead of them, Brad Hutchison's Cupra was largely unchallenged en route to victory.

An exhausted Shepherd took another win on Sunday after grappling with intermittent power-steering failure, a recurrence from Friday testing. Joe Marshall, denied his front-row grid slot a day earlier by driveshaft failure on his Audi RS3 LMS, homed in with lap-record pace but Shepherd held firm.

Another who might have had a hat-trick

was Mini Se7en pacesetter Joe Thompson. He ran three abreast with Ross Billison and Damien Harrington in race one before rounding Billison at Brundle in a decisive last-lap move. Thompson's race-two success was stripped for tipping Harrington into a spin at Coram on the final tour, gifting Billison victory from Spencer Wanstall.

Thompson then led the Se7ens on a grid combined with Mini Miglias but Billison was in front when it was halted early. The stoppage was caused by Jeff Smith's Miglia rolling from the lead battle after clipping a sausage kerb at Nelson, as Aaron Smith triumphed from Kane Astin. Earlier, Astin had won from Jeff Smith and Ben Colburn while the younger (unrelated) Smith suffered a suspected electrical failure, retiring with no drive.

Finn Leslie's overly robust move cost him a Fiesta Junior double. Jenson O'Neill-Going's Mk6 ST had set the pace before debutant Jake Wardle's red-flag inducing inversion, but O'Neill-Going lost out to Tommy Harfield following the restart and then to Leslie after a final-lap moment. Leslie then dived inside Harfield at Agostini to lead but was later penalised a place for the contact, handing a maiden win to Jenson Mason, who emerged from a three-wide sort-out.

Leslie won a drag race to the line with O'Neill-Going by 0.022 seconds in the sequel after pressuring his rival into a mistake. Erstwhile points leader Jacob Hodgkiss had a nightmare, with a non-start (diff pin failure) and exclusion (contact).

Alastair Kellett won both of Saturday's Fiesta ST240 races, then climbed from 10th to third behind John Cooper and Joe Knight on Sunday as Zach Lucas managed only seventh after his Saturday second places.

MARK PAULSON



Brace of TCR UK wins went the way of Shepherd



Files took his first wins in the Civic Cup at Snetterton

WEEKEND WINNERS

CIVIC CUP

Races 1 & 3 Josh Files (EP3)
Race 2 Max Edmundson (EP3)

AUDI TT CUP

Races 1 & 2 Carl Swift
Race 3 Steve Foden

TCR UK

Races 1 & 3 Adam Shepherd (Cupra Leon TCR)
Race 2 Brad Hutchison (Cupra Leon TCR)

MINI SE7EN

Race 1 Joe Thompson
Race 2 Ross Billison

MINI MIGLIA

Race 1 Kane Astin
Race 2 Aaron Smith

FIESTA JUNIOR

Race 1 Jenson Mason (Mk7 Zetec S)
Race 2 Finn Leslie (Mk7 Zetec S)

FIESTA ST240

Races 1 & 2 Alastair Kellett (below)
Race 3 John Cooper

ZEO PROTOTYPE

Races 1 & 2 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey Gunn TS6)

MG METRO CUP

Race 1 Robbie Kenning
Race 2 Mike Williams



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

JENVEY STILL A TOP GUNN AS HE REACHES WIN 76

Zeo Prototype stalwart Mike Jenvey scored the 75th and 76th race victories of his career with a double success aboard his self-developed Jenvey Gunn TS6 at Snetterton.

In a national racing landscape littered with one-make categories, Zeo provides a relatively rare opportunity for innovative engineering to create some of the fastest machinery seen regularly on British circuits.

Jenvey's 101mph Snetterton pole lap was quicker than every GT3 Am drivers' qualifying time at last year's British GT event and beaten by only six of the 19 Pro racers. It was on a par with LMP3 Cup pace when it visited in 2017-18.

The Jenvey Gunn is a decade-plus development of the two-litre Duratec-engined Gunn TS6 in which the two-time Formula Vee champion won Sports 2000 titles in 2009 and 2012, before progressing to the British Racing & Sports Car Club's old Open Sportscar Series – effectively a forerunner to Zeo. There, he scored title success in 2015 and 2017.

"Rear wing, diffusers, much bigger tyres, paddleshift, electronic throttle, 100bhp more," said Jenvey when describing some of the areas of development compared with the original Sports 2000 car. Jenvey throttle bodies are, naturally, a key component in getting the Duratec to push 300bhp.

He added: "We've developed our own engine over many years, and we've been through years where we've blown up four/five engines in a year. I went through two years where I was rebuilding the engine every single event.

"And now it's really, really stable. Steel crank, CNC ported heads, really good intake system, airbox and exhaust. We've had our own valve springs made for it, so it's a bit of a labour of love."

The car's latest developments –



Jenvey had to fight for top spot

a twin-plane rear wing and corresponding splitter modifications – came in response to Joe Lock's rapid pace at the Silverstone opener aboard his Tim Gray Motorsport Spire SSSC.

"Tim wanted to make a car that was more competitive in the prototype world, rather than just a standard Bikesports-spec car," said Lock, who was on pole position in Northamptonshire but has been hampered by an oil-surge issue on the Spire's 1.3-litre supercharged Hayabusa engine causing it to trip out. "I think, when we do get it right, it will be a very competitive car. Mike's a very good driver, so to be there or thereabouts and be competitive in our first season in the car, Tim's got to take a lot of credit for building such a good car."

The two one-offs, and a pair of Praga R1s piloted by Shane Kelly and Jack Fabby, were surprisingly evenly matched around the three-mile Snetterton 300 circuit, despite their different strengths and weaknesses. Each had spells leading while Jenvey had to battle back having dropped to fourth in each race.

"That was one of the hardest races I've had for a long time," said Jenvey, whose father Richard competed internationally in the 1970s. "I'm loving this series, it's really good. My dad used to race two-litre sportscars, so this is like our ultimate two-litre sportscar."

MARK PAULSON



Fabby led the Zeo Prototype field at start in Praga R1



STEVE JONES

Crowhurst wins stripes and stars BMW M3 double

THRUXTON
CSCC
18 MAY

Competing in the BMW races at Saturday's Classic Sports Car Club Thruxton Thriller event hung in the balance for Graham Crowhurst on Tuesday, with the engine out of his M3 E46. A huge team effort got him there, with little expectation of success, but pole position and two charging victories exceeded his wildest dreams.

In a heady 'stripes and stars' tussle, Crowhurst beat Nathan Wells – whose 1m17.688s (109.17mph) fastest lap in his stunning E46 GTR was the day's best – and Niall Bradley (E46) in the restarted opener. Swamped in an awful second start from fourth, Matty Evans snarled his 1M Coupe V8 back from almost last to third, which became second when Wells spun at the chicane and couldn't restart.

Top Jaguar qualifier Colin Philpott won both races in his four-litre XJS, chased by

Tom Lenthall's similar machine and James Ramm's V12 version respectively. Lenthall retired from race two after a spin at Club, as Ramm unlocked his mount's potential. Switching to the big engine was blighted by gearbox dramas until Guy Connew lent him a spare, but Ramm – fourth in race one – also credited Philpott's Powerbell technicians for set-up suggestions that bore fruit. The shrieking supercharged cars of Andrew Harper (S-type R) and Chris Boon (XK8) netted a third apiece.

Run concurrently, the MG Trophy attracted seven ZRs, of which six raced, but provided fantastic entertainment. Poleman – and second overall! – Fergus Campbell led race one before James Cole and reigning champ Tylor Ballard hustled past. Two shredded tyres forced Campbell's retirement and a broken cam wheel put Ballard out, as Cole won from Matthew Harvey and James Blake.

Qualifying casualty Andrew Rogerson, Ballard's dad Simon and Andy Cushion

changed cylinder heads to get Tylor out in race two, in which Campbell resisted everything he, Cole and Jack Woodcock threw at him. Diving past the fifth and sixth-placed Jaguars of Michael Seabourne (XJS) and Mark Bennett (X300) into the complex on the final lap – the overtaking manoeuvre of the afternoon – enabled Campbell to blunt Woodcock's and Cole's aspirations. Ballard set fastest MG lap in 1m30.796s, but all six's were within 0.328s!

The Chevrolet-powered BMW M4 of Sam Allpass and now yellow Volvo S60 of Nigel Mustill did not finish the attritious Slicks Series race. Aidan Hills took the chequer in Michael Knibbs's Ford Mustang V6-powered Ginetta G55, but Knibbs's Code 60 overtake brought exclusion. Jamie Sturges, whose increasingly daring approaches to the chicane resulted in his Cupra TCR arriving backwards, was accorded victory from the BMWs of Wells and Bradley.

Car builder Mike Johnston replaced a wheel bearing on Andy Southcott's tubeframe Midget after qualifying, enabling him to score another Special Saloons & Modsports double at his local track. Southcott and Tom Carey (Honda CRX-BDG) shot past poleman Danny Morris's Peugeot-Cosworth 309 at the start of race one. Carey set fastest lap and briefly squeezed ahead before his engine lapsed onto three cylinders, gifting Morris second. Martyn Ellis (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus) grabbed a Future Classics-winning fourth ahead of the battling Craig Percy (Morris Minor), Geoff Beale (Sunbeam Lotus), Tim Moll (VW Golf GTI), and Tony Maryon and Darren Clayden in Porsche 944 S2s.

Carey and Morris broke early in the second outing, leaving Southcott to sizzle



STEVE JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

THRUXTON

BMWs/OPEN SERIES

Races 1 & 2 Graham Crowhurst (M3 E46)

JAGUAR CHAMPIONSHIP/MG TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Colin Philpott (XJS)

SLICKS SERIES

Jamie Sturges (Cupra Competition TCR)

SPECIAL SALOONS & MODSPORTS/
FUTURE CLASSICSRaces 1 & 2 Andy Southcott
(MG Lenham Midget-Vauxhall)

MODERN CLASSICS/TIN TOPS/PUMA CUP

Stuart Daburn (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Stephen Collins (Caterham C400)

OULTON PARK

EQUIPE LIBRE

Tom Smith (Lotus Elan)

EQUIPE GTS

Simon Cripps (MGB Roadster)

EQUIPE F2 ATLANTIC

Races 1 & 2 Tom Smith (March 74B, below)

EQUIPE LIBRE PLUS WITH BCV8s

Neil Fowler/Russell McCarthy (B GT V8)

EQUIPE MG CUP

Races 1 & 2 Stuart Tranter (Rover 220 Turbo Tomcat)



RACHEL BOURNE

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

home clear of Matthew Ellis in the Talbot. After spinning at the slippery chicane in the opener, tagging Stuart Daburn's TVR, Paul Dolan (Lotus Elan) and Daburn – from the back – finished third and fourth. Daburn previously bagged Modern Classics gold, although Tin Top heroes Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic CSL) and Adam Brown (Ford Fiesta ST150) focused him throughout.

Magnificent Sevens polesitter Stephen Collins prevailed when the finale got under way – at the fourth attempt, Simon Lancashire from fourth having thrice started racing at the green flag, twice chased by Italian Giuseppe Felet. With the 1830 curfew looking perilously close, the race was shortened from 40 to 30 minutes. Duelling Lancashire – apparently oblivious to his start protocol misdemeanours – and Bruce Wilson were second and third after their umpteenth order change.

MARCUS PYE

Leaders in trouble as Equipe races are endurance tests



Smith took Libre gold after Winstanley faltered

RACHEL BOURNE

OULTON PARK EQUIPE 18 MAY

It was a day of difficulties at the front when Oulton Park was swarmed by cars of the 1960s and 1970s as part of the Equipe Classic Racing event on Saturday.

The most surprising victim came in what was set up to be a thrilling final 20 minutes of the 40-minute Libre race between the brutish power of Danny Winstanley's Jaguar E-type and Tom Smith's nimble Lotus Elan. Winstanley had built a lead of around seven seconds from pole ahead of the pit window, but what Smith described as the "pure racing" nature of his Elan had kept him well within touching distance.

Pitting earlier was key to Smith's race plan, particularly as a swathe of backmarkers sat between him and the E-type, and after Winstanley's late stop the gap was down to just over a second.

Unfortunately, any idea of a grandstand finish was quashed when Winstanley took the decision to retire his car. "Something felt tight before the stop, and my oil

pressure was getting low – I didn't want to risk anything, so I had to slow down and bring it in," the former Caterham driver said. This handed a comfortable win to Smith, his third of the season behind the wheel of the Elan, a car that he admits he is still "trying to bed in" and is completely different from his usual MGB.

It was a similar story in Equipe GTS. Rob Cull and his TVR Grantura MkIII looked set to add another victory to this season's tally, but a blown head gasket shortly after his pitstop meant another frontrunner missed an opportunity to triumph. "The oil temperature was rising, normally I can back off a bit and it settles – it didn't," Cull explained. "The minute I felt fluid on my rears, I knew I should bring it in."

Cull's retirement meant Simon Cripps could celebrate his first victory of the season in his MGB Roadster. "We've not had much luck so far this season and we've had to get a new diff, bearings, the list goes on and on – this is absolutely fantastic," he beamed.

And in the new-for-2024 F2 Atlantic grid, a different Tom Smith celebrated two wins from two. Opening and closing Saturday's action, the victor claimed it was the first time his March 74B had finished a race since 1978. "We did a restoration last year, but these are tricky to keep going," he confessed. A statement that perfectly epitomised the thrills and challenges of classic car racing around the Cheshire circuit.

DOM D'ANGELILLO



Cripps was beneficiary of Cull's engine woes

RACHEL BOURNE

Allen bosses rivals with back to front victory

MALLORY PARK
BARC/CMMC
18-19 MAY

Olly Allen produced the drive of the weekend at Mallory Park's Classic & Modern Motorsport Festival event to storm through the entire combined Pre-'93 & Pre-'03 Touring Cars and Blue Oval Saloons field to take an impressive victory.

After crashing his Ford Fiesta Mk6 out of race one on Saturday, Blue Oval competitor Allen was forced to start at the back of the grid on Sunday with 22 cars in front of him. Yet that didn't faze Allen, who battled his way through, setting fastest lap after fastest lap. By the closing stages, he had caught the Ford Escort Mk2 of leader Piers Grange, who had triumphed in race one the day before. Allen managed to squeeze past him on the final lap with only two corners to go, prompting scenes of jubilation greeting him from his team as he returned to the paddock.

The Pre-'83 Touring Cars also provided some exhilarating action. After taking pole in qualifying, Mark Cholerton was forced to retire his Ford Escort RS2000



Fiesta man Allen hunted down and passed Grange (right) on last lap

with an engine issue after just one lap of the opener. Instead, multiple champion Stephen Primett, who started third in his Escort Mk1, took the victory by a just 0.252 seconds, fighting off a late Jonathan Corker attack in his Datsun 510. But Corker got the better of Primett second time around to end the weekend with a win.

There was further close racing among the Hyundai Coupe Cup contenders. Daniel Munro and Neale Hurren battled it out at the front of the opener, with Munro sealing the victory with a gap of just 0.965s separating the two. Munro had another

narrow victory in the sequel, this time defeating Mark Ridout by just over a second.

Munro's tight triumphs were in contrast to some of the single-seater contests. Current 500cc Formula 3 leader Alex Wilson extended his advantage with victories in both races in his Cooper Mk10. In race two, Wilson's dominance was so strong he finished over a minute ahead of second-placed Xavier Kingsland's Staride, which just pipped JB Jones and Richard Fuller to the runner-up spot. Had the 15-minute contest lasted one more tour, then Wilson would have lapped the entire

Blackburn and Greenan among the Bishops court stars

BISHOPSCOURT
BARC
18-19 MAY

Garry Manning and his team put on a superb weekend of motorsport action at the annual Bishops court Motor Races in County Down last weekend. The event has become a favourite of many classes, but a date change early in the year – owed to the movement of the North West 200

bike race – prevented it from attracting some of the bigger grids that have been seen in recent years.

Nevertheless, the on-track action and value for those who made the trip was clear for all to see, with the Irish Formula Vee Championship putting on a superb display of close racing throughout the field on Sunday. Colm Blackburn put his Leystone on the top spot in qualifying for both races, which he successfully

converted into a brace of wins.

It was certainly no easy feat, with the customary slipstreaming for which Bishops court has become renowned used to full effect by his rivals. Blackburn spent the most part of both races in a three-way battle for the lead with Jack Byrne and Gavin Buckley, but in each race Buckley suffered an unfortunate spin to rob him of a deserved podium. Instead, it was Andy Keogh and Kieran Hannan who snared a third place apiece.

The Formula BOSS Championship made a welcome return to Bishops court having been absent in recent years. While the overall numbers were a little down from previous rounds, the quality was there, with local driver Tony Greenan setting his stall out during practice and qualifying to suggest that the outright circuit lap record held by Limerick's Paul O'Connell was looking under threat.

Sure enough, Greenan in his Dallara F317 broke the lap record not once, but



Greenan lowered the lap record on five occasions

WEEKEND WINNERS

MALLORY PARK

CTCRC PRE-'93/PRE-'03 TOURING CARS & BLUE OVAL SALOONS

Race 1 Piers Grange (Ford Escort Mk2)

Race 2 Olly Allen (Ford Fiesta Mk6)

CTCRC PRE-'83 GROUP 1 TOURING CARS

Race 1 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)

Race 2 Jonathan Corker (Datsun 510)

COUPE CUP

Races 1 & 2 Daniel Munro

500 OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Races 1 & 2 Alex Wilson (Cooper Mk10)

BRSCC SUPER CLASSIC PRE-'99

FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Tom Hawkins (Swift SC95)

MG OWNERS' CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

CTCRC PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Dan Lewis (Austin Mini Cooper S)

CTCRC CLASSIC THUNDER

Race 1 Nick Vaughan (Audi A3)

Race 2 Colin Voyce (Ford Escort)

CMMCS INTERMARQUE SILHOUETTES

Race 1 Paul Knight (Vauxhall Tigra)

Race 2 Colin Smith (Ginetta G40)

CMMCS SUPER SALOONS/TIN TOPS

Races 1 & 2 Adrian Bradley (BMW E46 M3)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

BISHOPSCOURT

FORMULA VEE

Races 1 & 2 Colm Blackburn (Leastone JH004)

BOSS IRELAND

Races 1 & 2 Tony Greenan (Dallara F317)

STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

IRISH GLOBAL GT LIGHTS

Races 1 & 3 Peter Drennan

Race 2 Cameron Fenton

FUTURE CLASSICS

Races 1 & 2 Patrick O'Malley (Honda Civic)

FORMULA SHEANE

Races 1 & 2 Keith Hogg

NI SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Stephen Traub (Honda Integra)

IRISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1 & 2 Robert Savage (Honda Accord)

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION

Races 1 & 2 David Kelly (Crossle 9S)

NI SEVENS

Race 1 Mark Francis (Locost Honda)

Race 2 Richard Francis (Locost Honda)

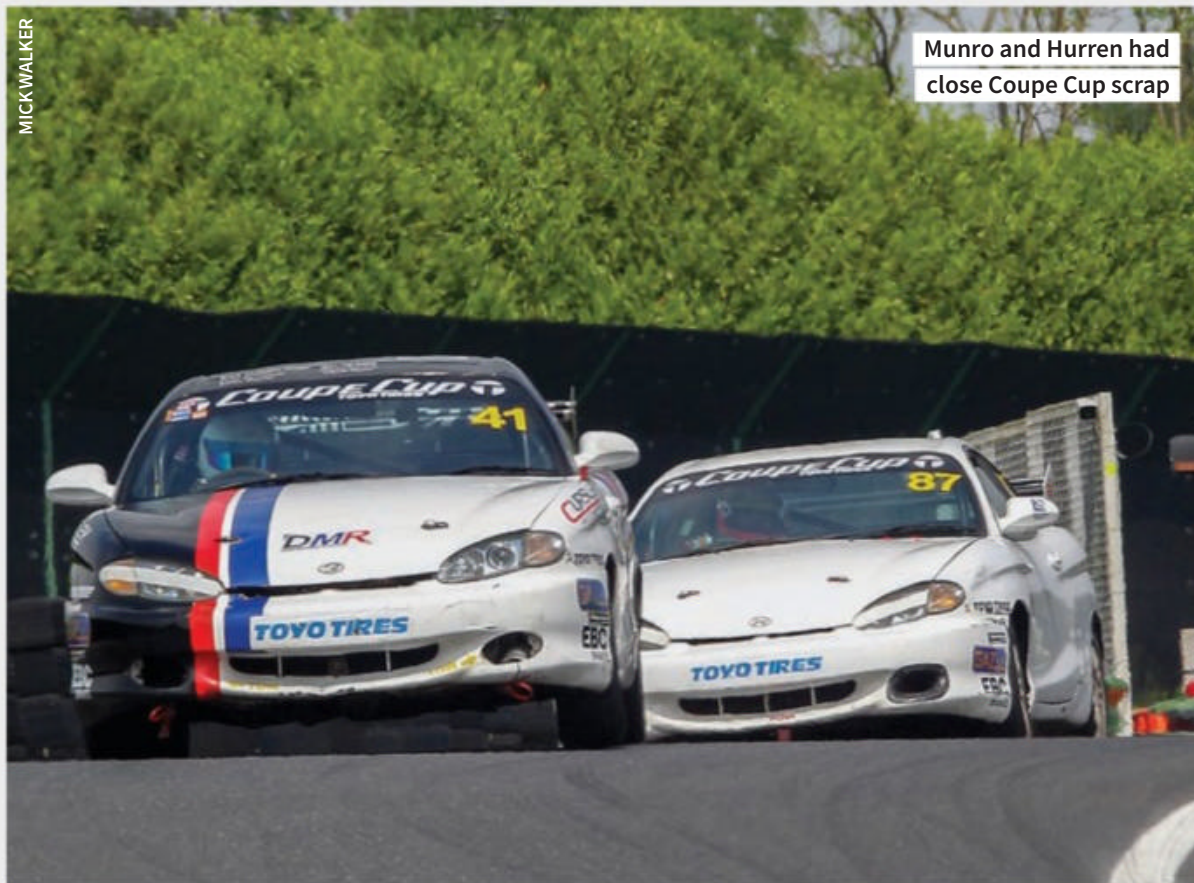
SUPERKARTS

Race 1 Ross Witherow (250cc)

Race 2 Brian Jones (250cc)

Race 3 Alan Crossen (250cc)

For full results visit: timing.ie



field. His winning margin was a slightly smaller 48s in the opener, this time over Finlay Mackintosh's Cooper Mk11.

Another double winner was Tom Hawkins (Swift SC95) in the Super Classic Formula Ford 1600 bouts, while the MG Owners' Club Championship was dominated by Steve McDermid in his ZR 170, which was victorious by 12s on each occasion. Dan Lewis was another driver to bag a brace as his Mini twice prevailed over larger machinery in the Pre-'66 Touring Car encounters.

The Classic & Historic Thunder

Saloons were the first to take to the track, but got the weekend's proceedings off to a shaky start when the race was red-flagged following a collision at Gerard's. Once the race resumed, it only lasted a short three laps before the chequered flag was shown with the racing schedule at risk, after another car ground to a halt on the final corner in a dangerous position. Nick Vaughan (Audi A3) was declared the winner, while Colin Voyce's Escort topped race two, which ran to its full distance.

LUKE GURNEY



five times over the course of the two races to lower the bar by over a second to a new time of 1m02.358s at an average speed of 105.82mph. Behind the all-conquering Greenan, Martin Daly's World Series Dallara machine was the only other car to remain on the lead lap in the opening bout, and he was twice runner-up.

Veteran racer Michael Cullen comfortably won both Stryker races. It was almost a family lockout with his son Victor on each occasion, only for Jonathan

Taylor to find a way past in the closing stages of the second race to relegate Cullen Jr to third.

Only Cameron Fenton was able to deny Peter Drennan a clean sweep over the three Irish Global GT Lights races, while Patrick O'Malley's Honda Civic put on a dominant display in Future Classics – crucially inside the championship's barrier time – to twice take the spoils over Raymond Melia's Toyota Celica.

PAUL GROGAN



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Double delight for the HSCC's Wolds winners

CADWELL PARK
HSCC
18-19 MAY

Double single-seater victories for Jon Milicevic, Samuel Harrison and Benn Simms topped the Historic Sports Car Club's annual trek to Lincolnshire for the Wolds Trophy.

On a weekend of repeat winners, Milicevic had to work hard in the opening Historic Formula 3 counter as Peter de la Roche mounted a strong challenge. However, when the Alexis faltered, Milicevic's Brabham BT21B was away and gone.

Harrison, too, had his rivals, notably Ben Glasswell – who was flying in the opening FF2000 race before he put a wheel wide at Charlie's and spun into the wall. Instead, Graham Fennymore took up the chase of the young Yorkshireman.

Simms stepped back to Historic FF1600 for the weekend, accompanied by his rival and mate Callum Grant. The two triple category champions are not chasing the title this year but wanted to compete at Cadwell and took the chance to turn in two mighty displays of wheel-to-wheel racing. Somehow Simms managed to be ahead twice when it really



Milicevic's Brabham was among those winning twice

mattered, but both winning margins were less than 0.4 seconds.

John Williams did his 70s Road Sports title bid a power of good with a double victory as he saw off the Lotus challenge, which was spearheaded by Howard Payne. The Europa's tardy getaway in the opener allowed Williams to jump free and the Porsche was on top again in the second race.

It's been quite a while since Lotus 20s dominated the rear-engined Formula Junior pack but that's just what happened at Cadwell as Andrew Hibberd headed Nic Carlton-Smith in both contests.

PAUL LAWRENCE

WEEKEND WINNERS

CADWELL PARK

HISTORIC FORMULA 3

Races 1 & 2 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B)

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 2000

Races 1 & 2 Samuel Harrison (Reynard SF79)

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Benn Simms (Jomo JMR7)

70s ROAD SPORTS

Races 1 & 2 John Williams (Porsche 911SC)

REAR-ENGINED FORMULA JUNIOR

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Hibberd (Lotus 20)

FRONT-ENGINED FORMULA JUNIOR

Races 1 & 2 Alex Morton (Condor S2)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS/ HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 John Shaw (Morgan +8)

HISTORIC MODSPORTS & SPECIAL SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 Myles Castaldini (Davrian Mk8)

SUPERKARTS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Tom Hatfield (Anderson VM)

PEMBREY

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Race 1 Jamie Keates

Race 2 Alex Solley

Race 3 Harry Hickton

BRITISH TRUCK RACING

Races 1 & 3 Ryan Smith (Daimler Freightliner)

Races 2 & 4 Dave Jenkins (MAN TGS)

Race 5 Steven Powell (MAN TGA)

PICKUP TRUCKS

Races 1 & 2 Matt Simpson

Race 3 Dale Gent

JUNIOR SALOONS

Race 1 Harry Smith

Races 2 & 3 Josh Salvadorai

TRACK ACTION

Races 1 & 2 Paul Roddison (VW Scirocco)

Race 3 Dan Earl (Vauxhall Astra)

WELSH SPORTS & SALOONS

Race 1 Deri Davies (Darrian T90)

Race 2 Damian Longotano (Westfield SE)

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

Mini racers entertain in Wales

PEMBREY
BARC
18-19 MAY

Three chaotic Mini Challenge Trophy races at Pembrey last weekend resulted in three different winners as Harry Hickton maintained his early lead in the championship standings.

Qualifying had been topped by Alex Keens, but his brave attempt to hold on at the front in a wet-but-drying opener was ultimately in vain as he slipped down to fifth having been overhauled mid-race by a charging Sam Gornall.



Points leader Hickton was among Pembrey victors

The Westbourne driver crossed the line first ahead of team-mate Hickton and PerformanceTek Racing's Jamie Keates, but the lead pair were both hit with penalties for contact with James Black. That promoted Keates into top spot for his maiden win, from Gornall and Hickton.

The reversed-grid contest was dominated by Alex Solley, who started from pole and raced away from the battles behind for his first win of the campaign. Gornall and Keates followed him home but, once again, post-race investigations led to a changed result, with Gornall handed a penalty for contact – again with Black – and Keates also dropping down the order. That resulted in Black being promoted into second, with Gornall third.

A clutch issue forced polesitter Keens out of the finale shortly after Hickton had overhauled him for the lead. A small error allowed Gornall to close in as the Westbourne duo secured a 1-2, with Ronnie Smith holding off Black for third.

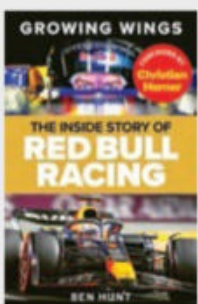
MATT SALISBURY

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Celebrating Red Bull's first of four consecutive title doubles in 2010

FERRARO
motorsport
IMAGES

The rise and rise of a superteam



BOOK REVIEW
**GROWING WINGS:
THE INSIDE STORY
OF RED BULL RACING**
Ben Hunt
RRP: £22

When you trace the lineage of each of the 10 current Formula 1 teams, Red Bull remains the second youngest – it joined the grid as Stewart Grand Prix in 1997 before evolving into Jaguar in 2000 and then its current guise in 2005. The only team that's younger is Haas, which made its debut in 2016.

It is through this prism that Red Bull's success must be gauged. To date it has taken 118 race wins, 102 pole positions, six constructors' titles and seven drivers' crowns. For a team that had topped the podium just once in its first 134 attempts, achieving what it has in the subsequent 377 grands prix is a staggering level of performance.

What is equally staggering is how Ben Hunt has managed to condense such a convoluted story into 305 pages while keeping this a genuine page-turner – something that's rather rare in the motorsport sphere. The input from the team in *Growing Wings: The inside story of Red Bull*

Racing is immediately evident, with team principal Christian Horner providing the foreword as well as sharing memories that add an extra level of insight to the story.

There are, naturally, other voices that feature throughout but, for the most part, these quotes come from contemporary press conferences, TV snippets and publications. Press releases are also used to further paint the picture, with specific reference given to the timings of their release at certain points, particularly in reference to the announcements of Mark Webber's and Sebastian Vettel's departures from the team.

Of course, there are certain points in the team's history that readers may want to skip straight to, notably Turkey 2010 when Vettel and Webber collided, Malaysia 2013 and Multi 21, and then arguably the most polarising moment in F1 history in the 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Refreshingly, while these elements are given fair space on the page, they are not fixated upon too much – this being especially true with the events of 2021. These proceedings could fill a book on their own. So much has been said on the topic already that finding something new to say in a relatively limited amount of space is not the simplest of tasks, and

the segment therefore changes style to more of a bullet point list of what happened rather than maintaining the fluidity prevalent elsewhere.

With the Vettel-Webber-era flashpoints of Multi21 and the Turkish Grand Prix clash, there is a full exploration of the fallout, comments on how the incidents are viewed now, and a more general analysis.

But away from the controversial moments, the real high points of *Growing Wings* come when talking about the more mundane times that may not have grabbed headlines. Readers should not be tempted to skip the opening chapters to get to the meat of Red Bull's success. Like in any good story, these chapters lay the foundations for what's to come. Those moments are almost more interesting than reading about the times when Red Bull was front and centre in the media. That said, the memory of seeing Horner jump into the Red Bull Energy Station pool wearing only a Superman cape was not something that needed to resurface.

Growing Wings is a well-paced romp through Red Bull's history and, while there will doubtlessly one day be a book five times as thick listing every detail of the team's time in F1, it's unlikely to be as readable and enjoyable as Hunt's achievement.

SAM HALL

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL
MOTORSPORT

Monaco Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 8/24
Monte Carlo, Monaco
26 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1355
TV Highlights
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1700,
Channel 4, Sun 1830



Indianapolis 500
IndyCar
Round 5/15
Indianapolis, USA
26 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1730

Catalan Grand Prix
MotoGP
Round 6/21
Barcelona, Spain
25-26 May
TV Live TNT Sports 2,
Sat 1330, Sun 1215
TV Highlights
ITV4, Mon 2000

Shanghai E-Prix
Formula E
Round 8/10
Shanghai, China
25-26 May

TV Live TNT Sports 3,
Sat 0700, Sun 0700

FIA Formula 2
Round 5/14
Monte Carlo, Monaco
25-26 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 1310, Sun 0835

FIA Formula 3
Round 4/10
Monte Carlo, Monaco
25-26 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 0940, Sun 0655

Porsche Supercup
Round 2/8
Monte Carlo, Monaco
26 May
TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1055

Formula Regional
European by Alpine
Round 2/10
Spa, Belgium
25-26 May
TV Livestream
via YouTube

DTM
Round 2/8
Lausitzring, Germany
25-26 May
TV Live
Premier 1, Sat 1215,
Premier 2, Sun 1215

NASCAR Cup
Round 14/36
Charlotte, USA
26 May
TV Live Premier 2,
Sun 2230

NASCAR Xfinity Series
Round 12/33
Charlotte, USA
25 May

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 12/23
Charlotte, USA
24 May

Brands Hatch MSVR
25-26 May
'66-'85 F1 Cars,
Endurance Legends,
Gentlemen Drivers,
Gerry Marshall Trophy,
GT Trophy, Pre-'66
Touring Cars, Sports
Car Legends

Castle Combe
27 May
750MC (Clio Sport, Hot
Hatch, Type R Trophy),
CCRC (FF1600, GT)

Jim Clark Rally
British Rally
Championship
Round 3/6
Scottish Borders
24 May

British Rallycross
Championship
Round 2/6
Mondello Park, Ireland
25-26 May

British Hillclimb
Championship
Round 3/14
Gurston Down
25-26 May

European
Drag Racing
Championship
Santa Pod
24-27 May

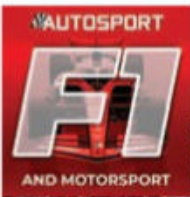
UK MOTORSPORT

Snetterton BARC
25-26 May
BTCC, British F4, Mini
Challenge, Porsche Sprint
Challenge, Radical Cup
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1050

Donington Park BRSCC
25-26 May
British GT, Caterham Seven
UK, GB4, Ginetta Academy,
Ginetta Championship,
Ginetta Junior
TV Livestream
via britishgt.com

Oulton Park BRSCC
25 May
CityCar Cup, Clubsport
Trophy, Mazda MX-5
(Championship,
Clubman, Supercup)

Kirkistown 500MRCI
25 May
FF1600, Fiestas, Legends,
Libre Saloons/GTs, Mazdas,
Minis, Roadsports



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Emilia Romagna Grand Prix review

Joining Bryn Lucas on the Autosport podcast to run down all the action from the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix are Alex Kalinauckas and Filip Cleeren. Has McLaren positioned itself as a genuine contender to Red Bull or was this just another blip from F1's dominant force?

There's also a deep dive into Sergio Perez's lacklustre weekend, questions asked as to whether Ferrari should be disappointed by its outing on home soil, and just what was going on when Valtteri Bottas and James Vowles went for a coffee?



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





FROM THE ARCHIVE

Emanuele Pirro (Audi A4) makes a move on the Peugeot 406 of Laurent Aiello on the opening lap of race one of the German Super Touring Cup's 1997 visit to the Norisring,

the halfway point of the season. Polesitter Aiello had been demoted off the line by the superfast-starting BMW 320i of Jo Winkelhock, just out of frame. The Peugeot was soon back ahead of Pirro and in hot pursuit of

Winkelhock, taking the lead on lap 10 of 22, then was repassed five tours later. At the flag, Aiello was just over a second adrift of his chief title rival. His second place was one of 17 podium finishes from 20 races, 11 of which

were victories, achieved en route to championship success, compared to title runner-up Winkelhock's tally of 14 and five. Defending champion Pirro could manage just one win in a challenging year for Audi.





Penske PC27

The Penske PC27 is an unexpected choice as Al Unser Jr's favourite car. The two-time Indianapolis 500 winner and double Indycar champion had his greatest successes in the Lola T90/00, Galmer G92 and Penske PC23-94. He never won a race in the PC27 he drove throughout 1998, and for parts of 1999 in B-spec form.

But Unser singles out the car he raced to a best result of second at Motegi in 1998 as one "I truly enjoyed driving, testing, going out and being a part of the development". He is adamant that factors other than the chassis prevented John Travis's design from winning: "The way the car was designed was just beautiful and John Travis did a fantastic job. It was such a pleasure to drive."

Unser, who picked Bobby Rahal as his favourite team-mate (14 April 2022), was at the time grappling with personal problems that he admits make it difficult to assess his own performances. But his biggest hindrance was almost certainly the PC27's Goodyear tyres, outclassed by Firestone. The underpowered Mercedes engine wasn't a hit either, and only ever won with Greg Moore's Firestone-shod Forsythe Reynard.

Goodyear's deficiencies prompted Travis to go radical. Unser admired many of the PC27's features, including the Formula 1-style high nose and clean-sheet longitudinal Xtrac transmission, whose low centre of gravity helped with the balance. Its fragility meant he "had



to learn how to drive it" but this brought great reward. "It was so trick, I loved it," Unser explains. "I broke a lot of dog rings trying to learn how to shift that thing. But once I figured it out, I could shift it with three fingers, it was that easy."

"The actual design of the gearbox with the oil-vanes going through the casing of the gearbox, the fact that the gear cluster was direct drive with the crank – there were things about it that I truly loved."

The world never got to see what the PC27 could have achieved with a Honda engine and Firestone tyres. Penske's drought ultimately ended in 2000 using a Reynard. But Unser, who departed Penske after 1999, relished developing his own car in pursuit of 'the unfair advantage'. After all, he says, "that was the reason to drive for Roger Penske from the very beginning".

JAMES NEWBOLD



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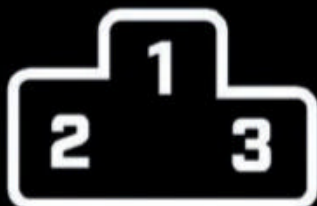
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