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AUTO SPORT

Leclerc ends curse to become king of Monaco

How Ferrari star beat McLaren and why Red Bull struggled

'It's the race I've dreamed of winning since I was a child'

CHARLES LECLERC



Newgarden makes last-lap pass to win **Indy 500** again



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Leclerc passes his Monaco test but did Formula 1?

Autosport had mixed feelings following last weekend's Monaco Grand Prix. On the one hand, it was fantastic to see Charles Leclerc emotionally end his 'jinx' at his home circuit, particularly given the remarkable fact that he'd not won a GP since July 2022. But, on the other, it was hard not to think that the Monte Carlo streets are not an appropriate setting for a Formula 1 race, so limited was the action.

In this issue, Alex Kalinauckas explains how Leclerc was able to score his long-awaited victory (page 14), and explores how the Monaco GP could be improved to create a better spectacle (p12).

It was a bumper weekend of motorsport events and, despite its delayed start, the Indianapolis 500 didn't disappoint. Josef Newgarden pulled off a last-lap pass to secure a second consecutive victory – and, perhaps, redemption for the Penske squad after all the recent controversy. Joey Barnes reports on p30.

Jaguar came away from Formula E's visit to Shanghai with a win for Mitch Evans and an extended points lead for Nick Cassidy. Stefan Mackley was there to see some typically tight racing (p36).

Closer to home, Jake Hill put in perhaps the best weekend of his British Touring Car career at Snetterton to take two victories and launch himself back into title contention, while tin-top veteran Rob Huff took his first series win in 20 years. Marcus Simmons explains how the weekend unfolded on p40.

Our attention now turns to another great event: the Le Mans 24 Hours. Look out for our free 52-page guide in next week's issue.



Kevin Turner

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PIT + PADDOCK

Sainz in Williams link as Perez closes on Red Bull stay

FORMULA 1

Williams has emerged as a surprise contender to snatch out-of-work Carlos Sainz for next year's Formula 1 season, as Sergio Perez closes in on a contract extension at Red Bull.

Sainz's future has been the subject of intense speculation over recent weeks as he finalises a race seat for 2025, when he is replaced by Lewis Hamilton at Ferrari. The Spaniard is known to have an offer to join Sauber on a long-term deal that would run through its transition to become Audi's works team from 2026. The German manufacturer wants an imminent decision, because it has a desire to get its line-up sorted so it can focus on putting other key foundations in place for the long term.

But Sainz has not wanted to rush into a decision, with potential opportunities that could open up at Red Bull and Mercedes. Those chances now appear to be fading, with Red Bull likely to keep Sergio Perez on a one-year deal, and Mercedes edging towards promoting Andrea Kimi Antonelli from F2. Autosport has learned, however, that Sainz is engaged in talks with Williams about what it can offer as the squad lays out its ambitious targets for the future. The team already has Alex Albon under contract, and team principal James Vowles is pushing for infrastructure changes that he hopes can help it advance up the grid.

One of the aces up its sleeve, which could be very attractive to Sainz, is its customer engine deal with Mercedes for 2026, amid speculation that the manufacturer has delivered some early promise with its new power unit design.



Under-pressure Perez, whose Red Bull seat was coveted by several drivers, had a more positive start to the 2024 campaign as the momentum started to shift towards the Mexican keeping his seat. But his form has deteriorated in recent weeks. He finished eighth in the recent Emilia Romagna Grand Prix, and in Monaco last weekend he qualified down in 18th before moving up two places thanks to the exclusion of the Haas cars, but was eliminated in a heavy start crash after contact with Kevin Magnussen.

Perez's dip in form, just as Red Bull is starting to be caught by McLaren and Ferrari and needs its second driver alongside Max Verstappen to step up, prompted some to question whether or not the team should look elsewhere for the Dutchman's future team-mate. But sources with good knowledge of the situation insist that the squad believes Perez is the best candidate available to work alongside the three-time world champion. With Red Bull not believed to be considering a promotion for Yuki Tsunoda from its secondary RB team, and with it understood to have told Sainz that he is not a candidate, all the indications are that the team is set on keeping Perez on board.

Although there are times when Perez is unable to match Verstappen's pace, the team feels that he does make an important contribution on those weekends when he can extract his best from the car. Equally he does not cause internal political issues and ensures a comfortable working environment, with team advisor Helmut Marko saying Perez has changed his approach this year and is no longer laser-focused on what his team-mate is doing.

Reflecting on another difficult weekend for Perez in Monaco, team principal Christian Horner said: "Obviously we need to make sure that we have got both cars up there scoring points, because we cannot dismiss the threat of Ferrari and McLaren in both championships. Checo's first six races, he was very strong. We just need to get back into that position of confidence and not to see a dip."

While it is unclear when Red Bull could announce a new deal, Marko suggested to Autosport that the team would like to have everything in place internally by the Spanish GP at the end of June.

JONATHAN NOBLE



Tech chief Symonds joins Andretti from F1

FORMULA 1

Andretti Cadillac has recruited ex-Formula 1 chief technical officer Pat Symonds as it ramps up its aggressive bid to join the series.

Symonds held the F1 position for seven years, playing a crucial role in contributing to F1's technical regulations for 2022 and 2026. With the chassis rules for 2026 all but finalised,

he decided to leave the organisation, as had long been under consideration.

Symonds joins Andretti Cadillac in the role of executive engineering consultant. The 70-year-old will work from the team's recently opened UK base at Silverstone following a gardening leave period.

"We couldn't be more excited to welcome Pat to the Andretti family," said Michael Andretti.

"Pat's keen understanding of aerodynamics, vehicle dynamics and Formula 1 power units will be instrumental as we continue to build a competitive team. I believe his expertise has been pivotal in shaping the narrative of Formula 1 and his vote of confidence in joining our effort speaks volumes."

At Andretti Symonds rejoins former Benetton and Renault colleague Nick Chester, who

heads up the engineering team as technical director.

Landing Symonds is another string to Andretti's bow as it aggressively pursues an F1 entry with Cadillac. While it was denied entry for 2026, it has not taken no for an answer and continued its preparation, opening the Silverstone headquarters and starting a recruitment drive.

FILIP CLEEREN

Teams try to enshrine \$600m entry

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 is discussing a \$600million dilution fund for new teams as part of the next Concorde Agreement.

Talks have begun between teams and F1's commercial rights holder about the terms of a new deal that will define all key commercial aspects of F1 from 2026. Sources have revealed that, as part of the draft proposals sent to teams as a starting point for the Concorde Agreement, the dilution fund idea has been proposed to help offset any loss current competitors would face from sharing their commercial rights income with an 11th team.

In the proposal, the current \$200m payment that would be shared among the current teams would be replaced by a formula that will work to compensate



the current competitors over a set period – believed to be five years. It is understood that the initial figure proposed totals the equivalent of \$600m for a team that wants to join in 2026, rising to \$700m from 2028. Included is a stipulation that a new team will not earn the right to any prize money for

the first year it races in F1.

The figure is high and, for an ambitious entrant such as Andretti Cadillac, it could prompt it to rethink whether or not it should start with a clean slate or look into buying one of the current competitors.

JONATHAN NOBLE

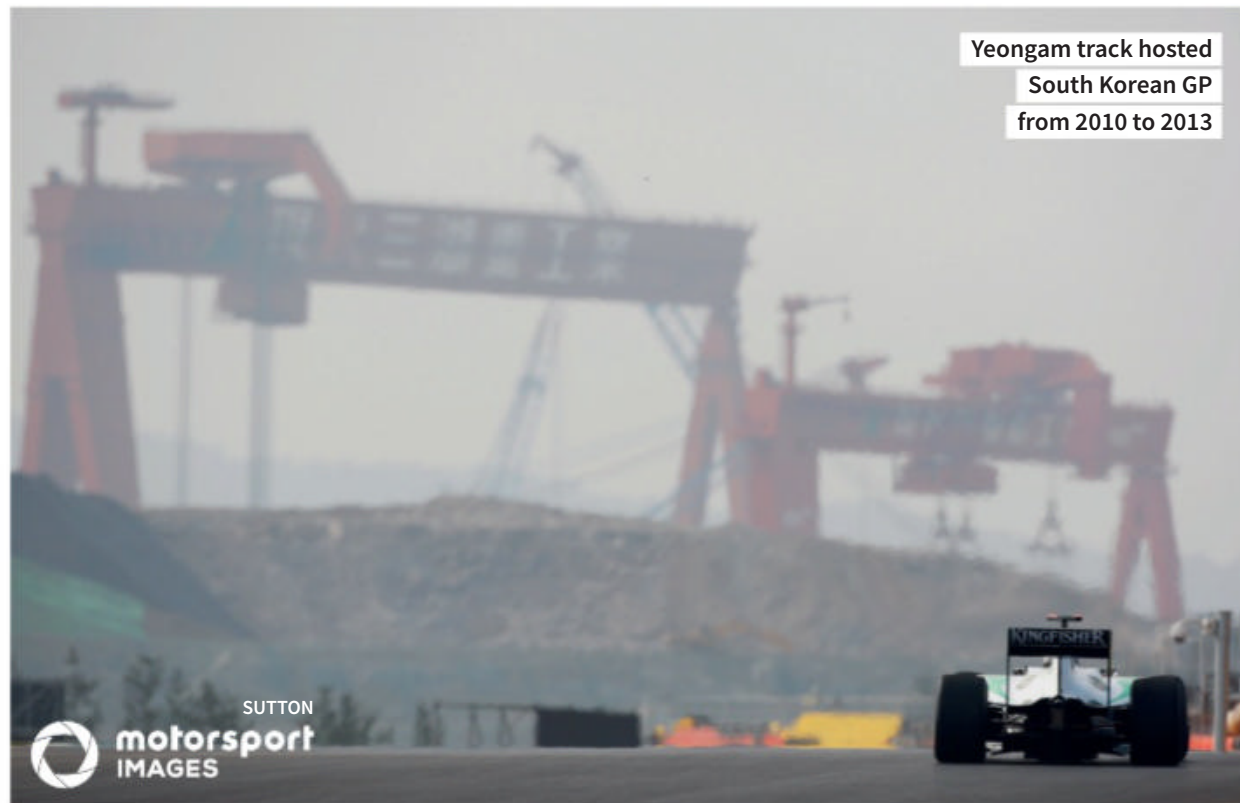
Net widened for South East Asian GPs

FORMULA 1

Liberty Media CEO Greg Maffei has added South Korea and Indonesia to Thailand on the list of countries in South East Asia that could host a Formula 1 grand prix in the coming seasons.

With F1 satisfied that its three races in the United States – in Austin, Miami and its latest addition in Las Vegas – are enough to cover that market, attention has shifted to other regions to capture a growing worldwide interest in the series. Speaking at an F1 in Depth event at last weekend's Monaco Grand Prix, which was co-hosted by Autosport Business, Maffei said that the successful return of the Chinese Grand Prix showed what was possible.

"We're lucky that we were able to get a Chinese race this year after four years," he said. "It was very successful. The interest in China has exploded in part because we now have a Chinese driver. But there's a lot



of interest across Asia, as we have interest from many cities. But in Asia, as you rightly point out: Thailand, Seoul, and we've had interest from Indonesia. There are lots of places which want a Formula 1 race.

"We have really looked at the intersection of where our fans are, where they could be, who could run a great race, and who can frankly afford a race. I think you could very

easily see a second one in South East Asia."

Thailand's prime minister visited the recent Emilia Romagna GP as he pushes for a race in Bangkok from 2026 or 2027. The Thai government is keen on a street race to boost tourism, with Thai-owned Red Bull understood to be a key player behind the scenes in making the race happen.

JONATHAN NOBLE

F1 abandons wet-weather wheel cover project

FORMULA 1

The FIA has abandoned the idea of fitting wheel covers to Formula 1 cars in extreme wet conditions following its latest test.

Ferrari recently helped the FIA with the evaluation of a more complete wheelguard concept during runs at Fiorano to see whether it could help reduce spray. The design was much more dramatic than the original idea tried out at Silverstone last year, but the benefit was still marginal, and there remains a tremendous amount of water thrown up by the diffuser.

Speaking exclusively to Autosport, FIA single-seater chief Nikolas Tombazis said: "We went to the maximum just to see what was the best we could achieve from the wheel covers. And while they do have a bit of an effect,



they don't have a significant enough effect to say that's the solution. Therefore we are back to square one. I don't think that's continuing as a project at the moment. Now we know we need to find other ways to protect races from being cancelled."

Ferrari was due to complete more running this week at Paul Ricard at the behest of F1 tyre supplier Pirelli. The run plan consisted of a day of dry running on Tuesday with

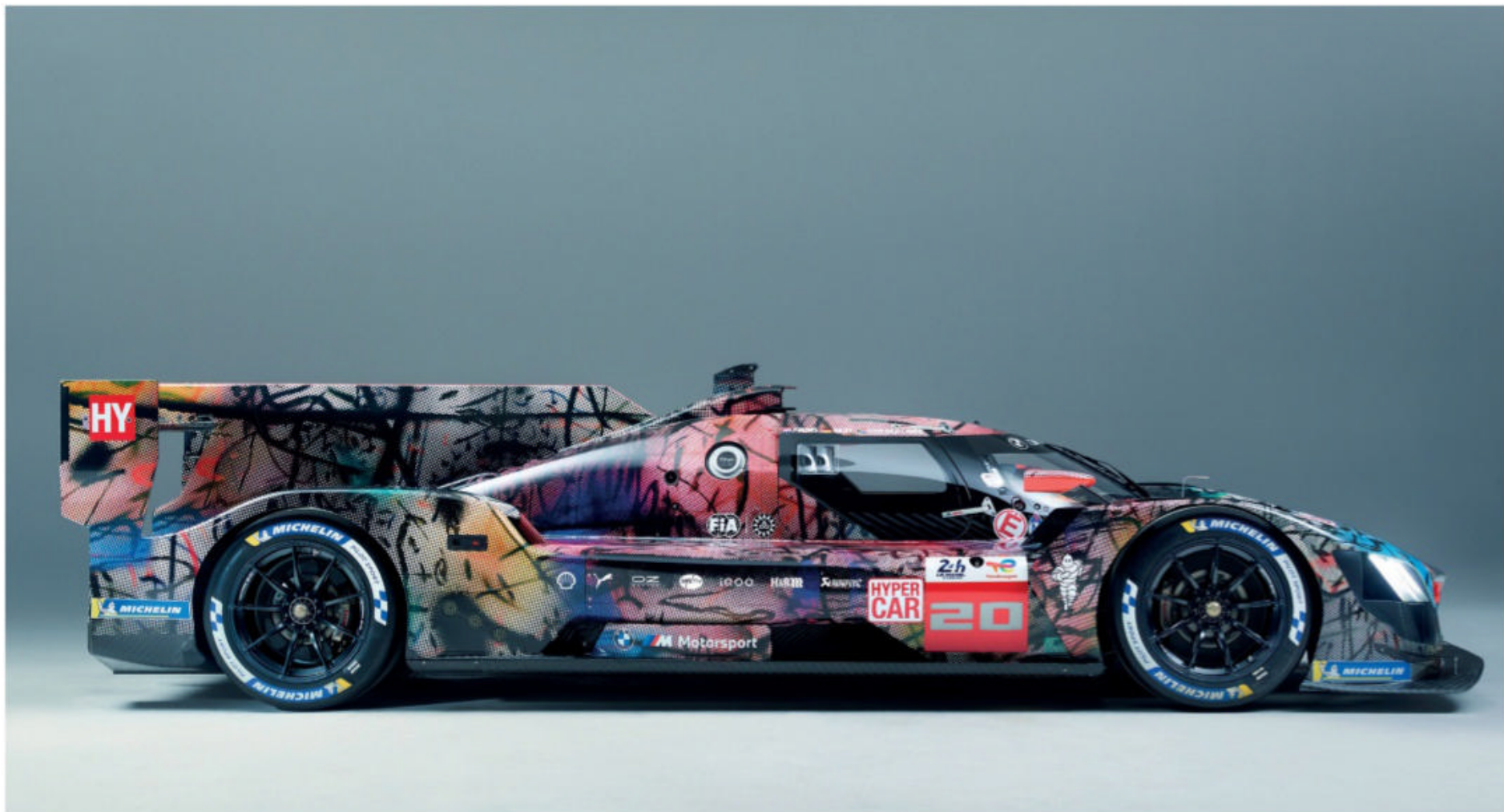
2025 prototype slick compounds, before the track was due to be made wet on Wednesday in order to try out a new extreme wet compound. The wet running is key because such tests entail Pirelli having to book in days at Paul Ricard or Ferrari's Fiorano test track, where sprinkler systems can be used.

Pirelli's blue-rimmed rain tyres have been unpopular because of their huge performance drop compared

to intermediates. The target is to have more robust compounds, that are less prone to overheating, ready for the start of 2025, although Pirelli did not completely rule out introducing something sooner.

The slick tyre test was intended to nail down Pirelli's tyre structure for 2025, and evaluate prototypes of its softer range of compounds for next year.

JONATHAN NOBLE & FILIP CLEEREN



LE MANS 24 HOURS BMW will field one of its M Hybrid V8 LMDhs run by the WRT team at the Le Mans 24 Hours in the latest of a long line of 'Art Car' liveries. The 20th special colour scheme from the German marque is the work of New York artist Julie Mehretu, known for her abstract landscapes, and will grace the #20 entry to be shared by Robin Frijns, Rene Rast and Sheldon van der Linde in the double-points round of the World Endurance Championship next month. The livery unveiled at the Pompidou Centre in Paris last week was described by Mehretu as a "performance painting". **Photograph by Mundilova/BMW**

BMW brings Formula E champion Dennis back into factory line-up

GT

Formula E World Championship title winner Jake Dennis has returned to the ranks of BMW's factory roster. The 28-year-old Briton, who raced for the German manufacturer in FE in 2021 with the Andretti team, was named last week as the 23rd member of its line-up.

Dennis dropped off the roster for 2024 after maintaining a relationship with BMW since its withdrawal from FE at the end of 2021. His return comes after he joined the British Century Motorsport squad for the opening GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup round at Paul Ricard in April, and ahead of an outing this weekend in the Italian GT Championship

at Imola with Ceccato Racing.

Dennis will then turn out for Century in a BMW M4 GT3 entered in the Bronze Cup for the remaining GTWCE enduros with the exception of next month's Spa 24 Hours. The Belgian classic takes place on the same weekend as the Portland FE round, where he will be on duty for the Andretti team. This weekend at Imola, he is replacing Max Hesse, who has a clashing commitment in the Nurburgring 24 Hours, at the wheel of the Ceccato M4.

Dennis, who raced a Walkenhorst M4 at last year's Nurburgring enduro, said he was "very excited to continue my journey as a BMW M works driver – we have had a great partnership".

GARY WATKINS



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Formula Regional replaces F3 for Macau classic

MACAU GRAND PRIX

Formula Regional cars will replace F3 at the Macau Grand Prix for 2024. The FIA announced the switch for the single-seater classic last week in a statement that, according to Far East sources, came as something of a surprise to local organisers.

Under the late Barry Bland, the race brought together the leading contenders from national and regional F3 championships from 1983. It continued in this format until 2019, when GP3 was renamed FIA F3 and the cars from this single series were used. The COVID crisis forced the organisers to run the event for Chinese F4 cars from 2020-22, before the return of FIA F3 last November.

FIA F3 organiser Bruno Michel's lack

of interest in the Macau GP is well documented, and FIA single-seater strategy and operations director Francois Sicard had to work hard on making the event happen within the constraints of teams needing to return their cars to Europe for rebuilds at spec engine supplier Mecachrome. The introduction of a new F3 car for 2025 is understood to have posed another huge obstacle.

Sicard described the move as "a natural consequence of the evolution of the junior single-seater landscape". He added: "Macau's F3 race has built its legendary reputation as an event that gathered the best junior racers from national series around the world. A move to Formula Regional machinery very much revives that spirit and is an optimal long-term solution."

While FRegional theoretically brings back the old Macau concept of bringing together competitors from different series in Europe, Japan, the US, Middle East and New Zealand, it will likely require some means of performance balancing of different spec chassis and engines.

Single-seater guru Trevor Carlin, whose team won the race three times in the old F3 era, said: "Since the old F3 car stopped racing there, the event's lost its allure. It had the perfect power-and-grip ratio for that circuit. The current FIA car is fast on the straight, but nowhere near as agile on the mountain. It doesn't matter what they replace it with – F3 or Formula Regional. Until they get proper F3 cars back there it will never be the same event."

MARCUS SIMMONS

Porsche commits to FE throughout Gen4 lifespan



GALLOWAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FORMULA E

Porsche announced ahead of last weekend's Shanghai E-Prix that it has committed to Formula E throughout the Gen4 regulations, taking its involvement in the championship up to the end of the 2029-30 season.

The German marque has been involved in Formula E since the 2019-20 season, and over the past five campaigns its works team

has taken eight victories across Gen2 and Gen3 eras. While the factory effort has only achieved a best result of fourth in the teams' standings, Porsche's powertrain propelled Jake Dennis to the drivers' title last season for customer squad Andretti.

"We are on some kind of journey together, everybody together, but of course before you sign you have some talks, you want to

clarify some things, you talk about conditions, you talk about everything before you set a signature," Porsche Motorsport vice-president Thomas Laudenbach told Autosport.

"We want to be a core part of this championship. We are not well-known for in and out, we've never done that in the past, and for us it's to really grow with the championship."

STEFAN MACKLEY



INDIANAPOLIS 500 Simon Pagenaud drove a tribute lap at the Indy 500 last weekend in honour of his friend Gil de Ferran, who died last December of a heart attack. The 2019 500 victor, who drove for de Ferran's American Le Mans Series team, was at the wheel of the Brazilian's 2003 500-winning G-Force-Toyota, which has been in the care of Penske Restoration. "Gil de Ferran has been my role model, not only as a racer but also as a father," said Pagenaud. "I got to be very close to him, [wife] Angela, [daughter] Anna and [son] Luke through the years." The Frenchman is recovering from injuries from a Mid-Ohio crash last July. **Photograph by Galstad/Motorsport Images**

Ilott in McLaren frame for 2025

INDYCAR

McLaren CEO Zak Brown has stated that Callum Ilott is in the running for a seat with his IndyCar team for next season.

The Briton has been called upon on three occasions this year, including this month's Indy 500, by Arrow McLaren after David Malukas was sidelined by a wrist injury. Ilott's World Endurance Championship commitments also allowed an IndyCar debut for reigning FIA Formula 2 champion Theo Pourchaire, who will drive the car for the rest of 2024.

Asked whether Ilott is on his shortlist for 2025, Brown replied: "Yes. He did a really good job. We wanted to see him on an oval; plus Theo having never driven an oval, he's now done a test in St Louis."

Brown stressed that the team is not viewing it as a shootout between Ilott and Pourchaire. The combination of past contract drama with Alex Palou, who



TONS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

decided to U-turn on his exit from Chip Ganassi Racing, and McLaren's decision to split with Malukas has made it a challenge to solidify the driver line-up. To that end, Pato O'Ward signed a multi-year extension over the off-season, but the status of team-mate Alexander Rossi is unknown.

"Now, it's like catch our breath, focus on Indy and turn our attention to what we're gonna do with our driver line-up after this race," Brown added. "Those conversations will come real quickly."

JOEY BARNES

HEDLEY'S F3 DEBUT

Two-time GB3 race winner James Hedley made a last-minute F3 debut in Monaco last weekend. The Briton was called up by Jenzer Motorsport after Peruvian Matias Zagazeta was diagnosed with appendicitis and needed an operation. A crash early in qualifying at Ste Devote consigned Hedley to the back of the grid but he finished both races, with a best result of 20th.

NEAL'S BTCC RESTART

Three-time British Touring Car champion Matt Neal made another return to the paddock last weekend at Snetterton as an advisor to new team Restart Racing. He oversaw the squad's Cupra Leons last year in a similar role at Team Hard. Under Neal's watch, Chris Smiley made Q2 and rookie Scott Sumpton scored his best result so far – 11th. "Matt ticks a few small details," said Smiley. "We weren't a million miles away. It's improved my driving and we've made set-up changes that work."

F2 AND F3 CALENDARS

The FIA F2 and F3 calendars have been unveiled for 2025. Each series visits the same circuits as in 2024, with the only notable change being that tweaks to the F1 schedule mean Melbourne replaces Bahrain as the opening round for both.

ANOTHER FOR TEN VOORDE

Porsche Supercup talisman Larry ten Voorde made it two wins out of two for 2024 in last weekend's Monaco Grand Prix support race. The Dutchman put his CLRT car (below) on pole and led all the way from Harry King (Lechner Racing). The Brit was followed home by South African Keagan Masters, who claimed his first Supercup podium.



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WE'RE DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE CLASSIC FERRARI SPIRIT

TOP FIVE



Didier Auriol took six WRC wins in 1992 with the Delta HF Integrale

LANCIA RALLY CARS

The most successful marque in World Rally Championship history is to make its long-awaited return to rallying with a Rally4 version of its new Ypsilon. So, here we rank Lancia's greatest rally cars

TOM HOWARD

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5 FULVIA (1965-73)

The Fulvia guided Lancia back into motorsport through the crucible of rallying in 1965. The eye-catching, V4-engined coupe enjoyed success on home soil, winning the Italian Rally Championship on its debut, the first of eight national titles and two European crowns. The Fulvia also secured the 1972 International Championship for Manufacturers, the precursor to the WRC, scoring three wins from nine rounds.



4 DELTA S4 (1985-86)

Epitomising the beasts that spawned during the WRC's famous Group B era, this mid-engined S4 combined turbocharging and supercharging. The result meant its 1.8-litre Fiat twin cam engine delivered more than 500bhp to its four-wheel-drive system. The S4 scored four wins and, along with the Peugeot 205 T16 Evo 2, was the ultimate Group B monster before the FIA scrapped the ruleset following serious accidents.



3 037 (1983-85)

The 037 carried Lancia to its fourth WRC manufacturers' title in 1983. This two-litre supercharged, mid-engined, rear-wheel drive car was the answer to Audi's 4WD Quattro. While it lacked in the power stakes compared to the Audi, it was much lighter. It managed to beat Audi to the manufacturers' crown, the last 2WD car to claim the title. Walter Rohrl and Markku Alen scored six WRC wins across 1983-84.



2 STRATOS (1974-81)

The lightweight, Bertone-designed Stratos, powered by a 2.4-litre V6 from the Dino 246 GT, was the brainchild of Lancia boss Cesare Fiorio, Giampaolo Dallara, Marcello Gandini and former Ferrari man Mike Parkes. It won the manufacturers' crown in 1974, in its first season, and helped Lancia to further titles in 1975 and 1976. The mid-engined Stratos was still capable of winning as late as 1981.



1 DELTA HF (1987-93)

For some, it's not the prettiest or most spectacular of Lancia's creations, but it's difficult to ignore the Delta's success. The 4WD car became the undisputed king of Group A. Through several iterations, it won 46 WRC rallies from 1987-92, making it the most successful car in the championship's history. The Delta claimed six consecutive manufacturers' crowns during that period and four drivers' titles.





Time to change the Monaco GP?

Modern F1 cars are too big for the confines of the world's most famous street circuit, so race-day dullness is baked in. Radical solutions may have to be the answer

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Imagine that Max Verstappen had led all 78 laps of Formula 2-like pace in dominating last Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix. What saved the weekend was Charles Leclerc's emotional dream-sealing, wrapped in the tension of historical Ferrari failure there. The home hero did all he could and more. And the instant red flag removed any chance of a botched pitstop or strategy call thwarting him once again on the streets he knows so well.

Leclerc's "ultimate dream" Monaco win gave Formula 1 a third feel-good story of 2024, following the lurid scandal of its start amid yet more Red Bull domination. Carlos Sainz's remarkable post-appendectomy win in Australia kicked off the trilogy, and Lando Norris finally breaking his F1 duck in Miami continued it. But Leclerc's story can only happen once. Take the eloquent emotion of his tale away, and the 2024 Monaco GP was awful.

Nothing happened after the first-lap shunting and red flag tyre changes. Tyre stops might have enlivened the end, but they didn't – largely thanks to Ferrari's canny pace management compared to the Mercedes pair far behind. And they only finished 13 and 15 seconds down once George Russell had raised his pace on medium tyres that eventually did 75 laps and left the charging Verstappen – on fresher hards – without even a whiff of a passing attempt.

Nothing changed to cause this. The modern cars again arrived too big, the track is too narrow. But the 2025 Monaco race is the

“Purists look away, but a unique contest – time trial or otherwise – might be considered”

last of the deal that was signed in 2022. And given the aim for smaller, more nimbler cars is coming beyond that, now is the perfect time to ask what can possibly be done to improve the famous event's racing spectacle.

After climbing from his Mercedes and suggesting “I'm sure people were falling asleep”, Lewis Hamilton suggested finding “ways to spice it up, maybe mandatory three stops or something?” Russell also had tyres in mind when this topic was put to him after “tootling” around well adrift of the leaders on Sunday afternoon. He argues “having the whole weekend on softs would solve a lot of problems”. Red Bull boss Christian Horner again discussed the idea pitched in previous years to reprofile the final sector around the Swimming Pool complex, using ‘reclaimed land’.

But away from the microphones, people were thinking more

radically. Sky Sports News reporter Craig Slater mused to this writer of a theoretical time trial idea replacing the race, perhaps with cars setting off in reverse qualifying order for a five-lap blast to reward success in that session with the best track conditions. “Tour de France-style,” Slater said.

The overall smaller grandstand totals and the team motorhomes crammed next to the harbour (where Red Bull's floats) make it harder to gauge attendance levels for this event. But we noted how the grid didn't feel quite as busy and chaotic as in previous years there, especially once the celebrity caravan had been led through the leading cars. Sources at various teams reported how, from their perspective, a noticeable chunk of the sponsor business and schmoozing they'd previously expected to be conducted here is now taking place in Miami – F1's other glitz-draped trade show event.

Monaco is already changing. Getting radical with its post-2025 future – because this race really is unlikely to go anywhere unless there's another round of strained contract talks between Formula One Management and the Automobile Club de Monaco – isn't all that outlandish. The mandatory pitstops idea is a cheap and very F1 way of change. The obvious riposte is how the teams would inevitably all converge on the same strategy. And the one-off 2023 Qatar GP with this rule didn't benefit from it. But only allowing soft tyre usage is perhaps a better shout, given Aston Martin's Lance Stroll made a tunnel pass on Sauber driver Zhou Guanyu with a big grip and pace difference last Sunday.

Given how Monaco has already claimed much land from the sea – and is doing so on a much grander scale in front of the city's Larvotto district – the layout-alteration idea has legs. But F1 would be wise to steer clear of reclaiming land unless it wants its already iffy promises of sustainability to lose what credibility they have. The environmental argument in the face of the climate crisis is overwhelming. Plus, the track would likely have to be massively wider in the new overtaking areas to avoid a similar issue to that at Imola: a still-predictable racing spectacle.

Purists look away, but a unique contest – time trial or otherwise – might be considered along the same lines as the anomalous Indianapolis 500 inclusions in the world championship's infancy. But, fear not, sprint races are about bold as F1 gets, format-wise...

Monaco already has a unique place on the calendar given the thrilling qualifying challenge, and some would argue that a very dull race is a price worth paying for it. But F1 needs that battle to be much more 2023 than 2024 – as good as Leclerc and Oscar Piastri were against the clock on Saturday. Since the race really is the only problem, going radical in a city where more is *always* better might just provide the interest injection required. 🏁



P14 LECLERC'S MONACO MAGIC

YOUR SAY

First raced in October 1973, and pre-‘droop snoot’; that was added in 1975 with a fuel-injected 210bhp engine, and had three race wins that year at Snetterton

PHIL CLARKE

Origins of a Star Club Car

It’s been brought to my attention your article on the Firenza ‘droop snoot’ still raced by Tony Davies (Star Club Car, Autosport, 16 May).

I’m Phil Clarke, and with my team constructed the car in the summer of 1973; yes, it was a DTV shell built as an ‘Old Nail’ spare, but they were making ‘Big Bertha’ (Ventora) so my luck was in to have this released from Shepreth to fit my ‘deceased’ Viva GT engine and gearbox and for my team to fit the body panels and bespoke throttle pedal/dash, etc.

First raced in October 1973, and pre-‘droop snoot’; that was added in 1975 with a fuel-injected 210bhp engine, and had three race wins that year at Snetterton.

Acquiring a Scottish Firenza (16v/ZF’box) for 1976, my Firenza was sold later that year. I’ve photos of our home garage build, and I’m very pleased the car has survived 50 years. Congrats to the Davies for persisting with the car, which I was finding uncompetitive in Tricentral Super Saloon racing of the era, and would have had to drop down categories to race competitively on my budget in 1977-82. We costed the 1973 build at £1500 with the Viva parts, and a similar sum for racing in 1974.

Phil Clarke

By email

If your car has an interesting and/or unusual history worthy of a Star Club Car profile in Autosport, drop a line to stephen.lickorish@autosport.com – ed

Grassroots lesson for the pinnacle of motorsport

While I have always really enjoyed Formula 1 since the 1960s, it was attending club meetings and seeing cars like the Transpeed



Firenza (Star Club Car, Autosport, 16 May), ‘Old Nail’ and Dave Brodie’s ‘Run Baby Run’ Escort that made real motorsport available at events like the Oulton Park Gold Cup.

The further that Liberty Media gets up itself and insists on filling the starting grid with utter no-mark ‘celebs’, and F1 teams refuse to let multiple championship-winning teams join the fray because they ‘wouldn’t be competitive’, reading the Transpeed article made me realise that people and cars like that are the ones that I want see – and hear!

Derrick Holden

Marlow

Mini Challenge entertains to the max

If you thought watching the racing on Sunday was paint-drying stupefaction, see the Round 8 race of the Mini Challenge, on the BTCC support bill at Snetterton: it can be found 1h10m into the full meeting’s coverage on the ITV player.

The commentary is equally entertaining: “I’ll keep it on the base tones, you do the sopranos.”

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland

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RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

LECLERC ENDS HIS MONACO 'CURSE'

So often thwarted at home, the Ferrari star finally got the win he wanted as Red Bull suffered a rare off weekend

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY FERRARI AND  motorsport
IMAGES



Leclerc
delighted to
join Vasseur
in celebratory
Monaco harbour
splashdown

FERRARI

MONACO GP RACE CENTRE



“I realised I was struggling to see out of the tunnel. I had tears in my eyes. And I was like, ‘F*, Charles, you cannot do that now, you still have two laps to finish’.”**

As if the task of navigating a Formula 1 car through the legendary streets wasn't hard enough, Charles Leclerc had much weighing heavy on his heart *and* his shoulders in the closing stages of 2024's Monaco Grand Prix.

At this stage, on lap 76 of 78 of his emotional first victory at home in Monte Carlo last weekend, Leclerc's thoughts had drifted. As he threaded his Ferrari SF-24 between the barriers, his sixth F1 career win long since secure, he thought of his late father, Herve. Leclerc is nearly seven years on from Herve's death, which came while he was dominating another Formula 2 weekend as a rapidly rising Ferrari junior. “I feel like I don't only accomplish a dream of mine today, but also one of his,” Leclerc would later beautifully put it.

Then there was all his previous misfortune racing in Monaco. On the F1 support bill in 2017, safety car and suspension issues had wrecked his Formula 2 feature race waltz. There was his brake failure aboard his Sauber in his first Monaco GP a year later. And then the 2021 pole high and non-starting low. Ferrari's strategy shambles when he'd led so commandingly in the rain a year later merely added to the apparent jinx.

When the home hero also shunted a Ferrari 312 in the Historique GP here two years ago, the ‘Leclerc Monaco Curse’ narrative pulsed strongly. Not that the man himself ever gave such simple hokum much thought.

“I never believed in the curse,” he said. “However, it was very frustrating to lose those wins. As a driver, you never really know when the next opportunity to win will be, and especially when it's your home race and even more so when your home race is Monaco. It's such a special track, such a difficult track and such a difficult weekend to master, and to do everything perfectly. Which we did.” »



Dreams dashed, fate – Leclerc seemingly had endured it all to finally secure his desired prize and pride. When that moment arrived, he had to navigate a series of distinct chapters and nail two critical changes to finally leap into the Monaco harbour in celebratory ecstasy. Here’s how it all came together for him.

Leclerc reaches “Q3 run two mode in FP1”

In many of Ferrari’s brightest showings amid Red Bull’s domination over the past two and a half years, its lead driver on such occasions has stolen a march right from the off in first practice. Here, Leclerc kicked off the weekend with fifth in FP1. But his good work at this stage was masked by the run plan tactics of other squads.

In anticipation of rain that never arrived in FP2, Mercedes and McLaren gave its drivers orders to push on new soft tyres in the opening one-hour session, while Leclerc rose to the fore in the second period, where his rivals had to conduct their qualifying simulation runs on used softs to preserve their stock of the red-walled rubber for Saturday’s action. From there, he stroked in a 0.197-second

advantage in FP3, which he followed with pole ahead of McLaren’s Oscar Piastri later that afternoon (see panel, right). Afterwards, Leclerc’s steely insistence that nothing was yet won, even with Monaco’s massive overtaking problem in mind, suggested that Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur had wanted a new mental approach to what, for Leclerc, is the hardest weekend of the year.

“Once you are in the car, you actually feel so good,” Leclerc said of a weekend where he is pulled from regular events to signing autographs for his adoring public, among the bustle of an F1 weekend crammed into a harbour-side paddock. “Everything goes away. It’s more the two hours in between FP3 to quali that you start to feel a little bit of tension – that you know you need to prepare everything, anticipate track conditions, and all of this. But, as soon as I put on the helmet and then I’m in the car, I’m completely fine. I really don’t feel anything anymore.”

Vasseur insisted post-race that there was “no guru” and “nothing special” that Ferrari had devised to get Leclerc through the weekend any differently to previous years. But there was something Vasseur detected at the start of the event that would prove pivotal. “Last year, I think he was a bit nervous and from the beginning of the weekend he was a bit under tension,” he recalled. “This year he was much more relaxed from the beginning.”

Across the Ferrari garage, Carlos Sainz could see “the same Charles that I’ve seen any other year in Monaco”, but he too could sense something was different in his team-mate’s initial offering this time around. “The only thing I saw different is that he seemed to be in Q3 run two mode already in FP1,” Sainz explained.

Red Bull undone by another street setting

Sainz’s gains on the final Q3 runs meant he lined up behind Leclerc and Piastri. At the same time, Max Verstappen’s weekend was unravelling with his Ste Devote wallstrike. This capped a relatively awful qualifying session for Red Bull – Sergio Perez’s customary 0.3s gap to Verstappen this time meant he started 16th after a Q1 exit.

The problem, said Verstappen, was being unable to “touch any



QUALIFYING



It's been a long time coming – Leclerc keeps it all together for win in his own back yard



“ONCE YOU ARE IN THE CAR, YOU ACTUALLY FEEL SO GOOD. EVERYTHING GOES AWAY”

kerbs because it just upsets the car way too much” through Monaco’s second and third sectors. Even with Red Bull’s softest suspension settings, Verstappen still felt like he was “running without suspension”.

But further hampering the issue was how “the correlation between the simulator and the track doesn’t work and in the simulator, we drive over the kerbs without any problems”, according to Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko.

Whatever Red Bull did to soften the RB20 from its set-up baseline, not only was it not finding the recovery time that sources at the team had insisted it would gain, but it couldn’t replicate what its drivers had been expecting from their pre-event preparations. A 2023 Singapore GP-style humbling was potentially on the cards.

Leclerc calmly navigates a shock qualifying swing

With F1’s usual dominator absent from the leading battle, Leclerc’s path to pole had appeared fairly straightforward. But two things knocked him from that perfect practice stride.

The first was “the issue in Q1 with the plastic bag in the front wing”, said Vasseur, referring to the massive piece of Mirabeau wall-wrapping advertising that got attached to Leclerc’s car. “There we had to pit, we lost two or three laps in a row with this,” Vasseur added. “He was able to stay very calm because we could have been out in Q1.”

Instead, Leclerc went through in fifth, and could only improve to fourth in Q2 with what he called “tricky” progress. This followed a precautionary engine change after FP3. And here came the second critical adjustment in securing his Monaco results >>

Finally, the streak was ended at the Monaco Grand Prix. For the first time in 2024, someone other than Max Verstappen secured pole position. The Red Bull driver was undone by the rear of his RB20 snapping left as he traversed Ste Devote on his final run, and a hefty brush with the barrier on the outside was enough. But his absence from the pole fight was already expected.

Not only was Red Bull grappling with further kerb and bump-riding problems, like in Singapore last year, but Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc was once again leading the way on his home streets against the clock. His commanding 0.188-second and 0.197s margins in FP2 and FP3 left him aware that anything but pole would leave him looking “completely stupid”.

Then came what Leclerc called “very tricky” Q1 and Q2 outings, where in each George Russell and Lando Norris led the way, with Leclerc rather languishing in fifth and fourth. Following his steering wheel settings adjustments, the Ferrari was “better everywhere”. In Q3, Leclerc returned to his previous dominant position. After the first runs, he led by 0.026s over Oscar Piastri’s McLaren, Leclerc particularly benefiting from a stonking final sector on his way to a 1m10.418s. At this stage Verstappen sat 0.149s back.

On the second runs – with Leclerc pushing from the off on each and not taking a preparation/banker lap like others, including Verstappen and Carlos Sainz in the other Ferrari, had chosen – the home favourite gained everywhere. Personal bests came in the opening two thirds, but a purple finale that Piastri couldn’t match made the difference.

Sainz had risen to third with his last lap – he rued a “lack of confidence” on the attack here – and Norris had taken his first new soft tyre run of the final segment to fourth. Verstappen was shuffled back to sixth behind Russell, so Piastri was still the biggest threat to Leclerc.

What’s interesting is just how close the Australian got to Leclerc’s pole-winning 1m10.270s. He was nearly a tenth up at the end of their respective first sectors before Piastri attacked too hard at Mirabeau (he turned in 3.7mph faster) and then hit wheelspin on exit. Then, at the Nouvelle chicane, Piastri appeared to check up slightly after getting too close to the barrier on the inside, and so was 0.060s down on the provisional pole time at the end of sector two.

Still, Piastri clawed back a 0.207s deficit to Leclerc’s last-lap improvements ahead by staying on the power fractionally longer at the critical second part of the Swimming pool complex. But Piastri couldn’t keep up his speed and shipped 0.154s in the final two corners and the run to the line, where Leclerc, his tyres holding on beautifully, prevailed.

“Leclerc was aware that anything but pole would leave him looking ‘completely stupid’”

breakthrough. Between Q2 and Q3, Leclerc made “some modifications, especially with the front wing, the tools [steering wheel differential and brake balance settings] and my driving”. This transformed his handling over kerbs, allowing a more predictable balance overall. It never came back to his practice “best feeling of the weekend”, but it was enough to see off the threat of Piastri.

And this was considerable. Had the McLaren driver hooked up his best sectors at the end in Q3, as Leclerc did, he would have taken the vital position at the head of the grid by 0.070s.

Leclerc escapes Ste Devote danger

When the lights went out at 3pm local time on Sunday, Leclerc squirmed out of his grid box but blasted ahead. The action came behind as he steamed through Ste Devote and began the climb up to Massenet in command.

Sainz “got a really good start and I had an opportunity going into Turn 1”, where he “arrived a bit long, with a lot of understeer in the car”, at one point actually fractionally ahead of Piastri. “Then I understeered off a bit into him on the exit and we had the slightest of contacts,” Sainz added. “I didn’t even feel or see the contact. But as soon as I exited Turn 1, I could feel the puncture.”

His left-front was sagging, while aboard the McLaren Piastri had lost “20 downforce points, which in Monaco is about half a second” –

according to McLaren team boss Andrea Stella – with right-rear floor damage. But it was Sainz’s problem that stood out – first as sparks flew from his already ailing Ferrari through Massenet, and then when he slid wide at the exit of Casino Square under little pressure from Lando Norris in the other McLaren.

But already, another more concerning matter was unfolding.

Perez/Haas-fest removes strategy jeopardy for Ferrari

As the leaders plunged down to Mirabeau and Portier, they were seconds away from the race being neutralised. This was urgently needed given that Perez had endured an almighty shunt with the Haas pair, Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg.

The crash was instigated by Magnussen pulling a third of the way alongside Perez as they raced up Beau Rivage and then Perez jinking right going with the meandering track. The contact speared Perez right and into the barriers, and their wreckage shot across the track and into the innocent Hulkenberg on the inside.

Perez felt Magnussen was guilty of “some dangerous driving”. The Dane said “he clearly wasn’t leaving space” and “he just squeezed me into the wall”. The stewards decreed it was a racing incident not even worthy of additional investigation – as they later did with the Sainz/Piastri Ste Devote clash.

When the red flags flew, Leclerc led the pack back to the pits. And here his race received a major boost. The top four on the grid had set off on the medium tyres. Pirelli predicted this as the standard start tyre, with a move to the hards in a one-stopper the only strategy requirement with no rain arriving, no tyre degradation on the smooth surface, and the softs no good long-term.

Behind, George Russell, Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton had started on the contra-strategy of running hard tyres from the off in a bid to gain from a mid-race safety car. This is exactly what Vasseur feared. But the stoppage wrecked any chance of that. Instead, Leclerc, Piastri, Sainz and Norris could switch to the hards in the pitlane and then run to finish. Russell, Verstappen and Hamilton by



regulation could only go to the mediums and attempt to do the same with less durable rubber, even though a 75-lap stint on the yellow-walled compound was entirely feasible here.

Leclerc escapes Ste Devote danger again, plus Piastri’s Portier ponder

McLaren had been able to partially repair Piastri’s damaged floor and replace his right sidepod during the 40-minute stoppage. This meant he faced just a 10-point downforce loss to cope with for the rest of the race.

But, instead of Norris providing McLaren with a two-pronged attack against Leclerc, Sainz was able to take the restart back in third. This was despite dropping to 16th and having to reverse away from the Casino Square barriers before the red flags had flown.

The reason for this was Zhou Guanyu being jumped by the two Haases at the start, and as a result getting caught behind the crash. The Sauber driver then delicately picked his way past the wreckage and medical car. The FIA therefore opted to take the restart order from the original grid, because Zhou hadn’t yet passed the sector one timing beam when the race was stopped.

At the standing restart, Leclerc was under even less pressure this time off the line, and the leading four merged in turn through Ste Devote. Now, with Leclerc 1.0s clear at the end the restart lap, the typical Monaco pace-modulating exercise could play out – albeit with the race shorn of strategic variance or pitstop service jeopardy *a la* 2022 for the leaders.

Leclerc and co started off lapping in the 1m22s and 1m21s – 11-12s slower than they’d gone in Q3. They gradually eased their way to the 1m19s, at which point Piastri “showed my hand” on the 19th tour. “I had an attempt into Turn 8 [Portier],” he added. “We were going pretty slow. I think at one point we were going slower than Formula 2 [in Leclerc’s case, that was only



for the first lap after the restart]. When you’re going that slow, you’ve got a fair few options. But I kind of knew that once I showed where I was going to try and overtake, that he would probably be wise to it from there. He reacted just quick enough. After that point I knew I was going to be very limited on options...”

Ferrari manages its tyre and go-slow gaps queries

For 15 of the first 16 laps after the restart, Piastri was able to stay in DRS range of the leader, Leclerc’s biggest lead through this stage a temporary 1.1s. Their pace continued to fall to the 1m18s bracket. The graining phase on both compounds predicted pre-race by most squads, given what they’d seen in FP2, where Sainz’s long-run pace had stood out when he wasn’t backing off in traffic, had to be “managed properly”, according to Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola. But it never seemed to unduly impact any of the frontrunners. At this stage, the front pack was detached from the medium-shod chasers. Mercedes was clear that Russell had to run at an even more rigid pace higher up the low 1m20s bracket as he was “tootling” around in fifth. Russell was falling away from Leclerc at a 0.6s rate at this stage, and the Mercedes would soon be at the critical 20s pitstop time-loss gap even to Norris ahead. Had there been a safety car >>

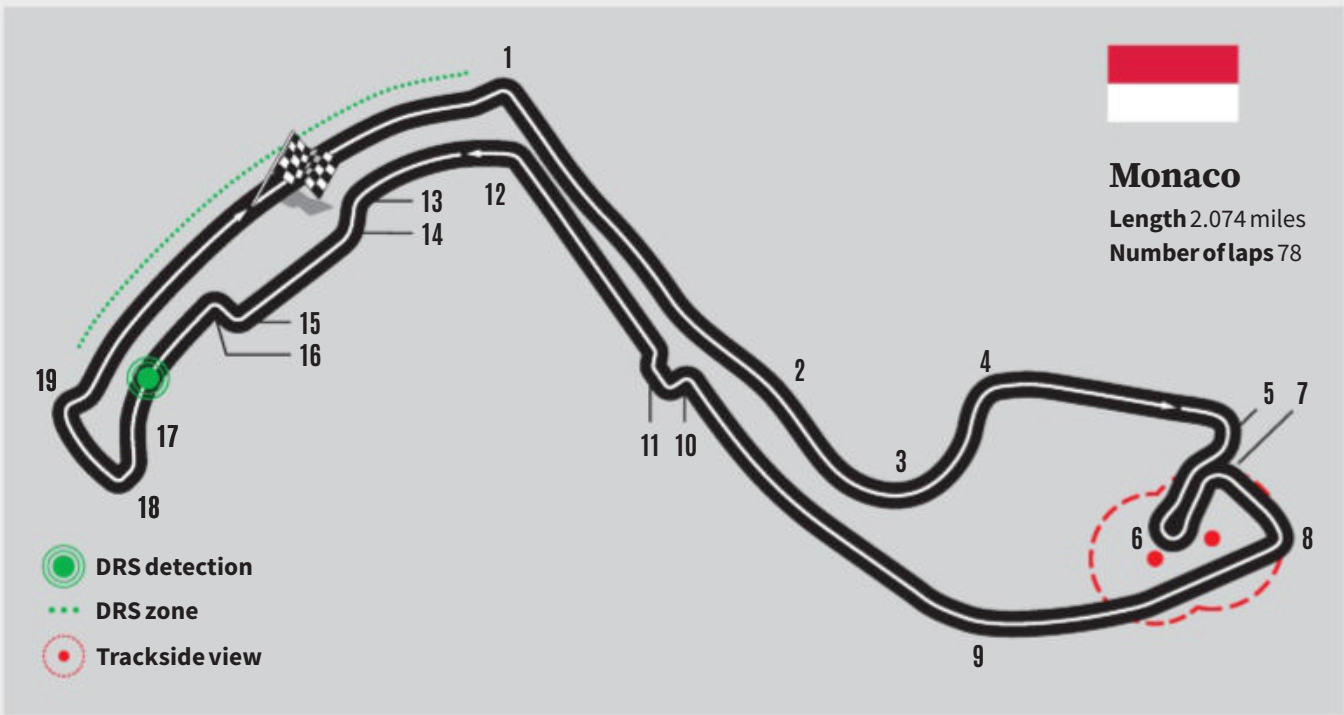


The Aston Martin drivers are not having a good time. It's FP1 for the Monaco Grand Prix, and we're at the Loews hairpin. The sun is shining early on, but the clouds will build up and drops of rain will even threaten proceedings much later, around the red-flag stoppage to clear away Zhou Guanyu's debris deposited elsewhere.

Every time Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll squirt down the hill towards Autosport's vantage point it happens. From our perspective on the outside of the corner, the green cars are having to traverse F1's slowest corner as if it's a 50p piece – hands a blur at the wheel. Stroll is really wrestling his AMR24.

Unlike the Ferrari drivers – although mainly Charles Leclerc, bar his first time through here bringing him shockingly close to the barrier with a clumsy exit – the Astons are not super-smooth. The problem is understeer. Masses of it.

They're not alone in struggling with this issue on the hard tyres early in the session, where later investigation will also reveal Alonso



at this stage didn't have his desired level of power steering support and Stroll lacked tyre temperature.

The Red Bulls and McLarens aren't much better through here. These machines are more stiffly sprung than most, and so rattle over the bump approaching the apex of the hairpin. The Mercedes duo are also having to provoke

rotation with sharper steering inputs to combat understeer.

Alonso just hustles his car every time, and the problem is noticeably better after a lengthy spell in the pits for adjustments and reappearance on the soft tyres. Before he makes a similar move, Stroll attempts a line adjustment. He gets wider and wider until at one stage he brushes the barrier with his right-side wheels. But things do improve because of his bigger, sweeping entry.

The unique nature of the Monaco trackside experience means this is also the perfect place to watch an F1 driver's hands as they do what they do best. Turning the car's fifth wheel is their craft, and they all do it differently.

Here we can see, resplendent in Ayrton Senna-homage yellow, Oscar Piastri's silky smooth steering inputs. From outside,

“This is the perfect place to watch a driver's hands as they do what they do best”

it's nonchalant. Kevin Magnussen, meanwhile, is proving his reputation for having an ultra-aggressive driving style – the first steering stab is devastatingly brutal.

For the second half of the one-hour session, we move around the hairpin to watch the cars plunge down towards the right beneath Mirabeau and the run on to Portier and the tunnel. Here, Leclerc's rotation smoothness really stands out. Not even Carlos Sainz in the other Ferrari can match his team-mate in keeping the momentum up all around the hairpin. The Red Bull and McLaren drivers simply have to wait longer to get on the gas again.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS





Leclerc and his team enjoy the rewards of a weekend when they did “everything perfectly”

or VSC, Norris could have taken a free stop from lap 20.

This caused Ferrari a problem. If it allowed the gap to build enough, Norris would be able to fit a much younger set of tyres and potentially use their advantage to overcome the overtaking issue. The grip punch of new tyres through the tunnel from Portier versus ancient hards, after all, was demonstrated by Lance Stroll's pass on Zhou there with new softs much later.

And so, Ferrari ordered its drivers to slow down and try to avoid this playing out. On lap 21, Leclerc's pace stabilised in the mid-1m18s for the next seven tours, after which he actually backed off to the 1m19s for three of the next four laps.

Vasseur felt that, for Sainz in third, “it was even more difficult because we asked him to stay not too far away of Piastri to cover a potential safety car, but also to slow down Norris for Russell”.

On lap 39, back down to the low 1m18s and with all the leaders through their graining phases, Ferrari asked Leclerc to slow again. He did back off to the 1m19s over the next three tours, but wasn't keen because “what I didn't want is that Oscar started to push straight away and then you don't have references”. “I was going so slow in the middle of the race that if you start to push, then you don't really know where to brake and that's where mistakes can happen,” he explained of his confused radio calls here.

The gap between Russell and Norris reached 20.6s by lap 55,



Piastri resisted late pressure from Sainz

MAUGER

“I WAS GOING SO SLOW THAT IF YOU START TO PUSH, THEN YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW WHERE TO BRAKE”

but here the Mercedes driver finally lifted his pace to match the leaders, now in the 1m17s. Russell had been near-metronomic in the 1m18s for the previous 20 laps, and so McLaren's chance was gone.

It turned out it had opted against stopping Norris on lap 55 because “it would have been still a bit of a risk”, said Stella. “As soon as the pitstop was just one second slower than normal we could have ended up behind a Mercedes and then it was gone. Even if you were three seconds faster, there was no way to overtake.”

Piastri's floor damage finally comes to bear

On lap 66, Leclerc took his pace from the 1m16s into the 1m15s. In the 20 tours since they'd started lapping the rear of the pack, Leclerc had been out of what little DRS threat there was here. But now he was able to snap Piastri's pursuit.

“Towards the end, a combination of trying to keep the pace of the race reasonably quick, plus the floor, I just struggled a little bit,” Piastri said of why Leclerc's victory margin expanded to 7.2s by the chequered flag. Here, Sainz was just 0.4s back in third, with Norris behind, 4.7s ahead of Russell (who'd generally lapped faster than Leclerc, even with the same aged medium tyres compared to hards over the race's final third), followed by the fruitlessly two-stopping Verstappen and Hamilton.

“But overall, pretty happy with it,” Piastri concluded. “The last 10 laps or so [with the overtaking challenge as Sainz bore down behind], I was pretty happy we were in Monaco.”

So was Leclerc. The yachts blared horns, royalty wept, and he took Vasseur with him for the harbour dip. His father's dream fulfilled, finally, Leclerc was a home winner at F1's street party race. 🏆

**NEXT
F1 REPORT**

Canadian Grand Prix
13 June issue

VERSTAPPEN: MONACO 'NOT REALLY RACING'

Max Verstappen spent his entire Monaco Grand Prix sandwiched between the two Mercedes, with all three hampered by the red flag following their decision to start on the hard tyres.

The trio switched to the medium compound to spend the first half of the race in lockstep, as George Russell backed off to save his tyres in a bid to get to the end of the race. A gap began to open between the seventh-placed Lewis Hamilton and Yuki Tsunoda in eighth, offering the Briton a chance to trade his mediums on the 51st lap for the hard tyres on which he'd started the race.

Verstappen responded and came in for his starting tyres a lap later, but Hamilton was not informed that his out-lap was "critical", so didn't attempt to undercut his 2021 title rival.

With Verstappen closing in on newer tyres, Russell had to dig into the life he'd saved in his mediums to avoid succumbing to the Red Bull driver's performance advantage, but soaked up the pressure across the remaining third of the race to maintain fifth.

"I just tried to follow George and we were so off the pace trying to manage the tyres," Verstappen moaned. "That is of course quite boring out there, driving half-throttle on the straights a gear higher than normal, and four seconds off the pace. It's not really racing."



Famin considering all options in Alpine team-mate fight

Esteban Ocon invoked the fury of usually placid Alpine team principal Bruno Famin with his first-lap assault on team-mate Pierre Gasly at Portier, a hubristic move that resulted in his own retirement and almost caused an early exit for Gasly in the process.

Ocon tried to barge his way past despite Gasly already being halfway through the corner and, on the exit, their tyres made contact to lift Ocon into the air before coming back to earth with a shuddering halt. It caused damage to Ocon's car that could not be repaired in the 40-minute red-flag hiatus, while Gasly's suspension damage and puncture were fixed in time for him to re-assume 10th place for the restart.

Famin was incensed when speaking to Canal+: "Esteban's dive was completely out of place, it was exactly what we didn't want to see."

To his credit, Ocon assumed full blame for the incident and took to

X (formerly Twitter) to apologise for the incident, while Gasly said that there was a clear order in place before the grand prix started.

"You should never have such a situation, especially between team-mates," Gasly mused. "Just sad, disappointed with the situation. We had clear instructions before the race on what to do, and whoever qualified ahead, the trailing car was supposed to help throughout the race. That was the strategy. Unfortunately, it didn't happen."

Famin warned that Ocon's attack would come with "consequences"; it is unclear whether this would comprise a simple ban on the two drivers racing for position, or the removal of Ocon from his race seat entirely, even on a temporary basis. Famin is said to be considering all options to ensure that there are no repeats of conflict between his two drivers.

“THAT GETS US OFF TO A START, AND IT MEANS A LOT TO US. YOU NEVER LIKE TO BE POINTLESS, EVEN JUST FOR THE MORALE OF THE TEAM. SO NOW WE’RE ON THE BOARD WE CAN USE THAT AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON”

Alex Albon on scoring Williams's first points of the season in ninth.



Errant advertising hoardings create sticky trackside situation

The peeling stickers on Monaco's Armco barriers caused sufficient consternation among the drivers for the FIA to remove a handful of them in time for the race, with Lando Norris and Sergio Perez among those who complained that the sticky remnants had caused performance issues during qualifying.

"The hoarding came off and got stuck under my car, which then cost me the tyres," Norris said. "It was a bit of a mess

and that shouldn't happen in Formula 1. They need to come up with a better solution than just stickers."

The errant advertising was stripped from the Ste Devote exit and on the apex of several corners, including Casino Square, Ste Devote and Rascasse. Perez partly blamed his Q1 exit on the appearance of dislodged stickers at Portier, along with the effect of traffic on his final flying lap.



ALONSO CONFUSION AS ASTON FALLS SHORT OF POINTS

Fernando Alonso believed he had secured a point in the Monaco Grand Prix, until being told he had finished 11th after crossing the finish line.

The Aston Martin driver spent much of the race building up a gap for Lance Stroll to ditch his medium tyres, preserve his position, and chase Pierre Gasly. Alonso thought that this was for the final point and, when Stroll picked up a puncture after knocking his left-rear tyre from the rim on the entry to the Nouvelle Chicane, the Spaniard believed the responsibility was his to secure 10th.

This prompted him to successfully defend from the chasing Daniel Ricciardo on old medium tyres, but he was chastened when he found out he would not be rewarded for his efforts. "I got confused because when we [built the gap] and Lance was in front of me after the pitstops, they said, 'OK, we secured 10th, we've been doing all this for that last point,'" Alonso explained. "Then Lance had the puncture, I said, 'Oh, now I have all the responsibility on my shoulders with very old tyres to bring this point back home.'"

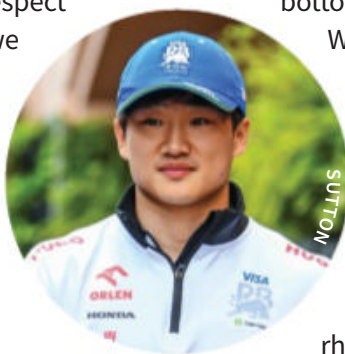
"I was driving for 50 laps thinking that I was 10th. And then when I crossed the line and they told me P11, I said, 'Oh, all that stress for nothing!' But it kept me alive."

Q&A

YUKI TSUNODA RB DRIVER

Quite a long race with so few pitstops...

Yeah, it's a very long race. I have to always respect the strategy that we planned and we didn't want any single space so that other competitors use that opportunity [to undercut]. We always wanted to manage the tyres and the pace, make sure we always prepare for any situation. The last three laps, I enjoyed it because I got told I could push flat out, but until then it was fine tuning that to make sure I don't be too greedy and manage the tyres.



Are you ahead of Aston Martin now [on performance]?

I would say we're a little bit ahead if we see the last couple of races. I think we separate the top five teams and the bottom four teams.

We're kind of individual and we slowly start to catch up with Aston as well. I think we're in good shape, we're in a good rhythm and we keep pushing what we're doing. Development is coming, so hopefully those upgrades will give us some extra pace, and maybe we can catch up to Aston.

Were you under real pressure from Alex Albon?

I was managing quite a lot.

I had to sometimes slow down to make sure that the cars behind didn't do any pitstop or make sure they couldn't undercut us. We managed the pace, so that was frustrating as a driver, especially when you know there's a lot of pace to come. But we have to stick to what the team says. The last three laps I was pushing flat out.

How difficult is it to drive that slowly?

Monaco is obviously a very hard track to overtake, but you don't want to get pressure from behind as it's not a nice feeling, especially when the car is behind and they try to overtake. We discussed already before the race and I knew it's going to happen like this, but I am actually happy with what I've done and not be too greedy with the tyres.

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DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

MERCEDES MAKES CHANGES TO NOVEL NOSE

After drawing much in the way of attention thanks to its novel front-wing treatment at the start of 2024, Mercedes has developed a new version that removes its extreme short-chord upper element and follows a more conventional format.

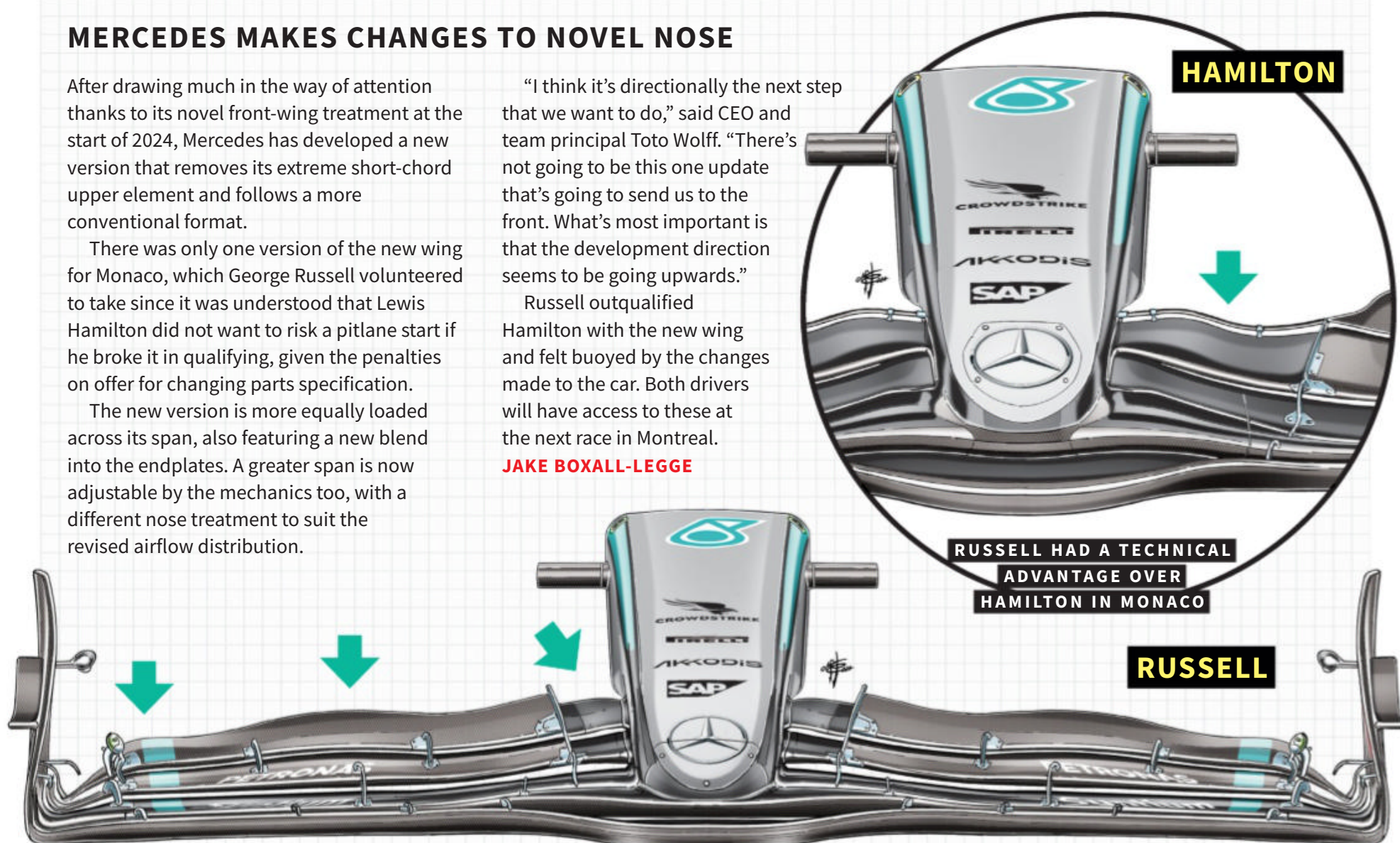
There was only one version of the new wing for Monaco, which George Russell volunteered to take since it was understood that Lewis Hamilton did not want to risk a pitlane start if he broke it in qualifying, given the penalties on offer for changing parts specification.

The new version is more equally loaded across its span, also featuring a new blend into the endplates. A greater span is now adjustable by the mechanics too, with a different nose treatment to suit the revised airflow distribution.

“I think it’s directionally the next step that we want to do,” said CEO and team principal Toto Wolff. “There’s not going to be this one update that’s going to send us to the front. What’s most important is that the development direction seems to be going upwards.”

Russell outqualified Hamilton with the new wing and felt buoyed by the changes made to the car. Both drivers will have access to these at the next race in Montreal.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

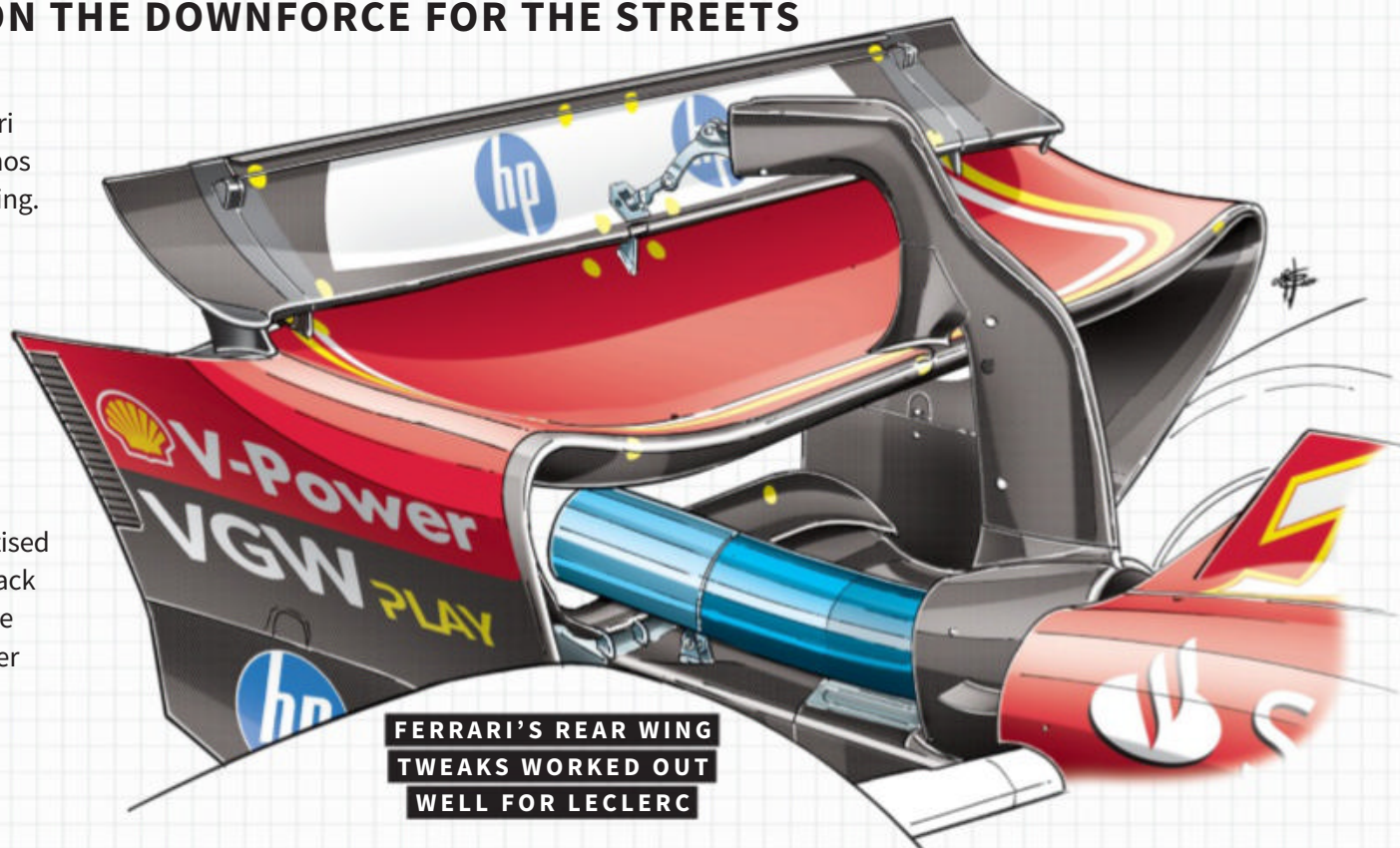


FERRARI LOADS ON THE DOWNFORCE FOR THE STREETS

Following its upgrades to its SF-24 at the Imola round, Ferrari maintained a similar design ethos with its Monaco-specific rear wing. The squared-off upper wing element was retained, but set at a higher angle of attack and paired with a deeper mainplane to extract more rear-end downforce.

Aero efficiency is less of a concern at Monaco, so outright downforce production is prioritised given the paucity of areas on track that test outright top speed. The mainplane therefore had a wider area of camber around its mid-section to extract more downforce, helpful in the traction zones.

Every team on the grid introduced a track-specific rear wing design to grab more outright load, also paying attention to the beam wing to further improve performance in Monaco’s range



of tight corners.

The other host of usual Monaco changes included revised suspension fairings, which were implemented to ensure the front

wheels could operate at full lock at the hairpin, with trackrod changes added to suit that requirement.

To balance the rear wing, the front wings were also largely

operated at their greatest angle to dial in more front-end downforce to ensure that the car did not wash out in the tighter corners.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

20 Magnussen #20
time disallowed

18 Zhou #24
1m13.028s

16 Perez #11
1m12.060s

14 Alonso #14
1m12.019s

12 Ricciardo #3
1m11.482s

19 Hulkenberg #27
time disallowed

17 Bottas #77
1m12.512s

15 Sargeant #2
1m12.020s

13 Stroll #18
1m11.563s

11 Ocon #31
1m11.285s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m12.169s	1	Leclerc	1m11.278s	1	Leclerc	1m11.369s
2	Piastri	1m12.198s	2	Hamilton	1m11.466s	2	Verstappen	1m11.566s
3	Russell	1m12.295s	3	Alonso	1m11.753s	3	Hamilton	1m11.710s
4	Norris	1m12.396s	4	Verstappen	1m11.813s	4	Piastri	1m11.901s
5	Leclerc	1m12.397s	5	Norris	1m11.953s	5	Perez	1m11.923s
6	Alonso	1m12.775s	6	Sainz	1m11.962s	6	Russell	1m11.968s
7	Stroll	1m12.789s	7	Stroll	1m12.062s	7	Sainz	1m11.979s
8	Tsunoda	1m12.875s	8	Perez	1m12.099s	8	Norris	1m11.988s
9	Ricciardo	1m12.901s	9	Albon	1m12.257s	9	Tsunoda	1m11.991s
10	Sainz	1m12.954s	10	Russell	1m12.260s	10	Alonso	1m12.087s
11	Verstappen	1m12.984s	11	Tsunoda	1m12.349s	11	Gasly	1m12.144s
12	Perez	1m13.229s	12	Piastri	1m12.366s	12	Albon	1m12.180s
13	Bottas	1m13.248s	13	Magnussen	1m12.473s	13	Hulkenberg	1m12.192s
14	Magnussen	1m13.390s	14	Ocon	1m12.554s	14	Magnussen	1m12.216s
15	Albon	1m13.425s	15	Hulkenberg	1m12.569s	15	Stroll	1m12.331s
16	Hulkenberg	1m13.576s	16	Ricciardo	1m12.577s	16	Ocon	1m12.472s
17	Sargeant	1m14.150s	17	Gasly	1m12.750s	17	Sargeant	1m12.703s
18	Ocon	1m14.159s	18	Sargeant	1m12.790s	18	Ricciardo	1m12.829s
19	Zhou	1m14.570s	19	Bottas	1m13.057s	19	Zhou	1m13.830s
20	Gasly	1m15.574s	20	Zhou	1m13.773s	20	Bottas	no time

WEATHER Sunny then overcast,
air 24-25C track 35-36C

WEATHER Overcast, air 21-23C
track 29-31C

WEATHER Sunny, air 26-30C track 42-46C

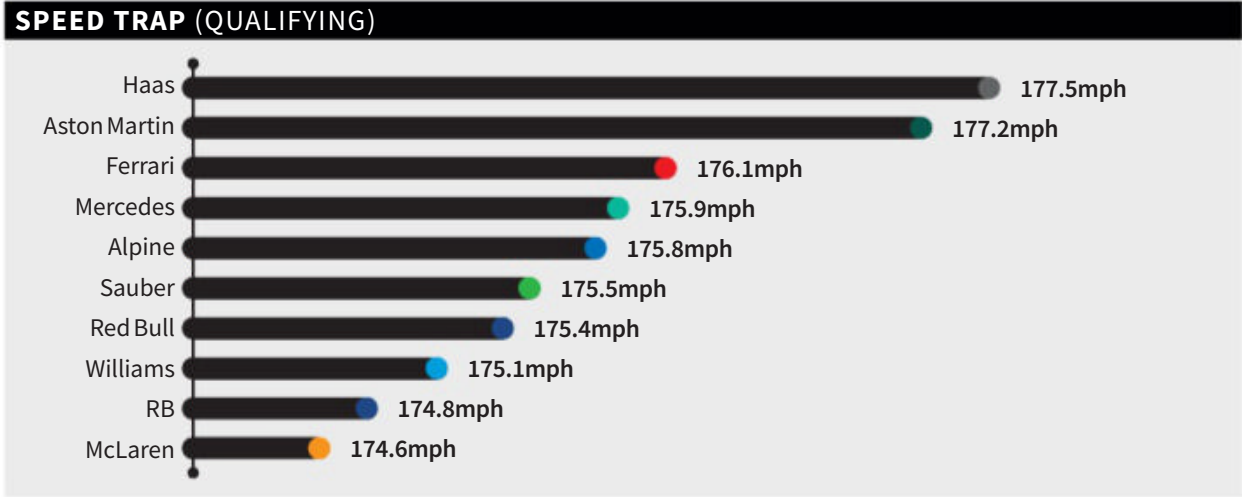
SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	169	1	1
2 Leclerc	138	1	1
3 Norris	113	1	3
4 Sainz	108	1	2
5 Perez	107	2	2
6 Piastri	71	2	2
7 Russell	54	5	3
8 Hamilton	42	6	7
9 Alonso	33	5	3
10 Tsunoda	19	7	7
11 Stroll	11	6	9
12 Bearman	6	7	11
13 Hulkenberg	6	9	9
14 Ricciardo	5	12	9
15 Albon	2	9	9
16 Ocon	1	10	11
17 Magnussen	1	10	13
18 Gasly	1	10	10
19 Zhou	0	11	16
20 Bottas	0	13	10
21 Sargeant	0	14	15

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	276
2 Ferrari	252
3 McLaren	184
4 Mercedes	96
5 Aston Martin	44
6 RB	24
7 Haas	7
8 Williams	2
9 Alpine	2
10 Sauber	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	8	0	Perez
Hamilton	1	7	Russell
Leclerc	5	2	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	5	3	Piastri
Alonso	4	4	Stroll
Gasly	2	6	Ocon
Sargeant	0	7	Albon
Ricciardo	1	7	Tsunoda
Zhou	0	8	Bottas
Magnussen	1	6	Hulkenberg

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

WINS	FASTEST LAPS
Verstappen 5	Leclerc 2
Leclerc 1	Verstappen 2
Norris 1	Alonso 1
Sainz 1	Hamilton 1
	Piastri 1
	Russell 1
POLE POSITIONS	
Verstappen 7	
Leclerc 1	



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Russell	1m11.492s	1	Norris	1m10.732s	1	Leclerc	1m10.270s
2	Piastri	1m11.500s	2	Verstappen	1m10.745s	2	Piastri	1m10.424s
3	Hamilton	1m11.528s	3	Piastri	1m10.756s	3	Sainz	1m10.518s
4	Sainz	1m11.543s	4	Leclerc	1m10.825s	4	Norris	1m10.542s
5	Leclerc	1m11.584s	5	Gasly	1m10.896s	5	Russell	1m10.543s
6	Albon	1m11.623s	6	Russell	1m10.929s	6	Verstappen	1m10.567s
7	Verstappen	1m11.711s	7	Hamilton	1m11.056s	7	Hamilton	1m10.621s
8	Gasly	1m11.714s	8	Sainz	1m11.075s	8	Tsunoda	1m10.858s
9	Stroll	1m11.728s	9	Tsunoda	1m11.106s	9	Albon	1m10.948s
10	Norris	1m11.760s	10	Albon	1m11.216s	10	Gasly	1m11.311s
11	Ricciardo	1m11.785s	11	Ocon	1m11.285s			
12	Magnussen	1m11.832s	12	Hulkenberg	1m11.440s			
13	Tsunoda	1m11.852s	13	Ricciardo	1m11.482s			
14	Hulkenberg	1m11.876s	14	Stroll	1m11.563s			
15	Ocon	1m11.887s	15	Magnussen	1m11.725s			
16	Alonso	1m12.019s						
17	Sargeant	1m12.020s						
18	Perez	1m12.060s						
19	Bottas	1m12.512s						
20	Zhou	1m13.028s						

WEATHER Sunny, air 22-27C track 35-40C


NEXT RACE

9 June


Canadian GP

Montreal


10 Gasly #10
1m11.311s




8 Tsunoda #22
1m10.858s




6 Verstappen #1
1m10.567s




4 Norris #4
1m10.542s




2 Piastri #81
1m10.424s




9 Albon #23
1m10.948s




7 Hamilton #44
1m10.621s



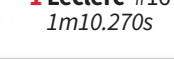
5 Russell #63
1m10.543s



3 Sainz #55
1m10.518s



1 Leclerc #16
1m10.270s



RESULTS ROUND 8/24 (78 LAPS – 161.73 MILES)					
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	2h23m15.554s	78	Mn, Hn
2	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+7.152s		Mu, Hu
3	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+7.585s		Mn, Hn
4	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+8.650s		Mu, Hu
5	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+13.309s		Hn, Mn
6	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+13.853s		Hn, Mn, Hu
7	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+14.908s		Hn, Mn, Hu
8	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+39.487s		Mn, Hu
9	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+54.052s		Mn, Hn
10	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+1m00.241s		Hn, Mn
11	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-2 laps/+3.854s		Hu, Mu
12	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	-2 laps/+4.264s		Mn, Hu
13	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps/+4.488s		Hn, Mn, Hu
14	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-2 laps/+5.967s		Hu, Mu, Hu, Sn
15	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+9.026s		Hn, Mn
16	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps/+55.260s		Mn, Hn, Sn
R	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	0 laps-accident damage		Hn
R	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	0 laps-accident		Hn
R	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	0 laps-accident		Mn
R	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	0 laps-accident		Hn

WEATHER Sunny, air 25-26C track 40-45C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 67.738mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 100.649mph.

FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Hamilton	1m14.165s	-	63
2	Verstappen	1m14.569s	+0.404s	58
3	Zhou	1m14.718s	+0.553s	75
4	Tsunoda	1m14.720s	+0.555s	77
5	Sainz	1m14.726s	+0.561s	62
6	Leclerc	1m15.162s	+0.997s	71
7	Russell	1m15.228s	+1.063s	73
8	Sargeant	1m15.525s	+1.360s	62
9	Gasly	1m15.625s	+1.460s	77
10	Norris	1m15.742s	+1.577s	64
11	Piastri	1m16.281s	+2.116s	73
12	Bottas	1m16.561s	+2.396s	17
13	Stroll	1m16.710s	+2.545s	59
14	Albon	1m17.060s	+2.895s	77
15	Ricciardo	1m17.172s	+3.007s	46
16	Alonso	1m17.939s	+3.774s	68

RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

HULKENBERG and MAGNUSSEN disqualified from qualifying for non-compliant rear wing element. Both permitted to start from the back

RACE PENALTIES


OCON 10-second penalty converted to five-place grid drop for the next race in which the driver participates and two licence points

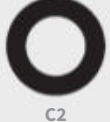
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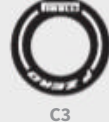
Leclerc is the second Monegasque to win his home GP. Louis Chiron won in 1931


TYRES


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


C1


C2

C3

C4

C5

INTERMEDIATE

WET

LAP CHART

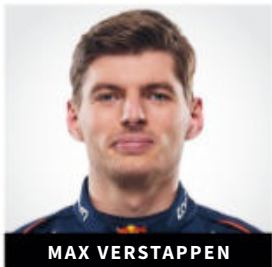
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Leclerc	Piastri	Sainz	Norris	Russell	Verstappen	Hamilton	Tsunoda	Albon	Gasly	Ocon	Ricciardo	Stroll	Alonso	Sargeant	Perez	Bottas	Zhou	Hulkenberg	Magnussen
G	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	31	3	18	14	2	11	77	24	27	20
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58	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	14	3	77	18	24	2				
59	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	14	3	77	18	24	2				
60	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	14	3	77	18	24	2				
61	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	14	3	77	18	24	2				
62	16	81	55	4	63	1	44	22	23	10	14	3	77	18	24	2				
63	16	81																		

MONACO GP DRIVER RATINGS

Just in case a lights-to-flag victory in his back yard isn't enough, Charles Leclerc also has a perfect 10 to celebrate after his dream Monaco weekend

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

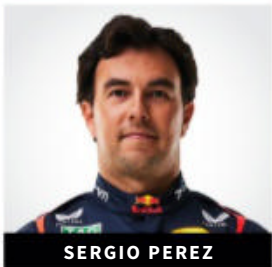
RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started 6th — Result 6th

7 Mostly overcame the Red Bull's limitations in slow corners, but wall bang in qualifying probably cost a shot at a podium. Harried Russell after pitstops, but his challenge for fifth was resisted at every turn. Must be commended for driving around problems, which Perez could not.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started 16th — Result R

1 Saw Magnussen in his mirrors and did nothing about it. Laid blame at the Dane's door, but had space on the outside to react rather than assume Magnussen would back out. Struggled with car balance all weekend, hence Q1 exit. Comprehensively outclassed by Verstappen.



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started 7th — Result 7th

6 Perhaps missed a trick by not pushing on his out-lap, which could have put him above Verstappen. Showed flashes of pace on switch to hard tyres, and caught the Russell/Verstappen battle near the end. Seemed to take great pains to argue with team over strategy and front wing calls.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started 5th — Result 5th

8 Absorbed every ounce of Verstappen pressure despite substantial tyre offset. Questioned need to go slow early on but did heed orders, which arguably paid off. One of the more impressive all-round drivers of the weekend: practice promise tailed off, but he held his nerve well in qualifying trim.



CHARLES LECLERC

Started 1st — Result 1st

10 Imperious. Gradually ratcheted up an already impressive turn of pace as the weekend progressed, dispelling all myths of a Monaco curse with a superbly managed race. Most admitted Leclerc was 'unreachable' early in the weekend, and the Monegasque duly delivered on Sunday.

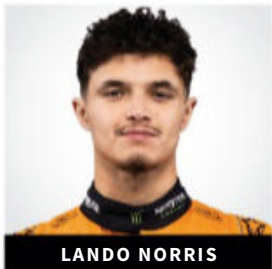


CARLOS SAINZ

Started 3rd — Result 3rd

7 Robust attempt to pass Piastri on first start caused puncture, which he was lucky to get away with. Learned his lesson at the second start, then did his job perfectly to help deny Norris a chance to pit through backing him up towards Russell. Lacked Leclerc's confidence in qualifying trim.

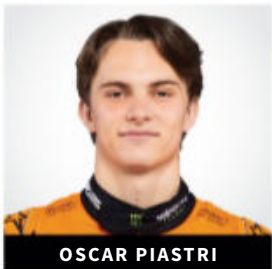
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started 4th — Result 4th

7 Outpaced by Piastri all weekend, losing the bulk of the time in Massenet and Casino Square, where he seemed less dialled in. Attempt to build a pitstop gap was covered by the Ferraris, so the Briton had to be content with sitting back and banking the points for fourth position.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started 2nd — Result 2nd

9 One of his strongest F1 weekends thus far. Late push once Leclerc pulled the pin did put him at risk of an attack from Sainz. Could have had pole if he'd put his best sectors together, and reckoned he only had half a chance of making it past Leclerc – which ultimately came to nought.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started 14th - Result 11th

5 Hit qualifying traffic, leading to Q1 exit. Compromised from there, especially given long medium-tyre stint. Also tasked with holding up the cars behind to give Stroll a free stop. Admitted confusion, believing he was on for 10th. Held off Ricciardo to retain the place, but couldn't go after Gasly.

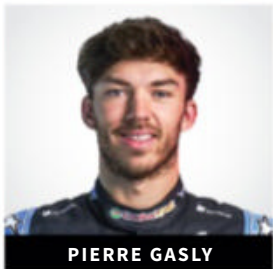


LANCE STROLL

Started 13th - Result 14th

4 Killed slim hopes of a point with his chicane wall clip, so loses marks for that. But outqualified Alonso, making up ground on aborted start and, after taking soft tyres post-puncture, made a series of passes. Doubled the race's overtake count with neat moves on Zhou and Sargeant.

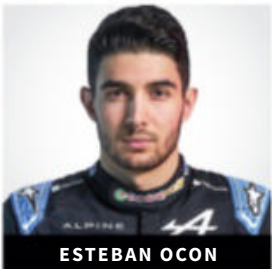
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started 10th - Result 10th

8 Surviving Ocon onslaught in the aborted start was key, particularly as he sustained damage. Enjoyed – or endured – a somewhat lonely race to claim Alpine's second point of 2024. Getting into Q3 was quite a feat, and he didn't put a foot wrong despite being stuck on medium tyres for 76 laps.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started 11th — Result R

2 Committed F1's cardinal sin with a dive on team-mate Gasly at Portier. Tyre-to-tyre contact sent him briefly into the air and back down to earth with a shuddering halt, causing irreparable damage. Outqualified by Gasly too, but 11th on the grid might have offered opportunities.



WILLIAMS



Started **15th** — Result **15th**

6 Call to stick with hard tyres through red flag forced him into a late pitstop that cost track position, but nonetheless made the most of his medium tyres at the end of the race. Learned from being passed by Bottas at Mirabeau to put the same move on Zhou, and had good, consistent late pace.



Started **9th** — Result **9th**

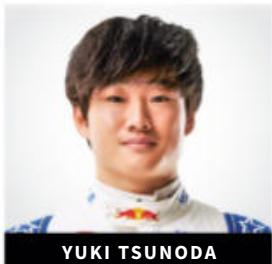
8 Made the most of a clear track in Q3 to line up ninth. Put Tsunoda under intense scrutiny, although the RB driver had plenty in hand. Managed tyres well to avoid hints of graining seen in practice. Thus took important points for Williams despite struggling to stay focused in stifling race.

RB



Started **12th** — Result **12th**

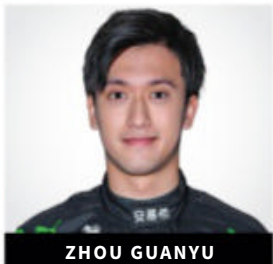
5 Well short of Tsunoda in quali: disappointing given the chance to make Q3 was there. Lost places to Stroll and Alonso at the two starts, but stayed glued to Alonso's gearbox and gave the veteran a run for his money. Also kept the Saubers and Sargeant from interfering in their duel.



Started **8th** — Result **8th**

7 Did well to break into Q3, although RB progress shows he has a good car. Smothered Albon throughout most of the race to ward off any challenge, then bolted once convinced tyres had enough life. Hard to grade higher given he drove so slowly – however intentional that was.

SAUBER



Started **18th** — Result **16th**

3 No spectacular missteps, but did break front wing in FP1. Just too slow: he propped up quali times and proved something of a training dummy for overtakes during the race. Could do little on soft tyres at the end after falling well down the order, and couldn't even nab fastest lap from Hamilton.



Started **17th** — Result **13th**

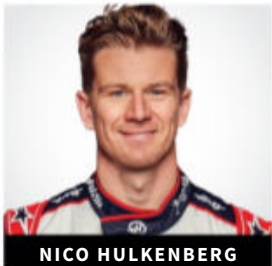
5 Loses a mark for the FP3 shunt that cost valuable track time, but Saubers were nowhere in quali trim anyway. Gamble on hard-tyre switch sent him to the back, but he made up places with clean but forceful overtakes. Move on Sargeant at Mirabeau offered a much-needed spectacle.

HAAS



Started **20th** — Result **R**

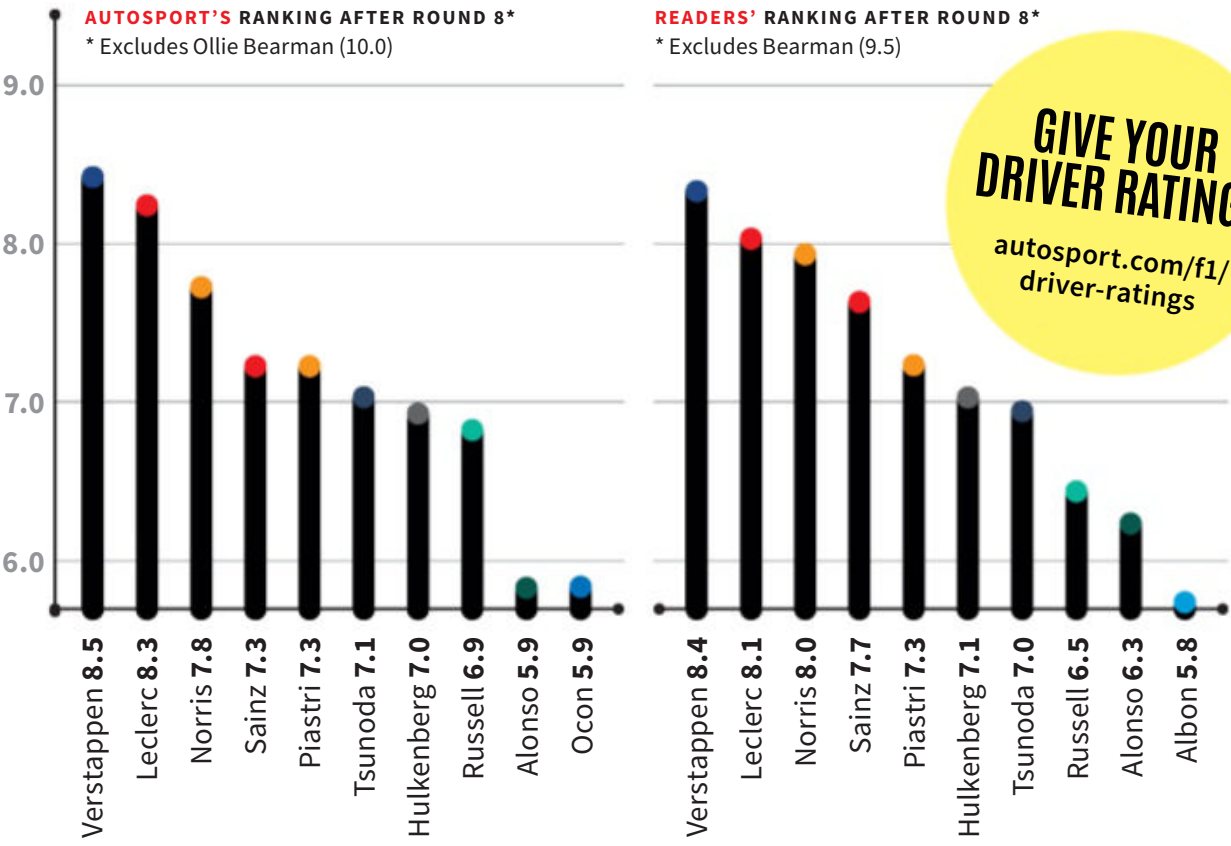
2 Rued Haas call to abort a qualifying lap, but was also involved in decision to charge battery. Could perhaps have backed out of Perez move but was squeezed by a driver who made a poor judgement call. Gained places at the start, and better qualifying than Perez earns him extra point.



Started **20th** — Result **R**

2 Had been largely outpaced by Magnussen across the weekend, but got a clean Q2 lap in to start ahead despite both cars losing their times. An innocent bystander in the Magnussen/Perez shunt, there was little the German could have done to evade the out-of-control Red Bull in his path.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



Newgarden powers to Penske redemption

After all the controversy surrounding the legendary team in 2024, last year's Indy 500 winner did it again with a dramatic late pass

JOEY BARNES

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Josef Newgarden outlasted the rain and pulled off a dramatic last-lap pass on an extremely hungry Pato O'Ward to triumph in the 108th running of the Indianapolis 500. The 33-year-old Tennessee native became the first back-to-back winner of 'The Greatest Spectacle in Racing' in 22 years, with Helio Castroneves the last driver to accomplish the feat in 2001 and 2002. Both drivers' repeat victories came for legendary team owner Roger Penske, and Newgarden's latest gave 'The Captain' a record-extending 20th win in IndyCar's crown jewel event.

The battle for the lead during the final sprint to the finish originally appeared to be between Newgarden and Alexander Rossi, O'Ward's Arrow McLaren team-mate. But Rossi's bid was abruptly halted by a stern pass by the similarly Chevrolet-powered Arrow McLaren entry of O'Ward entering Turn 1 with seven laps to go.

Newgarden and O'Ward distanced themselves from Rossi, the 2016 Indy 500 winner left to fend off Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon for third. O'Ward sprung to the lead with five laps to go but lost it the next tour to the surging Newgarden. From there, each run O'Ward built up was subdued as he backed off the throttle, patiently biding his time for a late move.

The moment came for the 25-year-old Mexican when he darted to the outside of Newgarden coming to the white flag for the final lap, completing the pass entering Turn 1. Despite his best efforts to shake Newgarden from his draft, even diving down on the apron briefly on the backstretch, O'Ward was watching his mirrors awaiting a counter attack.

Newgarden responded by darting to the outside as the two went wheel to wheel, without an inch to spare, entering Turn 3. The momentum favoured Newgarden, who reclaimed the lead as O'Ward struggled to keep up, instead appearing to pick up a moment of understeer that nearly sent him into the wall as his nemesis completed the pass.

Newgarden crossed the Yard of Bricks 0.3417 seconds ahead of O'Ward, who was left with his second runner-up finish over his past three Indy 500 starts. It was the 30th victory of Newgarden's IndyCar career.

"I knew we could win this race again; it was just a matter of getting it right," said Newgarden, who led 26 of the 200 laps. "There's no better way to win a race than that. I got to give it up to Pato as well. He's an incredibly clean driver. It takes two people to make that work. It's not just a good pass, it's also someone that you're working with that's incredibly clean. Pato could have easily won this race, too, but it just fell our way."

Meanwhile, O'Ward made the crawl during the cooldown lap around the 2.5 miles of asphalt that makes up the Indianapolis >>



GALSTAD



Newgarden
becomes the
first back-to-back
Indy 500 winner
in 22 years

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O'Ward edged ahead of Newgarden at the start of the last lap, but couldn't hold on

ABBOTT

Motor Speedway. He attempted to rise from the cockpit of his machine but was left feeling the disappointment and slumped his head over his steering wheel with helmet in hands. The team showed their admiration of his drive with continued pats on the back in an effort to raise his spirits.

O'Ward's eyes appeared strained by tears once he removed his helmet. The Indy 500 has never had a Mexican winner in its history that dates back to 1911; O'Ward has been less than two miles away from being the first on two separate occasions.

"It was just such a stressful race," said O'Ward, who has now finished runner-up to Newgarden in six different races. "We were up and down, up and down. The car definitely wasn't the easiest to drive at certain moments. I just tried to keep pace as much of the race as I could. I feel like I did. Really prepared to open the doors to ultimately have a chance to win at the end of this, and yeah, it's just heartbreaking. Two corners short.

"I think in a way I've cracked a code and I know how to position myself to win this race. I know I can win this race, and I know that I know how to also protect a good result when maybe the win isn't in the cards for me."

Dixon, the 2008 Indy 500 winner, eventually got by Rossi to complete his charge from 21st on the grid and was the top Honda-powered runner. Rossi took fourth, ahead of reigning and two-time IndyCar champion Alex Palou's Ganassi entry in fifth.

The day had begun with the threat of rain, which eventually arrived and pushed back the start by exactly four hours. Eventually



GALSTAD

Dixon, who had a spell at the front, finished third



“I think in a way I’ve cracked a code and I know how to position myself to win this race”

the clouds diminished and over 315,000 fans packed back into IMS.

Polesitter Scott McLaughlin led the field to the green flag in his Penske machine, but trouble broke out moments later and set the tone for what was to come. Meyer Shank Racing rookie Tom Blomqvist, who started 25th, ignited a multi-car crash on the opening lap, which collected 2022 Indy 500 winner Marcus Ericsson and Pietro Fittipaldi. Blomqvist drifted under the white line in Turn 1, touched the kerbing and spun, colliding with Ericsson, who had started 32nd in a back-up Andretti Global car. “I can’t believe it,” said Ericsson after being released from the infield care centre. “It’s so frustrating. I don’t know what to say. We had to work so hard. The team did such a good job rebuilding that car. We fought all last weekend. We fought all week, and this happens.”

Fittipaldi, who was held for extensive observation but ultimately released from the infield medical centre, tried to avoid the incident but made wheel-to-wheel contact with Callum Ilott, who was forced to start from the rear of the field after a mechanical issue needed to be addressed in his Arrow McLaren entry during the pace laps.

McLaughlin, who shared over the radio that he had a developing clutch problem just before the halfway point, continued to trade the top spot with team-mate Newgarden, with Rossi lingering.

Through a staggering blend of pit strategy, Dixon, who avoided a penalty after early contact that led to Ryan Hunter-Reay’s retirement, found the lead on lap 133 to put his name in the hat at the front of the pack. And the six-time IndyCar champion stayed near the front after the Team Penske car of Will Power, the 2018 Indy 500 winner and two-time series champion, suffered a hard crash in Turn 2 on lap 147. Power was running on the outside of Ed Carpenter Racing rookie Christian Rasmussen in Turn 1 when the back end snapped, and he hit the wall.

Although qualifying for the Indy 500 featured seven plenum events for Chevrolet, the race featured Honda encountering a trio of mechanical issues for Marcus Armstrong (Ganassi), Katherine Legge (Dale Coyne Racing) and Felix Rosenqvist (Meyer Shank). All three engine woes for the Japanese manufacturer happened during the first 56 laps. >>

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Colton Herta's promising charge from 13th to second came to an end on lap 88 when he crashed in Turn 1. He was following McLaughlin when his Honda-powered Andretti Global car drifted down below the white line – although he never touched the kerb like in Blomqvist's incident – and snapped around. Despite being pushed back to the garage for the damage sustained, mostly at the front of the car, Herta returned just past the halfway point several laps down and retired from contention in the late portion of the race. He ended up 30 laps down in 23rd.

Hunter-Reay, the 2014 Indy 500 winner, and Marco Andretti were also involved in two separate crashes that led to early retirements on laps 107 and 114 respectively.

Although O'Ward, Dixon and Rossi shone at times, the day belonged to Newgarden. He raised his hand out of the top of the aeroscreen as he charged to the chequered flag, returning on the

“This win epitomises a team victory. I'm thankful for Roger Penske; he stood by me”

cooldown lap to park on the finish line and jump through the hole in the fence, just like last year, to celebrate to a mixed reception by fans following the push-to-pass scandal that has hung over the team for the past month.

Last month, IndyCar officials disqualified Newgarden's victory in March's St Petersburg season opener due to Penske having illegal overtake software on its cars. He was found guilty of using the boost three times in the win and fined \$25,000 in a penalty that also included McLaughlin and Power. Penske, who owns the IndyCar Series, IMS and the race team, suspended four crew members, including team president Tim Cindric, who also serves as Newgarden's race strategist, for two IndyCar races.

Rebounding with a win provided Newgarden a chance to move forward and leave the scandal in the past. “They can say what they want,” said Newgarden. “I don't even care anymore. It's always a team win. This win epitomises a team victory. I'm thankful for Roger Penske; he stood by me. He's the man. He's a legend.”

Newgarden acknowledged how the dark cloud brought on by his actions in St Petersburg also allowed a chance to learn a few lessons. “In an odd way, I'm grateful for the experience,” he said.



“It's been a very illuminating experience to me, more from the outside world. I think it shows you things that maybe weren't fully clear but are very clear now.

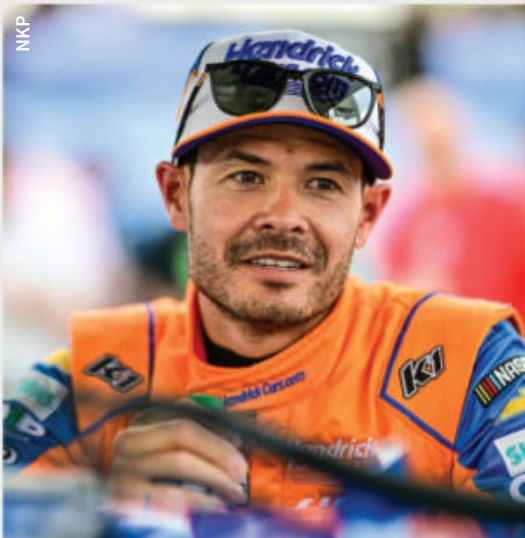
“It's an experience that it's got to either break you or toughen you up, and for me, that's all I'll say about it. We've been moving forward. We've never worked together more as a group than this weekend, and I thought that was difficult to do. This is the most tight-knit team I've ever seen. It's been a pleasure to be a part of it because it's such a well-conjoined group. Everybody works so well together. It's fun to show up here. It's fun to go to work.”

And as the first back-to-back winner in over two decades, Newgarden earned an extra \$440,000 on top of a winner's purse that already exceeded \$3million. “Well, everybody on this team deserves a big bonus after today,” he said. “Not even today, this month. This Indy, you can see the highs and lows of it so easily. You go up and you go down, and we've been down on the speed aspect the last four years, and we've been fighting our way back as a group together.

“Everybody has earned this one today, all year. It took a long time to get to this point. Yeah, it's cool.”



DOUBLE SETBACK FAILS TO DAMPEN LARSON'S ENTHUSIASM



A four-hour rain delay and an 18th-place finish in the Indianapolis 500 wasn't enough to diminish the desire of a return for Kyle Larson.

Larson, the 2021 NASCAR Cup champion, rolled off fifth for his IndyCar debut in the Chevrolet-powered #17 Arrow McLaren-Rick Hendrick entry. He experienced the highs and lows of the event, including a missed shift on an early restart that dropped him from the top 10, before fading from contention thanks to a pitroad speeding penalty on lap 131 of 200. He went a lap down, but the Will Power-caused caution allowed Larson to get the wavearound and return to the lead lap, eventually rising from a 23rd-place restart to finish in the top 20.

"I would definitely love to be back next year," said Larson. "I feel like I learned a lot throughout the race. I made a couple of mistakes early there with the restart. I somehow got myself into third [gear] and then felt like I did a really good job on the restarts."

"I definitely feel good about knowing what I would need [to be] different for the balance to help runs and stuff. Obviously, I smoked the left-front on the green flag stop and killed our opportunity."

"I'm proud to finish, but pretty upset with myself. I just could have executed a better race. You don't know what could have happened."

Although Larson started the first leg of 'The Double', which consists of running the Indy 500 and 600-mile NASCAR Cup Series race in Charlotte on the same day of Memorial Day weekend, the choice to stay in Indianapolis impacted the nightcap. He arrived in Charlotte shortly after his Indy adventure ready to replace substitute driver Justin Allgaier, who was running 13th after 249 of 400 laps in the #5 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. But a separate rainstorm came through and the race was called early, which left Larson without turning a single lap.

RESULTS INDYCAR ROUND 5/15, INDIANAPOLIS (USA), 26 MAY (200 LAPS – 500.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	2h58m49.4079s	3
2	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+0.3417s	8
3	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+0.9097s	21
4	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.1691s	4
5	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+1.5079s	14
6	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+2.0593s	1
7	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	+2.5379s	11
8	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+3.6143s	6
9	Rinus VeeKay (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+3.9560s	7
10	Conor Daly (USA)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing / Cusick Motorsports / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.6071s	29
11	Callum Ilott (GBR)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.9652s	15
12	Christian Rasmussen (DNK)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Honda	+5.3234s	24
13	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+6.1824s	28
14	Takuma Sato (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+6.6893s	10
15	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+7.3608s	33
16	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+8.5098s	23
17	Ed Carpenter (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+8.9081s	17
18	Kyle Larson (USA)	Arrow McLaren/Rick Hendrick / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.4846s	5
19	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.8312s	26
20	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+10.3602s	20
21	Kyffin Simpson (CYM)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+11.0931s	18
22	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap	22
23	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Global with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	170 laps-accident	13
24	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	145 laps-accident	2
25	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport with Marco & Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	113 laps-accident	19
26	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing / Cusick Motorsports / Dallara-Chevrolet	107 laps-accident	12
27	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	55 laps-engine	9
28	Linus Lundqvist (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	27 laps-accident	27
29	Katherine Legge (GBR)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	22 laps-engine	31
30	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	6 laps-engine	16
31	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	25
32	Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	30
33	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	32

Winner's average speed 167.763mph. **Fastest lap** Lundgaard 39.757s, 226.375mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Palou 183; 2 Dixon 163; 3 Power 157; 4 O'Ward 134; 5 Herta 134; 6 McLaughlin 131; 7 Newgarden 122; 8 Rossi 120; 9 Rosenqvist 117; 10 Kirkwood 115.





FORMULA E SHANGHAI

Evans wins as Cassidy edges towards title

While his team-mate Mitch Evans shared the victories with Antonio Felix da Costa, Jaguar's Nick Cassidy drew clear of his championship chasers

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Formula E went full circle last weekend, returning to China a decade on from its inaugural race in Beijing, and five years since its previous race in the country. Now the all-electric series has 'grown up', and was let loose on the Chinese Grand Prix permanent circuit. Nick Cassidy entered the Shanghai E-Prix double-header as points leader, failed to take a win in either race, but still came away with an extended lead in the standings. He also experienced a range of emotions over the weekend.

Frustration had come in the opening contest, where the Jaguar driver had to play second fiddle to team-mate and fellow Kiwi Mitch Evans, who claimed his second victory of the season after surviving a post-race investigation. Evans and title protagonist Pascal Wehrlein dominated the majority of the opening 29-lap race at the Shanghai International Circuit, each leading for long periods around the truncated GP layout, which incorporated the opening sector before cutting back through to the start/finish straight in the middle segment.

Ahead of Formula E's first visit to the venue, much had been made about the style of racing that was likely to take place, with conjecture that the chaotic action seen at Misano would be repeated. But while both races initially produced three-wide racing and constant pack action, track position remained an important strategic element, more so than at other circuits on the calendar. Perhaps even more surprisingly, the number of incidents and collisions was kept to a minimum: neither contest featured a safety car, and there was only one retirement in each race.

As at previous rounds, though, drivers generally took their

two Attack Mode activations at the earliest opportunity, meaning there were no fewer than six drivers who led at least one lap in the opening race.

Just past the halfway point, the true complexion of the race began to take shape. Wehrlein's Porsche hit the front again after passing Evans into the Turn 6 right-hand hairpin and noticeably upped the pace, as well as defending his position when challenged. But with the pressure mounting, the German made a small error into Turn 6 on lap 23, locking up and running slightly wide. That allowed Evans to pull off a neat switchback on the exit to power alongside and ahead as the race entered a critical stage.

The pair were side by side again just two laps later, this time into the tight right, left, right sequence of corners that concluded the lap, with Wehrlein throwing his car to the outside into the braking zone. Through the left, Wehrlein took to the grass and emerged alongside Evans again before squeezing his opponent into the final corner to move back into the lead. With no message from race control to suggest the incident was under investigation, Wehrlein remained at the head of the field over the following three laps. Evans looked to the outside multiple times through the long left and right sweeps of Turns 7/8 but, with no way through, Wehrlein led onto the final lap with a third victory of the season in sight.

But with a fraction more energy to hand, Evans took the outside line into Turn 1 as Wehrlein defended and, with a daring move, swept into the lead before going on to take the chequered flag first.

His celebrations were short-lived, however. Both Evans and Wehrlein were called to see the stewards immediately after the race, with the penultimate corner incident now a point of interest



Evans had to work hard for race one victory

STALEY



Cassidy had a frustrating weekend but looks a good title bet

FERRARO

“As Cassidy struggled for control, Rowland threatened to snatch away the final step of the podium”

for the officials. Several hours later, the stewards returned a verdict of no further action, meaning Wehrlein kept his second place behind Evans. But the victor was left unimpressed that no penalty was handed out for gaining an unfair advantage.

“For me, it was clear he was going to get a penalty – he even admitted to me that he gained an advantage, I gave him space,” said Evans, who would go on to take fifth the following day. “But they [the stewards] didn’t give it to him in the end. I then had to use energy to pass him again so I’m quite shocked that he didn’t get a penalty for it. I’m still a bit annoyed – he deserves a penalty for that, he had a lasting advantage.”

Evans admitted that had he been unable to overtake Wehrlein

on the final lap he “would be kicking off big time” in order to overturn the result. While that never came to pass, and Evans remained unchallenged to the line on the final lap, team-mate Cassidy launched his own assault on Wehrlein over the remaining corners and attempted to overtake through the final segment.

Into the now infamous penultimate turn, Cassidy showed his nose to the inside and, as Wehrlein turned in, the pair made contact. Wehrlein remained ahead and seemingly unscathed, but Cassidy’s front wing became dislodged. As the Kiwi struggled for control, Nissan’s Oliver Rowland threatened to snatch away the final podium position on the run to the line – the pair were separated by just 0.245 seconds in the end. >>



Only several laps earlier, Cassidy had seemingly been the best placed to take victory, having saved almost 2% more energy than Evans and Wehrlein up ahead, even after climbing from the lower reaches of the top 10 at one stage. But, after jumping up to third just five laps from home, any further progress was halted by a radio request from his team to hold position, with Evans directly in front and pressuring Wehrlein for the win – much to Cassidy’s annoyance in the heat of the moment.

Another potential opportunity for a Cassidy win disappeared in Sunday’s sequel. Fourth was the best that he could manage, although it was still enough to finish ahead of all his main rivals in the title battle.

With the race distance one lap shorter and the ambient heat much higher, the Sunday round turned into a somewhat processional affair over the second half as drivers and teams struggled to stay on top of rising battery temperatures. Not so for Antonio Felix da Costa, however, who suffered no such problems after deciding with his Porsche team pre-race that leading as much as possible to keep in cooler air was the right strategy. And so it proved to be, with the Portuguese heading 14 of the 28 laps after starting from third with a point to prove – he had lost his fifth place from the opening race when he was handed a 5s penalty after the stewards held him responsible for pushing the DS Penske of Jean-Eric Vergne off track.

After diving up the inside of Norman Nato’s Andretti Porsche at

“There was a sneaky radio message. I was trying to tell Andretti what the gameplan was”

Turn 1 on lap 16, da Costa was never headed on the way to his third on-the-road win of the season, with the appeal for the Misano victory he was stripped of for a technical breach due to be heard next month. “Managing my temperatures [was key], so there was a lot of communication with the team going back and forth,” said da Costa. “At some point there was a sneaky radio message there as well, which was more for Andretti. I was trying to secretly tell them what the gameplan was and I think they understood.”

Nato had led for 11 laps and claimed his first podium with Porsche’s customer team, but he was beaten to second place by polesitter Jake Hughes. The McLaren driver also reached a milestone in the form of his maiden Formula E podium, earned by aggressively overtaking Nato through Turn 7 with 10 laps remaining. But he was unable to launch any assault against da Costa. The Briton had earlier been involved in contact with Cassidy at the opening bend that damaged the Jaguar’s front wing, which was left in a precarious position for the remainder of the race. While Cassidy was very fortunate that his wing survived, his main championship rival Wehrlein was not so lucky after the smallest of touches from McLaren’s Sam Bird punctured his left-rear tyre.

Prior to the pitstop for a new wheel, Wehrlein had been on the fringes of the top 10 after qualifying down the order, his car having suffered a mechanical issue related to the collision the previous day with Cassidy. And Wehrlein was not the only Porsche powertrain user to non-score in the second race, with reigning champion Jake Dennis conceding that “for sure I’m out of the championship now” thanks to finishing in 11th after a lacklustre race that leaves him 54 points behind Cassidy. The Briton struggled with balance throughout the race, particularly oversteer, which left him with no pace. He barely breached the top 10 at any point after once again struggling in qualifying.

“I’m a bit disappointed the championship is over, but they’ve just done a better job than us – we haven’t been quick enough,” said Dennis, who had salvaged fifth from the opening race, in which he never really featured in the lead battle.

Wehrlein still remains Cassidy’s closest challenger in the championship. But with a 25-point margin – the same as a race win – and only four races left, Cassidy’s consistency has put him in prime position for his maiden Formula E title. 🏆





VERGNE MATCHES RECORD

Jean-Eric Vergne drew level with Sebastien Buemi for the record of Formula E pole positions with 16 when he took the top spot in qualifying for race one in China. The DS Penske driver dropped back to sixth in the final classification, after leading for three laps. Hopes of setting a new benchmark were dashed when the Frenchman could only qualify ninth for race two, before finishing seventh behind team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne.

BIRD'S TROUBLED RETURN

McLaren's Sam Bird returned to racing after recovering from the broken hand he sustained in practice in Monaco earlier this month, but the Briton was involved in two incidents that meant he failed to score in either race. He was the innocent party in a collision with Maximilian Guenther at Turn 6 in the opener, which eliminated Edoardo Mortara and condemned Bird to 17th. In the sequel, Bird lost control at Turn 10 and hit Nyck de Vries, which earned him a five-place grid drop, two penalty points on his licence, and retirement from the race with damage.

FIRST POINTS OF THE SEASON

Nyck de Vries scored his first points since his return to Formula E this season when he was classified seventh in the opening race, admitting that the result felt "like a victory". The Dutchman (below) even briefly led at one point before immediately being told to drop back by his Mahindra engineer in order to save energy. The 2021 Formula E champion then made it through to the duels for the first time this year on Sunday to start fourth, before his collision with Bird meant he finished down in 16th.



RESULTS FORMULA E ROUND 8/10, SHANGHAI (CHN), 25-26 MAY (29 LAPS – 54.860 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	38m03.434s
2	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+0.796s
3	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+1.498s
4	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+1.743s
5	Jake Dennis (GBR)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+2.361s
6	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	+2.599s
7	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M10Electro	+2.818s
8	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+3.610s
9	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	+4.095s
10	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Abt / Mahindra M10Electro	+4.397s
11	Sacha Fenestraz (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+4.791s
12	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+5.083s
13	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	ERT / ERT X24	+5.425s
14	Norman Nato (FRA)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+5.793s
15	Nico Muller (CHE)	Abt / Mahindra M10Electro	+6.178s
16	Jake Hughes (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+6.566s
17	Sam Bird (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+6.944s
18	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+7.165s
19	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+7.372s
20	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	ERT / ERT X24	+7.688s
21	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+13.165s
R	Edoardo Mortara (CHE)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M10Electro	16 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 86.491mph. **Fastest lap** Dennis 1m15.965s, 89.842mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Vergne 1m13.322s; 2 Rowland 1m13.360s; 3 Evans 1m13.359s; 4 Wehrlein 1m13.624s; 5 Hughes 1m13.483s; 6 da Costa 1m13.693s; 7 Nato 1m13.824s; 8 Vandoorne 1m13.861s; 9 Frijns 1m14.336s; 10 Cassidy 1m14.316s; 11 Dennis 1m14.459s; 12 Buemi 1m14.367s; 13 de Vries 1m14.523s; 14 Guenther 1m14.384s; 15 Muller 1m14.530s; 16 di Grassi 1m14.384s; 17 Sette Camara 1m14.580s; 18 Ticktum 1m14.481s; 19 Bird 1m14.601s; 20 Daruvala 1m14.494s; 21 Mortara 1m15.006s; 22 Fenestraz 1m14.520s.

RACE 2 (28 LAPS – 52.964 MILES)

1 da Costa 36m04.600s; 2 Hughes +0.612s; 3 Nato +1.122s; 4 Cassidy +2.215s; 5 Evans +3.167s; 6 Vandoorne +3.861s; 7 Vergne +4.374s; 8 Guenther +5.077s; 9 Frijns +7.846s; 10 Rowland +8.840s; 11 Dennis +9.634s; 12 Buemi +10.143s; 13 Mortara +11.423s; 14 Fenestraz +12.280s; 15 Muller +12.751s; 16 de Vries +13.102s; 17 Daruvala +15.973s; 18 Sette Camara +16.419s; 19 di Grassi +50.057s; 20 Wehrlein +1m01.675s; 21 Ticktum +1m24.415s; R Bird 18 laps-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 88.086mph. **Fastest lap** Nato 1m15.358s, 90.566mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Hughes 1m13.921s; 2 Vandoorne 1m13.922s; 3 da Costa 1m13.980s; 4 de Vries 1m14.080s; 5 Cassidy 1m13.672s; 6 Evans 1m13.888s; 7 Nato 1m13.909s; 8 Rowland 1m14.009s; 9 Vergne 1m14.631s; 10 Guenther 1m14.672s; 11 Bird 1m14.725s; 12 Fenestraz 1m14.735s; 13 Wehrlein 1m14.732s; 14 Dennis 1m14.771s; 15 Sette Camara 1m14.771s; 16 Daruvala 1m14.792s; 17 Muller 1m14.832s; 18 Ticktum 1m14.809s; 19 di Grassi 1m14.865s; 20 Frijns 1m14.944s; 21 Mortara 1m14.877s; 22 Buemi 1m14.949s.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Cassidy 167; 2 Wehrlein 142; 3 Evans 132; 4 Rowland 131; 5 Dennis 113; 6 Vergne 101; 7 da Costa 84; 8 Guenther 69; 9 Vandoorne 53; 10 Hughes 46.

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Jaguar Racing 299; 2 Porsche 226; 3 Nissan 157; 4 DS Penske 154; 5 Andretti 153; 6 McLaren 89; 7 Maserati 77; 8 Envision Racing 49; 9 ERT 23; 10 Abt 20; 11 Mahindra Racing 13.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Porsche 337; 2 Jaguar 328; 3 Nissan 236; 4 Stellantis 213; 5 Mahindra 33; 6 ERT 23.





BTCC

Hill hits the peaks in East Anglia

The Kentishman got his title bid back on track with a sensational double win from pole at Snetterton in his 'Laser Beemer'

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



East Anglia may be renowned for its flat topography, but last weekend a small area of Norfolk became notable for an almost insurmountable Hill. The Laser Tools-emblazoned BMW 330e M Sport of Jake Hill was invincible through qualifying and the first two races at Snetterton, bringing the West Surrey Racing squad's diminutive Kentishman right back into the hunt for the British Touring Car Championship crown after a miserable weekend on home soil at Brands Hatch. He drove absolutely brilliantly in a car he described as "quite honestly, perfect all weekend".

And for all its flat terrain, Snetterton also featured a weekend of ups and downs for the three other 'big guns' of the BTCC – Hill's title rivals Ash Sutton, Tom Ingram and Colin Turkington. Much of that was down to a combination of the miserable British climate, which unleashed all it had throughout the weekend, and the BTCC's sporting regulations. The compulsion for this event to run all three of Goodyear's slick tyre options, and the new-for-2024 regulation whereby the top 10 in race one all have to run the hardest rubber left from their allocation for race two, provided perhaps one gimmick too many amid the rain.

WSR attempted to pull a fast one for race two by sending the BMWs of Hill and team newcomer Bobby Thompson to the front row of the decidedly slippery grid on the hard slick, when almost everyone else was on grooved wet-weather tyres. It was a 'look, we've used the hard tyre and got it out of the way' ploy, and the mechanics predictably got them off the cars and put the wets on in plenty of time for the formation lap. Down the pitlane there was fuming at Speedworks Motorsport, which had taken its pain in race one by running Rob Huff's Toyota Gazoo Racing GB Corolla on the mediums, and the LKQ cars of Josh Cook and Aiden Moffat on hards, when pretty much all the other top contenders were on softs. It now looked as though rain might have set in for the rest of the day and, even if it only affected one of the remaining races, the other leading lights might get away with not running the hards at all...

The day was one of routine rule clarifications from BTCC organiser TOCA; WhatsApps dinged merrily up and down the paddock and pitlane. It turned out that the compulsion for race one's top 10 to use the hard rubber would be deferred to the finale should wet-weather rubber be the choice for race two. "Our regulations are pretty clear," responded the stressed TOCA technical chief Sam Riches when ambushed. "It's just that the interpretations have swapped and changed for individuals' own benefit."

Hill's beautiful weekend could never, therefore, extend to a treble victory. He had to run the hard tyres, from ninth on the reversed grid, in the finale, which started on a track only slightly less wet than its predecessor. In that second race, Sutton had led Ingram and Turkington to the pits at the end of the formation >>

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lap to get onto slicks – the hards they were obliged to use – but, of course, the rear-wheel-drive BMW isn't at its happiest when trying to switch *any* rubber on in slippery conditions, let alone the most durable. In the five flying laps before the rain returned and scuppered their gamble, Turkington had lost 6.595 seconds to Ingram, even though the 2022 champion had been engaged in a battle to get past Sutton. Hill therefore knew that he was doomed. He went for the wets and, after leading for eight of the 12 laps, plummeted to an eventual ninth.

Over at Speedworks, everyone was now rubbing their hands. Moffat was on the front row of the reversed grid, Cook was seventh, and Huff was 14th – all on the soft tyre. And what followed was a masterpiece from Huff every bit as impressive as Hill's earlier successes. The chirpy local man – egged on by a large contingent of friends – scythed his way through the field. Moffat is not one of the championship's big names, but is certainly someone who can get the job done; Cook is renowned by many as a BTCC champion in waiting. Yet the old boy eclipsed them with the class developed

“Could I have committed and gone quicker if I had another lap? I'd like to think so”

over almost two decades on the global tin-top stage in a remarkable 1-2-3 for the team.

Hill could not help but smile ruefully. OK, the seven points he earned for that ninth-place finish, plus the single point he gained for being a lap leader – which he would never have attained had he been on the hard tyres – did drop him back slightly in the standings. But he is now level with 2022 king Ingram, one point behind four-time champion team-mate Turkington, and just 11 adrift of reigning title holder Sutton. Contrast that to his Brands weekend...

“It didn't matter which session, we just had it under control,” Hill had beamed after smashing his way to quickest time in his first qualifying group by 0.611s, top of Q2 by 0.473s, both in the wet. It began drying out for Q3, and all bar Thompson went out on slicks for the pole shootout, before the bearded Essex charger realised the error of his ways and pitted for slicks at the end of his out-lap. The fight for pole boiled down to Hill versus Sutton, on opposite sides of the circuit, times tumbling each lap. Sutton, his Alliance Racing Ford Focus ST having undergone the traditional front-wheel-drive tyre-crossing ritual early doors, took the flag with a new pole, but Hill had already snuck through for an extra lap. He was down in sector one, but blitzed the NAPA machine over the rest of his final effort to seize pole by an eye-watering 0.805s. “The route we went down set-up-wise at Brands, I just couldn't get on



Hill had never won at Snetterton in the BTCC. He's now done so twice

with it,” chirped Hill. “It felt nice, but not pace-wise. Now we've gone back to what I know. I'm enjoying driving it again.”

Sutton, who as the championship leader had just one second per lap of hybrid use available to him to the seven of Hill, pointed out: “The track was evolving, and I'm pleased where we ended up with that amount of hybrid. I never fully committed in the first sector – I played it safe. Could I have committed and gone quicker if I had another lap? I'd like to think so.” Sutton added that, even though the Snetterton lap is the longest on the calendar, the hybrid penalty is at its most punitive here: “It's more of a handicap. Because of the low-speed corners and long straights, we've worked out it's seven tenths, although in the wet it's a little bit less.”

In the dry of race one, the BMWs showed their strength – well, two of them, anyway. Hill predictably used his rear-wheel-drive benefit to convert pole into the lead. Impressively, on his first RWD BTCC start, Thompson got just as good a getaway to storm his purple Zeus Cloud 3 Series past the sister car of Adam Morgan and Sutton's Alliance Ford sidekick Dan Cammish from fifth into third. And he wasn't finished there. Bear in mind that Thompson was subject to TOCA's rule for series latecomers, and therefore had only slightly more hybrid use available to him than Hill. And while the leading BMW sailed merrily away up front, Thompson got on his boost button to get down the inside of Sutton and into >>



New territory for Thompson, after passing Sutton

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Sutton hit the wall,
got poisoned by fumes,
and still got 26 points

second place at Riches on the sixth lap of 12. “It’s definitely a BMW weekend, that’s for sure,” related Sutton. “And the amount of hybrid Bobby had over me in race one, it was pointless to go to war with him about it. As soon as he got the run on me, I just braked early and let him have the corner, and then focused on bringing it home. We were also cautious on the soft tyres after what happened at Brands [a puncture for Cammish].”

If there was one black cloud to Hill’s general silver lining, it was that Ingram snatched the point for fastest lap away on the very last lap. Qualifying had been a nightmare all round at Exceľr8 Motorsport, with Ronan Pearson shading his title-winning team-mate to be the only member of the Hyundai i30 N squad to make it into Q2. Ingram, who would start 13th, mused: “Less than zero grip. As soon as I touch the brake pedal it locks, as soon as I touch the steering it understeers, as soon as I touch the throttle it wheelspins. I couldn’t extract any more out of it.”

But Ingram had something to work with in the dry, and saved what little hybrid he was entitled to for a pass on Morgan for sixth on the penultimate lap, followed by his Hill-eclipsing time on the final tour. A bit cheeky. “It was!” he chuckled. “I didn’t expect the tyres to still be in good enough condition to then be able to do the fastest lap, but honestly, they came off the car and it looked as though they’d not done anything. I could have done the next race on them.” For his part, Hill hadn’t even bothered to use two laps of his hybrid. “I felt like I didn’t need to,” he explained. “I wasn’t pushing and I thought I’d done enough for fastest lap. But fair



Turkington and Ingram both
fought after tough qualifying

“Do you know who I blame? Ashley Sutton. Do you know why I blame him? Because we copied him”

play to Tom. Annoying as it was, it’s not the end of the world.”

It did *look* like the end of the world before race two, such was the violence of the storm that delayed the kick-off. But the sun soon came out, and the tyre agonising began. Hill and Thompson, on the wet-weather rubber, should have had it easy in the opening laps. But each lurched forward in unison after the five-second board, and were immediately hit with 10s false-start penalties. “The handbrake failed,” reported Hill. “I had a dodgy wheel-speed sensor, which pops the handbrake off if it feels any speed. And I’m on pole, so it’s always going to be obvious...” Thompson’s error was for a different reason: “I didn’t get enough rear brake temperature, which meant it just crept.” And then he compounded that with a poor getaway: “Wet starts are still my bugbear; in the dry I’m ready to go.”

So Thompson was down in fourth, with Hill pursued by the Speedworks Toyota of Andrew Watson, who had done a fine job to take fifth in the opener and made an excellent start to this one, and Cammish, who’d driven his Ford to fourth earlier on. Most of the other leading contenders had gone onto hard slick tyres, and surely it was only a matter of time before the crossover point happened. In the meantime, Hill had to pull out 10s on Watson to negate his penalty. After six laps the margin was up to 8.4s, but all attentions had turned to Aron Taylor-Smith, who had used the medium rubber in the opener to take 12th place. His Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra was now on the softs, had sledgehammered past the hard-shod runners, had just slashed 4s out of Hill’s lead to take fastest lap, and was on course to, at the very least, finish within 10s of the BMW – if not in front on the road.

Then came the rain. Morgan and Turkington were among those to bail for the pits to go back onto the wets; Sutton had a series of offs and even hit the tyre wall before going for wets too. Ingram stayed out on slicks, and lost 15th place and the final point to Turkington on the run to the finish line. “Do you know who I blame in all of this?” he chortled. “Ashley Sutton. Do you know why I blame him? Because we copied him.” Sutton grinned: “I was the first to make that call so I’ll happily take the blame for that one. It was the right call until it rained. Up to that point we were going to be back into the fight. It was a bit of a kick in the backside, but we got rid of the hard tyre and it gave us a chance in the last race.” >>



Huff battled sister
Toyotas at sunset
on a drying track...

Up front, Hill was superb. Watson undid his good work with a slide across the grass at the esses once the rain returned, elevating Cammish to second, but the Berkshire-domiciled Yorkshireman could not prevent Hill winning by an astonishing 16.260s – minus 10s on corrected times. “It felt like we struggled a bit in the drying conditions,” reckoned Cammish. “When the rain came down, relative to Bobby and Andrew, the car came alive.”

Hill was delighted with what he described as his “most professional drive” ever, and which most onlookers reckoned was his “most amazing”. “It was pretty good, wasn’t it?” he added. “I’m extremely pleased. The team did an exceptional job. What a wet car we’ve got, and in the dry in race one it wasn’t too bad either.”

Hill’s doomed crusade in the finale opened the door for that other *tour de force* – the one we saw from Huff. He and engineer Andrew Sayer had played a pretty canny hand all day. Their Toyota was the only car in the top 11 in race one not on the soft tyres, and only Huff and Restart Racing’s Chris Smiley were brave enough to go to the grid for race two on slicks; Huff led those on hard tyres throughout. Now came payback.

To be fair, the Cook and Moffat boys from the sister LKQ stable made things tough. “I had no idea we were fighting for a podium position,” said Huff. “It was only when Josh started to defend. He slid across into me quite abruptly as I went around the outside [into the esses] and I had no option other than to cut across the grass. I came out ahead of Aiden but gave him the place back.” Moffat then

“With a car as good as I had, there was no choice but to give it everything”

got into a massive tankslapper at Coram, somehow saving it but conceding second place to Huff, before they all steamed past Hill. Was there any risk to the engine from that trip onto the grass? “Toyota have done a good job with their cooling...” Huff laughed.

Remarkably, the weekend represented Huff’s first experience of the current Snetterton 300 layout – inaugurated in 2011 – other than “a couple of laps in a friend’s TCR car two or three years ago”. It was his first BTCC victory since September 2004, which came at the same venue: “Snetterton has always held something special for me, but I only came from eighth on the grid that time! With a car as good as I had, there was no choice but to give it everything. We’ve made barely any changes to set-up from what we arrived with.”

With one more lap, the Toyotas could have come under threat, with Ingram charging from 16th onto Cook’s rear bumper by the chequered flag, setting a succession of fastest laps at the end on medium tyres. “The medium took a while to come in and get going, but once it did it was marvellous,” he concluded. “I saw ‘Huffy’ behind and I literally waved him past. ‘Crack on, because you’re quicker than me. You can get going and make some inroads, and I’ll see you later in the race.’ Generally the car was phenomenal, an absolute monster.”

Turkington too was on the rise, from 15th to seventh, behind the Excelr8 Hyundai of Tom Chilton. In contrast to Hill, it had been an under-the-radar weekend. “It carried over from yesterday,” he said. “We were just not in the window with the car. I didn’t feel comfortable, just a bit out of balance. For race three I went back to what we ran last year, pretty much. Ultimately I scored points in all three races. Jake had a big number, but it’s been a stalemate with Ash and Tom from a super-challenging weekend.”

And Sutton still leads the points. After rising from 20th to fifth, he needed a trip to the medical centre due to damage from a collision on lap two. “I’ve felt better,” he shrugged. “It did the exhaust, and there was an issue with it getting hot and burning things. It was just someone else’s incident, unfortunate really. Smoke was filling up the car, which wasn’t ideal. The last few laps there was stinging and burning in my eyes, but it’s still a good result – that’s what we need.”



...and then Cook helped
him on a wet set-up, as
Moffat stands and laughs

THOMPSON TRANSITIONS TO BTCC FRONTLINER



Bobby Thompson’s performances over the years with the Team Hard Cupra had prompted a lot of people to label him as a BTCC star of the future, as long as he could get into a team with some financial stability. His first race outing with the West Surrey Racing BMW squad last weekend suggested that he is just around the corner from being a BTCC star of today.

Apart from a shakedown at the MIRA proving ground last Thursday, Thompson’s only running in the 330e M Sport had been in the wet in the early April Brands Hatch test. So his drive to second place to complete a WSR 1-2 behind Jake Hill in the dry opening race was especially impressive. He was third on the road in race two, before his false-start penalty dropped him to seventh. And he was eighth in the finale, where he had to run the hard tyre.

“To be able to do it, turning up in style...” he enthused. “And then finishing the weekend with the second most accumulated points, I’m over the moon. I’m still in the learning process of when to use the most of the tyre – I think I’m too nice to them early in the race.”

On Saturday, Thompson had placed second to Hill in his opening qualifying group, then repeated that in Q2. Had he not made the wrong choice of going out on wet-weather tyres in the top-six shootout, he should have qualified better than his eventual fifth. He was effectively almost two laps behind stablemates Hill and Adam Morgan in bringing in the rubber – costly on a fast-drying track.

Veteran WSR engineer John Waterman, who had led the development on the BMW in recent seasons, was spontaneous in singing Thompson’s praises, and a win surely can’t be far away. After all, with 16th place in the standings after Snetterton, he’s got a fair few events to go before any significant hybrid restriction is thrown in his direction.

RESULTS SNETTERTON (GBR), 26 MAY RACE 1 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	23m35.164s
2	Bobby Thompson (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	+1.922s
3	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+4.009s
4	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+5.130s
5	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (s)	+8.021s
6	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	+8.770s
7	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	+12.041s
8	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	+19.824s
9	Rob Huff (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (M)	+22.219s
10	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+22.426s
11	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	+26.880s
12	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (M)	+29.528s
13	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (M)	+33.585s
14	Josh Cook (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+36.228s
15	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (M)	+37.326s
16	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (M)	+40.323s
17	Daryl DeLeon (PHL)	Unlimited Motorsport / Cupra Leon (s)	+57.061s
18	Chris Smiley (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon (s)	+1m02.756s
19	Scott Sumpton (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon (M)	+1m39.415s
20	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	-1 lap
21	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	-1 lap

Winner’s average speed 90.63mph. **Fastest lap** Ingram 1m56.404s, 91.81mph.

Q3 1 Hill 2m00.876s; 2 Sutton 2m01.681s; 3 Morgan 2m01.867s; 4 Cammish 2m02.423s; 5 Thompson 2m02.560s; 6 Cook 2m03.429s.

Q2 Hill 2m09.732s; Thompson 2m10.205s; Cammish 2m10.318s; Sutton 2m10.438s; Cook 2m10.790s; Morgan 2m10.791s; 7 Watson 2m10.871s; 8 Huff 2m10.926s; 9 Turkington 2m10.932s; 10 Rowbottom 2m10.949s; 11 Smiley 2m11.345s; 12 Pearson 2m11.450s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 Hill 2m10.620s; Thompson 2m11.231s; Huff 2m11.650s; Turkington 2m11.730s; Watson 2m11.993s; Pearson 2m12.199s; 13 Ingram 2m12.218s; 14 Chilton 2m12.336s; 17 Moffat 2m13.523s; 18 Sumpton 2m13.592s; 21 Halstead 2m15.721s.

Q1 – GROUP 2 Sutton 2m11.342s; Cammish 2m12.032s; Cook 2m12.425s; Rowbottom 2m12.461s; Morgan 2m12.678s; Smiley 2m12.908s; 15 Taylor-Smith 2m13.302s; 16 Doble 2m13.500s; 19 DeLeon 2m13.900s; 20 Osborne 2m15.699s.

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

1 Hill (w) 26m43.848s; 2 Cammish (w) +6.260s; 3 Cook (w) +9.974s; 4 Doble (w) +14.794s; 5 Chilton (w) +15.696s; 6 Watson (w) +16.626s; 7 Thompson (w) +16.643s; 8 Moffat (w) +23.431s; 9 Osborne (w) +26.823s; 10 DeLeon (w) +29.165s; 11 Sumpton (w) +33.174s; 12 Taylor-Smith (s) +1m08.350s; 13 Smiley (M) +1m32.158s; 14 Huff (H) +1m33.739s; 15 Turkington (H/w) +1m51.605s; 16 Ingram (H) +1m52.272s; 17 Rowbottom (H/w) -1 lap; 18 Morgan (H/w) -1 lap; 19 Pearson (M/w) -1 lap; 20 Sutton (H/w) -1 lap; NS Halstead food poisoning.

Winner’s average speed 79.96mph.

Fastest lap Taylor-Smith 2m05.876s, 84.90mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top nine reversed.

RACE 3 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

1 Huff (s) 25m37.243s; 2 Moffat (s) +2.338s;

3 Cook (s) +3.297s; 4 Ingram (M) +3.501s; 5 Sutton (M) +12.830s; 6 Chilton (s) +14.169s; 7 Turkington (M) +16.470s; 8 Thompson (H) +19.425s; 9 Hill (w) +20.025s; 10 Doble (s) +21.864s; 11 Morgan (M) +24.073s; 12 DeLeon (M) +24.565s; 13 Cammish (H) +32.149s; 14 Osborne (s) +34.856s; 15 Taylor-Smith (H) +34.857s; 16 Watson (w) +46.341s; 17 Sumpton (s) +46.697s; 18 Pearson (H) +52.203s; 19 Rowbottom (M) -1 lap; R Smiley (H) 0 laps-accident; NS Halstead.

Winner’s average speed 83.43mph.

Fastest lap Ingram 2m01.251s, 88.14mph.

TYRES (S) = Soft; (M) = Medium; (H) = Hard; (W) = Wet.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Sutton

121; 2 Turkington 111; 3 Ingram 110; 4 Hill 110; 5 Cook 84; 6 Cammish 77; 7 Moffat 76; 8 Chilton 69; 9 Huff 60; 10 Morgan 55.

**NEXT
REPORT**
Thruxton
13 June issue



FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Verschoor leads Hadjar and Aron
at the start of the feature race.
Winner O'Sullivan out of shot!

Audacious strategy gives O'Sullivan first F2 win

FORMULA 2
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
25-26 MAY
ROUND 5/14

Zak O'Sullivan pulled off a remarkable smash-and-grab maiden Formula 2 win in Monaco over a furious Isack Hadjar thanks to an audacious strategy worked perfectly by the ART Grand Prix team.

Red Bull Junior Hadjar and Campos Racing appeared to have their third successive feature race victory in the bag when Joshua Durksen, after pitting late on the alternate strategy, parked at Casino Square on lap 40 of 42 with damage from moving over on Zane Maloney after exiting the pits. ART had gone all in on a gamble for a late safety car intervention, but instead it was the timing of a virtual safety car to remove the Paraguayan's stranded car that paid off. It's illegal to pit under the VSC, but O'Sullivan entered the pits just before it

was called, exchanged his soft Pirelli tyres for supersofts, and emerged in front of Hadjar. The British Williams protege had been running 14th early on, but all he had to do now was hold off the Frenchman for two laps to the finish.

O'Sullivan's unexpected win completed a British double for the weekend, after Taylor Barnard's success in Saturday's sprint race. While the AIX Racing driver converted reversed-grid pole into the lead over Gabriel Bortoleto, safety car driver Bernd Maylander had to wait only one corner for his first call to action when the luckless Victor Martins was assisted into the barriers in a chain-reaction incident by Jak Crawford. A shunt for Pepe Marti on the exit of the Swimming Pool caused the second intervention, before an incident at Rascasse brought out the red flags. Rodin Motorsport's pre-weekend series leader Maloney had already damaged his front wing

in contact with O'Sullivan at the Grand Hotel hairpin, and now he hit him again, with Correa and Maini helpless to avoid getting caught up in the aftermath.

Barnard remained composed, absorbing late pressure from Bortoleto, with Dennis Hauger, Andrea Kimi Antonelli, Franco Colapinto and Roman Stanek completing the top six.

While Hadjar fumed on Sunday, he had himself been the beneficiary of some luck throughout the first 39 laps. Martins appeared to have reversed his poor start to the season by qualifying on the front row, but the Alpine-backed ART driver was slow away at the start and dropped to 15th, although he would recover to score points in ninth.

Poleman Richard Verschoor led for over half the race, before his Trident car developed a fault that caused him to lose speed on the straights. The Dutchman put up a fight but was quickly forced to throw in the towel, hurling his steering wheel from the car before coming to a halt.

That put Hadjar into the net lead from Paul Aron and Ollie Bearman, who earlier had completed a fabulous move on Prema Racing team-mate Antonelli after the Italian had emerged from the pits on cold tyres. Aron's third place, which came after a seventh in the sprint race, elevates the Hitech GP driver into the championship lead by two points over Hadjar, with Maloney falling to third. Correa finished fifth ahead of Hauger and Antonelli.

SAM HALL



FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Marvellous Mini is the maestro in Monte Carlo

FORMULA 3
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
25-26 MAY
ROUND 4/10

Gabriele Mini proved himself a master of Monaco once again last Sunday. Two of his three Formula 3 career wins to date have come from start-to-finish feature race successes on the Monte Carlo streets.

Mini's victory with Prema Racing completed a double for Alpine F1-backed drivers, after Nikola Tsolov had triumphed with ART Grand Prix in the sprint race. The Bulgarian's and Sicilian's wins mean it's eight different drivers to have won across the first eight races of the season.

Tsolov converted reversed-grid pole into the lead, and had to survive two safety car restarts to make it count. The first came after the weekend's most chaotic moment, when Arvid Lindblad swung left to take the racing line into Casino Square, but failed to notice Christian Mansell alongside him. The ensuing contact spun Lindblad through 180 degrees and left Josh Dufek, Alex Dunne and Cian Shields with nowhere to go but straight into the parked traffic. It resulted in the amusing sight of the marshals attempting to crane Mansell's and Dunne's cars away while still interlinked.

Following a half-hour red-flag delay, the remaining laps were considerably quieter, although late contact between Sophia Floersch and Kacper Sztuka gave the Pole a puncture and caused him to park up at Ste Devote, necessitating a brief interruption.

Tsolov took the flag ahead of Red Bull Junior Tim Tramnitz, who had jumped Laurens van Hoepen off the start. Right behind van Hoepen at the finish was Noel



Leon, while Joseph Loake, enjoying by far his strongest weekend in F3, took fifth ahead of Mari Boya.

Mini could only finish 11th from 12th on the grid in that race, but the following day he put in a controlled performance in the feature. From pole, he made a slower start than the ART car of front-row partner Mansell, with the Australian drawing level on the short run to Ste Devote. This was the only opportunity Mansell had to attack, and Mini completed an error-free race.

This time there were three safety car periods. The first came when Piotr Wisnicki tipped Charlie Wurz into a one-way trip into the barriers at Portier.

While Mini led Mansell, Luke Browning and Lindblad at the restart, Loake was getting his elbows out in the battle for seventh. First the Rodin Motorsport driver pulled off a superb move on Boya at Rascasse, but the Spaniard came back

at him. Loake skipped the chicane in his defence, and conceded the place to Boya rather than attract a penalty. Then came the second caution after Tsolov spun Leon into the wall at Mirabeau, with Sami Meguetounif left with nowhere to go.

On the restart, Loake tried to ambush Boya again, this time at the Grand Hotel hairpin, but instead ended up losing a position to Tramnitz. He then got into a fight with van Hoepen, who ended up in the barriers at Tabac, triggering the third safety car. Loake ended up with more points in ninth, while ahead of him Leonardo Fornaroli was fifth from Dino Beganovic, Boya and Tramnitz.

Williams junior Browning, who pulled off a superb pass on Fornaroli at Massenet on the opening lap of the sprint, now sits four points adrift of new series leader Mini, and four clear of the consistent Fornaroli.

SAM HALL



Sacre bleu! Cars of Mansell and Dunne are stuck together

FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA 2
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Race 1 Taylor Barnard
AIX Racing
Race 2 Zak O'Sullivan
ART Grand Prix

FORMULA 3
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Race 1 Nikola Tsolov
ART Grand Prix
Race 2 Gabriele Mini
Prema Racing



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Audi and Porsche on top

Van der Linde leads Engel in the spray on Saturday. They went on to finish first and second



DTM
LAUSITZRING (DEU)
25-26 MAY
ROUND 2/8

Audi racer Kelvin van der Linde and Porsche's reigning champion Thomas Preining scored a race win apiece on the DTM's visit to the Lausitzring to grab the top two spots in the championship.

Van der Linde's victory came in a Saturday race that started in dry conditions but soon turned into a proper wet-weather contest. Race control had to wave the red flag twice because of the treacherous conditions, and it wasn't until 6pm, an hour after the original start, that the action could resume again. When it did, Abt driver van der Linde held his nerve against the Winward Mercedes of Maro Engel, who had jumped from 13th to second position by making an early switch to wet-weather

tyres before the red flags.

Lap by lap, van der Linde extended his advantage over the German, with some quick pitwork by the Abt crew helping him rejoin the track with his lead well intact. Although Engel managed to close the gap by a fraction in the closing stages as the track began to dry out, the South African still had a buffer of 2.5s as he crossed the finish line. Factory Porsche driver Preining completed the podium spots for the Manthey EMA team ahead of Lucas Auer's Winward Mercedes, while Ricardo Feller recovered to fifth in his Abt Audi after losing a chunk of time during the initial pitstop sequence.

There was no threat of rain in Sunday's second race, which paved the way for a thrilling three-way scrap between Preining, van der Linde and Feller. Preining started the race from pole position but was passed for the lead on the fourth lap by Feller,

the Swiss barging his way past with an aggressive move into Turn 2.

When the pit window opened after 20 minutes of racing, Preining was first of the frontrunners to head into the pits, with Feller and van der Linde following him over the next two tours. Feller emerged ahead, but soon came under pressure from Preining, whose tyres were already up to temperature. Although Feller managed to hold onto the position on his out-lap, the Austrian was simply the faster of the two at this stage of the race and pulled off a brilliant move on the Audi next time round.

While these two were battling for position, van der Linde had managed to leapfrog both in the pits and rejoined the track in the net lead. But Preining again had the pace advantage over his other Audi rival and it didn't take long for him to make the decisive pass going into the hairpin.

The race was neutralised soon after as the cars of Maximilian Paul and Luca Stolz got beached at Turn 6, the Lamborghini and Mercedes retiring on the spot. When the safety car pulled into the pits there were only 13 minutes left on the clock, but Preining had no trouble keeping the Audi duo at bay in the dash to the finish, taking his first win of the season by 1.4s.

The Lamborghinis of Mirko Bortolotti (SSR) and Luca Engstler (GRT) finished fourth and fifth, with Rene Rast taking sixth in the top Schubert BMW after a trying qualifying that had left him 13th on the grid.

RACHIT THUKRAL

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Camara gets title charge into high definition

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
SPA (BEL)
25-26 MAY
ROUND 2/10

Ferrari protege Rafael Camara has opened out an enormous lead in the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine season after winning twice at Spa to add to his Hockenheim victory.

Qualifying for race one was wet. While Enzo Peugeot led Alessandro Giusti and Camara in the slower first group, Roman Bilinski secured pole by beating Noah Stromsted to the fastest lap in the later session. James Wharton had a big crash on the Kemmel straight, which meant he missed the race.

It was three-wide for the lead at the start, and French F4 graduate Peugeot got ahead at Les Combes before going off. Bilinski then led Zachary David and, as they fought for the lead, Stromsted and Camara joined the battle and passed David entering Les Combes at half-distance. Two laps later they cleared Bilinski, and on the



penultimate lap Prema Racing-run Brazilian Camara took the lead from Stromsted at Les Combes.

On the last lap, the Dane's Race Performance Motorsport car dived down the inside of Camara at the Bus Stop. Stromsted gave as little room as possible, but Camara still had enough space to turn in and stay ahead through the next direction change. Just 0.129 seconds split them at the finish. Bilinski was next, with David, Peugeot and Giusti completing the top six until Stromsted, Peugeot and Giusti were all handed two-place penalties for gaining an advantage off track. That promoted Trident racer Bilinski to second,

with R-ace GP contender David in third. Camara took pole for race two, with Prema team-mate Wharton joining him on the front row. But it was the R-ace car of Camara's Ferrari stablemate Tuukka Taponen who drafted both to grab the lead at Les Combes on the opening lap. Camara reclaimed the advantage on lap four, just before the safety car emerged.

When the race went green with four laps remaining, Stromsted quickly cleared Taponen for second but could not challenge Camara for victory. Wharton and Giusti also passed Taponen, who came home fifth ahead of Evan Giltair.

IDA WOOD

Bell wins the Coca-Cola '373.5'

NASCAR CUP
CHARLOTTE (USA)
26 MAY
ROUND 14/36

It seems only fitting that Christopher Bell's chaotic season now includes victory in an abbreviated version of what should be the NASCAR Cup Series' longest race.

A round of severe thunderstorms halted last Sunday night's Coca-Cola 600 after 249 of the 400 laps, but NASCAR and Charlotte Motor Speedway were determined to try to complete the 600-mile event. After nearly two hours of



track-drying efforts, NASCAR was finally forced to call the race official when it became clear that the final 151 laps would not be completed until the early hours of Monday morning.

Bell, whose Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota was leading at the time the final caution was displayed for rain, was declared the winner, which handed him his second victory of the 2024 season. "I was literally on the couch like half-asleep and I'm already mentally prepared to go back racing," he said. "What a twist of emotions, man."

It's been a very up-and-down season for Bell. Although locked into the playoffs with his Phoenix win, he has crashed out of three races and has five finishes of 33rd or worse.

Brad Keselowski was second in his RFK Racing Ford, ahead of the Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet of William Byron, with Tyler Reddick and Denny Hamlin next. With the Indy 500 delayed, that ruled out Kyle Larson, whose Hendrick Chevy was driven by Justin Allgaier. Larson arrived just after the rain started.

JIM UTTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

DTM
LAUSITZRING (DEU)
Race 1 Kelvin van der Linde
Abt Sportsline
(Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)
Race 2 Thomas Preining
Manthey EMA
(Porsche 911 GT3-R)

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
BY ALPINE
SPA (BEL)
Races 1 & 2 Rafael Camara
Prema Racing

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

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
MONTE CARLO (MCO)
Larry ten Voorde
CLRT

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
SPA (BEL)
Mikael Grenier/Al Faisal Al Zubair
GetSpeed Performance
(Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

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Bagnaia defiantly bounces back

MOTOGP
BARCELONA (ESP)
26 MAY
ROUND 6/21

Francesco Bagnaia closed the book on a mixed Catalan Grand Prix weekend with one of his most important wins. Having been thoroughly bested by Ducati stablemates Jorge Martin and Marc Marquez at the preceding French GP, the reigning MotoGP world champion needed to bounce back at Barcelona.

At a track where the factory rider hadn't escaped the opening two corners in a grand prix in the previous two years, all was on course for a sprint win on Saturday. But in a race that featured five different leaders, two had already crashed when Bagnaia went down on the final lap at the Turn 5 left-hander. This gifted Aleix Espargaro a "fairytale" win at his home track 48 hours after the Aprilia rider announced his retirement. It also meant that there still

wasn't a serious dent in Martin's points lead, despite him only managing fourth place in the sprint.

In the 24-lap grand prix on Sunday, strategy was to play a key part. The low-grip surface meant controlling pace was vital in ensuring your rear tyre had enough rubber left to get to the finish.

Bagnaia led the field away from second on the grid, but by the end of the fifth lap he had been shuffled down to third by Martin and Tech3 KTM rookie Pedro Acosta. Those two quickly put a gap of a second between themselves and Bagnaia, their pace in the 1m39s while the Italian kept steady in the low 1m40s. When Acosta fell at Turn 10 on lap 11, Martin's Pramac Ducati held a lead over Bagnaia of 1.2s.

Over the previous few tours, Bagnaia had thrown in a few high 1m39s, testing his pace. Then he began gently applying pressure on Martin. By the end of lap 15, the gap between the pair was around 0.7s. And it quickly eroded.

Martin later admitted he'd "cooked" his rear tyre trying to keep Acosta at bay.

Bagnaia homed in on lap 19 and lined up a pass into Turn 5, banishing the demons of a sprint that had ended at that very corner.

Martin said he had one more engine map at his disposal to try to fight with Bagnaia, but the leader's medium tyre was in better shape, and the Pramac rider decided that crashing in a vain push for a win at this stage of the season would be folly. Even on a bad weekend, Martin could extend his championship lead by a point, cementing his position as the title favourite.

The gravity of the win, however, was not lost on Bagnaia. His third Sunday success of the season, his 'vaffanculo' gesture to Turn 5 on the cooldown lap – "f*** off" in English – a statement of defiance as he looks to prove that he will not be prevented from taking a third crown.



Acosta's hunt for a win will have to wait following this lapse



Qualifying aside, Marc Marquez continued to revel in life on a Ducati

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Sprint spill: Bagnaia makes an enemy of Turn 5



Completing the podium was Marquez, who once again staged an incredible comeback from down the order. After struggling with the way new soft tyres push the front end of his Gresini Ducati under braking on qualifying laps, Marquez was left in 14th on the grid. He climbed to second through sheer talent and a bit of misfortune for others in the sprint, and then gambled – one of only four riders to do so – on the soft rear tyre for the GP. A much slower rise through the field culminated in him getting up to third to score three successive Sunday podiums for the first time since his final title-winning year for Honda in 2019.

Marquez denied Espargaro a second home podium of the weekend, but the Aprilia rider's fourth on a medium tyre with which he didn't feel happy was continued proof that his retirement is not a case of him being hounded out of the championship.

Fabio Quartararo is starting to see light at the end of the tunnel, with Yamaha's recent upgrades providing enough of a boost for him to finish ninth. It was Ducati's Enea Bastianini who should have finished there, however. The Italian was given a long-lap penalty for shortcutting Turns 1-2 after an aggressive overtake from Alex Marquez. But he didn't agree and chose to ignore it, netting him a second long lap. After ignoring this too, he was given a ride-through penalty. When he failed to serve that, 32s were added to his race time, dropping him to 18th. For Bastianini, this further highlighted MotoGP's current issues with officiating.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS **MOTOGP ROUND 6/20, BARCELONA (ESP), 26 MAY (24 LAPS – 69.449 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	40m11.726s
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+1.740s
3	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+10.491s
4	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+10.543s
5	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+15.441s
6	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+15.916s
7	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+16.882s
8	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+18.578s
9	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+20.477s
10	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+20.889s
11	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+21.023s
12	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+22.137s
13	Pedro Acosta (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+31.967s
14	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+32.987s
15	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	+33.132s
16	Johann Zarco (FRA)	LCR Honda	+34.554s
17	Luca Marini (ITA)	Honda	+36.689s
18	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+50.615s
19	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+55.295s
20	Alex Rins (ESP)	Yamaha	+1m03.428s
R	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	17 laps-accident
R	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	5 laps-accident
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	2 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 103.667mph. **Fastest lap** Acosta 1m39.664s, 104.525mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Espargaro 1m38.190s; 2 Bagnaia 1m38.221s; 3 R Fernandez 1m38.261s; 4 Binder 1m38.334s; 5 Acosta 1m38.369s; 6 Di Giannantonio 1m38.400s; 7 Martin 1m38.401s; 8 Rins 1m38.692s; 9 Miller 1m38.763s; 10 Morbidelli 1m38.778s; 11 Bastianini 1m38.860s; 12 Vinales 1m38.972s.

QUALIFYING 1 Di Giannantonio 1m38.208s; R Fernandez 1m38.453s; 13 A Marquez 1m38.530s; 14 M Marquez 1m38.536s; 15 Oliveira 1m38.551s; 16 Bezzecchi 1m38.662s; 17 Quartararo 1m38.705s; 18 Zarco 1m38.978s; 19 A Fernandez 1m39.120s; 20 Nakagami 1m39.156s; 21 Mir 1m39.524s; 22 Marini 1m39.621s; 23 Bradl 1m40.276s.

SPRINT RACE (12 LAPS – 34.725 MILES)

1 Espargaro 20m01.478s; 2 M Marquez +0.892s; 3 Acosta +1.169s; 4 Martin +2.147s; 5 Bastianini +2.980s; 6 Di Giannantonio +4.623s; 7 Miller +8.084s; 8 Vinales +8.245s; 9 Bezzecchi +8.643s; 10 Quartararo +9.241s; 11 Morbidelli +9.537s; 12 Rins +13.045s; 13 Nakagami +13.199s; 14 A Marquez +13.378s; 15 Mir +16.438s; 16 Marini +18.000s; 17 A Fernandez +25.262s; 18 Bradl +33.751s; R Bagnaia 11 laps-accident; R Oliveira 9 laps-accident; R Zarco 7 laps-accident; R Binder 6 laps-accident; R R Fernandez 4 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 104.045mph. **Fastest lap** R Fernandez 1m38.991s, 105.235mph.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Martin 155; 2 Bagnaia 116; 3 M Marquez 114; 4 Bastianini 94; 5 Vinales 87; 6 Acosta 83; 7 Espargaro 76; 8 Binder 75; 9 Di Giannantonio 62; 10 Bezzecchi 42.

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 204; 2 Aprilia 125; 3 KTM 122; 4 Yamaha 35; 5 Honda 19.



Espargaro soaked up the adoration at home

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Italian GP
6 June issue

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- Ensure all safety guidelines and protocols are followed
- 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
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- Secretariat for the BARC Volunteers Working Group.
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- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all colleagues, departments and business partners.
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- Understanding of supervised and unsupervised learning techniques Understanding of computational statistics
- Experience using python
- Experience with one or more deep learning frameworks (e.g., PyTorch, TensorFlow)
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- Keeping full traceability of all parts on the Model(s) and within the Departments
- Making sure the pre-fit model is kept in a state of readiness for pre-fitting and is responsible for pre-fit sign off
- Responsible for model builds and mapping session roll backs
- Work closely with the Aero Design Team to identify areas for improvement that would provide faster model change times whilst maintaining model part quality
- Assist Aero Design Team in writing the SOP's for the model shop process
- Raises faults in the Aero faults system so they can be closed in a timely manner
- Always be open and assist in identifying Improvements within the Aero Production Process
- Maintain positive relationships with all other factory departments.

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British GT battles red-flag and track-limits controversy

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Lambo duo weather Donington storm

Mitchell and Martin move into British GT
points lead with victory



Historic **Mini JCW**
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Rain dampens the
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Tractor and marshals were on track under yellow flags initially

JEP

Lack of red flags amid rain leaves drivers unhappy

BRITISH GT

Several British GT drivers were left stunned over how long it took for a red flag to emerge once chaos descended at Redgate during last weekend's Donington Park round.

A heavy downpour suddenly hit 45 minutes into the three-hour contest, causing many slick-tyre runners to skid off at Turn 1 in quick succession due to areas of standing water down the start/finish straight.

Race control first signalled for a safety car before waving a red flag 12 minutes later, during which time marshals and a tractor had begun recovery work in the gravel trap under the caution.

RAM Racing's Raffaele Marciello posted on social media: "After Jules [Bianchi's] crash [at Suzuka] the lesson is still not learnt... tractor on track, drivers on slick on wet track... and no red flag! Today we're lucky no one got injured."

Seb Morris called it "scary" as he watched cars approach while his Mercedes was stuck in the firing line, before he got hit by Alex Buncombe as the Team RJN McLaren skidded off.

"I'd have liked a red flag a bit sooner because it's done damage to quite a lot of cars and ruined a lot of races," said Buncombe, who was later penalised for not sticking to the 60km/h speed limit with it being the second time he'd approached

Redgate, although conditions had become significantly worse throughout his lap.

"Yes, we should have been going slower, but I was probably at half race speed, which I thought would be enough, but it was nowhere near. You just don't know as a driver how slow you have to go on a slick, little did I know it had deluged the whole lap."

Race director Peter Daly explained it takes 20 seconds for a full-course yellow flag to be implemented, meaning he thought instructing cars to slow to 60km/h (37mph) was the quickest action.

When asked by Autosport why the red flag did not then appear sooner, Daly replied: "As race director, you need to evaluate what is happening before you panic. I would apologise to the marshals if they feel that I put them in unnecessary danger but, with the circumstances and the amount of information coming to race control, my responsibility is not to panic – it's to use my experience and assess."

"If I had a car upside down or on fire, I would immediately go to that because I know immediately we need outside assistance. But here we've got a number of cars losing control through a gravel trap."

As for the tractor, Daly explained: "Provided it's not a single-seater race, we're allowed to do live snatches under yellow flags."

ED HARDY

TYRE STACK HELPS TO SOLVE TRACK-LIMITS VIOLATIONS

BRITISH GT

The British GT paddock praised race control for solving the track-limits problem that plagued the opening two practice sessions at Donington Park last weekend.

There was a total of 427 track-limits violations before qualifying, with most occurring at the second part of the Esses chicane, which resulted in a black flag for five cars across both practice sessions.

A judge of fact was originally monitoring offenders, and marked the cars via a camera, leading to concerns that some violations were missed because of how many drivers went through at once.

Barwell boss Mark Lemmer said after second practice: "The guy has got an impossible job. Clearly, the problem with this system is that they can't keep up."

"Therefore, the drivers don't know which lap they've done it, therefore they don't know they have done it, so they can't adjust their line."

Race director Peter Daly believed a visual barrier was needed, leading to a tyre stack being placed on the inside of the corner for qualifying and meant zero violations for the rest of the weekend. "I just wanted to say a big thank you and well done to Peter upstairs for actually adapting," said Barwell's Ricky Collard, who received a black flag in second practice.

Raffaele Marciello echoed those thoughts saying it was "the best way", and four-time British GT champion Jonny Adam added: "I prefer this because if you get it wrong at the chicane now, you're going to hit the barrier and that's fair."

ED HARDY

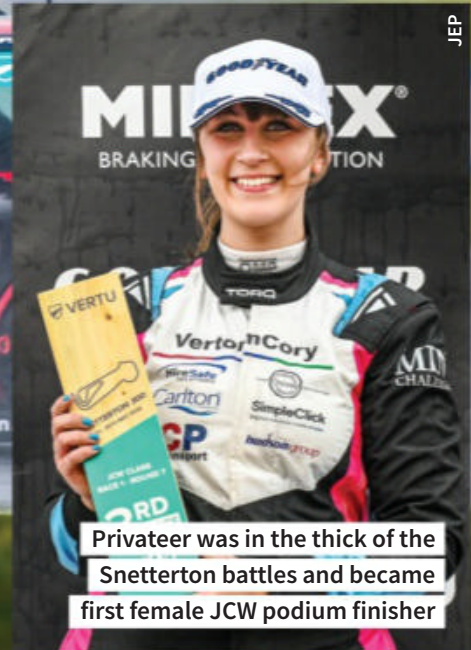


Tyre stack stopped drivers from cutting

JEP



Walmsley's historic Mini podium



Privateer was in the thick of the Snetterton battles and became first female JCW podium finisher

MINI CHALLENGE

Lydia Walmsley made Mini Challenge history at last weekend's Snetterton event when she became the first female driver to take a podium in the series since the current top-class JCW machine was adopted in 2015.

Walmsley had been in the thick of the podium fight in the second of the four Mini races in Norfolk, which she started down in ninth, when contact

between Max Hall and Lewis Selby ahead left Hall taking to the grass at Nelson and she was able to capitalise by passing Selby through the Bomb Hole.

Walmsley said she was "very proud" of the result at her local circuit since she is the sole entry for her small, family-run team and is competing against far larger, multi-car operations.

"I got my first ever win here [in the Cooper class of the Minis in 2019] so it's a special place for me anyway," said

Walmsley, who was also just 0.2 seconds away from taking fastest lap in the race. "It's such a competitive championship, and it's hard when you're a one-car team, so it means the world really."

She said the result was rewarding for her team and was also a welcome boost after some tricky campaigns. "You can start to think it's never going to happen," she added. "It can get demoralising and days like that lift you up."

Walmsley admitted to being disappointed to take sixth and eighth places in the remaining two races – she had been eager for further success.

Also in action at Snetterton last weekend was Mazda MX-5 racer Roan Lundy, who became the latest driver to pilot Mini Challenge's sustainably fuelled guest car. He twice finished runner-up in the JCW Sport division to class pacesetter Albert Webster.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Price on pole for his race return

MINI CHALLENGE

Former British Touring Car driver Josh Price made an instant impression on his debut Mini Challenge event when he took a double pole at Snetterton for his first race outing for nearly five years.

Price had not competed in cars since the conclusion of his 2019 British GT campaign, when he finished 12th in the GT4 standings in a TF Aston Martin. Before that he spent a season and a half in the BTCC, piloting a Subaru Levorg, and was a Renault UK Clio

Cup race winner in 2016.

The 25-year-old defied his lack of recent experience to top Mini qualifying by nearly half a second to land a double pole, although a clutch problem hampered the first of his races and he fell to seventh in the finale.

"I thought I would be up there but didn't expect that [double pole]," admitted Price, who now plans to complete the rest of the season after joining forces with Excelr8 Motorsport.

"We decided two weeks ago to get back into it. One of my sponsors,



Ex-BTCC driver had first car races for five years

Bennetts Car Parts, were interested in doing Minis and it ticked all the boxes for the exposure and level the series is at."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Clash with Abrahams triggered
the parc ferme altercation



British F4 driver Harrison has licence suspended after bust-up

BRITISH F4

British Formula 4 racer Bart Harrison is facing a Motorsport UK disciplinary hearing following a parc ferme altercation with Mika Abrahams at Snetterton last weekend.

Chris Dittmann Racing driver Harrison had been battling the Hitech GP racer for second place in race two when an ambitious move from Harrison at Murrays sent Abrahams spinning.

The South African was angry with Harrison and, according to officials, approached him in parc ferme after the race and “verbally abused” him. This provoked Harrison, who is said on the clerk of the course’s report to have

begun “pushing and striking” Abrahams.

Harrison was immediately disqualified from the entire weekend and had six penalty points applied to his licence. The stewards later opted to also suspend Harrison’s licence for 14 days and refer the matter “with urgency” to governing body Motorsport UK for further consideration. He therefore faces the prospect of a longer ban, if the clash is considered serious enough.

Prior to the Snetterton weekend, Harrison’s best result so far this year had been ninth at Brands Hatch. Regular frontrunner Abrahams, meanwhile, was left to rue lost points and slipped to seventh in the standings, 91 behind team-mate Deagen Fairclough.

RJN’S WATTS FORCED TO REMAIN ON THE SIDELINES

BRITISH GT

Team RJN’s Simon Watts missed another British GT round at Donington Park last weekend because of a compression fracture caused by his crash at the Silverstone 500 last month.

Watts oversteered into the barriers at Stowe during Friday testing for the Northamptonshire round, causing RJN to withdraw his McLaren 720S GT3 (below) from the weekend. The injury is now set to keep Watts sidelined until at least July, meaning he will skip the campaign’s fourth event at Spa next month.

“I’ve had better starts,” said Watts, who also missed the Oulton Park season-opener for family reasons. “I wish I could jump into the car today because I feel OK, I’ve just got pain – the risk is too high. It’s out of my control now so, there’s no point getting upset about it.”

Reserve driver Chris Buncombe raced alongside his brother Alex at Donington for the second time this year as a result, but the RJN pairing retired 45 minutes into the three-hour affair when Alex skidded off at a wet Redgate while running on slick tyres amid a sudden downpour.

“It was just really unfortunate,” said Alex, who was 13th at the time of the incident. “I had to be in first or second gear and I probably hit the [standing] water at 60, 70mph and it was just way too quick.”

Buncombe said the crash was made “more painful” because RJN told him he had the pace of a top three car, so the team was poised for a strong finish had the incident not occurred.

ED HARDY



TOCA Junior chassis clears stress tests

TOCA JUNIOR

Organisers of the new TOCA Junior series, which is due to join the British Touring Car bill next season, say that the championship has received the support of Motorsport UK’s Race Committee, and the chassis that will be used has passed stringent stress tests.

BTCC supremo Alan Gow first revealed his intention for a new junior series to replace

Ginetta Junior on the TOCA bill at the end of 2022. Dave Beecroft and his team, which also run Junior Saloons, were appointed to take charge of the series and a rear-wheel-drive saloon car is being developed.

Following its successful stress tests, it is expected that the car will soon get final approval from Motorsport UK’s technical department. The final bodywork and moulds for the car have now been

produced and it is due to begin initial track testing shortly, ahead of being unveiled at a BTCC event next month.

Series operations director Vickie MacClinton added: “We are delighted with the interest we have had from potential teams and drivers since the first announcement went out. We have had 20-plus teams showing initial interest along with 10 privateers.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Seaman plans charity drive in 1927 Bentley

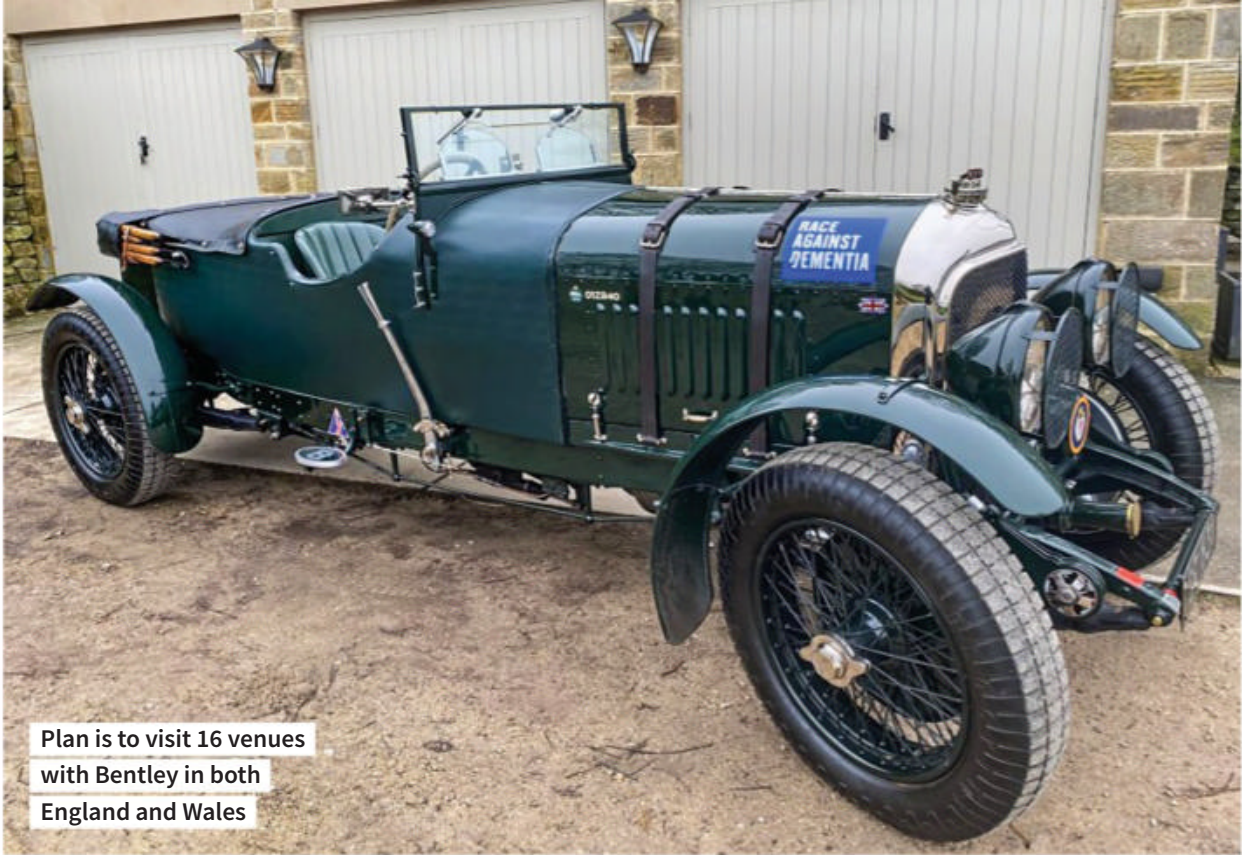
HISTORICS

Historic Sports Car Club single-seater and sportscar racer Steve Seaman will attempt to drive his 1927 Bentley on a lap of every circuit in England and Wales over the next week to raise funds for charity.

Seaman is raising money for the Race against Dementia charity in memory of his late father, who died two years ago from Alzheimer's Disease, and across six days plans to visit 16 tracks and relevant venues with the Bentley 4½ Litre.

As well as all 14 active circuits in England and Wales, he also plans to visit Brooklands and Llandow in South Wales, on a journey starting tomorrow (Friday) and finishing at Oulton Park on 5 June.

"I wanted to do a charity event for my late



father who died two years ago," said Seaman. "I knew we couldn't swim the Channel or row the Atlantic, so we came up with a drive to include every track in England and Wales."

The event is also to tell the story of his father and two uncles, who all served in the military. Brian, Steve's father, was the middle brother and drove Centurion and Comet Tanks for the 1st Tank regiment based in Hong Kong after the Second World War.

Norman, the eldest, served in World War II

on HMS Wishart, a destroyer based in the Mediterranean Sea that survived the war, and he died 10 years ago from Parkinson's Disease. Graham, the youngest, crewed Vulcan Bombers for the RAF as a radio operator until Vulcans were retired from service. He has symptoms of Alzheimer's.

"Dementia has touched many families," said Seaman. "If anyone feels they would like to join us for a section of the route, they will be most welcome."

KTM X-Bow GT4+ hits UK track but suffers crash

CASTLE COMBE GT

Tom Walpole intrigued the Castle Combe paddock when he campaigned a KTM X-Bow Evo GT4+ at last Monday's meeting, before it was

badly damaged in a crash.

The GT4+ had never been raced in the UK and, after receiving the car six weeks ago, Walpole had only raced it once before at the Classic Sports Car Club's Spa Summer

Classic meeting.

"Marc Kemp is my driving coach and he's driven KTMs quite a bit," explained Walpole. "As he recommended Reiter Engineering, we decided to go for it."

The GT4+ features upgrades over the standard GT4 model. It produces 440bhp instead of the original 360bhp, and has a larger splitter and rear wing, as well as a lighter floor. Walpole plans to get the car out in the CSCC Slicks Series later in the year after finding it enjoyable to drive.

"It drives really well, the wheelbase is short so the car is quite pointy on the front end," said Walpole. "Compared to the Ariel Atom I had earlier, it's slightly slower in chicanes when changing direction, probably due to the weight difference."

After Walpole qualified on Castle Combe GT pole, despite a misfire, the car was considerably damaged in an accident on the exit of Folly in race one that took Walpole out of the meeting.

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Manchester among Ginetta GT guest drivers at Donington

GINETTA GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Sportscar racer Jack Manchester made a one-off appearance in the Ginetta GT Championship at Donington Park last weekend as series organisers try to increase their small grids.

Manchester, who last raced in the European Le Mans Series LMP3 class in 2023, was one of three guest entries to join the Ginetta field. He scored a best result of sixth in race two for Pace Performance, despite being hampered by mechanical issues throughout the weekend.

"It wasn't planned, it was a last-minute thing," said Manchester. "Ginetta reached out to my manager, and they gave me the car and the entry. I was looking to test in sportscars this year, but this was quite a good-

value thing to do. It was like a test weekend for us but with races and qualifying.

Unfortunately, the car has come with a few issues, which hamstrung us a little bit.

"It's a lighter, slower car [than what he's used to], but it's a good car to dynamically focus on your driving – you've got to hustle it to get the most out of it."

Long-time BMW racer Callum Noble also cameoed for Xentek Racing, while karting graduate and Fun Cup competitor Gracie Mitchell, who initially planned to enter GB4 this year, is hoping to make more Ginetta appearances after taking a best finish of eighth on her debut for MDD Racing.

"It's like nothing I've ever driven before," she said. "I was surprised to get a podium in class. I really enjoyed the weekend."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Buzz Buzaglo 1940-2024

OBITUARY

Australian racer Buzz Buzaglo, whose exploits in Formula Ford and F3 kept British fans entertained in the early 1970s, has died in his native Melbourne, aged 83.

Buzz (real name John) started racing after featuring as an extra in the movie *Grand Prix* in 1966, where he got the bug. He acquired a Merlyn FF1600 car for 1970 but an early-season crash at Oulton Park broke a leg. By June, the repaired Merlyn carried him to his first win at Brands Hatch, followed by further promising results.

Armed with a Palliser in 1971 and an Elden in mid-1972, there were various wins, lap records and strong showings against fields that included future stars, among them Tony

Brise, but he found himself back in hospital again following a bad crash at Croft.

For 1973, Buzaglo competed in a limited programme of F3 events in Britain where a lack of testing hampered his efforts, although he did score a second place in a championship round at Castle Combe.

Most infamously, his drive in the 1974 F1-supporting F3 event in Monaco was taken by Tom Pryce, who would go on to take victory. Aside from some sportscar outings, Buzaglo stepped back from racing.

Some old contacts with the McLaren team enabled him to meet Ayrton Senna in 1993 in Adelaide, where he was gifted the winning champagne bottle, signed by the Brazilian, after his final F1 win.

MIKE DOODSON

COLBURN BACK TO CLIOS

Ben Colburn, the 2018 Michelin Clio Cup runner-up, will return to racing the French machines this season after signing up for the new-Clio Cup GB series, which is due to begin at Brands Hatch this weekend. The 2015 Junior Saloon champion will be back with his family Westbourne squad, where he will be joined by fellow ex-JSCC driver Leonardo Panayiotou. Richard Clarke, who has recently competed in the Trackday Trophy and Championship recently, has been announced at Finsport.

WALKER WALKS AWAY

Forty-eight years on from his first race in a Jim Russell Van Diemen Formula Ford, Robin Walker is hanging up his helmet after the MG Trophy round at Silverstone this weekend. Walker, aged 70, has raced in club series since 1988, mostly in MGs as well as some endurance outings, with the highlight a class win at Spa and victories aboard MGF and ZR 190 machines.

GROUP B AT MOTOEST

MotoFest Coventry's 10th anniversary will feature a celebration of Group B rally cars, as well as rounds of the British Automobile Racing Club's Sprint Championship and an appearance by the Vintage Sports-Car Club, as the latter celebrates its 90th birthday in 2024. The two-day event this weekend will feature dynamic displays of rally cars that competed between 1982-86, as well as from other periods of rallying.

AINTREE CELEBRATIONS

Aintree Circuit Club celebrated its 70th anniversary earlier this month, with a small demonstration taking place on what remains of the ex-Formula 1 circuit (below). A select group of enthusiasts from across motorsport were on hand to witness Andy Middlehurst lead the cars away in an ex-Jack Sears Ford Galaxie, the last car to win on the full circuit in 1964. He was joined by an Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar C-type and an original Mini raced in period at Aintree by Anita Taylor.



ACTUARIUS ART

Cronin returns to form with BRC Jim Clark victory

JIM CLARK RALLY
BRC
24-25 MAY

Keith Cronin is one of the most successful drivers in the history of the British Rally Championship with four titles to his name. Yet, after two rounds of this season, your money would have been placed elsewhere for the destiny of the 2024 crown.

But the Irishman and his Ford Fiesta Rally2 were back on form at last weekend's Jim Clark Rally, bagging a crucial victory and ensuring Cronin's hopes for a fifth title remain firmly alive.

Cronin entered into a battle with Chris Ingram from the outset, and it was the Volkswagen Polo driver who edged away over the opening loop on Friday. But, when the darkness descended, Cronin pounced.

The Cronin of old, which lay dormant in the first two rallies, was reignited when he went over 14 seconds faster than Ingram to close the gap heading into Saturday. And, after Ingram went off the road on Saturday morning, he needed only a steady drive through the Borders lanes to take the win.



"It's been a long time coming," said Cronin. "The first two rounds didn't go our way, but championships are long. This win gives us a fighting chance again."

It was 2023 Junior World Rally champion William Creighton who took yet another second place and the lead of the championship, while a trouble-free weekend for Garry Pearson netted him third position on home soil, ensuring a podium lock-out for the M-Sport Fiesta. Technical issues claimed a host of rivals,

while round two winner Osian Pryce ended his rally in the Langton watersplash.

The Junior BRC tussle was a two-horse race between the Fiesta of Ryan MacHugh and the Peugeot 208 of Kyle McBride. The young chargers swapped seconds across each one of the 14 stages in a fascinating tug of war. MacHugh's trip into a field in the darkness of Friday allowed McBride to edge away, and there he stayed to take his first JBRC win of the season.

MATT COTTON

O'Donovan powers faltering Peugeot to BRX glory

MONDELLO PARK
BRX
25-26 MAY

Reigning British Rallycross champion Patrick O'Donovan extended his lead in the 2024 standings with back-to-back victories on the series' visit to Mondello Park last weekend.

O'Donovan reverted to his title-winning Hansen Motorsport-built Peugeot 208 Supercar for the second instalment of the campaign, with Irish

rally legend Andrew Nesbitt taking the wheel of O'Donovan's Ford Fiesta for his return to competition. O'Donovan overcame a series of sub-optimal launches in the qualifying heats on the opening day, forcing him to battle through the field in a packed entry for the amalgamated British and Irish event. Regardless, he set the fastest time in each heat, won his semi-final from the front, and dominated the final to beat local Fiesta drivers Derek Tohill and John McCluskey to the finish.

O'Donovan was second fastest to 2021 British title winner Tohill in Q1 for the Sunday round, but retired with broken suspension after contact with the reigning Irish champion in Q2. Second fastest in Q3 lifted O'Donovan to fifth in the intermediate classification, despite a car running without power-steering, before battling to third in the first semi-final, finishing behind Tohill and Volkswagen Polo driver Shane Murphy.

In the final, the pack ran deep in the opening corner, where O'Donovan snuck through on the inside to take the lead, chased by Murphy. As O'Donovan hustled his hamstrung 208, Murphy couldn't make the most of a pace advantage, losing time in the joker section and ultimately finishing second to O'Donovan, but ahead of Tohill.

Ollie O'Donovan took fourth on both days, while Tohill secured a record eighth straight Irish Rallycross title by winning each of the Irish-only Superfinals.





DAVE DJ JONES/SANTA POD

More weather misery for Santa Pod competitors

SANTA POD
BRITISH DRAG RACING
25-27 MAY

Rain took the honours at Santa Pod, axing the fourth Pro Modified qualifying session on Sunday and interrupting eliminations throughout Monday, before curtailing the contest as the semi-finals approached. The event featured two Pro Mod rounds in a single race: the opening round of the FIA European Championship combined with round two of the Motorsport UK British Drag Racing Championship.



CALLUM PUDGE/SANTA POD

A month earlier, Andres Arnover had made his intentions clear. The Estonian brought his turbocharged Mustang to the opening British round to treat it as a test session towards his true goal, the FIA crown left vacant by triple conqueror Jan Ericsson's retirement. Arnover, reeling off 5.8s/252mph career-best figures before rain ended that race too, laid down an early-season marker to continental opponents who had yet to fire up in anger.

David Vegter is another likely challenger. The Dutchman had won last time out at September's European Finals, his first victory after years of close finishes, and opened his 2024 account by taking a comfortable pole position at 5.809s. Britain's Andy Robinson took second place at 5.892s allied to a British-best speed of 249.07mph, while Arnover, initially credited with third, found himself relegated to ninth after his 5.900s best was disqualified for a turbo infraction.

Three Nordic entries made UK Pro

Mod debuts. Finland's Jere Rantaniemi qualified third (5.919s) while clocking the event's top speed, 251.85mph. Stian Rusanen ran a career-best 6.089s for sixth in a colourful Willys-bodied machine from Norway, and Sweden's Andreas Sjodin placed 10th.

All six contenders negotiated Monday's first elimination round. The second round pitched Vegter against Arnover in a heavyweight clash many might have hoped to see gracing the final. Vegter's Camaro failed to hold still on the startline, and instant disqualification handed the win to Arnover. Robinson also sprang a red light loss to Sjodin, while Rusanen beat Rantaniemi. Elsewhere, Swiss veteran Bruno Bader defeated reigning British champion Bobby Wallace.

But for the rain, new faces Sjodin and Rusanen would have contested one intriguing semi-final bout, while Arnover and Bader would have faced off in the other.

ROBIN JACKSON

Summers shines before rain halts Gurston fun early

GURSTON DOWN
BRITISH HILLCLIMB
25-26 MAY

Alex Summers and Matthew Ryder were the winners as the British Hillclimb Championship arrived at Gurston Down for what was intended to be a quadruple-header.

Summers, in a striking return to absolute top form with his DJ Firestorm, won twice, Ryder won once, and

the British weather also won once as the weekend's final run-off at the Wiltshire hill was lost to the rain.

Ryder opened proceedings with his third win in three rounds, with Summers second. But then he had to play second fiddle while 2015 champion Summers drove superbly to win rounds four and five. Both times, Ryder chased hard and retained his early points lead in his Gould GR59. On a hill that

has not always been kind to him, Will Hall was consistently strong to bag three third places.

Then the rain arrived on Sunday afternoon and, with standing water on the very fast run to Hollow, time was called before the fourth run-off.

Others to shine over the weekend included Jack Cottrill with a career-best sixth in his DJ Dallara in the third contest, the ever-rapid Paul Haines and young Alex Coles,

who twice bagged points with a spectacular charge.

Reigning champion Wallace Menzies arrived at Gurston with a heavily rebuilt car after his accident at Craigantlet and bravely qualified fourth for the first run-off, only to be slowed by a fuel issue that left him out of the points. Menzies bounced back for two fifth-place finishes, but now has significant ground to make up in the title race.

PAUL LAWRENCE

TOCA SUPPORTS SNETTERTON 25-26 MAY

Zelos almost storms to quadruple glory

MINI CHALLENGE

Thunder, lightning and torrential rain all featured at Snetterton last weekend, but it was Dan Zelos who produced a storming performance on track as he came within half a second of clinching a quartet of Mini Challenge wins.

The reigning champion was in blistering form around his local circuit and the pick of his triumphs came in the dry third contest, his 100th series start. This featured a partially-reversed grid with Zelos fifth, but he soon slipped to seventh. “I made it very difficult for myself as I bottled the start,” admitted the Excelr8 driver. “But I got my head down and passed them one by one.”

On lap one his victim was Josh Porter, around the outside of Coram. On lap two he profited from Bradley Gravett’s wide moment. On lap three he went around the outside of Lydia Walmsley. And on the fourth lap he passed Jamie Osborne at Riches. By now he was third, but still 4s behind leader Max Hall – yet Zelos was far from done. “I could see Max and Nelson [King] had gone, I thought that was too far,” said Zelos. “All I could do was try.”



Sure enough, he zoomed towards King and made another sensational move around the outside of Coram. “I got to try it earlier with another of my team-mates [Porter],” explained Zelos. “I knew I had the grip there and it all came together.”

That just left Hall, who was battling gearbox problems. On the final lap, Zelos got around the outside of him at Brundle, which gave him the inside for Bomb Hole and a magnificent win. Hall then somehow saved a huge slide through Coram, but it cost him momentum and enabled King to snatch second on the line. Hall said the gearbox issue was “getting worse and

worse” and he got stuck in fifth gear on the last lap, so was relieved to still be third in the final reckoning.

He did get his win in the damp finale, resisting a rapidly closing Zelos to prevail by 0.445s. Earlier, Zelos won the rearranged Donington race after passing Ant Whorton-Eales (back to complete his guest weekend) when the Jamsport driver had a wobble at Turn 3 on the first lap and then usurping Osborne at Riches two tours later. He doubled up in race two, following an early scrap with King, extending his points lead to a mighty 146.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Further Ninovic/Fairclough controversy in British F4

BRITISH F4

Another British Formula 4 round produced another controversial moment involving title protagonists Deagen Fairclough and Alex Ninovic. After their Brands Hatch clash left Ninovic in the Clearways gravel, it was points leader Fairclough in the wars this time at Snetterton.

Ninovic initially held the lead of the dry finale but ran slightly wide at Turn 3 and Fairclough sensed an opportunity to pounce. But the Rodin racer was robust in his defence, moving across the track and Fairclough took to the grass and smashed into a Kwik Fit board, which damaged his Hitech car’s rear wing. Surprisingly, it was deemed a racing incident.

“I got a bit wide – from there, I could come across to defend the inside line,” said Ninovic. “I think Deagen got a bit stuck on the inside and ended up on the grass. There’s nothing I can do about that now.”

Ninovic therefore prevailed in a race that ended abruptly when torrential rain suddenly arrived, meaning only half points were awarded and limiting Fairclough’s losses in the title race.

Ninovic had also led team-mate James Higgins throughout a dull opener that featured a lengthy caution period. Later, Mercedes junior Yuanpu Cui dominated the reversed-grid encounter, while all eyes were on an entertaining battle behind. Bart Harrison hit second-placed Mika Abrahams at Murrays (triggering a parc ferme confrontation, see News) and simultaneous Oggies offs for Higgins and Ninovic meant Jack Sherwood and Fairclough were promoted to the podium.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP

Lulham romps to more Radical wins

RADICAL CUP UK

Anyone who thought Chris Lulham's brace of Radical Cup UK wins at Donington Park last month might be a one-off was left in no doubt of his ability at Snetterton – especially after his display in the wet fourth race, where he triumphed by a remarkable 40 seconds in a 20-minute contest.

The one blemish on the Esports star's



Lulham was a regular sight at the front of Radical field

otherwise perfect event came in the opener, which was the race postponed following the Donington deluge. Lulham was immediately on a charge in his Valour SR3 from seventh on the reversed grid but went straight on at Nelson on the first lap in the wet conditions, for which he was given a mid-race drive-through penalty for gaining an advantage. Lulham was baffled and a safety car period meant the sanction dropped him from contention. Instead, it was his team-mate Luke Hilton who took the spoils, despite being in the thick of his GCSE exams currently, from Oscar Joyce. Lulham was back on form thereafter, prevailing in each of the other three bouts. But the star of the third race on a slightly damp track was Ryan Lindsay as the SR1 pilot took advantage of the more durable treaded rubber in the secondary category to climb as high as third before the invitational driver pitted late on.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Coates on for Hopkins battle

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Seb Hopkins and Max Coates laid down early markers in the opening Porsche Sprint Challenge GB event at Snetterton as they shared the spoils. Coates only qualified third for the first race but was into the lead out of Riches as Will Jenkins made a very slow getaway from the front row and Coates dived ahead of Hopkins. But the Graves Motorsport driver's lead did not last long after a safety car period as he ran slightly wide at Oggies and Hopkins needed no second invitation. Behind, Ethan Hammerton made a similar move on Toby Trice to complete the podium. Coates also jumped into the lead at

the start of race two, but this time was able to stay there while Hopkins fell to fourth. He soon repassed Tom Bradshaw, when he ran off at Oggies, and jumped Team Parker stablemate Jenkins around the outside of Riches. But he could do nothing about Coates. The victorious pair then had a close scrap with Jenkins in the early stages of the finale. This time it was Coates' turn to lose out from pole, with Jenkins initially passing Hopkins for the lead at Wilson before they swapped places again at Agostini. Further around the lap, Coates brilliantly demoted Jenkins around the outside of Brundle and that was how they stayed to the flag.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Hopkins leads Coates as they were early Cayman pacesetters

RACE RESULTS

MINI CHALLENGE

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Dan Zelos; 2 Jamie Osborne +2.966s; 3 Dominic Wheatley; 4 Nathan Edwards; 5 Bradley Gravett; 6 Max Hall. **Fastest lap** Osborne 2m20.673s (75.97mph). **Pole** Tom Ovenden. **Starters** 19. **Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Zelos;** 2 Nelson King +3.611s; 3 Lydia Walmsley; 4 Osborne; 5 Hall; 6 Josh Porter. **FL** Zelos 2m04.694s (85.71mph). **P** Josh Price. **S** 22. **Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Zelos;** 2 King +0.193s; 3 Hall; 4 Osborne; 5 Wheatley; 6 Walmsley. **FL** Wheatley 2m05.192s (85.37mph). **P** Hall. **S** 21. **Race 4 (9 laps) 1 Hall;** 2 Zelos +0.445s; 3 Wheatley; 4 King; 5 Osborne; 6 Gravett. **FL** Zelos 2m18.424s (77.21mph). **P** Price. **S** 20. **Points 1 Zelos 450;** 2 Hall 304; 3 Wheatley 297; 4 Osborne 294; 5 King 266; 6 Lewis Selby 258.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Alex Ninovic; 2 James Higgins +1.694s; 3 Deagen Fairclough; 4 Jack Sherwood; 5 Reza Seewooruthun; 6 Joel Bergstrom. **FL** Ninovic 2m07.377s (83.91mph). **P** Ninovic. **S** 22. **Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Yuanpu Cui;** 2 Sherwood +2.122s; 3 Fairclough; 4 Ninovic; 5 Abbi Pulling; 6 Bergstrom. **FL** Fairclough 2m08.926s (82.90mph). **P** Mika Abrahams. **S** 22. **Race 3 (5 laps) 1 Ninovic;** 2 Sherwood +1.150s; 3 Higgins; 4 Bergstrom; 5 Seewooruthun; 6 Rowan Campbell-Pilling. **FL** Ninovic 1m50.763s (96.49mph). **P** Ninovic. **S** 21. **Points 1 Fairclough 140;** 2 Ninovic 105; 3 Higgins 92.5; 4 Sherwood 81; 5 Pulling 56; 6 Seewooruthun 53.

RADICAL CUP UK

Race 1 (8 laps) 1 Luke Hilton; 2 Oscar Joyce +14.828s; 3 Chris Preen; 4 James Pinkerton; 5 John Macleod; 6 Peter Tyler. **FL** Chris Lulham 2m09.863s (82.30mph). **P** Tyler. **S** 18. **Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Lulham;** 2 Hilton +3.287s; 3 Jason Rishover; 4 Macleod; 5 Joyce; 6 Jack Yang. **FL** Pinkerton 1m49.101s (97.96mph). **P** Lulham. **S** 18. **Race 3 (14 laps) 1 Lulham;** 2 Hilton +12.797s; 3 Tyler; 4 Preen; 5 Macleod; 6 Rishover. **FL** Lulham 1m59.182s (89.67mph). **P** Lulham. **S** 18. **Race 4 (10 laps) 1 Lulham;** 2 Hilton +40.464s; 3 Macleod; 4 Preen; 5 Joyce; 6 Sam Shaw. **FL** Lulham 2m07.862s (83.59mph). **P** Preen. **S** 17.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Seb Hopkins; 2 Max Coates (below) +2.394s; 3 Ethan Hammerton; 4 Will Jenkins; 5 Tom Bradshaw; 6 Toby Trice. **FL** Hopkins 1m53.584s (94.10mph). **P** Hopkins. **S** 23. **Race 2 (10 laps) 1 Coates;** 2 Hopkins +5.390s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Bradshaw; 5 Robert Cronin; 6 Trice. **FL** Coates 2m08.036s (83.47mph). **P** Hopkins. **S** 22. **Race 3 (10 laps) 1 Hopkins;** 2 Coates +1.023s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Bradshaw; 5 Cronin; 6 Trice. **FL** Hopkins 2m08.107s (83.43mph). **P** Coates. **S** 22. **Points 1 Hopkins 31;** 2 Coates 27; 3 Jenkins 17; 4 Bradshaw 14; 5 Hammerton 10; 6 Cronin 10.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Mitchell and Martin move to the top as they win ‘craziest race’

DONINGTON PARK
BRITISH GT
25-26 MAY

Sandy Mitchell and Alex Martin claimed the British GT points lead after staging a late comeback to win a frantic three-hour contest at Donington Park last weekend.

The Barwell Motorsport duo triumphed from pole position, but it was never plain sailing because all four weather seasons practically hit Donington, leading to two red flag stoppages and seven safety car periods.

Barwell's #78 car lost its lead early on before dropping as low as seventh during the middle stages, until others' retirements and mega pace helped Mitchell/Martin retake first in the final minutes. "I can't believe we just won the craziest race," said Mitchell, who now has a 9.5-point championship lead after four rounds. "On paper, when we look back, it says pole and win, but that doesn't tell 95% of the story – it's been absolutely crazy."

The weekend was British weather in a nutshell. Mitchell/Martin took pole in the beaming sun, but a sudden downpour

hit during Sunday's formation lap while cars were running on slick tyres. It prompted race control to signal a red flag, so teams could switch to wets on the grid and start under safety car conditions after a 10-minute delay. All appeared normal as drivers kept position yet RAM Racing, starting seventh, chose a different strategy.

At the end of the opening lap, it switched John Ferguson for Raffaele Marciello so the World Endurance Championship Hypercar star was against amateur drivers. Although this allowed Marciello to repeatedly set purple sectors in his BMW when conditions turned green after five minutes, RAM acted too early as it had to pit again for slicks within the next half hour.

Up at the front, Martin dropped to fourth after struggling for pace amid the drying conditions as Rob Collard aboard Barwell's other Lamborghini Huracan became the leader. But that didn't last for long, as Rob's son Ricky was overtaken by erstwhile championship leader Adam Smalley's Garage 59 McLaren – which later served a 20-second compensation penalty for its victory at Silverstone – and Mitchell during the next stint.



It was a Barwell Lambo 1-2 in the early stages as Martin led Collard

Yet chaos suddenly descended 45 minutes into the race when the heavens reopened. It meant drivers had slick tyres on an extremely wet track and, like a well-rehearsed synchronised swimming team, cars skidded off at Redgate one after the other. This included RJN's Alex Buncombe, who described himself as "a complete passenger" because "in all my years of racing, which is nearly 20 now, I've never been in those conditions with a slick on that amount of water".

He clipped a gravel-struck Seb Morris's GT4 Mercedes while heading into the barrier, forcing both cars to retire. A safety car was first signalled before a red flag 12 minutes later, but there was confusion, even some anger, among drivers that this was not done earlier as various cars were stuck.

However, race control believed it was important to not throw a red flag too early, as it wanted to thoroughly assess the situation before making a decision.



Gamble shone late on to take second in McLaren



Keen missed out on record-breaking win

OPTIMUM RESULT FOR McLAREN PAIR WHILE RIVALS STRUGGLE AT DONINGTON

Zac Meakin and Jack Brown overcame their 20-second success penalty at Donington Park to seal a surprise second British GT4 victory on the bounce.

The Optimum Motorsport duo had strong pace throughout, but benefited from mistakes and retirements elsewhere to add to their Silverstone 500 win. It moves the McLaren Artura pair into the championship lead, as their title rivals suffered as Donington threw all kinds of obstacles into the mix.

"Pretty impressive," said Optimum boss Shaun Goff, whose drivers now hold a 26-point advantage. "It was an amazing result and

unfortunate for some of our rivals who had a much more difficult race. So it really stuck us out in the championship and that's mega going into the next round at Spa."

Stuart Middleton and Freddie Tomlinson pipped Optimum to pole, but DTO's joy was short-lived as a brake disc failure on its Ginetta G56 soon cost the team on its series return. This coincided with the Redgate drama when rain returned 45 minutes into the three-hour race, meaning cars suddenly had slick tyres on a very wet track.

The deluge caused the end of Team Parker's outing as Seb Morris slid into the gravel despite braking "about 100 metres early". As his

championship fight took a big hit, so did that of former leaders Jamie Day and Mikey Porter when their Aston Martin left its pitbox too early amid the drama.

Forsetti boss Joe Holloway labelled it a "communication error", as their whopping 64s stop/go penalty left Meakin leading from Paddock's Alex Walker in the latter stages. But Paddock's strategy cost it a chance of victory, as its McLaren was the only frontrunner to pit just before the final full-course yellow – during which Optimum served its compensation time and driver change.

Brown was now third behind Forsetti's Will

RACE RESULTS

GT3

(94 laps) 1 Alex Martin/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2), below; 2 Mark Radcliffe/Tom Gamble (McLaren 720S GT3 Evo) +0.597s; 3 Ian Loggie/Phil Keen (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo); 4 Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren); 5 Rob Collard/Ricky Collard (Lamborghini); 6 Michael Johnston/Daniel Harper (BMW M4 GT3). **Fastest lap** Gamble 1m26.868s (103.08mph). **Pole** Martin/Mitchell. **Starters** 20. **Points 1 Martin/Mitchell 77.5;** 2 Collard/Collard 68; 3 Shaun Balfe/Adam Smalley (McLaren) 65.5; 4 Loggie/Keen 61.5; 5 Radcliffe/Gamble 57; 6 Tillbrook/Clutton 46.5.

GT4

(90 laps) 1 Jack Brown/Zac Meakin (McLaren Artura GT4); 2 Marc Warren/Will Orton (Aston Martin Vantage GT4 Evo) +3.348s; 3 Kavi Jundu/Dan Vaughan (Toyota GR Supra GT4 Evo); 4 Blake Angliss/Alex Walker (McLaren); 5 Harry George/Luca Hopkinson (Mercedes-AMG GT4); 6 Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones (Ford Mustang GT4). **FL** Nicoll-Jones 1m34.745s (94.51mph). **P** Stuart Middleton/Freddie Tomlinson (Ginetta G56 GT4 Evo). **S** 18. **Points 1 Brown/Meakin 102;** 2 Mikey Porter/Jamie Day (Aston) 76; 3 Warren/Orton 72; 4 Charles Dawson/Seb Morris (Mercedes) 61; 5 Ian Duggan/Gordie Mutch (Lotus Emira) 30.5; 6 George/Hopkinson 29.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP

The red flag caused a 41-minute stoppage, and racing resumed with 2h3m left on the clock while the track was still damp.

When cars ahead made their mandatory pitstop, Collard Sr reclaimed the lead ahead of Ian Loggie (2 Seas) and Simon Orange, whose teams had both benefited from a strong opening stint and good strategy through the pitstops. This order remained during another two caution periods for incidents further back. A final round of pitstops was then triggered with 62 minutes left when Kevin Tse collided into Orange's McLaren down the inside of Starkey's Bridge, causing a full-course yellow.

It also resulted in a change for the lead, as 2 Seas jumped ahead of Barwell in the pitlane when Loggie handed the Mercedes over to Phil Keen. Another FCY – this time for Martin Plowman spinning at Redgate after a collision with Marciello – meant the final stint only settled as there were 38 minutes left with cars back on slicks.

Mitchell and Optimum's Tom Gamble

were both quick and passed Collard Jr within five minutes of the restart before pressurising Keen, who was on course for a record-breaking 20th GT3 victory.

The top three were tied together over the next 22 minutes, during which point 2 Seas survived an investigation into one of its pitstops. But if that didn't cost the Merc pair the lead, then Keen going wide at Coppice did as Mitchell moved down the inside with eight minutes left.

Keen dropped another position with three laps to go when Gamble overtook him at the Old Hairpin, before then staging a late charge on Mitchell. But it was too late, as the McLaren Gamble shared with Mark Radcliffe finished half a second behind Mitchell/Martin, who became the first pairing to win twice this year. Mitchell said he "was really proud of that last stint by doing a couple of overtakes when the pressure was on", as he seeks to repeat his 2020 title success.

ED HARDY

Orton and Toyota's Dan Vaughan. But Toyota was next to fall, as it served a stop/go for cutting a second off its final stop. It left only two fighting for victory and a rapid Brown overtook Orton down the inside of Melbourne Hairpin with half an hour left.

Holloway said the McLaren "just had such a pace advantage", as Brown eventually pulled 3.3s clear of Orton to ensure Optimum became the first team to win twice overall in GT4 this year. Vaughan/Kavi Jundu completed the podium, with Walker/Blake Angliss and Luca Hopkinson/Harry George (RAM Mercedes) rounding off the top five.

ED HARDY



Brown and Meakin profited as other top pairings dropped out



Joslyn has now moved to the head of the points standings after his Donington success

JEP

Fernandez left chasing Joslyn as he misses out on two victories

DONINGTON PARK
BRSCC
25-26 MAY

Despite leading at the end of all three of last weekend's Ginetta Junior contests, Chase Fernandez came away from Donington Park with just one victory, while Henry Joslyn scored a double triumph to claim the series lead.

Fernandez was involved in an opening-race skirmish with Joslyn, who received a nudge from Charlie Hart behind to draw alongside the R Racing driver for the lead into Coppice. A door-banging squabble followed before Joslyn was pushed off the road and, after finishing 2.4 seconds clear, Fernandez was given a post-race penalty and demoted to second behind the Preptech UK racer.

Joslyn led a damp sequel, while Fernandez slipped to third at the start behind Hart before the safety car was deployed. After running wide and slipping to second at the restart, Joslyn immediately reclaimed the lead through the Craner Curves from Hart, who then lost further ground to Fernandez and Marcus Saeter.

Fernandez snatched the lead from Joslyn at Melbourne hairpin on the penultimate lap but, after an incident at the Fogarty esses triggered a red flag, Fernandez was denied victory again due to the results being counted back by one lap.

After taking the lead moments before another safety car period, Fernandez then held off Joslyn and Isaac Phelps following the restart to finally seal victory in a dry finale.

Points leader Linus Granfors took his fourth consecutive win with Fortec Motorsport in the GB4 opener after resisting a late charge from KMR Sport driver Brandon McCaughan, while Liam McNeilly finished third on his one-off return to the series with Fox Motorsport.

McNeilly led race two as a slow start dropped Granfors to fourth. But it was McCaughan who mastered the greasy conditions to take the lead at the Craner Curves and pull 5.6s clear for his second triumph of the season. Harry Burgoyne lost third with an excursion at Redgate, but reclaimed his place on the podium with a final-lap pass on Granfors, who also fell behind Finn Harrison before the finish. Harrison was later excluded for causing a crash at the start involving three others, including his Elite Motorsport team-mate Alisha Palmowski, who remarkably still took ninth despite wrestling a suspension-damaged car.

Branden Templeton (Fox) scored a comfortable maiden triumph in the reversed-grid contest, while Callum Baxter and Palmowski both climbed six places to finish second and third.

Car racing rookie James Nicholas

WEEKEND WINNERS

GINETTA JUNIOR

Races 1 & 2 Henry Joslyn

Race 3 Chase Fernandez

GB4

Race 1 Linus Granfors

Race 2 Brandon McCaughan

Race 3 Branden Templeton

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Race 1 Luke Shaw

Races 2 & 3 James Nicholas

GINETTA GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Mckenzie Douglass

CATERHAM SEVEN UK

Race 1 William Smith

Race 2 Wes Payne

Race 3 Lewis Thompson

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Templeton took maiden
GB4 win in the finale



once again starred with two more Ginetta GT Academy wins, but he retired from the opener after suffering suspension damage in lap-one contact at Redgate, with Luke Shaw victorious.

Mckenzie Douglass extended his Ginetta GT Championship lead by winning all three races, with Nick White and Luke Garlick finishing behind him in the first two contests, Garlick boosting his own title hopes with second in the finale.

Caterham's Seven UK Championship made its first appearance on the Grand Prix circuit in five years and provided some thrilling action. Reigning champion Lewis Thompson and William Smith both did their hopes of taking a second crown no harm by scoring a victory each, with Wes Payne the other winner after he benefited from a slick-tyre gamble in race two.

STEVE WHITFIELD

Walker's wins anything but an FF1600 stroll

CASTLE COMBE
CCRC
27 MAY

A tense opening Formula Ford race was a true highlight of Monday's Castle Combe Carnival event. Alex Walker's Van Diemen RF01 led from lights to flag, but that doesn't illustrate the battle he had on his hands keeping Felix Fisher (Ray) and Luke Cooper (Swift) at bay.

Cooper got close, especially on the opening lap when he tried to pass Walker around the outside of Quarry, but the British GT driver held him off in decisive fashion. It was reigning champion Fisher who finished second and, although he made his own attempts to unseat Walker at Quarry, his focus then shifted to not losing out to Cooper behind. Cooper had to settle for third even though he tried his hardest to retake second, as evidenced by his excursion onto the rumble strip at the chicane and the bent trackrod that followed.

Race two was equally close, even if the action was slightly subdued due to yellow flags being permanently displayed from Bobbies to the start/finish line. Barrier damage following the first Clio Sport race of the day meant that, without the constant yellow flags, the meeting couldn't continue. After some damper changes, Walker won from Fisher, with Cooper third again.

The other Combe-based championship in action was the GT category and the Ferrari 488 of Doug Watson took the spoils in race one as Keith Butcher's Lamborghini Huracan followed him home. Watson blasted into the lead from second place on the grid even though he had contact with polesitter Tom Walpole's KTM before the race had even begun. On lap five, however, Walpole had an incident that



Walker faced threats from Fisher (left) and Cooper

STEVE JONES

involved Dylan Popovic on the exit of Folly that took them both out of the race and ended their meeting early due to the damage. Watson held off Butcher following the restart, with Josh Smith in his Hayabusa-powered Caterham third. Race two was a tamer affair where Butcher took the win from the Ginettas of Simon Griffiths and Chris Everill.

There was no catching Dan Brown in the 750 Motor Club's Hot Hatch brigade as he took both victories in his bewinged Honda Civic, with Mohamed Benlaadar second. But Brown was later excluded for overtaking under yellow flags, promoting Benlaadar's Civic. Shay Kavanagh did well to finish second in his battered Civic following a big shunt during Thursday testing, which ended with the car up on its side.

Brown could not be denied second time around when he comfortably drove away from the field again with Benlaadar second, while third fell to Adam Brown's Ford Fiesta. Brown explained that some tweaks to his machine helped unlock much greater speed of late. "Basically, two shock absorbers weren't doing anything!" he said.

"After I swapped those out, the car's been going really well."

The first Clio Sport race was stopped after just three laps following a big incident on the approach to Camp Corner for Chris Page, which resulted in the severe barrier damage that affected the racing throughout the rest of the day. Peter O'Connor's 182 was ahead at the time from the 197s of Chris Lawrence and Darren Ransom. Justin Griffiths's 197 then took top spot in the sequel, followed by Lawrence and O'Connor.

MACIEJ HAMERA

RACE WINNERS

CCRC FORMULA FORD 1600

Races 1 & 2 Alex Walker (Van Diemen RF01)

CCRC GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Doug Watson (Ferrari 488, below)

Race 2 Keith Butcher
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)

750MC HOT HATCH

Race 1 Mohamed Benlaadar (Honda Civic)

Race 2 Dan Brown (Honda Civic)

750MC CLIO SPORT

Race 1 Peter O'Connor (182)

Race 2 Justin Griffiths (197)

750MC TYPE R TROPHY

Race 1 Matt Wilkins

Race 2 Joe Jessup



STEVE JONES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



STEVE JONES

Wrigley's mint weekend with Tyrrell double

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR MASTERS HISTORIC RACING
25-26 MAY

Back behind the wheel of the ex-Michele Alboreto Tyrrell 011 he first raced at Paul Ricard earlier this season, Matt Wrigley recorded a superb double win in the pair of Masters Racing Legends contests held at Brands Hatch last Sunday as the series for 1966-85 Formula 1 cars thrilled the crowds at the circuit's annual Masters Historic Festival meeting.

Wrigley, who competed in a March 721G and Penske PC3 at the Monaco Historique a fortnight ago, may have claimed a lights-to-flag success in the opener but Japanese driver Yutaka Toriba, having his maiden outing in a Williams FW07C, never allowed Wrigley any time to relax. Less than a second separated the pair at the flag. Third place was taken by Simon Fish in his Arrows A4 after he withstood a late challenge from the McLaren MP4/1 of multiple series champion Steve Hartley, who had powered his way up from the fourth row.

Wrigley's success in the second contest owed a lot to a collision between poleman Hartley and Toriba as the pair emerged from the Grand Prix loop at the end of the second tour. Hartley's car was left beached in the Clearways gravel, while Toriba was forced into retirement with accident damage. A brief safety car period followed before Wrigley pulled clear of Fish to seal a double triumph, while Mark Harrison claimed his first ever Masters podium by taking third in his ex-Elio de Angelis Shadow DN9.

Keith Frieser was another driver to claim two wins across the weekend, in the Endurance Legends double-header. Driving the Ginetta-Zytek 09S that was once run for



Ex-Alboreto
 Tyrrell (left)
 won after threat
 from Toriba
 (right)

Nigel Mansell and his sons Leo and Greg by Beechdean Motorsport, Frieser came under intense pressure from the Norma Duqueine D08 of Jack Fabby and Alfie Briggs in the early stages of both races. 'Elite driver' penalties for Fabby eventually helped Frieser pull clear and claim two dominant victories. Fabby and Briggs took second in the first event, but suspected fuel problems in the closing moments of race two allowed Mike Newton to snatch second in the same MG Lola EX264 he took to LMP2 class glory at Le Mans in 2005 alongside Tommy Erdos and Warren Hughes.

For the third year in succession, 2016 British Touring Car runner-up Sam Tordoff took victory in the well-supported Pre-'66 Touring Car event at the wheel of his Ford Falcon Sprint, although he admitted that a mid-race caution period aided his cause in getting the better of Michael Whitaker Jr's Ford Mustang. Knowing he would have to stay stationary in the pits longer to serve

an 'elite driver' penalty, Tordoff built up a big lead in the early laps in an attempt to reduce the time he would inevitably lose to Whitaker at his mandatory stop. As events transpired, however, a mid-race caution enabled Tordoff to negate any time loss. After regaining his lead at Paddock within seconds of the race resuming, Tordoff ran out a comfortable victor. Whitaker duly took second just ahead of the John Spiers/Nigel Greensall Mustang, despite rear tyre wear concerns.

Whitaker was triumphant in the Gerry Marshall Trophy race, in which his Rover SD1 prevailed after a fabulous four-way lead battle that also involved Spiers and Greensall in their Ford Capri Hermetite, Whitaker's father Mike in his SD1 and the Faberge Capri of Porsche Carrera Cup GB star Charles Rainford. Track conditions became slippery after oil from Nick Swift's Mini 1275 GT was deposited at Graham Hill Bend, and Whitaker Sr was among many drivers to experience hairy moments during the 45-minute contest, but he was able to take third as the race concluded, behind Spiers/Greensall but ahead of Rainford.

Spiers and Greensall were also part of an exciting duel for the lead in the opening Masters Sports Car Legends race, but problems for them and closest challengers Guy Jeynes-Ellis/Matt Manderson (GRD 74S) ensured that neither would top the podium come the finish.

Suspension issues in their McLaren M1B forced Spiers and Greensall onto the sidelines, while problems firing their car up when Manderson came in for his mandatory stop to hand over to Jeynes-Ellis



Frieser's Ginetta was
 another double victor



WEEKEND WINNERS

MASTERS RACING LEGENDS FOR 1966-85 FORMULA 1 CARS

Races 1 & 2 Matt Wrigley (Tyrrell 011)

MASTERS ENDURANCE LEGENDS

Races 1 & 2 Keith Frieser (Ginetta-Zytek 09S)

MASTERS PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

Sam Tordoff (Ford Falcon Sprint, below)

GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY

Mike Whitaker Jr (Rover SD1)

MASTERS SPORTS CAR LEGENDS

Races 1 & 2 Paul Cope (March 75S)

GENTLEMEN DRIVERS

Dan Eagling (Ginetta G4R)

MASTERS GT TROPHY

Race 1 Craig Wilkins
(Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo Evo)

Race 2 Neil Glover/Aaron Scott
(Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo Evo)



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

pushed the GRD duo back to third. Paul Cope was the grateful beneficiary, and he steered his March 75S to victory ahead of James Claridge's Lola T296. Cope completed the double in race two, despite receiving a penalty for pitlane speeding, while Spiers and Greensall came home second after charging through from the back.

MARK LIBBETER



JABOUILLE JR IN FITTIPALDI Victor Jabouille, son of the late former Renault and Ligier Formula 1 driver Jean-Pierre, made his first UK Masters Historic Festival appearance last weekend at the wheel of a 1980 Fittipaldi F8. The car, designed by Harvey Postlethwaite and the first F1 car to have input from Adrian Newey when he was a junior aerodynamicist, was first driven by Jabouille in the Masters event held at Paul Ricard last month. The French youngster recorded a best result of seventh at Brands.



BRABHAM BACK AT BRANDS A week after claiming an emotional GT Cup win at Brands Hatch at the wheel of his Brabham BT62, 2009 Le Mans winner David Brabham was back in action again at the Kent circuit last weekend when he shared a Jaguar E-type with Gary Pearson in the Gentlemen Drivers event. Brabham, whose GT Cup win came a decade after his father Sir Jack died, ran sixth in the early part of the 80-minute race, but serving an 'elite driver' penalty meant the duo fell to 11th.



GRD TURNS HEADS Among the cars to catch the eye on the Masters Sports Car Legends grid was the ex-Targa Florio GRD 74S driven by Guy Jeynes-Ellis and Matt Manderson. Powered by a Ford-Cosworth engine, the GRD was originally built by British firm Group Racing Developments, and raced in the Italian endurance event in 1974, finishing fifth. Now restored in period livery, it took a pair of thirds at Brands, despite enduring a lengthy pitstop in race one when the car required a bump start.

FINISHING STRAIGHT



F1 24: Evolution not revolution



VIDEO GAME REVIEW

F1 24

EA Sports/Codemasters
PC (Steam, Epic Game Store, EA App), PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S
RRP: £59.99 (Standard Edition), £79.99 (Champions Edition)

F1 24 is the latest entry in Codemasters' and EA Sports' long-running Formula 1 game series and features all the teams, circuits, drivers and cars from the 2024 season, alongside a full suite of 2023 Formula 2 content (the 2024 F2 grid will arrive in a post-launch update).

The developers have stuck with Codemasters' proprietary Ego game engine for *F1 24*, so players shouldn't expect radically improved visuals, despite long-overdue graphical overhauls for tracks such as Spa-Francorchamps.

There are still disappointing rough edges on older track models such as Monza and the Hungaroring, with occasional screen freezes cropping up during cross-play online modes. But the game generally runs smoothly, despite lacking the kind of polish you'd expect from a 2024 title.

The overall presentation is suitably slick, though, featuring Sky Sports F1 stalwarts Natalie Pinkham, Anthony Davidson and – of course – 'Crofty', making players feel like they're about to watch a real F1 event

(although players can swap Crofty for F2 broadcaster Alex Jacques if preferred).

Car handling has also been tweaked, with a new 'Dynamic Handling' system designed to produce more 'realistic and predictable performance' on both gamepad and steering wheel controllers.

In practice, the new suspension, tyre and aero models seem to be weighted more towards gamepad users, which is understandable given how most *F1 24* players will use a pad. With all assists turned off, traction zones are now easier to master, while kerbs seem to be a benign presence in all but the most extreme cases: the Variante Tamburello and Gresini sausage kerbs at Imola can be monstered, for example, making gamepad progress much less frustrating.

Many hardcore F1 enthusiasts will prefer to use a steering wheel and, while handling feels mostly intuitive (after extensive force feedback adjustments), cars feel very 'on-the-nose' to drive, with initial oversteer trending towards mid-corner understeer. It may not be to everyone's taste, but after some acclimatisation it provides a predictable platform to help tackle the game's extensive career mode

(there's no 'Braking Point' story content this time round – it's a biennial occurrence).

Not much has changed compared to its predecessors in this respect: players run specific practice session programmes set by their engineers, earning upgrade points to help improve their car. Additional buffs are also supplied by fulfilling objectives for the new-for-2024 Specialists – personnel with specific skills – who come and go throughout the season. Doing well increases the new 'Driver Recognition' stat, helping attract prospective employers.

For the first time, players can choose to drive as one of the F1 grid, with each driver's rating – including your own – increasing or decreasing throughout a season. The effects of these new additions are mostly skin-deep, however.

The new Challenge Career mode adds intriguing, bite-sized scenarios, with online leaderboards ranking the top-scoring players. More will be added throughout the season too, with the returning F1 World and My Team modes continuing to offer interesting diversions from the main single-player career.

Microtransactions are present (but optional), with the



WHAT'S ON

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


ABBOTT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

2024 Indy 500 review – Newgarden beats O'Ward to go back-to-back

The 108th running of the Indianapolis 500 was a dramatic affair from start to finish with Josef Newgarden securing back-to-back victories through a last lap pass on Pato O'Ward.

Joey Barnes joins Steph Wentworth on the Autosport Podcast to discuss all the action from what will go down as an all-time classic.

**INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT****Rally Italy Sardinia****World Rally Championship****Round 6/13**

Sardinia, Italy

30 May–2 June

TV Live TNT Sports 3, Fri 1330, 1630, 1730, TNT Sports 4, Sat 0630, 0930, 1230, 1400, 1600, 1700, Sun 0645, 0800, 1000, 1100

TV Highlights TNT Sports 1, Fri 2330, TNT Sports 2, Sat 2230, TNT Sports 3, Sun 2015

Italian Grand Prix**MotoGP****Round 7/21**

Mugello, Italy

1–2 June

TV Live TNT Sports 2, Sat 1330, Sun 1215

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

IndyCar**Round 6/15**

Detroit, USA

2 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1700

Indy NXT**Round 4/12**

Detroit, USA

2 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1520

Nurburgring 24 Hours**Intercontinental GT Challenge****Round 2/4**

Nurburgring, Germany

1–2 June

Livestream via Motorsport.tv, Sat 1345

Super GT**Round 3/8**

Suzuka, Japan

2 June

Livestream via Motorsport.tv, Sun 0515

IMSA SportsCar**Round 5/11**

Detroit, USA

1 June

Livestream via IMSA.tv, Sat 2000

NASCAR Cup Series**Round 15/36**

St Louis, USA

2 June

TV Live Premier 2, Sun 2000

NASCAR Xfinity Series**Round 13/33**

Portland, USA

1 June**NASCAR Truck Series****Round 13/23**

St Louis, USA

1 June**GB3****Round 3/8**

Spa, Belgium

1–2 June

Livestream via gb-3.net, Sat 2100 & 1500, Sun 1200

UK MOTORSPORT**Silverstone CSCC****1 June**

Classic K/Jaguar Challenge, MG Trophy/Jaguar Championship, Midget & Sprite Challenge, Special Saloons & Modsports/Future Classics, Swinging Sixties

Brands Hatch MSVR**1 June**

7 Racing (270R, 310R, 420R), Clio Cup GB, Sports 2000, Snetterton Saloons

Oulton Park 750MC**1 June**

116 Trophy, Armed Forces Challenge, BMW Car Club, F1000, Historic 750 Formula, Ultimate BMWs

Livestream via [alphalive.co.uk](https://www.alphalive.co.uk)

Snetterton MSVR**1–2 June**

Clubmans Sports Prototypes, Production GTIs, GT Cup, Lotus Cup UK

Livestream via YouTube

Knockhill KMSC**1–2 June**

Legends, Minis, Modified Fords, Modsports, Northern Saloons & Sports Cars, Super Lap Scotland

British Hillclimb Championship**Round 4/14**

Shelsley Walsh

1–2 June

F1 24 is a step forward but doesn't wow us. A bit like an Alpine aero update?

F124EASPORTS

much-derided supercars now a thing of the past.

Is *F1 24* worth buying if you already own *F1 23*? There are few genuine innovations to make it stand out from its predecessor. The Challenge Career is an interesting but limited addition; the reworked handling model is divisive yet forgiving; and the effects of the Driver Recognition and Driver Rating systems have very little bearing on players' career mode choices.

The remodelled circuits bring the series up to modern F1 standards, however, and although the career mode is similar to previous incarnations it still provides an interesting and immersive challenge.

If you're completely new to the *F1* series, or have skipped a couple of entries, *F1 24* provides an authentic hit of F1-themed action, with a forgiving handling model appealing to the vast majority of players. This may alienate those seeking a more visceral driving experience, however.

ROSS MCGREGOR



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INTRODUCING



UNITED AUTOSPORTS

CHRIS OWEN/IMSPHOTO

NICOLAS COSTA

The Brazilian has defied the odds, and a lack of budget, to race on the world stage

Autosport has occasionally ridden in an Uber with a driver who believed they had missed their calling as a racing driver. But unlike most such individuals, Nicolas Costa had a valid case in 2015.

The Brazilian, now racing for McLaren partner team United Autosports in the World Endurance Championship, was then facing the prospect of his motorsport dreams hitting a dead end – and not for the first time. He'd rebounded from losing his biggest sponsor after winning the 2012 European Formula Abarth championship (from future F2 race winner and recent IndyCar debutant Luca Ghiotto), getting back into single-seaters and winning a Pro Mazda race in 2014, but a deal to continue what he calls "an unbelievable experience" collapsed.

"I had a seat [for 2015] but I lost it because a driver with a lot of budget came in," Costa relates. "I found myself not racing again. I was an Uber driver in Brazil, because I didn't want to work with my dad. I wanted to do something myself."

"I HAD A SEAT BUT LOST IT. I FOUND MYSELF NOT RACING AGAIN. I WAS AN UBER DRIVER IN BRAZIL"

Costa had already done a stint working for his window and door salesman father, whose means to support his son's racing budget were limited. But Vincenzo Sospiri, whose Euronova team had run Costa in 2012 on what he reckons was a quarter of the regular budget, came to the rescue. Costa acknowledges that his career would look very different without the 1988 Formula Ford Festival winner. "He gave me so many opportunities," he says. "If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have the experience I have today."

Sospiri was setting up a Japanese Formula 4 team for 2015 and wanted Costa on board. He headed East, which led to opportunities in Sospiri-run GT cars across multiple series. His career was just gathering momentum towards a planned Super GT move when the COVID pandemic pushed him back to Brazil. "I stopped racing completely," he recalls. "I didn't even go to a track for two years."

Costa busied himself selling cars and didn't complete a full race season until 2023, when he entered Brazil's Porsche Carrera Cup "to have an idea if I'm up for the challenge". He was. The campaign, "so much better than I anticipated", secured the title and opened the door to an Estoril test with United and a long-awaited chance on the world stage.

It's unsurprising that the 32-year-old describes reaching the pinnacle of sportscar racing as "a dream come true", after following a unique path that began with a British Formula Ford cameo at Snetterton in July 2009 when he had just "£80 in my

CV



- Age** 32
- 2024** World Endurance Championship
- 2023** Porsche Carrera Cup Brazil, champion
- 2016** Italian GT, Super GT Cup champion
- 2015** Japanese F4, 7 races
- 2014** Pro Mazda, 5th (1 win)
- 2012** European Formula Abarth, champion
- 2009** British Formula Ford, 1 race

pocket for crash damage".

"It's actually unbelievable to be here in a world championship. I stopped my career three times completely to do some other stuff – I could never count on my parents to pay for it. But as soon as I saw any light at the end of the tunnel, I would just run for it."

JAMES NEWBOLD



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312B3) heads the grid before the start of the 1974 British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch. The Austrian led from the off and looked set for a dominant win when,

with 20 laps to go, he felt his handling deteriorate due to a slowly deflating right-rear Goodyear. He soldiered on, but was forced to pit for new rubber on the last lap – then when he tried to rejoin, which would have resulted

in a fifth-place finish and two points, he found his way blocked by milling crowds and a Ford Cortina course car. Ferrari's Luca di Montezemolo did not hold back in his resulting tirade and neither did Autosport editor Ian

Phillips who, aghast at the “ludicrous” situation, wrote a coruscating leader lambasting officials “who didn’t have a clue what was going on”. At least Lauda later got his points back after an appeal to the FIA.





Jan Magnussen

From a career spanning four decades, including Le Mans 24 Hours success and two stints in Formula 1, David Brabham says that it's from his time racing alongside Jan Magnussen that he has the fondest memories.

While Brabham was racing in F1 for Simtek during 1994, Magnussen was dominating British Formula 3, taking 14 wins from 18 starts. After his own spell in F1 with McLaren and Stewart Grand Prix, the rapid Dane has since enjoyed a decorated sportscar career, which started with a successful stint alongside Brabham at the unfancied Panoz squad in the American Le Mans Series.

"If I was to say the team-mate I had the most fun with, the most competition with, it was Jan Magnussen," says Brabham. "When he came to Panoz, he'd just come out of F1. I would be the one setting up the car and getting everything sorted for the race. I'd come into the pits and he'd be sitting there like [puffing a cigarette], 'Is the car ready, Brabs?' Puts the fag out, jumps in and off he goes and he'd be like a tenth quicker, so then I'd have to beat him. Every time we got to the end of the weekend, whoever was quicker got a dollar!"

After taking their first win ahead of BMW and Audi in treacherous conditions at the 2000 Nurburgring 1000Km, the



pair upstaged the otherwise dominant Audi R8s to score another four outright ALMS triumphs over the two next seasons, including a thrilling victory by 0.4 seconds at Portland.

"He was so different to me," Brabham explains. "Different in personality, lifestyle, driving technique, but we complemented one another as well. It was just good fun to be around him because everyone used to look at his life, the mad world that he was in at that point, and we'd all have a chuckle."

"You could see with his junior category pace he was damn fast and he was obviously a lot younger than I was. We really pushed each other and that's what helped us beat Audi, BMW, Porsche and so forth. We had those little opportunities and because of that relationship we punched well above our weight."

STEVE WHITFIELD



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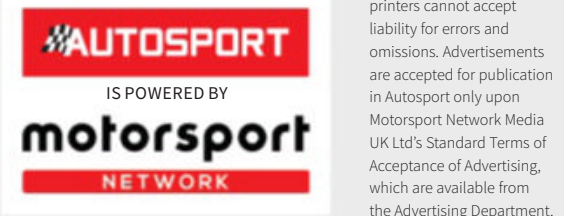
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