

Le Mans 24 Hours special issue

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AUTOSPORT

FERRARI WINS EPIC LE MANS

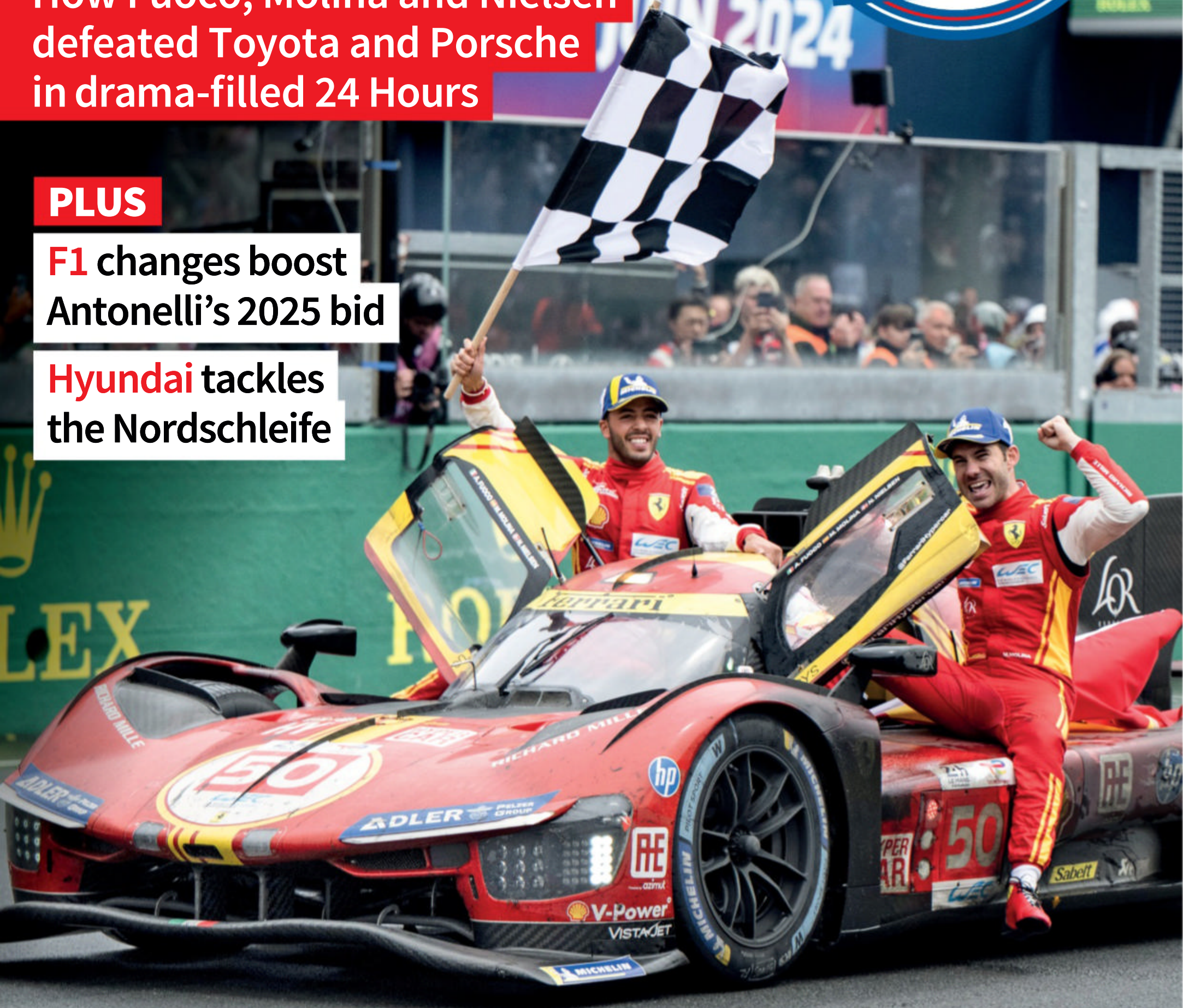
How Fuoco, Molina and Nielsen
defeated Toyota and Porsche
in drama-filled 24 Hours

PLUS

F1 changes boost
Antonelli's 2025 bid

Hyundai tackles
the Nordschleife

LE MANS
REPORT
**20
PAGES**
COVERING HYPERCAR,
LMP2 AND LMGT3



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The latest great sportscar era at Le Mans has now arrived

What a race! Yes, there was rather too much time spent behind the safety car, but the 92nd running of the Le Mans 24 Hours had four manufacturers in contention, changeable conditions that threw the advantage from one team to another, and a result that was in doubt until the very end. And that's before we mention LMP2 and LMGT3.

In this special Le Mans report issue, Gary Watkins explains how Ferrari managed to overturn a Test Day deficit to Porsche and a race pace disadvantage to Toyota to make it two wins on the trot (page 20).

British squad United Autosports and Oliver Jarvis know a thing or two about succeeding at the 24 Hours but both have had to wait to follow up their previous wins. Stephen Lickorish was there to see Jarvis lead two rookies to LMP2 victory, despite threats from some strong Pro-Am line-ups (p30).

McLaren took LMGT3 pole on its Le Mans comeback and the WRT BMW team was its usual competitive self, but the Manthey Porsche squad was simply too strong, particularly when the rain came down. James Newbold brings you the highlights from the new class on p34.

Prodrive is a key player in endurance racing and elsewhere. As his company celebrates its 40th birthday, David Richards looks back to past victories and ahead to new challenges with James Allen (p42).

Hyundai tried something a bit different recently, tackling the famous Nurburgring as though it was a stage for its World Rally Championship squad. Tom Howard went along to take a look at the German track from an unusual perspective (p48).



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

kevin.turner@autosport.com

**NEVER MISS
AN ISSUE**

Special deals for
Autosport p56



Cover image
Ferrari

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PIT + PADDOCK

FIA lowers F1 licence age to 17; Antonelli OK for debut

FORMULA 1

The FIA has reduced the minimum age to acquire a Formula 1 superlicence to 17, removing any technical obstacles for Mercedes junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli to make his debut.

The FIA has updated Appendix L of its International Sporting Code to add a clause stating that, although the minimum age for the superlicence required to drive in F1 is 18 years old, special dispensation may be granted to certain drivers to receive one at 17. The updated article 13.1.2 reads: "At the sole discretion of the FIA, a driver judged to have recently and consistently demonstrated outstanding ability and maturity in single-seater formula car competition may be granted a Super Licence at the age of 17 years old."

This also affects the requirements for a free practice-only superlicence, meaning Antonelli could make his FP1 debut prior to his 18th birthday on 25 August. The Italian has long been expected to take the vacant Mercedes seat alongside George Russell for 2025, when Lewis Hamilton departs for Ferrari. His rapid progression through the ranks has come with titles in Italian and German F4 in 2022 and Formula Regional European and Middle East in 2023. All these crowns came with Prema, where he has stayed in 2024 for his maiden Formula 2 season, although the team has struggled to get to grips with the new Dallara chassis.

In May the FIA received a dispensation request for Antonelli to be granted a superlicence, believed to be submitted by Williams. That would give the squad the

option to replace Logan Sargeant before August if it wanted to do so, although team principal James Vowles has always denied those suggestions.

Any early debut for Antonelli would require the blessing of Mercedes, and at the time team boss Toto Wolff strongly dismissed any suggestions that Antonelli would be thrown in at the deep end before his 18th birthday. Speaking to Autosport, Wolff said: "The dispensation was something that wasn't brought up by us and we have certainly stated from

the beginning that that was not something we have pursued. I don't know where this belief comes from that Mercedes was keen on pushing that forward. Kimi needs to concentrate on his F2 campaign, and he knows that. Everything else is just rumours, which continue to spin around and that are factually incorrect."

But while a premature grand prix debut for Antonelli remains unlikely despite the FIA's rule change, it seems clear that he is Mercedes' man for the future, with the team delaying a formal decision as long



Rule was brought in as reaction to Verstappen debut in 2015. He didn't do too badly...



as it has a sliver of hope that it can prise Max Verstappen away from Red Bull. With Antonelli under lock and key, there is no pressing need to make an urgent call. When asked at the Canadian Grand Prix about the possibility of signing Ferrari exile Carlos Sainz, Wolff replied: "Carlos deserves a top seat. He's done a fantastic job, but for us, we've embarked on a route now. We want to reinvent ourselves a little bit going forward and Kimi Antonelli definitely plays a part in that."

Whether or not Antonelli gets to build grand prix experience in the Williams, the writing appears to be on the wall for Sargeant to retain his seat. Vowles has openly admitted that Sainz is his number one target among a shortlist of three drivers, with Sauber's Valtteri Bottas also under consideration (see p6).

Setting the minimum age for a superlicence to 18 was done in reaction to Verstappen making his grand prix debut at the age of 17 years and 166 days at the start of the 2015 season, jumping into F1 straight from European Formula 3.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE & FILIP CLEEREN

P15 OPINION



Jota and WTR set to take over as Cadillac factory efforts

WEC/IMSA

The British Jota team will fly the flag for Cadillac in next year's World Endurance Championship, and Wayne Taylor Racing with Andretti is set to do the same in the IMSA SportsCar Championship. Jota is known to have a deal in place to field a pair of V-Series.R LMDhs, while WTR is edging towards one.

Jota, Autosport has learnt, will move over from its customer programme with the Porsche 963 LMDh less than two seasons after its graduation to the Hypercar ranks following a stint in LMP2 beginning in 2012 that yielded no fewer than 10 class podiums at the Le Mans 24 Hours. WTR is set to move back to its spiritual home with the General Motors marque after four seasons representing Acura in North America.

The changearound at Cadillac for 2025 follows Chip Ganassi Racing's revelation in March that this season would be its last after four campaigns with the marque, starting in IMSA in 2021 with the DPi-V.R and then straddling the WEC from the introduction of the V-Series.R.



No confirmation has come from either the manufacturer or the teams, but it is now pretty much an open secret.

Laura Wontrop Klauser, who heads up GM's sportscar racing programmes, refused to be drawn on plans for next year. "We do not have a timeline set for an announcement," she said. "It's a TBD for both programmes at the moment."

Jota team principal Sam Hignett was equally evasive on the prospect of running Cadillac's expanded WEC programme when the new rule demanding that each manufacturer in Hypercar fields two cars comes into force. "The focus for now is our 2024 campaign," was his reply to questions on the subject.

WTR boss Wayne Taylor, whose team linked up with the Andretti organisation for last year, insisted that no deal has been done for him to move back to Cadillac after four years with Honda brand Acura. "We have not signed anything and there is a simple reason for that: we remain under contract with Honda Racing Corporation [which masterminds the Acura ARX-06 LMDh programme]," explained the stalwart team owner whose links with GM go back to the 1990s. "We will only begin contract talks for next year after the final race of the season."

Cadillac will be expanding its IMSA attack next season should the deal come to fruition: Ganassi only runs a single V-Series.R this year alongside one from Action Express Racing. Meyer Shank Racing looks likely to take over the Acura factory programme should the WTR deal go through as expected.

GARY WATKINS

Bottas confident of seat amid F1 musical chairs

FORMULA 1

Sauber racer Valtteri Bottas says he is confident of finding a seat for the 2025 Formula 1 season, with a decision expected in the coming weeks.

The 2025 driver market is now largely dictated by Ferrari exile Carlos Sainz, who has to make a decision between accepting a long-standing offer from Sauber, which will become Audi in 2026, or joining Williams. With the Spaniard the highest-profile free agent left to announce a deal, his stalling over a decision has an impact on others, not least Sauber's incumbent duo of Bottas and Zhou Guanyu.

Neither Bottas nor Zhou is expecting to remain at Sauber/Audi for 2025, although there remains an outside chance that the Finn could stay if team CEO Andreas Seidl doesn't land his main target Sainz. At Williams, Bottas is similarly known to be a back-up option to Sainz, who has been



HONEY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

heavily courted by team principal James Vowles, and the 10-time grand prix winner has also been in talks with Alpine and Haas.

But as time drags on and some of those teams are poised to pull the trigger rather than keep waiting and missing out on the best options altogether, Bottas similarly realises he will need to act soon to avoid missing the cut.

"[Audi] is willing to wait for a long time,"

acknowledged Bottas at the recent Canadian Grand Prix. "This team is definitely still an option but I don't think I have the time to wait for too long."

Asked whether there was a chance he could end up on the sidelines, he replied: "I'm confident I'm going to get a seat, but obviously in this sport nothing is ever 100% sure until you are signed."

FILIP CLEEREN

Hypercar lifespan extended to end of 2029

WEC/IMSA

The current breed of Le Mans Hypercar and LMDh prototypes that has spawned a so-called golden era of sportscar racing is going to be around for a bit longer than planned. The lifespan of both rulesets has been extended through to the end of 2029 in both the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

The timeframe for the rules, which make up the respective Hypercar and GTP classes in the two series, has been extended for reasons of stability, according to both the WEC and IMSA on the announcement made ahead of the Le Mans 24 Hours WEC round last week.

"Stability is very important: it is the reason why we have all these manufacturers in Hypercar,



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

that and the reasonable costs involved," explained Richard Mille, president of the FIA Endurance Commission. "We want to avoid obsoleting the cars: we need stability but at the same time flexibility, which is why we have the system of evo jokers so that manufacturers can

evolve their cars."

IMSA boss John Doonan offered a similar statement: "This is important for the manufacturers involved from a stability point of view, but it also creates opportunities for manufacturers looking at potentially coming into the GTP class."

LMH rules came on stream in the WEC in 2021 with a five-year lifecycle, which was extended by two years when the LMDh cars arrived in 2023.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA, which jointly organise the WEC, gave further details in the timeline for the introduction of hydrogen-fuelled cars into the Hypercar category. The rules will be in place to allow a manufacturer to race at Le Mans in 2028, rather than 2027, when first entrants with the zero-emissions fuel are expected.

The LMP2 class will also be extended for a further year until the end of 2027, the ACO has confirmed. The current cars, introduced in 2017, will then be replaced by a new generation in 2028 that will have a downsized engine and be lighter.

GARY WATKINS



MISSIONH24 The MissionH24 group backed by Le Mans 24 Hours organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest has unveiled its new-generation prototype powered by a hydrogen fuel cell. The wraps came off a show version of the H24EVO on the eve of this year's edition ahead of the arrival on track of the real thing next year. It is a single-seater coupe for two reasons, explained project technical director Bassel Aslan. There was a desire to give the car a unique look and also to free up space for packaging reasons. Testing will begin next year ahead its competition debut in 2026 in an undisclosed series. **Photograph by MissionH24**

Liberty takes controlling 65% stake in electric Formula E series

FORMULA E

Liberty Global has acquired a controlling 65% stake in Formula E from Warner Bros Discovery. The company, which initially invested in Formula E 10 years ago, intends to complete the deal before the end of 2024, subject to regulatory approval.

The deal is independent from Liberty Media's ownership of Formula 1 and planned future control of Dorna Sports, which runs MotoGP and the World Superbike championship.

Formula E CEO Jeff Dodds said: "We are at the cusp of unlocking this exponential growth. Therefore having such a convicted investor like Liberty Global to come in

behind us at a time we are growing our footprint and we are investing in technology and we are investing in noise generation is absolutely critical."

The announcement last week comes fresh from Formula E preparing for its 11th season with the 2024-25 calendar being unveiled, headlined by a Monaco double-header and a new Miami round on the 17-race schedule.

"This is a pivotal moment for Formula E," said Liberty Global CEO Mike Fries. "This is, like every sports platform, a moment when Formula E needs capital and it needs conviction. We are absolutely intending to provide both of those things and in this critical moment."

HAYDN COBB



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Imola keeps its place on unchanged WEC schedule

WEC

Imola has maintained its place on an unchanged eight-round World Endurance Championship calendar for 2025. The Formula 1 venue has renewed what was originally a one-year deal covering 2023 to keep the Italian round of the series for a further four years. The Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari has committed to improving the infrastructure in the paddock area, including the building of additional pit garages, as part of the deal. An increase in the capacity of the

Imola pitlane will be required for next year’s race in April as the WEC expands its grid to 40. The WEC switched from Monza to Imola this year because the home of the Italian Grand Prix was undergoing major paddock works. The limited number of garages, one fewer than the 37 cars on this year’s entry, had been seen as an obstacle to Imola’s continuation as part of the series. The 2025 WEC incorporates the same eight events in the same order as this year, with the Le Mans 24 Hours at its centre on 14-15 June. This date,

confirmed last year, represents a conflict with Formula 1: the publication of the 2025 F1 calendar in April revealed a clash with the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal. The season will begin with the Qatar 1812Km on 28 February. Austin will again host the North American round despite Roger Penske’s interest in bringing the WEC to Indianapolis. The rule demanding that each manufacturer in Hypercar must field two cars from 2025, first revealed by Autosport in March, was confirmed alongside the calendar at the traditional

Automobile Club de l’Ouest press conference ahead of last week’s Le Mans 24 Hours. Aston Martin sent out a simultaneous release confirming its intent to field two Valkyrie AMR-LMHs with the Heart of Racing factory squad. Cadillac will expand from one car to two on its switch to the Jota (see p5), while Lamborghini and Iron Lynx outlined a plan to run a pair of cars in WEC on the launch of its SC63 LMDh last July. Isotta Fraschini is also working to double its entry with the Duqueine team.

GARY WATKINS



Ricky Chiba 1945-2024

OBITUARY

Sportscar entrant and car owner Yasutsune Chiba, always known as Ricky in racing circles, has died aged 79 after a long illness. His Team Taisan operation was a race and championship winner domestically in Japan and beyond. Chiba started out as a car owner in the Japanese Sports-Prototype Championship, taking a hat-trick of titles with Kunimitsu Takahashi in 1985-87 with a Group C Porsche 956 run by Nova Engineering. He remained a stalwart of

Japanese sportscars until 2018, his cars winning GT class titles eight times. Taisan went to the Le Mans 24 Hours six times, scoring a debut victory in GT2 in 2000 with a 996-shape Porsche 911 GT3-R (left) on the disqualification of the factory Dick Barbour Racing car. “Ricky was a true enthusiast and a real character,” said Anthony Reid, who drove among other things the Ferrari F40 for Taisan. “He employed a lot of good drivers over the years, and I was lucky enough to be one of them.”

GARY WATKINS

Ferraris were 1-2 when
race was red-flagged



JEP

Ferrari appeals Spa judgment

WEC

The results of last month's Spa 6 Hours round of the World Endurance Championship remain provisional after Ferrari appealed the decision not to uphold its protest in the wake of the race.

It protested the decision of the stewards to allow the red-flagged race to restart after the scheduled finish time of the event, and therefore the provisional results immediately after the race. The protest was thrown out, but Ferrari has now exercised its right of appeal, Ferrari sportscar racing boss Antonello Coletta confirmed ahead of last weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours.

"Yes, we filed a complaint and we have filed an appeal," he said. "At this moment we prefer not to discuss any details and to be fair we don't have a date for the hearing [at the International Court of Appeal]."

Coletta pointed to previous WEC races, including the 2013 Fuji and 2022 Sebring fixtures, which were not restarted beyond the scheduled finish time after red flags caused by the weather. "We need to be clear on the interpretation for the future," he said. "The most important thing is

that we need clarity in terms of the rules. It is important to know exactly what will happen to make the correct [tactical] decisions."

He described the decision to restart the race 10 minutes after the original 1900 scheduled finish as "astonishing and completely unexpected".

The race was halted after four hours and 13 minutes with the two Ferrari 499Ps running 1-2 when Cadillac driver Earl Bamber came together with the WRT BMW M4 GT3 driven by Sean Gelael on the Kemmel Straight. Barrier repairs were not completed in time for the race to restart before 1900, and Ferrari missed out on victory because the winning #12 Jota Porsche and #6 factory 963 had pitted just before the stoppage.

Extending the timeframe in which the Spa race took place was unprecedented since the rebirth of the WEC in 2012, but was allowed under the sporting regulations. They state: "If the circumstances so require the stewards may take the decision to stop and/or modify the race time set. This may not exceed the time of the competition [six hours]."

GARY WATKINS

INDYCAR SETS UP DATE CLASH WITH LE MANS FOR 2025

INDYCAR

The chances of IndyCar champions such as Scott Dixon and Alex Palou contesting next year's Le Mans 24 Hours look remote after IndyCar released its 2025 calendar – with a clashing date.

The round at the World Wide Technology Raceway oval in St Louis (below) has moved forward from August and is set to take place on 15 June, meaning that IndyCar has joined Formula 1 in doubling up on the same weekend as the world's premier endurance race.

As usual, the IndyCar season begins at the St Petersburg street circuit in Florida on the first weekend of March, while the race at The Thermal Club in the same month remains, but will now count for points. Rounds at Long Beach, Barber Motorsports Park and the Indianapolis road course precede the Indy 500 on 25 May.

Races are held in June in Detroit, St Louis and at Road America, before the July fixtures at Mid-Ohio, Iowa Speedway, Toronto and Laguna Seca. The series then finishes in August at Portland, Milwaukee and Nashville, with the Tennessee event set to run on the oval – as it will in 2024 – and brought forward from mid-September to Labor Day weekend.



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The ‘will he, won’t he?’ saga over Bobby Thompson’s British Touring Car Championship season with West Surrey Racing is a ‘he won’t’ for this weekend’s round at Oulton Park. Thompson starred on his debut in one of the team’s BMWs at Snetterton last month before commercial issues put the brakes on his campaign at Thruxton. WSR is still working to get him out in the second half of the season.

POLE AXED BY RED BULL

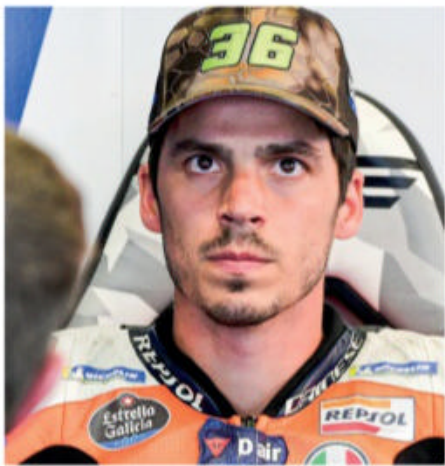
Kacper Sztuka, the teenaged Pole who won a place on the Red Bull Junior programme after beating F1 team proteges such as Arvid Lindblad and Ugo Ugochukwu to last season’s Italian F4 title, has been dropped by the scheme already. Sztuka, who has a best result of fifth from the opening four FIA F3 rounds this term, says he will continue his season with MP Motorsport.

WHELDON WINNING AGAIN

Sebastian Wheldon, son of the late Dan Wheldon, took another win in his USF Juniors campaign at Virginia International Raceway last weekend in what is boiling into a close title fight. Wheldon went off in the other two races, and is just a point ahead of VRD Racing team-mate Max Taylor, who claimed one of the other wins. Brit Liam McNeilly had a best result of fourth over the weekend but is only 21 points adrift of the top of the table in fourth position.

MIR IS THE CAT FOR HONDA

Former MotoGP champion Joan Mir has put an end to rumours about his retirement by extending his deal with Honda until the end of the 2026 season. The news means that the beleaguered Japanese marque next season fields an unchanged line-up of the Spaniard (below) and Luca Marini, who is locked in to the end of 2025. Maverick Vinales has jumped ship from Aprilia to join the Tech3 KTM squad, where he will partner Ducati refugee Enea Bastianini.



GOLD AND GOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



FORMULA 4 British 15-year-old Freddie Slater took three more wins at Vallelunga last weekend to extend his Italian Formula 4 Championship lead. The Prema Racing driver got the jump on US Racing’s Australian poleman Jack Beeton to lead throughout the first race, waltzed away from Jamaican-American team-mate Alex Powell in the second, and jumped pole winner Powell to win a safety car-infested finale. **Photo by ACI Sport Italia**

Canapino back after benching

INDYCAR

Agustin Canapino will return to his IndyCar Series drive with Juncos Hollinger Racing for this weekend’s round at Laguna Seca and for the remainder of the 2024 season. The decision comes after the 34-year-old Argentinian sat out the most recent race at Road America, with mental health cited following a controversial week.

A collision earlier this month in the Detroit Grand Prix between Canapino and Arrow McLaren rookie Theo Pourchaire sparked vile remarks on social media aimed at the 20-year-old Frenchman. The situation escalated further when Canapino ‘liked’ several controversial posts on social media and made a statement rejecting claims that his supporters threatened rivals.

It led to the termination of Arrow McLaren and JHR’s strategic alliance, while Canapino took a leave of absence and the team leaned on Indy NXT regular Nolan Siegel to substitute at Road America.

“We are a team with shared goals and objectives, and will always focus on prioritising what our drivers need,” said team founder Ricardo Juncos. “From now on, our focus is on Laguna Seca and the



TONS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

rest of the 2024 season.”

Team co-owner Brad Hollinger said: “He took a giant step back, did a lot of self-introspective reflection, and had further conversations with David [O’Neill, team principal], Ricardo, myself. It was quite evident that he had cleared his head. He was thinking very clearly and very rationally and not emotionally. That makes a huge difference. It’s like writing a letter that you shouldn’t send until the next day, if at all.”

JOEY BARNES



FIA makes U-turn on axing Rally1 hybrids after pressure

WRC

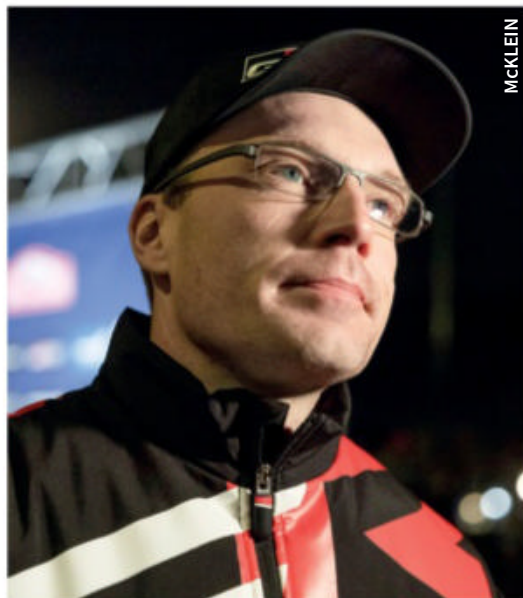
Hybrid-powered Rally1 cars will continue in the World Rally Championship until the end of 2026 after all, following a U-turn in technical regulations by the FIA.

The governing body proposed in February to remove hybrid power from Rally1 cars from next year as part of a plan to close the performance gap to Rally2 cars through a reduction in aero, a modified rear wing and a smaller air restrictor. This coincided with a plan for manufacturers to produce an optional upgrade kit for Rally2 cars to increase their performance. It was hoped that this could increase entries and provide a smooth transition to all-new technical regulations in 2027.

The changes were strongly opposed by teams and manufacturers. Their key concerns centred around the short timeframe to redesign, test and validate changes to cars for next season, and that investments had already been made into the current cars, expected to compete across a five-year period of 2022-26.

The FIA has now said that “all stakeholders are working positively together on the direction of the regulations for 2027 and beyond”, with the primary aim to increase participation. The 2027 regulations will be presented this December.

“It is clear now that we all need to have technical stability for the next two years, but at the same time it is important for the FIA that, in providing this stability, we receive the same positive commitment from the manufacturers,” said FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem following



last week’s World Motor Sport Council meeting in Uzbekistan.

Unsurprisingly the reaction to the decision has been positive from the WRC promoter and the teams, with the former describing the move as a “hugely important moment”.

“If we had done changes now, we would have needed a big investment, so it is very clever to concentrate on stability and then do the new regulations for 2027,” said Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala (above).

Hyundai has been most affected by the upheaval, abandoning plans to produce a whole new car for 2025 under the current rules due to the uncertainty. “We all believe that stability of the technical regulations for 2025 and 2026 is the right thing,” said team chief Cyril Abiteboul. “The very substantial steps made on the governance will provide for a more unified and positive approach towards the short-term improvements and long-term breakthroughs that we all agree the sport needs.”

TOM HOWARD

Champ Truex to quit after 2024

NASCAR

Former NASCAR champion Martin Truex Jr has decided to end his Cup career at the conclusion of the 2024 season, but said he still plans “to be around” the sport.

Truex, 43, has mulled retirement from NASCAR for the past several years, which has resulted in him signing a one-season renewal with Joe Gibbs Racing and putting off a decision each year as long as possible. But last Friday at Iowa Speedway, Truex made his decision official – he will step away from JGR’s Toyota team at the end of the year regardless of how his season plays out.

Truex said it had been “a true honour” to work with all the crew members and team owners over his career. “I won’t be gone,” he insisted. “We’re going to do some stuff together and have some fun.”

Truex remains winless so far in 2024 but is fifth in the Cup standings and well-positioned for another run in the playoffs. He has 34 victories at Cup level and has finished in the top five in the points five times in the past nine years.

He earned his only Cup championship with Furniture Row Racing in 2017.

“Obviously, we’ve had a tremendous respect for Martin,” JGR owner Joe Gibbs said. “I did everything I could to keep it going. I think we have two 40-year-olds [Denny Hamlin is also 43] at the top of their game right now.”

New Jersey native Truex’s Cup career has spanned nearly 20 years with 674 starts. His first Cup win came in 2007 at his home track of Dover Motor Speedway. He has amassed wins in some of NASCAR’s biggest races, including a pair of Coca-Cola 600 victories, a victory in the Southern 500 and five road course successes, including four at Sonoma.

JIM UTTER



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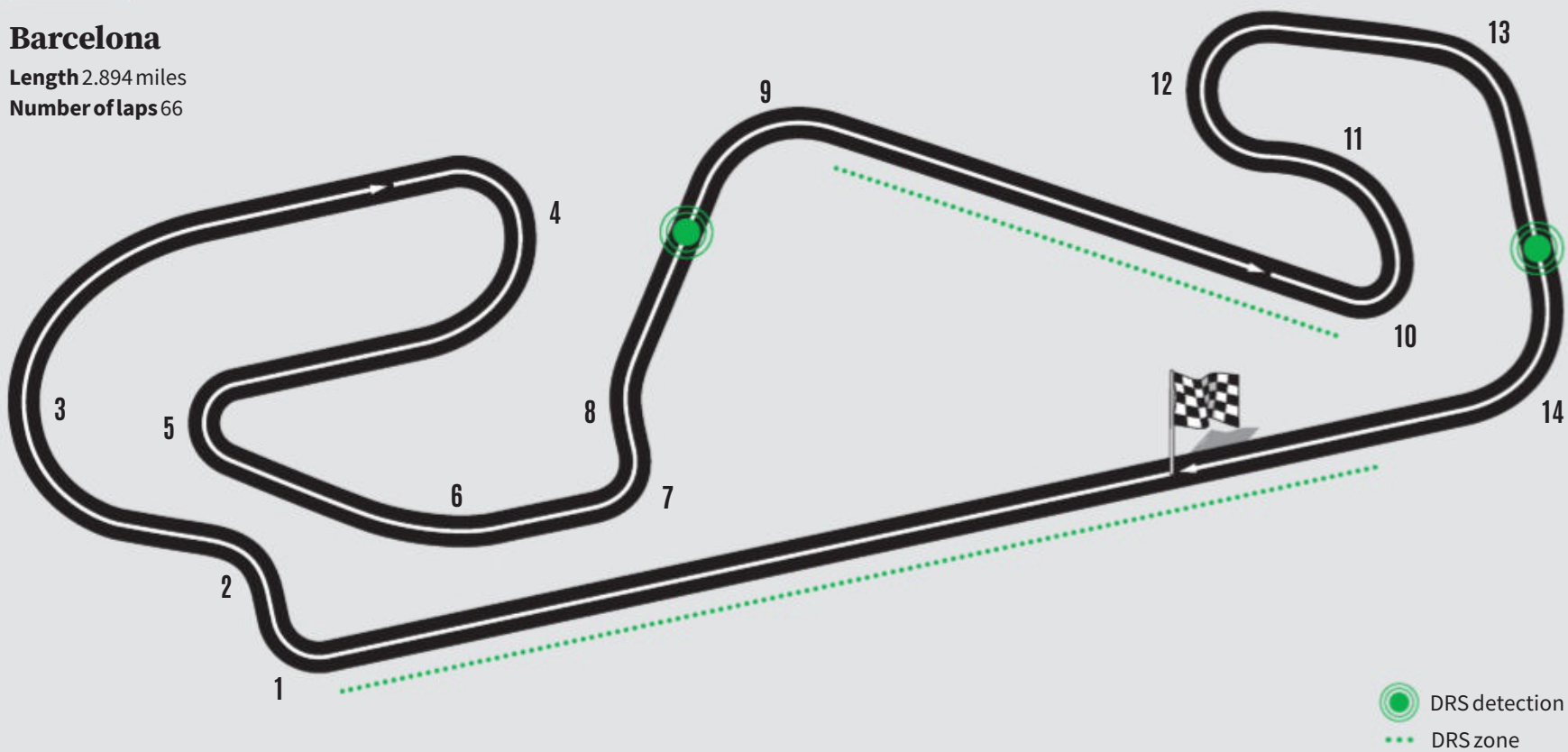
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F1 SPANISH GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Barcelona

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Number of laps 66



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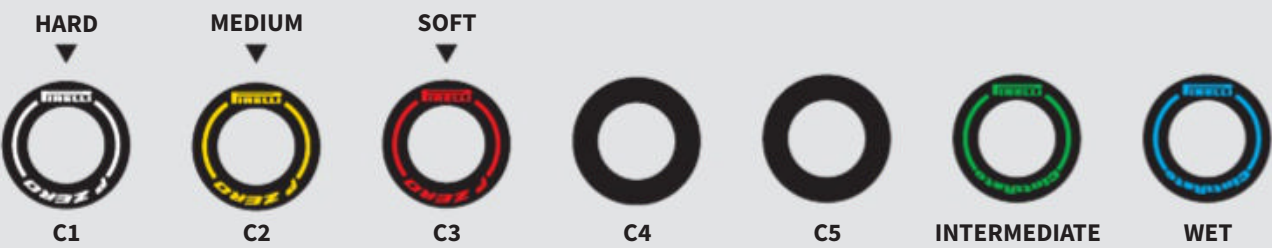
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2	Leclerc	138
3	Norris	131
4	Sainz	108
5	Perez	107

Constructors

1	Red Bull	301
2	Ferrari	252
3	McLaren	212
4	Mercedes	124
5	Aston Martin	58



Norris just seven points off second

BARCELONA STATS

Previous winners

2023	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2022	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2021	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes

2023 POLE POSITION
Max Verstappen
1m12.272s

POLE LAP RECORD
Max Verstappen
1m12.272s (2023)

RACE LAP RECORD
Max Verstappen
1m16.330s (2023)



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Michael Schumacher	12
Lewis Hamilton	11
Max Verstappen	7
Fernando Alonso	7
Kimi Raikkonen	5
Sebastian Vettel	5
David Coulthard	4
Valtteri Bottas	4
Rubens Barrichello	4
Mika Hakkinen	3



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Has path to F1 been undermined?

The effectiveness of an already narrow single-seater ladder has hardly been aided by the FIA's decision to tinker with its own rules, not to mention another power at play

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The news that the FIA has altered Appendix L of its International Sporting Code, which in effect means highly rated Mercedes junior Andrea Kimi Antonelli can make his Formula 1 bow before he turns 18 years old in August, means the junior single-seater scene must be viewed differently.

There are two sides to consider. The first argument poses how, five years on from the DTM-supporting Formula 3 European Championship being merged with GP3, the results of the decision to streamline the junior categories finally stand out starkly.

The proliferation of spec categories at a junior level – remember, European F3 had Mercedes and Volkswagen-badged engines that involved development and higher-downforce aero loads, which tested drivers early – means there are now fewer marques directly assessing potential factory drivers on their way up. It's not unheard of for some juniors to pay to be on the books of F1 teams these days. Plus, as one F1 team technical director told me, with Tatuus and Dallara essentially supplying almost all junior single-seater cars, drivers (and young engineers) are missing out on developing the skills that in bygone eras came with adjusting to cars built by varying suppliers. Say, Ralt, March, Lola, Reynard etc. When these marques thrived, talented drivers could also negotiate better deals because constructors wanted to use their success as advertising to sell more cars. Now, the machines just cost what they do.

“It must be acknowledged just how much power F1 teams hold behind this game”

The move to spec championships falls neatly under the modern drive to cut costs. But this also hurts young drivers. In the most visible junior categories – F3 and F2 – two-year budgets are now typically required for a driver stepping up the ladder. Only after such a period can they accrue anything like the experience levels possible in the past. This boosts drivers with wealthy backers. And so, the same names stick around at such levels for a while – the last two F2 champions (Felipe Drugovich and Theo Pourchaire) were in their third seasons in the category when clinching the title.

There is a view – shared by some within the F2/F3 paddock – on how costs are just of a different magnitude now compared to when there were multiple routes to F1, across previous generations.

The reduction in track time that comes with the essentially FIA-stipulated path is a factor contextualised in the impressive

rise of McLaren's Oscar Piastri. That Piastri succeeded in clinching back-to-back rookie F3/F2 titles shows how top talents can still win out. In the years since, some argue, these two championships have just had weaker fields overall, allowing the more experienced to more sedately succeed.

To some, Drugovich and Pourchaire not making F1 matters little when drivers of Fernando Alonso's calibre are keeping seats past the age of 40. But if F2-F1 champion progression is the metric to assess the overall health of the current junior single-seater scene – and many would argue that that *shouldn't* be the case – then there is a more powerful master pulling the strings in the background.

In changing the rules to allow under-18 F1 drivers at its “sole discretion”, the FIA has made a bad move. Having altered the superlicence points system and stipulations in the aftermath of Max Verstappen's rapid ascent to F1 in 2015, the FIA forged the narrower ladder climb of this era. With the discretionary move to allow 17-year-olds into F1, amid Antonelli's tale, the FIA, which did not reply to Autosport's request for comment, has perplexingly undermined its own rules. That's after sticking to its guns over IndyCar driver Colton Herta's lack of superlicence points in 2022.

And these are rules that Verstappen himself immediately proved to be ill-conceived. For there hasn't been a glut of very young drivers making as big a jump up the categories, until Antonelli's expected case. And here it must be acknowledged just how much power F1 teams hold behind this game.

Piastri aside, the drivers who have entered grand prix racing full-time since 2021 are Zhou Guanyu and Logan Sargeant. Their promotions had far more to do with the off-track requirements of Sauber and Williams respectively. And Antonelli's F1 promotion for 2025 is now near-certain, because his Mercedes benefactor is convinced of his merit.

It's widely expected that he'll rise alongside his F2 Prema Racing team-mate Ollie Bearman. In Bearman's case, Haas team principal Ayao Komatsu is happy to say that his F1 FP1 results (which he'll extend in Nico Hulkenberg's VF-24 at Barcelona tomorrow) have “more weight” than those he secures in F2.

These positions surely undermine the junior single-seater ladder overall and the top rungs of it particularly. They also show the true scale of the king-making power F1 teams possess, if they are so disposed to use it.

The attention he's received so far this year piles pressure on Antonelli. This is why his media appearances are being so tightly controlled. He's been impressing Prema with his ability to shut out the hyperbole and focus on learning the F2 ropes – around the team's season-opening struggles with the category's new car.

Verstappen shouldered such expectations brilliantly. A decade later, will Antonelli? 🍀

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What F1 can learn from Le Mans

The abundance of Hypercar entries at the French enduro shows that the WEC seems to have cracked the code to attracting and sustaining manufacturer involvement

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

Twenty-three cars graced this year's Hypercar class at the Le Mans 24 Hours, three more than the current 20-strong Formula 1 field. It was quite the statement of success for the current rules cycle at the top level, one that had become increasingly sparse in the final days of the LMP1 formula across a World Endurance Championship season.

Renewed interest among the manufacturer entities bolstered the decision to unify the LMH regulations with those in the GTP, LMDh-based category at the top of the IMSA SportsCar Championship – and now you have a line-up brimming with star power. Aston Martin's long-awaited Valkyrie is set to come online in 2025, and the WEC would undoubtedly welcome more.

That's in stark contrast to F1, which seems a closed book when it comes to Andretti's potential entry. The FIA said that the American squad met the criteria, FOM said it didn't, and Andretti has pressed on anyway while the existing teams do everything in their power to stop an 11th team making the grid. You've got a 'come one, come all' approach that distinctly contrasts with an attempt to introduce a franchise model. But could F1 be learning from endurance racing's current-day manufacturer pull?

In its own bid to appeal to manufacturers, F1's 2026 powertrain regulations were formulated to do just that; dropping the expensive and barely road-relevant MGU-H was a big part of getting automotive giants to buy in. Audi has done so, Honda has made a full return after its end-of-2021 part-withdrawal, and Ford has partnered with Red Bull Powertrains to get back involved in F1 without needing to make a significant outlay on infrastructure.

The problem is, one of the six manufacturers signed up for the 2026 power unit rules may give up. Alpine is considering dropping the Renault powertrains under development and becoming a customer team. Cadillac wants to come in for 2028, albeit only with Andretti, and the likes of McLaren, Williams, Haas and RB will remain customer operations under the new rules. There's plenty of space for more manufacturers, but having to develop everything requires a lot of outlay and no guaranteed return on investment.

It's also dangerous to base a championship around the whims of manufacturers if the rules aren't sustainable. The boom of automotive giants all joining F1 in the early 2000s had largely been extinguished when the global financial crisis of 2008 pushed Honda, BMW and Toyota towards the exit. It's a bit like how WEC was a few years ago: just five LMP1 cars filled the top class at Le Mans in 2020, and the Hypercar grids have only grown thanks to reduced costs and the LMDh/GTP contingent joining the fray. These guidelines have managed to corral a clutch of car giants onto the same page despite two differing rulesets.

In many ways it's almost like a two-tier formula, an idea F1

flirted with over a decade ago. It gives manufacturers two ways to get involved; Toyota, for example, wanted to showcase its hybrid technology in its WEC efforts and thus put its focus on the LMH regulations to do so. For others, it's a less important consideration, so following the LMP2-based LMDh route ensured they could put their stamp on the bodywork but not worry about the rest.

Attracting manufacturers is one thing; retaining them is quite another. And say what you will about the LMDh rules, but it gives

“A lot of manufacturer interest in sportscar racing is helped by the reduced cost to compete”

manufacturers a chance to have 'their' cars on track without having to build a chassis, a hybrid system, or even a race team. The long-term retention rate of the Hypercar rules will not be known for a few years, and the eventual follow-up series of regulations will truly test whether the FIA and IMSA can capture lightning in a bottle more than once.

A lot of the manufacturer interest in current sportscar racing is helped by the reduced cost to compete. The rules on in-season development are tight, and this ensures that a budget for a WEC or IMSA team is modest – less than €30million – when measured against F1. In the meantime, F1 appears set to raise its cost cap to \$220m (about €205m), although this includes fewer exemptions against the current budget in the cap.

So, it would surely serve F1 to have more manufacturer involvement in powertrain design, but at a sustainable level. After all, the championship is arguably more valuable when car companies are not only involved but actively engaged. F1 can kowtow to them with all the regulations in the world, but their intentions to showcase a product will only really prove engaging for a few seasons before the costs inevitably rise. So, why not have an option to do it almost as competitively, but cheaper?

Here's a solution to making future engine rules sustainable for manufacturers: the car companies do the internal combustion engines, and put the turbochargers, MGU-K, gearboxes, fuel and batteries out to tender. That way, the manufacturer gets exactly what they want out of F1: either the involvement and opportunity to reclaim the old truism of 'win on Sunday, sell on Monday', or the chance to genuinely enhance their technology through the power of motorsport. But that only works as long as F1 is willing to open its doors. And, currently, they remain as sealed as Fort Knox... ❄



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How to improve greatest enduro

Last weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours was a classic, its conclusion made all the more remarkable for a jaw-dropping stat. Nothing's perfect, though, so we have a suggestion

GARY WATKINS

People always ask me a simple question: what is your favourite Le Mans 24 Hours? It's an inevitable request when you've been to as many of the things as I have. My tally now stands at 34 to be precise. Favourite for me means best, as in the best motor race. And each year when I travel down through France, my mind is always thinking about whether this one will jump somewhere near the top of my personal ranking.

The 2024 edition last weekend didn't disappoint, though I've yet to decide where it fits in among some of the classics I've had the honour of witnessing and reporting on for Autosport. It was a brilliant race with high drama at the end, notwithstanding the fact that six hours, give or take, took place behind the safety car. Was it up there with 2008 and 2011, those amazing confrontations between Audi and Peugeot? I don't know, or rather have yet to decide. Neither am I sure whether I'm going to put it above 2023, like this year a fantastic Ferrari versus Toyota battle.

Perhaps what makes it harder to call is the fact that there were nine cars on the lead lap. I'm going to say that again for effect: nine cars on the lead lap. That's unprecedented at Le Mans. In fact, never before in the now 101-year history of the race had more than two cars still been on the same lap out front as the leaders set off for the final time around the 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe. Just to reinforce my point about how close it was this time, I'm going to stress that on only six times in the current century have there actually been two cars on the lead lap.

The two factory Ferraris and the pair of Toyotas were joined by four Porsches – two from Penske and two from Jota – and a Cadillac on 311 laps at the conclusion of the centrepiece round of the World Endurance Championship. Could any of that quartet of manufacturers won? Absolutely, given that this was a race held in changeable conditions with frequent yellow-flag interruptions. I'm not saying that Porsche and Cadillac were quite up there on pace with the top two marques, but they weren't far off.

The golden age of sportscar racing that's now polishing up quite nicely is, of course, Balance of Performance racing. The playing field is being increasingly levelled as the rulemakers strive to bring the absolute performance of the cars together. If you accept that the BoP is a positive development for top-line sportscar racing – and not everyone does – the new 'power gain' component aimed at closing up any differentials in straightline speed introduced for this year has to be positive.

Of course, the safety cars played a role, both the amount of time the field was trundling around behind them and the new

procedure introduced last year that, controversially for some, helps keep the field together. The new system that I am not going to try to explain here does undoubtedly make it easier to stay on the lead lap.

As interminably long as the safety car periods might have felt to those watching from the edge of the circuit or on TV, a tweak to the procedure for this year was another positive. The so-called drop back, the process by which the cars were

“Like it or not, sportscar racing is always looking for new ways to woo the fans”

in 2023 formed up in class groups ready for the green flag, has gone – fortunately.

It shows that there is always room for improvement with the format of the event. There is one change I'd like to see and it concerns qualifying. Hyperpole, in which the top eight cars in the opening timed session battle it out for a TV-friendly half an hour on Thursday, works for me. What I don't like is how those eight cars in each class get there.

The hour-long first qualifying session on Wednesday has become a lottery. Getting a traffic-free lap is always the key to a quick lap around Le Mans. Catch a slower car in the Porsche Curves, for example, and it's game over for that lap.

Having all 62 cars from the three classes out on track at the same time ensured there were any number of tales of woe about slower cars getting in the way last week. An ability to manage the traffic is one of the core skills required by a driver who is going to be successful at Le Mans, but if we are really looking for the ultimate spectacle, you need the fastest eight cars going through to the final round of qualifying. I can't help wondering if it is time to give each class its own mini-session. It would surely be the fairer way of doing things.

Like it or not, sportscar racing is always looking for new ways to woo the fans. It's not as pure as it used to be, for better or for worse. But what was once described by former Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical boss Pascal Vasselon as the “Americanisation” of our sport is here to stay.

I'm not complaining and I'm going to say it again: nine cars on the lead lap. 🏁



P20 HOW FERRARI WON LE MANS AGAIN



HYPERCAR

LMP2

LMGT3

FERRARI WINS TITANIC STRUGGLE

A second consecutive 24 Hours victory for the Italian squad, this year for the #50 car of Nielsen, Fuoco and Molina in a thrilling multi-marque battle

GARY WATKINS



A Ferrari victory; a narrow one over Toyota. A late problem in the pits for the Italian manufacturer and one on track for the Japanese. It all sounds familiar. Yet the 92nd running of the Le Mans 24 Hours wasn't quite a repeat of last year's centenary edition of the World Endurance Championship blue riband. This wasn't just a two-car fight. The new golden era of sportscar racing has really kicked on this season, and the French enduro produced a multi-marque battle through its duration.

Ferrari notched up its 11th outright victory in the big race, but there was an unprecedented number of entries on the lead lap and in with sniff of victory as the clock ticked down to 1600 on Sunday. Four manufacturers – Ferrari, Toyota, Porsche and Cadillac – provided nine contenders to be precise. To put that into context, never had more than two cars been in the hunt at the start of the final lap of the majestic 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe.

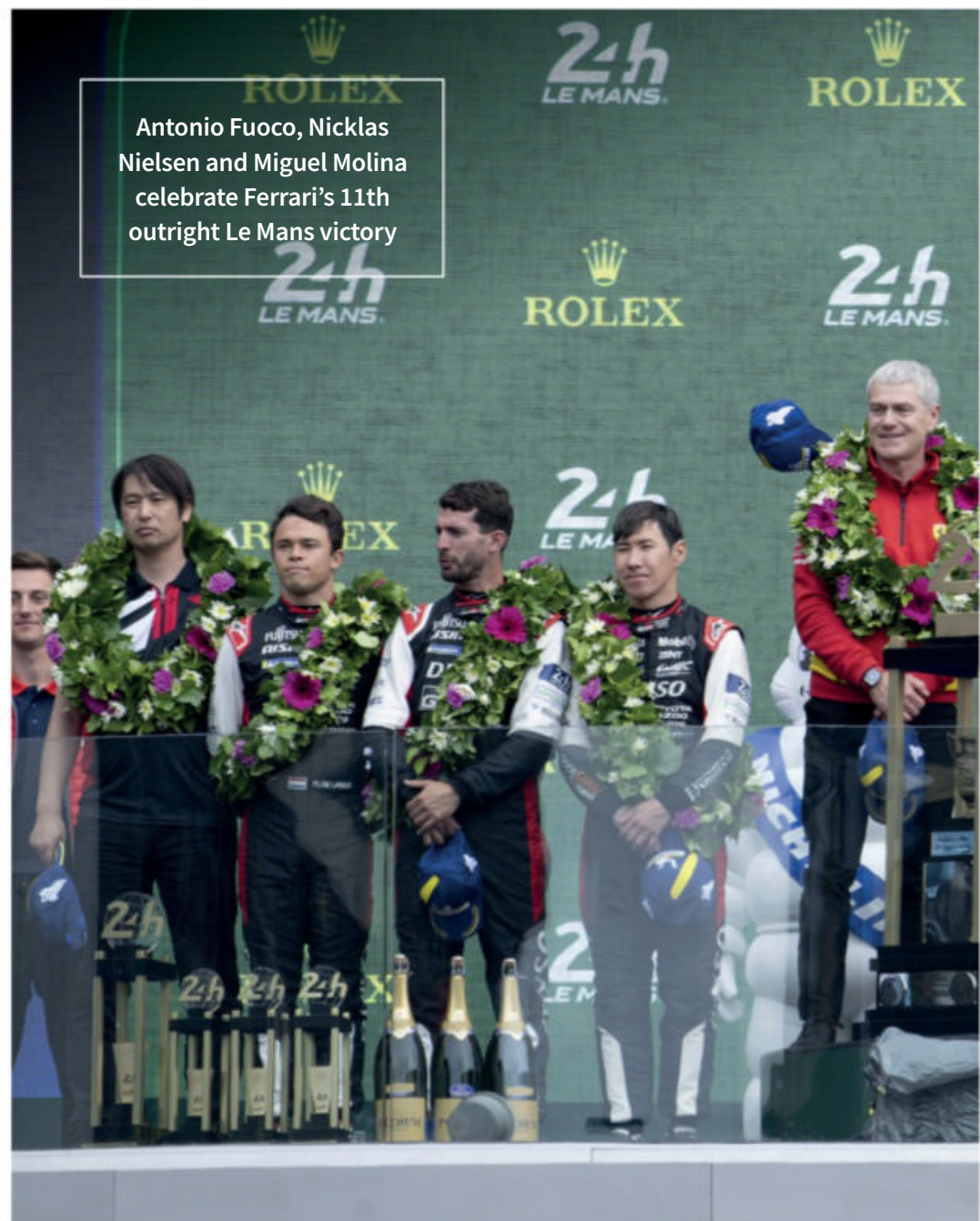
The other difference between this year and last was the identity of the two Hypercar class entries fighting it out at the very front in the final hour. Nicklas Nielsen, Antonio Fuoco and Miguel Molina prevailed in the best of the factory AF Corse Ferrari 499P Le Mans Hypercars by 14 seconds from the Toyota GR010 HYBRID LMH shared by Kamui Kobayashi, Nyck de Vries and late stand-in Jose Maria Lopez. The second cars from this pair of manufacturers ended up third and fifth, with the best of four Porsches to finish in the lead pack between them. Last year's winners James Calado, Alessandro Pier Guidi and Antonio Giovinazzi took the final podium spot, Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa fifth, but it could just as easily have been this Toyota once again duking it out for the win with Ferrari.

The Ferrari and the Toyota were evenly matched – there was probably less in it than last year – over the course of a race interrupted by rain on multiple occasions and six hours' worth of safety car running. The Toyota probably had the slightest of edges, a reverse on last year, though the GR010 was undoubtedly the quicker car in wet conditions. That Ferrari ultimately prevailed came down to the fact that in the final stages of the race it wasn't the quicker or less problem-free of the Toyotas that was in the hunt for victory.

Lopez's spin at the Dunlop Chicane bang on the 23-hour mark as he hunted down Nielsen wasn't the defining Toyota off on Sunday afternoon. Exactly an hour before, Hartley had spun at Mulsanne Corner after getting a helping hand from Pier Guidi, a misdemeanour that resulted in the Italian getting a 5s penalty at his next pitstop.

The time loss for Toyota was significant as Hartley waited to rejoin after spinning to the inside of the tight right-hander and then took to the gravel on the outside. He lost around 35s on the lap he spun, and another five on the next lap as he got his wet-weather Michelin tyres back up to temperature. The deficit of the #8 car at the chequered flag was 63s, but it is important to point out that Hartley dropped down in the pack, to sixth in fact. That undoubtedly played a part in his ability to mount any kind of fightback.

The crew of the #8 car were adamant that the incident cost them the victory. "I guess without that spin after that little touch, we would



"I guess without that spin after that little touch, we would have won the race. We lost something like 40s"

have won the race," said Buemi. "We lost something like 40s and we were some way ahead of #7 at the time." For Hartley, it felt "like the victory just slipped away from us".

Hartley was just behind the winning Ferrari at the time of the incident and would have assumed the lead when Nielsen had to make an unscheduled pitstop. The drivers' door had come open in the wake of the car's penultimate pitstop, and the Dane had no option but to pit because he was being shown the black-and-orange warning flag. He came in with an hour and 40 left on the clock, or two times a normal 50-minute stint on the car's energy allocation. Lopez, chosen to finish the race in #7 despite this being his first time back in a GR010 since last November's WEC finale in Bahrain, was 36s behind after making his own second-to-last stop.

His progress towards the Ferrari was halted when he looped it with an hour to go. The time loss was more or less the 14s by which he lost the race, but it would be wrong to say that Toyota missed out on the win as a result of an incident that Lopez suspected was caused by some kind of powertrain issue. Nielsen was backing off at the end; the gap stood at 22s with a couple of laps to go, so Lopez was almost certainly correct when he said that the spin didn't define the race for the #7 crew. The only caveat to that is the fact that Nielsen was in pretty aggressive fuel save mode as the race approached its conclusion. Nielsen's early stop gave him no margin for error on the

HYPERCAR RACE PACE		
AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Jose Maria Lopez (#7)	3m29.629s
2	Brendon Hartley (#8)	3m29.940s
3	Alessandro Pier Guidi (#51)	3m29.977s
4	Kamui Kobayashi (#7)	3m30.043s
5	James Calado (#51)	3m30.262s
6	Laurens Vanthoor (#6)	3m30.308s

AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Brendon Hartley (#8)	3m30.844s
2	Jose Maria Lopez (#7)	3m30.856s
3	James Calado (#51)	3m30.965s
4	Sebastien Buemi (#8)	3m30.993s
5	Miguel Molina (#50)	3m31.032s
6	Kamui Kobayashi (#7)	3m31.045s

AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Sebastien Buemi (#8)	3m31.381s
2	James Calado (#51)	3m31.563s
3	Miguel Molina (#50)	3m31.595s
4	Kamui Kobayashi (#7)	3m31.716s
5	Robert Shwartzman (#83)	3m31.952s
6	Phil Hanson (#38)	3m31.974s

FERRARI

fuel as he strived to avoid the need for a splash. He knew it would be tight even with the wet conditions and a brief slow zone, a temporary 80km/h (50mph) speed limit. Official data showed that he had less than 2% of his energy remaining when he took the chequered flag.

“I did quite a bit of fuel save but I didn’t think about it much,” said Nielsen. “If we wanted to go for the win we only had one option – to save fuel. I just asked the team to give me an energy target per lap, and that’s it.”

The #7 Toyota had what might be deemed a messy race. It had to come from the back of the 23-strong Hypercar field after Kobayashi went off at Virage Corvette (formerly Karting) as he tried to improve his time in first qualifying. WEC rules demand a driver loses all his lap times if he or she causes a red flag stoppage.

There were multiple issues along the way for the #7 Toyota,

though their effect was to a greater or lesser extent mitigated by the three safety cars that interrupted this race. There were two slow punctures that resulted in unscheduled stops, and on Sunday morning Kobayashi lost turbo boost and therefore power as a result of a sensor issue that took some time to resolve out on track. It explained why the Japanese driver had to cede position to the sister car, putting #8 in the pound seats as Ferrari’s nearest challenger at this point.

Another engine issue, during Lopez’s final stint, cost the car time. This one was “related to communication”, explained Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe director Rob Leupen. The Argentinian had somehow ended up with the wrong settings leaving the pits and had to be guided by the team to cycle through the systems to address the problem, all the while trying to make up time on a wet track. »



Buemi rues “one that got away” after “cleanest race” for #8 Toyota...



...while runner-up #7 encountered numerous issues throughout the race



It all went to backing up Buemi’s claim that #8 should have won this race. “I think we had the cleanest race of everyone,” he said. “This was one that got away.”

Ferrari insisted that it didn’t go into the race believing it would win, merely that it *could* win. That’s why the marque’s boss of sportscar racing, Antonello Coletta, described the repeat victory as a surprise. Between the Test Day on the Sunday ahead of the race and the start of practice and qualifying on the Wednesday, Ferrari was talking down its chances.

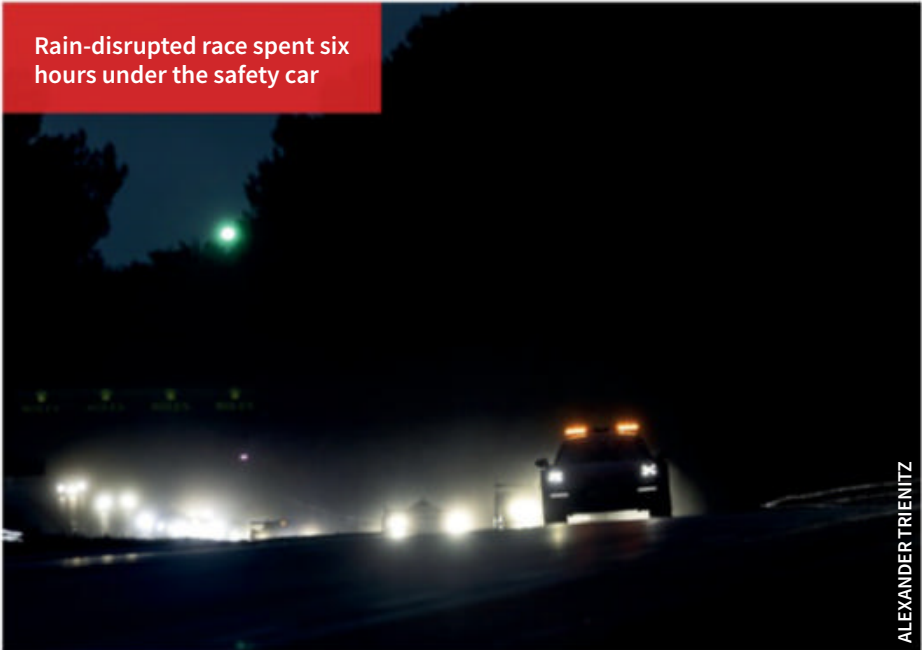
It made mention of its loss of straightline speed since last year, a function of the new power gain component of the Balance of Performance that cut the 499P’s maximum power above 250km/h (155mph) by 10bhp or so. It reckoned it had only the third fastest car and it could only win the race, said Ferrari technical director Ferdinando Cannizzo, by “minimising its weaknesses and maximising its strengths”. The rhetoric looked empty long

before the race start: Giovinnazzi and Fuoco qualified fourth and fifth (and started third and fourth), and the cars were quicker through the speed trap than any of the other members of the big four in which Toyota, Porsche and Cadillac joined Ferrari.

Last year’s victors weren’t quite a match for the winning #50 car at the weekend, Calado was happy to admit. In the dry, #51 was the quicker, but in the wet the advantage flipped around. “We were flying in the dry but really struggling in the wet,” confirmed the Brit.

He also bemoaned some incorrect strategy calls. Putting the car on medium tyres on Sunday morning when the sister car was on the softs looked like the wrong choice, though Cannizzo insisted it wasn’t. “We made a few wrong decisions, a few too many,” said Calado. “That dropped us back so that we were always trying to catch up. We were pretty much on the back foot through the race.”

The yellow customer – or satellite entry – from Ferrari and AF was a genuine contender in the hands of Robert Kubica and factory





“We made a few wrong decisions, a few too many. That dropped us back so we were always trying to catch up”

drivers Robert Shwartzman and Yifei Ye, even if it didn't quite have the pace of the red cars from the same stable. Its race came to an end right at the conclusion of the 20th hour with a hybrid problem. Smoke billowing from its brakes hinted at the issue with the motor generator unit on the front axle and the extra reliance that its failure put on the conventional brakes.

Porsche only came away with fourth place, although as Urs Kuratle, who oversees the 963 LMDh project, pointed out it fell just 38s short of the marque's 20th overall victory at Le Mans. The German manufacturer and the factory Penske Porsche team had strengthened its status as a genuine contender after its strong run in the WEC so far this season by ending up 1-2-4 in the Test Day times, though pole or no pole for Kevin Estre, it didn't look quite such a competitive proposition when the temperatures progressively fell as the race approached. “We've been chasing tyre temperatures and tyre temperature control all week,” said PPM boss Jonathan Diuguid on Friday. He went on to say, however, that he felt confident about the race pace of all three PPM cars, and stated that PPM would use three divergent grid positions of its expanded three-car squad – first, 10th and 19th – to cover off all the tactical bases. That tactic arguably worked against Porsche.

Changing to wets on the pole-winning car when the rain arrived for the first time late in hour two was a call that ensured that Estre, Laurens Vanthoor and Andre Lotterer were behind the eighth ball until after a rain-induced safety car from just before 0400 on Sunday »

QUALIFYING

PORSCHE ON TOP WHEN IT MATTERS

BMW celebrated after first qualifying on Wednesday evening, then Porsche had its turn when it really mattered at the end of the half-hour Hyperpole session a day later. And Cadillac muscled in on the act just for a few minutes in the belief, it seemed, that it had grabbed the pre-race headlines with pole.

The pace of the BMW M Hybrid V8 was one of the surprises of Le Mans week, even if many were billing the German manufacturer as a good outside bet for Le Mans courtesy of the upward trajectory it has been on since joining the World Endurance Championship with WRT at the start of this season. Dries Vanthoor was quickest initially on his first run, and then found two seconds on the second to take the session honours as the first of the eight drivers to progress to Hyperpole.

The Belgian did the business on the soft Michelin tyre rather than the medium used by most of the Hypercar pack. He was on that tyre again 24 hours later and was initially third on his first run. When he went again on a second set he went off at the Indianapolis left-hander, bringing out the red flags, which meant his previous time was scratched out and he was left down in eighth position (which eventually became sixth).

Sebastien Bourdais had just gone fastest in the #3 Ganassi Cadillac V-Series.R LMDh and appeared to celebrate with his team as though he'd secured the top spot. He denied that he was doing so, and for good reason. There were still over seven minutes left on the clock, time for two flying laps.

Alex Lynn, in the full-season WEC entry from the Ganassi Caddy squad, sort of knocked him off first position, though the five-place grid penalty awarded to Earl Bamber for his part in the shunt that halted the Spa round last month would have demoted the car. The advantage for Lynn was just 0.034s before Kevin Estre chipped another tenth off to give Porsche its first outright WEC grid-topper since the second of Neel Jani's back-to-back poles in 2015-16 with the 919 Hybrid LMP1.

Ferrari took fourth and fifth with its pair of factory 499P Le Mans Hypercars, Alessandro Pier Guidi outpacing 2023 pole winner Antonio Fuoco by four tenths this time. Paul-Loup Chatin took sixth for Alpine, but what of Toyota? Neither of the GR010 HYBRID LMHs made the cut. Brendon Hartley failed to get a clear lap and ended up 11th. Kamui Kobayashi had been fourth behind Vanthoor, Bourdais and Fuoco, but lost his time after causing the red flag as per WEC rules. The deletion of his times and those of Nicolas Lapierre for a track limits infringement promoted Callum Hogg to eighth, although his shunt in second practice meant he took no part in Hyperpole.



that lasted for three and a half hours. More telling, however, was the decision to leave Frederic Makowiecki out on slick tyres and then sticking to the plan in the face of logic provided by the stopwatch when it rained again on Sunday morning.

But for this call the car, which Makowiecki shared with Matt Campbell and Michael Christensen, would probably have been in the fight for some silverware given the Australian's pace in the wet at the end. The podium on which Vanthoor missed out by less than 2s after a dogged pursuit of Pier Guidi might have come the way of the #5 Porsche. "Certainly there were some decisions that could have been different," said Kuratle. "It was not a perfect tactical race for us, that is clear."

The extra Le Mans entry from PPM's IMSA SportsCar Championship squad seemed to attract the lion's share of the team's bad luck. Contact out on track resulted in damage to an illuminated number panel and a trip into the box for repairs before Felipe Nasr crashed out after losing the back end at the fast right at Indianapolis in hour 18.

Campbell and his team-mates ended up sixth, one place up on the best of the Cadillac V-Series.R LMDhs fielded by the factory Ganassi team. Full-season WEC drivers Earl Bamber and Alex Lynn had IndyCar champion Alex Palou as their co-driver for this one, but not the pace to ultimately challenge the top two. "Ferrari and Toyota in particular had a bit more pace on us in every condition," said Lynn. "It wasn't a lot, but ultimately that's what it came down to."

"Two cars on the lead lap and first and second in the FIA Endurance Trophy can't be a disappointment"

Crew of Toyota #8 were adamant the race should have been theirs



ALEXANDER TRIENITZ

Ganassi tried rolling the dice a couple of times, pitting early when Bamber got in on Sunday morning to gain track position, and then going to wet tyres at the end a lap before anyone else. But it wasn't enough for the General Motors brand to repeat its 2023 podium.

The other two cars had issues. Pipo Derani crashed the Action Express Racing Caddy, also visiting from North America, in a near-identical hour-19 accident to Nasr's. The difference was that he could crab the American car for repairs lasting an hour and 50 minutes. The second Ganassi entry, which finished fourth last year, was hit by bad luck in the same hour, a punctured oil tank putting it out of the race.

British Porsche privateer Jota took eighth and ninth with its pair of 963 LMDhs, the last two cars on the lead lap. As close as the team was to the front, it never looked like it was going to topple the Ferrari/Toyota hegemony, or beat the factory Penske squad. But there was no disappointment for a team that took the laurels the previous time out in the WEC at Spa in May.



Jota never looked like challenging at the front but still came away well satisfied

RAINIEREHRHARDT



BMW initially looked like being a potential dark horse and ended up having a shocker

“Two cars on the lead lap, even taking into account the safety cars, and first and second in the FIA Endurance Trophy [for privateer Hypercar teams] can’t be a disappointment,” said Jota team principal Sam Hignett. “You’d have to say we had a good day.”

That the winning car from Spa was even in the race could be described as a miracle. Callum Hogg had an innocuous-looking off in the Esses at the end of final free practice on Wednesday night, just a few hours after he’d taken – or rather inherited – a place in Hyperpole. The impact damaged a lower front right wishbone mounting on the monocoque.

Porsche brought in one of the two spare tubs it carries to each European WEC race, and Jota set to rebuilding the #12 entry around the new chassis. Le Mans rules, like those of the series, preclude the use of a T-car. Hignett described the process as “effectively just a chassis swap”. The full powertrain, all the running gear and bodywork were transferred over to the new tub in 36 hours,

a build-up that the team had never previously managed in under three weeks. Getting the car ready for a shakedown on the bumpy runway of the airfield adjacent to the circuit on Friday evening was an impressive feat.

So too was getting the Porsche home without problems in eighth. Hignett conceded that it “wasn’t perfect” and was never likely to be, given the hasty rebuild, and pointed out that it was the sister car shared by Jenson Button, Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen that was the quicker of its Hertz-liveried entries. It finished 34s behind after a less straightforward race.

Proton Competition, the other Porsche privateer competing in the WEC, never looked like emulating its race-leading form from Spa. The reason for that was a repeat of the bizarre problem it encountered in Belgium. Four stops were required in the opening couple of hours to make sure the drivers’ side door on the car shared by Neel Jani, Harry Tincknell and Julien Andlauer could be properly secured, putting it three laps down early on. The Porsche, running a livery that tipped its hat to the 1991 Daytona 24 Hours-winning Joest Porsche 962, showed decent performance thereafter before driveshaft failure intervened. “We haven’t got that wallop one-lap pace, but we were pretty strong over a stint,” reckoned Tincknell.

The driveshaft issue stranded Tincknell on pit entry early in the 21st hour before he managed to get some drive to make it back to the pits. After effecting repairs, the team waited until 20 minutes to go before sending Tincknell out to ensure a classified finish and a distant third behind the Jota cars in the Trophy points.

BMW appeared to be a dark horse coming into Le Mans, and reinforced that position in first qualifying. Dries Vanthoor led the way in the #15 M Hybrid V8 when it mattered on Wednesday evening in the one-hour session from which the fastest eight cars in each class went through to Hyperpole on Thursday. Come the race, however, the German manufacturer and the factory WRT squad endured a nightmare. The Bimmers completed fewer than 200 laps between them after a pair of accidents, one of which was the driver’s fault >>

Ferrari’s pace soon made its initial downplaying of its chances ring a little hollow





Peugeot happy with its reliability – now it has to work on performance

HYPERCAR

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FRENCH TEAMS PUT ON A BRAVE FACE

It was a bad day for the home manufacturers at Le Mans this year. Peugeot never troubled the frontrunners with its still-new 9X8 2024 Le Mans Hypercar over the course of the 24 Hours, and the two Alpine A424 LMDhs took early baths. Yet both marques tried to put a bit of spin on their disappointing performances at this double-points round of the World Endurance Championship.

Peugeot got its cars to the finish, albeit down in 11th and 12th, both two laps down. That was the good news it took away from the third race for its updated contender in the Hypercar class.

“The most positive thing from the race is the reliability,” said

Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Janssonie. “We had no issues with the car, not only for the race but also the Test Day and free practice. Now we can spend more time working on performance.”

Peugeot wasn’t expecting to be competitive, although it had predicted that it would be better than in qualifying after failing to get either car through to Hyperpole – its two cars ended up 15th and 20th with Jean-Eric Vergne and Stoffel Vandoorne. It stressed that it concentrated on race set-up at the Test Day and in first free practice.

Janssonie conceded that the car is lacking grip in the high-speed corners. He suggested that the

latest 9X8 wasn’t “giving confidence to the drivers so they push to the maximum”.

Twelve months ago, Peugeot generally had its cars on the right tyre for the changeable conditions from Saturday evening into the small hours. This time, that wasn’t the case.

“That crossover point, when we have to change the tyres, is still something we have to learn,” explained Janssonie. “When we arrived here last year we had a much better understanding of the car than we do this one.”

Alpine couldn’t take any positives from the A424’s reliability: both cars were out of the race before one-quarter duration. They

each retired with engine issues, Ferdinand Habsburg stopping out on track in #35 in a cloud of smoke late in the fifth hour, and Nicolas Lapierre calling it quits in the pits in #36 almost exactly an hour later.

“We knew we were not totally confident with the reliability of the powertrain,” said Alpine motorsport boss Bruno Famin. “But to be honest we were not expecting to have the problem so early.”

Famin wouldn’t go into detail about the failures and whether they were identical ahead of proper analysis. But he was keen to stress that the Alpine LMDh showed some real performance last week, particularly in qualifying. Paul-Loup Chatin made it through to Hyperpole in #35 and then stuck the car sixth on the grid the next day, which became fifth thanks to Earl Bamber’s penalty for his Spa crash. It was an impressive turnaround after a lacklustre Test Day, set-up tweaks yielding a significant improvement in straightline speed.

“The positives are the pace we showed in quali and at the beginning of the race,” said Famin. “It wasn’t pace to be on the podium, that wouldn’t be logical in our first year, but definitely good enough for the top 10. We need to build on that and improve quickly for the remaining WEC races.”



Alpine was not expecting both cars to be out quite so early

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

and one that most definitely wasn't.

It was a case of what might have been for BMW after Vanthoor's qualifying heroics on Wednesday. The performance pointed to the M Hybrids being able to do something serious in the race. The Belgian, who partnered Raffaele Marciello and Marco Wittmann, set his time on the soft Michelin slick tyre whereas the majority of the opposition ran on the medium. The weather forecast, which eventually came to pass, was suggesting cool conditions and rain for the race, which meant the soft was more often than not going to be the tyre to be on. What the M Hybrids might have achieved on BMW's return to the top class at Le Mans 25 years after its only outright victory will never be known.

Wittmann had an off in the Esses as early as lap six and more or less got away with it. When Robin Frijns went off at the second apex of the Ford Chicane in the second hour aboard the sister car in which he partnered Rene Rast and Sheldon van der Linde, he wasn't so lucky. Despite significant damage, he was able to get the car back to the pits for repairs.

Van der Linde subsequently reported something was awry with the handling and the car received further attention. A plan to go out again on a data-gathering mission was aborted given the conditions. The latest in a line of BMW 'Art Cars' wouldn't return to the track until the final minutes.

Vanthoor was running in the top 10 in the seventh hour when, on an out-lap, he was tagged by Kubica, having already gone straight at the first Mulsanne chicane. The video footage publicly available suggested that it was an error of judgement on the ex-Formula 1 driver's part. That didn't ease the pain for BMW, however. "Today was difficult to swallow," said WRT boss Vincent Vosse. "We've made steps, we had a good car and this was the first time that you have seen us able to fight for top positions." He went on to express disappointment with the move by Kubica, an alumnus of WRT, but not the performance of the M Hybrid V8.

Lamborghini and its Iron Lynx squad were not expecting to challenge on the Italian marque's first Le Mans campaign in the top flight. But it did make the finish with both its SC63 LMDhs, getting the best of them, the full-season WEC entry shared by Mirko Bortolotti, Daniil Kvyat and Edoardo Mortara, home in 10th and ahead of both Peugeots (see panel, left). Its two entries sandwiched the French cars, the IMSA chassis of Romain Grosjean, Andrea Caldarelli and Matteo Cairoli taking 13th.

Two clean finishes was a significant achievement for a manufacturer that endured a difficult development phase with the SC63 – a shunt early on that put a six-week hold on testing last summer, and then rain during its single pre-Le Mans endurance simulation earlier this year. Neither car had any problems, save for a bit of repair work to the bodywork after Grosjean and Cairoli both spun on out-laps on Saturday evening.

"This is a great success," said Emmanuel Esnault, racing director of the Iron Lynx factory squad. "Finishing the race without major issues was our first goal, and we did it without a single trip to the

Getting both Lamborghinis to the finish deemed mission accomplished



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

"Today was difficult to swallow. This was the first time that you have seen us able to fight for top positions"

garage, and scoring our maiden points finish in the WEC. I'm proud of how our team managed the race."

The only real hiccup for the team came at the start of the week. A vibration reported by the drivers of the WEC car on the Test Day resulted in a decision to change the brand-new chassis on #63 that had previously only completed a shakedown at Magny-Cours.

The Test Day in particular proved that Lamborghini is continuing to make steps with the SC63. It was difficult to judge the significance of the times, but Bortolotti was fourth in the morning and Kvyat seventh in the quicker afternoon session. Come the race, the Lambos were both just under a couple of seconds off the ultimate pace in the dry. The SC63 remains a tad overweight, so an increase in minimum weight by 4kg to 1039kg, allied with a little more power, was more significant than it looked.

The rhetoric from Isotta Fraschini was similar to Lamborghini's. The garagiste's Tipo 6 LMH Competizione run by the French Duqueine team came through the 24 Hours without issue as the last classified finisher in Hypercar, albeit nine laps down. "We are happy because we didn't have to bring the car into the box or take off the engine cover one time," said Isotta motorsport boss Claudio Berro.

There were a lot of happy people at Le Mans last week. Looking beyond those manufacturers putting a positive spin on their race, there should have been 329,000 individuals with smiles on their faces. That was the crowd figure put out for what was another classic edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours on the Circuit de la Sarthe. 🇫🇷

Trouble-free run for Isotta Fraschini, albeit nine laps down



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

JARVIS LEADS UNITED ROOKIES TO GLORY

Many crews, including the best Pro-Am line-ups, challenged in LMP2 before the former class winner and two debutants took control

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Multiple cars finishing on the lead lap may be a relatively rare phenomenon for the top class of the Le Mans 24 Hours, but it's far more commonplace among the LMP2 division. With ORECA's prototypes dominating the market, the class has developed a reputation for close and competitive racing in what has essentially become a one-make format. And this year's contest was no different.

The fact that nine different cars led at various points (and it's worth considering two of the other seven were in strife inside the opening hour), while the top 16 LMP2 drivers – encompassing 14 cars – all set fastest laps within a second of each other, showed that the increasing popularity of the Hypercar class has not dented the competitiveness of the secondary division. Despite the quality of the line-up, the class may be considered somewhat old hat – and it will get even longer in the tooth with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest revealing last week that the arrival of the next generation of machinery has been delayed to 2028 – but there were still new and intriguing subplots this year.

One of those concerned whether a Pro-Am pairing could win the LMP2 class outright for the first time. With three of the top four cars on the grid coming from the sub-category, and Wednesday practice and qualifying star Malthe Jakobsen suggesting all 16 crews had a realistic chance of winning, it was a question that kept cropping up ahead of the race. And the prospect of such a turn of events becomes that bit more likely with a chaotic race, during which the bronze amateurs have plenty of safety cars and slow zones to negate their pace disadvantage over their minimum driving time of six hours.

While we did get a crazy race, a Pro-Am car winning LMP2 overall will have to wait for another year after the #22 United Autosports trio

comprising a regular mix of a silver driver with a gold and a platinum prevailed. But a Pro-Am squad did come very close – and it was perhaps a line-up that had snuck a little under the radar. The AF Corse ORECA of Ben Barnicoat and former GTE Am Le Mans conquerors Nico Varrone and Francois Perrodo was one of the key cars in contention for much of the race. But two key factors ultimately prevented it from triumphing.

The first was a touch of conservatism. The AF Corse team decided to delay pitting under the race's final safety car in the 19th hour,

“We were out front and had it well under control then that last safety car put us in a difficult position”

mindful of the Pro-Am AO by TF entry that was second in the sub-class. “We were out front and had it pretty well under control and then that last safety car put us in a difficult position,” explained Barnicoat. “Do we pit now and go for the overall win? But that would have given AO a lap back and that would have brought them back into the fight of Pro-Am, so we decided to stick to the job that we set in March when we all came together and started working for this programme.”

The decision to cautiously stay out was then compounded by a starter motor problem that caused a slight delay in many of AF's later pitstops. “In the last four or five hours, the battery was running a



TF car of Deletraz led early on from pole but was unlucky with safety car timings

LMP2 RACE PACE		
AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Mathias Beche (#65)	3m39.182s
2	Oliver Jarvis (#22)	3m39.517s
3	Olli Caldwell (#25)	3m39.586s
4	Filipe Albuquerque (#23)	3m39.649s
5	Job van Uitert (#28)	3m39.654s
6	Malthe Jakobsen (#37)	3m39.710s
AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Patrick Pilet (#10)	3m40.436s
2	Job van Uitert (#28)	3m40.475s
3	Fabio Scherer (#24)	3m40.549s
4	Mathias Beche (#65)	3m40.631s
5	Oliver Jarvis (#22)	3m40.684s
6	Filipe Albuquerque (#23)	3m40.740s
AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS		
1	Patrick Pilet (#10)	3m41.194s
2	Fabio Scherer (#24)	3m41.237s
3	Job van Uitert (#28)	3m41.415s
4	Nolan Siegel (#22)	3m41.590s
5	Nico Varrone (#183)	3m41.672s
6	Ritomo Miyata (#37)	3m41.696s



RAINIEREHRHARDT

little bit low and it was taking an extra five seconds every pitstop,” recounted Barnicoat. “With these cars, it does 40 minutes and, with the weather, you’re pitting so much – it was at the point where you’re just praying the car was going to start.” It did eventually fire into action each time, but Barnicoat and co had to settle for fourth overall in LMP2 and the Pro-Am spoils.

Meanwhile, the TF machine spearheaded by established LMP2 ace Louis Deletraz, alongside rookie Alex Quinn and bronze PJ Hyett, had led early on after starting from pole, but suffered from not having Hyett at the wheel at the start of either of the overnight safety car periods because he had just finished his own stints at the time (see panel, p33) and fell a lap adrift with the American at the wheel.

While strategy therefore cost both the leading Pro-Am contenders a chance of the win, it also catapulted two cars seemingly destined for midfield finishes into the fray. The overwhelming majority of drivers pitted for rain tyres when the first of umpteen rain showers hit the Circuit de la Sarthe, in the second hour. But the #10 Vector machine of Patrick Pilet (sixth at the end of the first hour) and last year’s winning Inter Europol squad (eighth after hour one) did not. It was a strategic masterstroke – the rain eased and many of their rivals were soon back in the pits to shed the wet rubber. “We made the right calls and just survived with the slicks in the wet,” said Pilet.

Both cars remained in contention throughout, but neither could quite take the spoils. Pilet said that the Vector crew struggled for pace as the race wore on, while the Frenchman dropping a wheel off the track at Indianapolis in hour 20 enabled the Inter Europol car to find its way ahead. Silver-graded Ryan Cullen’s slower lap times in the car, also shared with Stephane Richelmi, in the wet closing stages meant they slipped to fifth.

Inter Europol, meanwhile, had an eventful time shortly after its strategy excellence when its ORECA shed its left-front wheel during the fourth hour and had to pit to also replace its nose. Some rapid



Veteran Jarvis (right) helped bring Garg and Siegel up to speed

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

pace from 2019 British Formula 3 champion Clement Novalak overnight before the four-hour-long safety car for the heavy rain clawed the crew back into contention. But a long-running battle with the #37 Cool Racing car, which provided plenty of entertainment in the closing stages, ended with Novalak picking up a 5s penalty for cutting the Dunlop Chicane, ensuring that he, Vlad Lomko and Jakub Smiechowski had to settle for second.

The Cool crew were not so calm in the final hour when Jakobsen, who had earlier spun when entering the pitlane during the night, lost it again and spent half an hour in the pits, which included replacing a faulty windscreen wiper motor.

Through all the chaos of a Le Mans race that was more reminiscent of the Spa 24 Hours with all its weather interventions came the #22 United Autosports crew. The car was among the sextet always in contention – they were all separated by 40s with a couple of hours to >>



NIELSEN RUES GT CLASH...

Another car that threatened to be a part of the lead mix for much of the race was the Nielsen Racing ORECA (above) that last year’s winner Fabio Scherer shared with IndyCar driver Kyffin Simpson and LMP2 regular David Heinemeier Hansson. But this dropped out of the fray after an overnight tangle with the #77 Proton Ford Mustang at the Esses, for which Hansson was penalised. After repairs were completed, the trio eventually finished 11th, six laps behind the leaders.

...AND LACK OF ROOKIE RUNNING

Like race winner Nolan Siegel, Nielsen’s fellow Le Mans rookie Simpson was unable to take part in the official pre-event test day the preceding weekend due to the clashing IndyCar round at Road America. And Simpson admitted he was on the back foot due to this lack of mileage. “It’s been tough to learn the track, a lot tougher than I expected,” he said. “In the four practice sessions I probably got about 30 laps in.”

BARNICOAT’S LE MANS LESSON

Pro-Am winner Ben Barnicoat admitted he had learned his lessons from last year’s race, when he crashed out in the AF Corse machine. There were no such problems this time around, where he took inspiration from his bronze team-mate Francois Perrodo. “They [bronzes] may not be the fastest but he certainly kept it clean and did his job,” said Barnicoat. “I learned a big lesson last year when I didn’t do it and it was great to redeem myself.”

NOT ALL SMILES AT UNITED

While the #22 United Autosports car enjoyed a near-perfect race, the same could not be said of the team’s #23 ORECA (below). Ben Keating had a spin early on and things soon went downhill from there when an alternator problem kept it in the pits for almost 90 minutes, before further spins and penalties added to the crew’s woes. Keating, Ben Hanley and Filipe Albuquerque were classified last of the LMP2 finishers in an unlucky 13th place, 25 laps down.



go – and really started stretching its legs when Nolan Siegel grabbed the lead from the IDEC Sport machine of Job van Uitert, Reshad de Gerus and Paul Lafargue in the closing stages. Oliver Jarvis was left to guide it home in the treacherous conditions to seal a 19-second win.

For a driver making his 13th Le Mans start, and with a previous LMP2 win and four overall podiums to his name, Jarvis said it was far from easy. “That was the hardest race I think I’ve ever done,” he admitted. “The track was just changing every lap. It was dry and then it would rain and you were on slicks. It was cold and you can’t get tyre temperature. I must have nearly crashed the car 10 times – you’re literally hanging onto it. I had a moment at the chicane [in the final hour], I had numerous moments – I think it was a good job



Pole position took some of the sting out of another year falling short



Barnicoat kept nose clean on way to Pro-Am honours for AF Corse

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Vector crew struggled for pace in later stages, falling to fifth

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Deposed from lead by winning car, IDEC machine came home third

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

I didn't have an onboard! You're always a small mistake away from putting it in the wall, so I was relieved to see the chequered flag." While Jarvis had years of experience to call upon to navigate such tricky conditions, his rookie team-mates did not, although you could hardly tell that from the way they acquitted themselves. Aside from a Ford Chicane spin for IndyCar racer Siegel, he and IMSA SportsCar Championship driver Bijoy Garg barely put a foot wrong. "It was very tricky – this was the first time I've driven in the rain at night," said Garg. "I was definitely thinking, 'Why do I have to learn it here?' But glad to have done it, stayed on track and maintained good track position throughout. Olly did a phenomenal job not only in the race in those final few stints but also just getting me and Nolan up to speed,

teaching us everything he knew." In a bizarre way, Jarvis said Siegel's clashing IndyCar commitments, which meant he missed the pre-event Test Day, actually made it easier for him to get the pair up to speed. "Because Nolan didn't arrive until Monday, that meant we could give Bijoy a lot of running at the pre-test," explained Jarvis. "I think I did 10 to 15 laps and he did the rest of the day. We probably focused a little bit more on Nolan this week and they've both got up to speed exceptionally well." Such accomplished performances under the toughest of tests ensured that there was no look-in for a Pro-Am crew this year, but it could be a matter of time before the Le Mans 24 Hours' oldest class creates a little more history. 🇫🇷

LMP2

RAPID DELETRAZ MISSES OUT YET AGAIN

You cannot get much closer to taking a Le Mans class win than leading onto the final lap only for your car's throttle sensor to falter and leave you grinding to a halt. But Louis Deletraz's LMP2 near-misses continued after that 2021 disappointment when he had to settle for runner-up the following year and was second again in 2023, when he missed out by a mere 21 seconds. The chances of Deletraz finally putting that unwanted streak of bridesmaid results behind him this year were boosted when he topped Hyperpole qualifying in the AO by TF ORECA.

Yet Deletraz was not getting carried away – even if he did believe an outright LMP2 win was possible for the Pro-Am crew. "Quali is good for the ego but I want to win on Sunday at 4pm," he said. "I've been so close to this win here a few times but didn't get it yet so I hope it's the year." The race started well for Deletraz when he maintained the advantage before bronze-graded amateur PJ Hyett took over at the opening pitstop. He dropped back when up against much faster drivers, and was later initially unable to take advantage of the long safety car period in the relentless rain

of Saturday night to get behind the wheel. With Deletraz also having a spin at the Dunlop Chicane, the car fell a lap down and was never able to claw back the deficit. "There were always slow zones and safety cars that stopped us from coming back," admitted Deletraz, who could still see the positives. "We got pole position, the team won the fastest pitstop. This is my third year in a row P2, but I'll come back for more." Deletraz was also the second-fastest driver in the LMP2 field – his best lap just 0.032s shy of Oliver Jarvis's – but he will have to wait at least another year to finally land that elusive win.



HYPERCAR

LMP2

LMGT3

MEGA MANTHEY'S GT3 GLORY

*The first Le Mans victory of the new LMGT3 era
went to Porsche with a controlled showing*

JAMES NEWBOLD

The circumstances of the Manthey EMA Porsche crew's Le Mans 24 Hours win couldn't have been much more different to their previous LMGT3 World Endurance Championship success at Spa.

After dramatically snatching victory on the final lap of the most recent WEC round away from their sister entry, Richard Lietz, Morris Schuring and Yasser Shahin led all but four of the last 76 laps in France to score Porsche's third win from four WEC rounds in 2024 – and drew level with team-mates Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alexander Malykhin at the head of the standings.

Veteran Porsche factory driver Lietz's fifth GT class win in the famous enduro, this time with event rookies Schuring and Shahin, looked assured heading into the closing stages when the rain returned. The Austrian conceded that a rear-engined Porsche was the car to have in the wet, when his advantage over Augusto Farfus's WRT BMW M4 GT3 stretched from just over 10 seconds to north of 50s. It capped a fine performance from all three drivers in unpredictable conditions that presented the pitwall with numerous tyre strategy headaches.

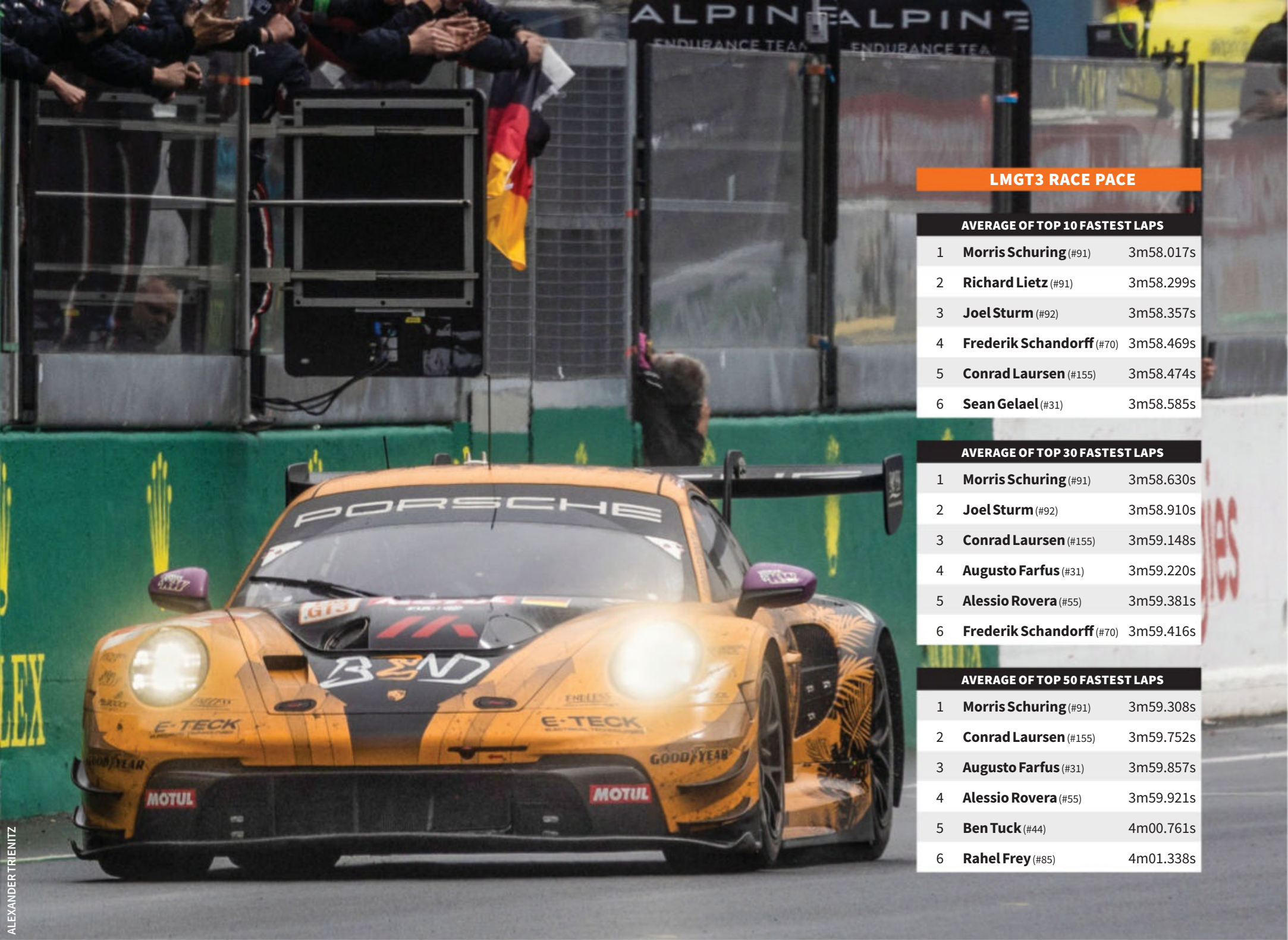
Silver-rated Dutchman Schuring, among the youngest drivers in the race at the age of 19, showed he has a big sportscar racing future with rapid and mistake-free stints to realise a dream sparked by

attending Le Mans as a fan with his father in 2017, while bronze-graded Australian Shahin more than played his role by exceeding his six-hour minimum driving time.

After an opening double stint at the start – shortened from a planned triple to install Schuring on fresh Goodyears when the first shower arrived, which put the car into the lead after four hours – Shahin later returned for what turned into an unplanned quadruple stint. He explained that it was the first time he'd ever done one. "That's not particularly orthodox on one set of tyres!" he grinned.

Shahin returned to the cockpit shortly before half-distance to see out his time behind a lengthy safety car, resulting from poor visibility in the overnight rain, a 3h27m stint pushing his cumulative time beyond seven hours. "Me staying in longer not just made [his co-drivers] fresher," he pointed out. "It meant that if we could defer my pitstop to as late as possible, to the track going green, whoever got in would have the freshest set of tyres."

The stage appeared set for a frenetic battle between the two Manthey 911 GT3-Rs, with Bachler leading Lietz upon the eventual resumption of hostilities, but a gearbox problem forced a pit visit with less than eight hours to go that cost 24 minutes and any hope of a result. They ultimately finished 14th, eight laps in arrears, and 10th of the WEC entrants following a drive-through penalty



LMGT3 RACE PACE

AVERAGE OF TOP 10 FASTEST LAPS

1	Morris Schuring (#91)	3m58.017s
2	Richard Lietz (#91)	3m58.299s
3	Joel Sturm (#92)	3m58.357s
4	Frederik Schandorff (#70)	3m58.469s
5	Conrad Laursen (#155)	3m58.474s
6	Sean Gelael (#31)	3m58.585s

AVERAGE OF TOP 30 FASTEST LAPS

1	Morris Schuring (#91)	3m58.630s
2	Joel Sturm (#92)	3m58.910s
3	Conrad Laursen (#155)	3m59.148s
4	Augusto Farfus (#31)	3m59.220s
5	Alessio Rovera (#55)	3m59.381s
6	Frederik Schandorff (#70)	3m59.416s

AVERAGE OF TOP 50 FASTEST LAPS

1	Morris Schuring (#91)	3m59.308s
2	Conrad Laursen (#155)	3m59.752s
3	Augusto Farfus (#31)	3m59.857s
4	Alessio Rovera (#55)	3m59.921s
5	Ben Tuck (#44)	4m00.761s
6	Rahel Frey (#85)	4m01.338s

ALEXANDER TRIENITZ

#31 WRT BMW was hamstrung by top speed disadvantage



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

for ignoring blue flags. “Normally they would have finished one and two,” remarked WRT GT programme manager Kurt Mollekens. “Without that, I think they were dominant.”

The BMW of Farfus, Sean Gelael and Darren Leung was the Porsche’s closest challenger on Sunday and briefly got ahead in the 21st hour with an undercut strategy when Gelael was given new tyres, before Lietz blasted back ahead on the run to Indianapolis with a move that “was a bit more aggressive than I wanted”. Lietz reckoned “if it would be dry, I think they would have beaten us”, but Mollekens maintained this was never likely.

“We knew it would always be a struggle, I was never hoping to beat them on a regular basis,” he said. Despite a set-up designed to maximise straightline speed, the BMW struggled to overtake even when in the tow. The die was cast when Farfus spent a triple stint behind Schuring without ever threatening a move.

Heart of Racing Aston running strongly in second before crashing out onto its roof



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“As soon as there was some traffic in between, he pulled away,” reflected Farfus, who rotated with Gelael throughout the last 15 hours after British GT champion Leung completed his driving time. “Not having the top speed advantage, you cannot pass.”

Second ultimately exceeded expectations, Farfus admitted: “If you had talked to me after two hours in the race, I would say, ‘If you can be top 10, I would be happy.’”

“This was absolutely the best possible result we could hope for,” Mollekens added. “We would have needed some damp conditions where we could make the slicks work and they couldn’t. When it gets a bit damp and tricky, we usually manage to generate a bit more tyre temperature. [A repeat of] Imola is what we were going for, but those conditions didn’t materialise when it mattered.”

And the winning Porsche crew offered no opportunity for WRT to capitalise on mistakes either, with a clean run incurring no >>



penalties. “It’s really been a triumph of discipline, everyone just drove on the right side of risk,” noted Shahin.

“Overall, we have done the race without any major wrong decisions,” agreed Lietz. “At the end we got chosen by Le Mans. We were the lucky ones to survive the night, survive the mixed conditions and put always a correct tyre.”

Another of Manthey’s potential challengers had long since fallen by the wayside. The other WRT BMW that Valentino Rossi shared with Maxime Martin and Ahmad Al Harthy led in the early evening but crashed in the Omani’s hands in the ninth hour at the Dunlop Curve. Struggling to get heat into his slick tyres during a shower, Al Harthy ran wide at the chicane and, after getting dirt on his tyres, slid off the road as he put the power down. “We were very close to making the call of going to wets when it went wrong,” revealed Mollekens. “I feel a bit annoyed that we put him in that situation.”

More contenders dropped one by one in the hours that followed the other Manthey Porsche’s delay. Although it never led at any point, Heart of Racing’s Aston Martin was looking strong with six hours to go and running second in the hands of silver driver

Daniel Mancinelli, with Gelael chasing, when the Italian ran slightly off line anticipating a move from the overall race-winning Ferrari Hypercar at the right-hand kink prior to Indianapolis. That put him onto a damp part of the road that sent Mancinelli backwards into the barriers with enough force to flip the Vantage onto its roof and require the thankfully unhurt driver to visit the medical centre for checks. HoR’s bronze Ian James had driven for over nine hours – “Before I got in for the last safety car, I needed 10 minutes and then I saw sun break!” – and believes the well-rested Mancinelli and Alex Riberas “would have definitely given [the winning Porsche crew] a run for their money”.

After identifying the Circuit de la Sarthe as a track that masked the new Mustang GT3’s centre of gravity weakness relative to other venues on the WEC calendar, and made strides in optimising the mandatory torque sensors, Ford and Proton put together their best WEC showing to date to secure third and fourth places. Dennis Olsen, Mikkel Pedersen and Giorgio Roda’s WEC car completed the podium, heading the invitational entry of Christopher Mies, Ben Tuck and John Hartshorne. Both enjoyed clean runs that somewhat





No reason to be disappointed with fifth, reckoned Iron Dames' Bovy

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“Overall, we have done the race without any major wrong decisions. At the end we got chosen by Le Mans”

compensated for the disappointment of a broken steering rack costing the team’s remaining machine – which ran second during the first two stints in Ben Barker’s hands – over three hours in the pits. “It’s part of the development of a new of a new car,” mused Barker, who topped Wednesday’s qualifying session. “Sometimes you’ve got to be the guinea pig and unfortunately, we were.”

The Iron Dames Lamborghini didn’t have the pace to challenge for more than its ultimate fifth place, Sarah Bovy reckoned. “I don’t see any reason to be disappointed,” shrugged the Belgian, who shared with Rahel Frey and Michelle Gating. The all-female crew ultimately saw off the strongest of the two ASP-run Lexus RC F GT3s, in which Jack Hawsworth was a late replacement for Jose Maria Lopez, when, as the Briton put it, “the wheels fell off really” in the last four hours.

Esteban Masson was given a 10s penalty for contact with Farfus, while the Lexus lost ABS, had an overheating engine and a broken wiper too. Hawsworth was still in the hunt for a top-five and was chasing Gating when a bracket failed on the bonnet and forced him into a slow tour back to the pits. The car ultimately finished 10th, while the sister crew, who also led at intervals, placed seventh despite starting from the pits and having to serve a two-minute penalty at their first pitstop, after repairs necessitated by Kelvin van der Linde’s involvement in a warm-up tangle with the #7 Toyota. “Until eight o’clock in the morning, we are in contention for a podium,” sighed team boss Jerome Policand.

GR Racing’s Ferrari 296 was on course for sixth until Daniel Serra came to a halt in the last half-hour. After restarting, he dropped to 12th, elevating the best of the regular AF Corse entries after a largely anonymous showing. 🇫🇷



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EASTWOOD EARNS PRAISE

TF Sport’s first Le Mans outing with Corvette proved low-key as it struggled for pace throughout, but both Z06 GT3.Rs saw the flag in 11th and 15th places. Charlie Eastwood’s #81 machine (above) was stranded on track with electrical problems, but team boss Tom Ferrier was full of praise for the Northern Irishman getting it back to the pits. “He rang on the mobile, and we talked him through all the different terminals and bits to check,” reflected Ferrier. “That was brilliant on his behalf; often you put the phones and the toolkits in the car and think, ‘They’re never going to be used.’”

BOVY QUESTIONS PENALTIES

The only hiccup for the Iron Dames Lamborghini came when Sarah Bovy was tagged into a spin by Mathieu Jaminet’s Porsche Hypercar in the Porsche Curves. The Huracan escaped without damage, but Bovy believes harsher penalties should be issued for contact between the classes. “The drivers are doing what they are allowed to do,” she offered. “If we keep putting some pretty light penalties, they will keep doing it.”

McLAREN’S RACE DAY DISAPPOINTMENT

McLaren’s eagerly anticipated Le Mans return began well when Brendan Iribe nailed top spot in Hyperpole. But the Optimum-run Inception Racing 720S (below) he shared with Ollie Millroy and Frederik Schandorff was a disappointing 13th at the flag, losing 28 minutes in the pits to radiator repairs after Iribe struck the tyres at the second Mulsanne Chicane in hour six. Meanwhile, both United Autosport McLarens were sniffing around the podium places before retiring within eight laps of each other. A suspected drivetrain issue sidelined #95, while the #59 machine was stranded on track with a problem that had yet to be diagnosed when Autosport went to press.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

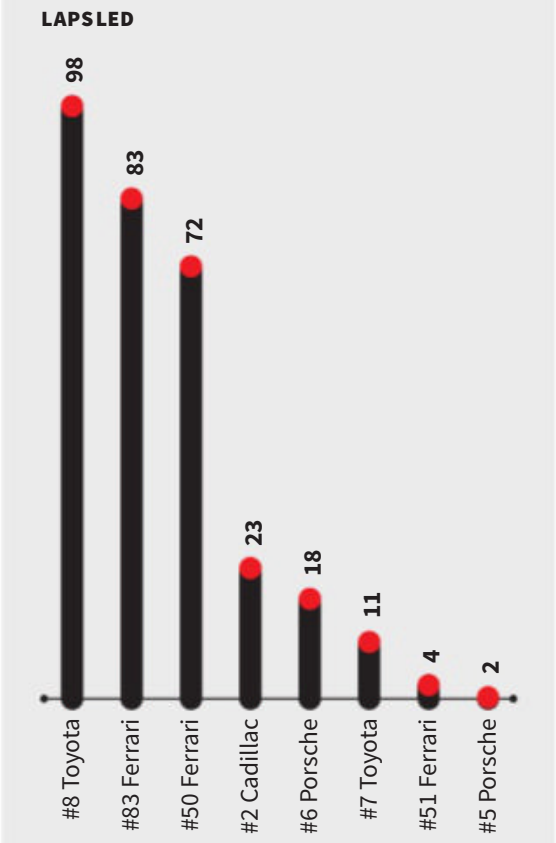
HYPERPOLE					* grid penalty
GRID	NO	DRIVER	CLASS	CAR	TIME
1	6	Kevin Estre	LMH	Porsche 963	3m24.634s
2	3	Sebastien Bourdais	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m24.816s
3	51	Alessandro Pier Guidi	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.156s
4	50	Antonio Fuoco	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.598s
5	35	Paul-Loup Chatin	LMH	Alpine A424	3m25.713s
6	15	Dries Vanthoor	LMH	BMW M Hybrid V8	no time
7	2	Alex Lynn	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m24.782s*
8	12		LMH	Porsche 963	no time
24	14	Louis Deletraz	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.217s
25	28	Job van Uitert	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.827s
26	65	Mathias Beche	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.053s
27	23	Ben Hanley	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.221s
28	22	Oliver Jarvis	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.270s
29	37	Malthe Jakobsen	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.773s
30	33	Laurents Horr	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.699s
31	10	Patrick Pilet	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.855s
40	70	Brendan Iribe	LMGT3	McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	3m58.120s
41	92	Alex Malykhin	LMGT3	Porsche 911 GT3-R	3m58.928s
42	66	Giacomo Petrobelli	LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	3m58.938s
43	77	Ryan Hardwick	LMGT3	Ford Mustang GT3	3m59.443s
44	27	Ian James	LMGT3	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	3m59.655s
45	777	Satoshi Hoshino	LMGT3	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	4m02.787s
46	82	Hiroshi Koizumi	LMGT3	Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	4m03.681s
47	60	Claudio Schiavoni	LMGT3	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	4m06.495s

QUALIFYING					
	15	Dries Vanthoor	LMH	BMW M Hybrid V8	3m24.465s
	3	Sebastien Bourdais	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m24.642s
	50	Antonio Fuoco	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m24.731s
	35	Paul-Loup Chatin	LMH	Alpine A424	3m24.872s
	2	Alex Lynn	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m24.993s
	51	Alessandro Pier Guidi	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.049s
	6	Kevin Estre	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.051s
	12	Callum Iltott	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.145s
9	36	Nicolas Lapierre	LMH	Alpine A424	3m25.278s
10	5	Matt Campbell	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.307s
11	8	Brendon Hartley	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	3m25.446s
12	83	Yifei Ye	LMH	Ferrari 499P	3m25.766s
13	63	Mirko Bortolotti	LMH	Lamborghini SC63	3m25.973s
14	99	Julien Andlauer	LMH	Porsche 963	3m25.992s
15	93	Jean-Eric Vergne	LMH	Peugeot 9X8 2024	3m26.195s
16	20	Robin Frijns	LMH	BMW M Hybrid V8	3m26.223s
17	38	Phil Hanson	LMH	Porsche 963	3m26.290s
18	311	Pipo Derani	LMH	Cadillac V-Series.R	3m26.311s
19	4	Nick Tandy	LMH	Porsche 963	3m26.362s
20	94	Stoffel Vandoorne	LMH	Peugeot 9X8 2024	3m27.251s
21	19	Andrea Caldarelli	LMH	Lamborghini SC63	3m27.655s
22	11	Jean-Karl Vernay	LMH	Isotta Fraschini Tipo 6 LMH Competizione	3m29.865s
23	7	Kamui Kobayashi	LMH	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	no time
	37	Malthe Jakobsen	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m32.827s
	14	Louis Deletraz	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.134s
	23	Ben Hanley	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.430s
	65	Mathias Beche	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m33.827s
	28	Job van Uitert	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.215s
	10	Patrick Pilet	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.262s
	33	Laurents Horr	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.330s
	22	Oliver Jarvis	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.480s
32	183	Nico Varrone	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.767s
33	24	Fabio Scherer	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.794s
34	34	Clement Novalak	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.885s
35	9	Bent Viscaal	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m34.963s
36	30	James Allen	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.070s
37	47	Frederik Vesti	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.360s
38	25	Olli Caldwell	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m35.474s
39	45	Colin Braun	LMP2	ORECA-Gibson 07	3m39.222s
	77	Ben Barker	LMGT3	Ford Mustang GT3	3m55.263s
	70	Frederik Schandorff	LMGT3	McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	3m55.406s
	82	Daniel Juncadella	LMGT3	Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	3m56.105s
	60	Franck Perera	LMGT3	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	3m56.153s
	92	Klaus Bachler	LMGT3	Porsche 911 GT3-R	3m56.189s
	27	Alex Riberas	LMGT3	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	3m56.243s
	66	Larry ten Voorde	LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	3m56.443s
	777	Marco Sorensen	LMGT3	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	3m56.500s
48	85	Michelle Gatting	LMGT3	Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	3m56.530s
49	87	Esteban Masson	LMGT3	Lexus RC F GT3	3m56.561s
50	59	Gregoire Saucy	LMGT3	McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	3m56.710s
51	46	Maxime Martin	LMGT3	BMW M4 GT3	3m56.738s
52	54	Davide Rigon	LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	3m56.780s
53	44	Christopher Mies	LMGT3	Ford Mustang GT3	3m56.836s
54	31	Augusto Farfus	LMGT3	BMW M4 GT3	3m56.947s
55	91	Richard Lietz	LMGT3	Porsche 911 GT3-R	3m57.026s
56	88	Dennis Olsen	LMGT3	Ford Mustang GT3	3m57.221s
57	81	Charlie Eastwood	LMGT3	Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	3m57.296s
58	95	Marino Sato	LMGT3	McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	3m57.313s
59	155	Conrad Laursen	LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	3m57.349s
60	78	Kelvin van der Linde	LMGT3	Lexus RC F GT3	3m57.441s
61	55	Alessio Rovera	LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	3m58.282s
62	86		LMGT3	Ferrari 296 GT3	no time

RACE STATS

WINNERS' AVERAGE SPEED			
Nielsen/Fuoco/Molina			109.568mph

FASTEST LAPS			
Hypercar	Kobayashi	3m28.756s	146.010mph
LMP2	Jarvis	3m38.284s	139.637mph
LMGT3	Laursen	3m57.429s	128.377mph



SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
HYPERCAR		
1	Lotterer/Estre/L Vanthoor	99
2	Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen	90
3	Kobayashi/de Vries	82
4	Iltott/Stevens	60
5	Makowiecki/Campbell/Christensen	56
6	Pier Guidi/Giovinazzi/Calado	48
LMGT3		
1	Schuring/Lietz/Shahin	75
2	Malykhin/Sturm/Bachler	75
3	Farfus/Leung/Gelael	73
4	Bastard/Sorensen	42
5	Gatting/Bovy	41
6	Rovera/Heriau/Mann	41
MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP		
HYPERCAR		
1	Porsche	108
2	Ferrari	99
3	Toyota	96
4	Alpine	23
5	BMW	21
6	Peugeot	14

DON'T MISS

WEC REPORT

6 HOURS OF

SAO PAULO

18 July issue

RESULTS WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 4/8, LE MANS 24 HOURS, LE MANS (FRA), 15-16 JUNE (311 LAPS – 2633.176 MILES)					
POS	NO	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	50	Nicklas Nielsen (DNK) Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	24h01m55.856s
2	7	Nyck de Vries (NLD) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	+14.221s
3	51	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	+36.730s
4	6	Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+37.897s
5	8	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	+1m02.824s
6	5	Frederic Makowiecki (FRA) Matt Campbell (AUS) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+1m45.654s
7	2	Alex Lynn (GBR) Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Palou (ESP)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	+2m34.468s
8	12	Will Stevens (GBR) Norman Nato (FRA) Callum Ilott (GBR)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+3m02.691s
9	38	Phil Hanson (GBR) Oliver Rasmussen (DNK) Jenson Button (GBR)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+3m36.756s
10	64	Edoardo Mortara (CHE) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA) Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Lamborghini Iron Lynx / Lamborghini SC63	Hypercar	-2 laps/+2m09.467s
11	94	Paul di Resta (GBR) Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL) Loic Duval (FRA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	-2 laps/+2m18.217s
12	93	Nico Muller (CHE) Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA) Mikkel Jensen (DNK)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	-2 laps/+2m35.918s
13	19	Andrea Caldarelli (ITA) Romain Grosjean (FRA) Matteo Cairolì (ITA)	Lamborghini Iron Lynx / Lamborghini SC63	Hypercar	-2 laps/+2m57.749s
14	11	Jean-Karl Vernay (FRA) Carl Bennett (USA) Antonio Serravalle (CAN)	Isotta Fraschini / Isotta Fraschini Tipo 6 LMH Competizione	Hypercar	-9 laps/+20.018s
15	22	Oliver Jarvis (GBR) Bijoy Garg (USA) Nolan Siegel (USA)	United Autosports / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps/+3m26.034s
16	34	Vlad Lomko (RUS) Jakub Smiechowski (POL) Clement Novalak (FRA)	Inter Europol Competition / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps/+3m44.685s
17	28	Job van Uitert (NLD) Paul Lafargue (FRA) Reshad de Gerus (FRA)	IDEC Sport / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps/+3m59.256s
18	183	Ben Barnicoat (GBR) Francois Perrodo (FRA) Nico Varrone (ARG)	AF Corse / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps/+4m01.070s
19	10	Patrick Pilet (FRA) Ryan Cullen (IRL) Stephane Richelmi (MCO)	Vector Sport / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-14 laps/+4m05.183s
20	14	Louis Deletraz (CHE) PJ Hyett (USA) Alex Quinn (GBR)	AO by TF / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-16 laps/+31.682s
21	33	Laurents Horr (DEU) Alexander Mattschull (DEU) Rene Binder (AUT)	DKR Engineering / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-16 laps/+2m57.104s
22	25	Olli Caldwell (GBR) Matthias Kaiser (LIE) Roman de Angelis (CAN)	Algarve Pro Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-17 laps/+2m07.193s
23	65	Mathias Beche (CHE) Rodrigo Sales (USA) Scott Huffaker (USA)	Panis Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-18 laps/+1m15.964s
24	47	Matt Bell (GBR) Naveen Rao (USA) Frederik Vesti (DNK)	Cool Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-20 laps/+2m05.869s
25	24	Fabio Scherer (CHE) David Heinemeier Hansson (DNK) Kyffin Simpson (CYM)	Nielsen Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-20 laps/+2m47.769s
26	37	Malthe Jakobsen (DNK) Lorenzo Fluxa (ESP) Ritomo Miyata (JPN)	Cool Racing / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-22 laps/+2m56.232s
27	91	Yasser Shahin (AUS) Morris Schuring (NLD) Richard Lietz (AUT)	Manthey EMA / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-30 laps/+3m54.374s
28	31	Augusto Farfus (BRA) Darren Leung (GBR) Sean Gelael (IDN)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	-31 laps/+4.323s
29	311	Pipo Derani (BRA) Jack Aitken (GBR) Felipe Drugovich (BRA)	Whelen Cadillac Racing (Action Express) / Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	-31 laps/+2m34.564s
30	88	Dennis Olsen (NOR) Giorgio Roda (ITA) Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen (DNK)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	-31 laps/+2m59.989s
31	44	Christopher Mies (DEU) John Hartshorne (GBR) Ben Tuck (GBR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	-31 laps/+3m58.735s
32	85	Rahel Frey (CHE) Sarah Bovy (BEL) Michelle Gatting (DNK)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx) / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-32 laps/+0.097s
33	55	Simon Mann (USA) Francois Heriau (FRA) Alessio Rovera (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-32 laps/+1m45.941s
34	78	Kelvin van der Linde (ZAF) Arnold Robin (FRA) Timur Boguslavskiy (RUS)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	-32 laps/+2m16.275s
35	155	Johnny Laursen (DNK) Conrad Laursen (DNK) Jordan Taylor (USA)	Spirit of Race (AF) / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-32 laps/+2m44.753s
36	777	Marco Sorensen (DNK) Satoshi Hoshino (JPN) Erwan Bastard (FRA)	D'Station Racing (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	-32 laps/+3m59.930s
37	87	Jack Hawksworth (GBR) Takeshi Kimura (JPN) Esteban Masson (FRA)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	-32 laps/+4m28.692s
38	82	Daniel Juncadella (ESP) Hiroshi Koizumi (JPN) Sebastien Baud (FRA)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	-33 laps/+2m03.496s
39	86	Daniel Serra (BRA) Michael Wainwright (GBR) Riccardo Pera (ITA)	GR Racing / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-33 laps/+2m42.056s
40	70	Frederik Schandorff (DNK) Brendan Iribe (USA) Ollie Millroy (GBR)	Inception Racing (Optimum) / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	-36 laps/+3m34.339s
41	92	Alex Malykhin (BLR) Joel Sturm (DEU) Klaus Bachler (AUT)	Manthey PureRxcing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-38 laps/+7.969s
42	23	Filipe Albuquerque (PRT) Ben Keating (USA) Ben Hanley (GBR)	United Autosports / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	-39 laps/+23.716s
43	81	Tom van Rompuy (BEL) Rui Andrade (PRT) Charlie Eastwood (GBR)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	-44 laps/+3m46.689s
44	60	Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) Franck Perera (FRA)	Iron Lynx / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-53 laps/+3m15.434s
45	99	Neel Jani (CHE) Harry Tincknell (GBR) Julien Andlauer (FRA)	Proton Competition / Porsche 963	Hypercar	-60 laps/+3m40.129s
46	77	Ben Barker (GBR) Ryan Hardwick (USA) Zacharie Robichon (CAN)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	-84 laps/+4m00.554s
R	83	Robert Kubica (POL) Robert Shwartzman (ISR) Yifei Ye (CHN)	AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	248 laps-hybrid
R	3	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA) Renger van der Zande (NLD) Scott Dixon (NZL)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	223 laps-oil leak
R	59	Gregoire Saucy (CHE) James Cottingham (GBR) Nicolas Costa (BRA)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	220 laps-mechanical
R	95	Marino Sato (JPN) Hiroshi Hamaguchi (JPN) Nico Pino (CHL)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	212 laps-drivetrain
R	4	Felipe Nasr (BRA) Mathieu Jaminet (FRA) Nick Tandy (GBR)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	211 laps-accident
R	27	Alex Riberas (ESP) Ian James (GBR) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA)	Heart of Racing Team (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	196 laps-accident
R	45	Colin Braun (USA) George Kurtz (USA) Nicky Catsburg (NLD)	Crowdstrike Racing by APR / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	149 laps-lost wheel
R	30	James Allen (AUS) John Falb (USA) Jean-Baptiste Simmenauer (FRA)	Duqueine Team / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	112 laps-engine
R	66	Larry ten Voorde (NLD) Giacomo Petrobelli (ITA) Salih Yoluc (TUR)	JMW Motorsport / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	112 laps-lost power
R	46	Maxime Martin (BEL) Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	109 laps-accident
R	15	Marco Wittmann (DEU) Dries Vanthoor (BEL) Raffaele Marciello (ITA)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	102 laps-accident
NC	20	Rene Rast (DEU) Sheldon van der Linde (ZAF) Robin Frijns (NLD)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	96 laps
R	36	Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Mick Schumacher (DEU) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	88 laps-engine
R	9	Bent Viscaal (NLD) Jonas Ried (DEU) Maceo Capietto (FRA)	Proton Competition / ORECA-Gibson 07	LMP2	86 laps-lost power
R	35	Charles Milesi (FRA) Paul-Loup Chatin (FRA) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	75 laps-engine
R	54	Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE) Davide Rigon (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	30 laps-accident

Road to Le Mans is frustrating stop-start trip

LE MANS CUP
LE MANS (FRA)
13 & 15 JUNE
ROUND 3/6

A dramatic brake disc failure on the green-flag lap of the first Road to Le Mans contest for the Inter Europol Ligier of Alexander Bukhantsov, where the left-rear wheel broke free, set the tone for what became a stop/start blue-riband 24 Hours support event for the Le Mans Cup.

The problem resulted in an extra formation lap and only one racing tour was completed before the safety car was called upon, with multiple cars stranded. A clutch of crews opted to pit on the first lap of the caution, and the prospect of a GT3 winning overall seemed possible with the Ferrari 296 of Charles-Henri Samani and Emmanuel Collard in the lead and a lengthy delay to clear the track.

The race briefly restarted but was then red-flagged almost immediately after a massive crash for Louis Rossi's Graff Ligier on the run out of Mulsanne Corner. Although the ex-bike racer jumped out unaided, he was later found to have broken two bones in his foot. Collard was denied another victory at Le Mans when



the result was counted back to the middle of the safety car period, so it was the WTM by Rinaldi Duqueine of Torsten Kratz and Leo Weiss that triumphed – Kratz had moved into the lead on the opening tour – over the Rinaldi Ligier of Stefan Aust and Felipe Fernandez Laser.

Race two was calmer but there were still two caution periods and again there were a few squads that opted to stop early and were catapulted to the front. This time more of the LMP3 runners dived in, and Maximus Mayer jumped up to first in the MV2S Ligier started by Christophe Crespo. Mayer stayed ahead to the flag, despite a nerve-wracking moment when he went off

through the Porsche Curves on the final lap, but still finished a second clear of Adrien Chila/David Droux (Cool Ligier).

Hadrien David was third on the road in the R-ace GP Duqueine in which Fabien Michal had been the early leader, but a track-limits penalty dropped them to fifth.

The Blackthorn Aston Martin was another to stop early (after doing likewise in the opener), helping former Porsche Carrera Cup GB frontrunner Lorcan Hanafin and Martin Berry take the GT3 spoils. The Kessel Ferrari of David Fumanelli and Frederic Jousset had prevailed in the earlier contest.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Tyre dramas mar Lambo 24 Hours support clash

LAMBORGHINI SUPER TROFEO
LE MANS (FRA)
13 & 15 JUNE
ROUND 3/6

The Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe event last time out at Spa had been chaotic, with a red flag significantly shortening the second contest. Things

were even more troublesome at Le Mans, where race two did not take place at all.

Numerous drivers encountered tyre failures prior to the races, and two of the leaders then suffered dramatic blowouts in the opener, with the left rear providing the majority of the problems. Despite “significant endeavours to maintain the race” involving Lamborghini and tyre

supplier Hankook – in its second season with the series – organisers opted to abandon Saturday's contest. “Safety remains of utmost importance to Lamborghini Squadra Corse and the championship organisers would like to express its regret to its teams, drivers and fans in these exceptional circumstances,” read a statement.

Polesitter and points leader Amaury Bonduel had been leading the first race comfortably when his left rear gave way dramatically on the Mulsanne Straight at half-distance and, as he continued at high speed, debris was scattered in all directions. On the very next lap, new leader Jacob Riegel had a similar issue and this left Mattia Michelotto and Oliver Soderstrom (in for Largim Ali) having a close battle for top spot.

Michelotto pulled clear in the closing stages, but even he had a puncture after taking the chequered flag.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Darwin visit brings weekend of Broc 'n' roll

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
HIDDEN VALLEY (AUS)
15-16 JUNE
ROUND 5/12

Broc Feeney scored the first double-winning weekend of his Supercars career at Hidden Valley, but he still could not shake off Triple Eight Chevrolet team-mate Will Brown in the fight for the championship.

Feeney was the driver to beat in Darwin, taking two polished wins in the 48-lap races. But Brown's amazing consistency made it 11 podium finishes in 12 races to hold onto a convincing, if slightly diminished, points lead.

Brown had to settle for third in Saturday's race, the T8 Camaros split by the Team18 example of veteran Mark Winterbottom, a noted specialist at this track. On Sunday Brown made it to second, while third place went to Brodie Kostecki, getting back to something like his 2023 title-winning form, though it took a complete rebuild of his Erebus Motorsport Chevrolet to overcome a niggling problem.



Best of the opposition was another Chevy pilot, James Golding. The PremiAir Racing driver set the pitlane on its heels by taking pole for Saturday's race and leading early, until Feeney found a small gap, passed him and sped away. Golding hung on for a career best-equalling fourth place and repeated the result in Sunday's race.

The other notable part of the weekend was the utter domination of the Chevrolets over the Fords. Camaro drivers finished 1-4 on Saturday and 1-6 on Sunday, the best Mustang result for the weekend coming from Chaz Mostert with fifth on Saturday. His Walkinshaw Andretti United car qualified a lowly 22nd but, aided by

four fresh tyres at his mandatory pitstop (while most of the opposition opted for two), Mostert sped through the pack, finishing right behind Golding. More drivers followed that strategy in Sunday's race, and from 20th Mostert made it only as far as 16th after a slow pitstop.

On Sunday Dick Johnson Racing's Will Davison and Anton De Pasquale flew the Ford flag in seventh and eighth respectively. But two Fords in the top 12 on Saturday's grid and three in the top 13 on Sunday's, in a Supercars category based upon technical parity, looks like, at best, uneven results.

PHIL BRANAGAN

Blaney's Penske strategy pays off

NASCAR CUP
IOWA SPEEDWAY (USA)
16 JUNE
ROUND 17/36

On a race weekend dominated by tyre concerns, it was a bold two-tyre pit strategy that propelled reigning series champion Ryan Blaney to victory at Iowa Speedway.

Sunday night's race was the first for the Cup Series at the 0.875-mile short track, but it has hosted numerous Xfinity, Truck, ARCA and IndyCar series races in its 18-year history. Teams were wary of tyre wear issues since Friday's practice – several

paid the price by hitting the wall after flats in the race – but Blaney and his Penske Ford team mastered the strategy.

On the final caution, Blaney was first off pitroad and he and two others took just two new right-side tyres. The race, which had eight cautions, ended with an 84-lap green-flag run. While William Byron got to second with four new tyres on his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, he never seriously challenged for the lead.

The win is the 11th of Blaney's career and he becomes the first driver to win in all three NASCAR national series at the track, located about 60 miles north of his mum's house. "Our car was really fast all night and we got a little bit better through the night, and two tyres [on the final pitstop] was a good call there," he said. "I didn't know how well I was going to hold on."

Chase Elliott ended up third and the Hendrick Chevy star took over from Kyle Larson as the series points leader, while Christopher Bell and Ricky Stenhouse Jr rounded out the top five.

JIM UTTER



WEEKEND WINNERS

ROAD TO LE MANS

LE MANS (FRA)

Race 1 Torsten Kratz/Leo Weiss
WTM by Rinaldi Racing
(Duqueine M30-D08)

Race 2 Christophe Crespo/Maximus Mayer
MV2S Racing
(Ligier JSP320)

LAMBORGHINI SUPER TROFEO EUROPE

LE MANS (FRA)

Race 1 Mattia Michelotto
VS Racing

Race 2 Abandoned

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

HIDDEN VALLEY (AUS)

Races 1 & 2 Broc Feeney
Triple Eight Race Engineering
(Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR CUP

IOWA SPEEDWAY (USA)

Ryan Blaney
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

David Richards
– from world
champion rally
co-driver to
motorsport mogul



40 YEARS ON

THE POWER OF PRODRIVE

David Richards founded a rally-based firm in 1984 and has subsequently been successful in many branches of motorsport. Here he looks back, as well as to the future

JAMES ALLEN

Mention Prodrive to a motorsport fan and what is the first thing they will think of? Colin McRae's mighty Subaru Impreza World Rally Car flying through the air perhaps, or Aston Martin's GT wins at Le Mans? Maybe it would be the turnaround at the BAR-Honda Formula 1 team in the early 2000s with Jenson Button. Others might call out the successes in the British Touring Car Championship with Frank Sytner and more recently the extravagant £15million-per-year Ford Mondeo programme. Maybe it's the Dakar rally or Lewis Hamilton's Extreme E team? The fact is there are so many things that fans of all disciplines might think of because, over 40 years, Prodrive has pretty much done it all.

Working out of a large industrial unit alongside the M40 in Banbury, home to almost 700 employees, some jewels of engineering have been produced. There have been plenty of hits and a few misses. Prodrive offers its clients – whether they be manufacturers, wealthy individuals or sovereign wealth funds – turn-key motorsport operations. This means the design and manufacture of cars and management of race operations, including full works teams in international race and rally series.

Today the workshop is abuzz with projects of all kinds; from the next generation Dakar Hunter, to limited edition Subaru P25s. The customer Aston Martin GT business is booming; there are dozens of cars under construction. Every weekend there are at least 20 cars competing somewhere in the world, requiring support. The hydraulic department is building a batch of hydraulic systems for the Valkyrie. There are even some amphibious vehicles and a pair of 1960s Ford Mustangs being refurbished to compete in the Paris-Beijing Rally. The fingerprints of engineering leader David Lapworth are over all the projects, but the direction of Prodrive

has always been set by David Richards.

Richards founded Prodrive in 1984 and the company was born from rallying. Richards was already a world champion as co-driver to Ari Vatanen in 1981, and Prodrive went out and won its first event in Qatar with a Porsche entered for Qatari driver Saeed Al-Hajri.

"I think for me the most rewarding thing is that we've played our part in a whole cross-section of activities across motorsport," says Richards, sitting behind a giant riveted metal desk in the shape of an aircraft wing. "And we managed to do things in a professional way

"The most rewarding thing is we've played our part in a cross-section of activities across motorsport"

throughout. That leaves with it a legacy. It's very rewarding to walk down the pitlane at a grand prix and someone pops out of the garage and shakes your hand and says, 'It's great to see you again'. Over the years we've become a training ground for a lot of young engineers."

Some Prodrive employees have been there for 30 years, while others join from university, stay for four or five years and then feel the gravitational pull of F1. "In most cases," says Richards with a grin, "I have an exit interview with them. I shake their hands and wish them the best of luck. And I say, 'You've done a great job with us here. And I'm sure in F1 you'll play your part very well. But after a few years, when you've only worked on the front-left wheel and nothing else, and you want something that's just a bit more realistic and >>



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interesting, give us a call and you'll be welcome back.' And so many come back!"

Unlike some of his peers who started out as drivers or mechanics, Richards trained as an accountant. He has always run Prodrive with a close eye on the bottom line. It is a motorsport business driven by revenue and profit, not pipedreams.

"That is an underlying trait of the business and the philosophy behind everything," he says. "We've got enough headroom to be able to do that these days. So we're not so completely bound up and strapped for cash that we can't afford to invest in things we think are the right things to do for the long term."

"I did five years' chartered accountancy articles and it's been a very good grounding for me. We keep a very tight rein on things. It doesn't always work. Sometimes we invest in something, but we know what we're doing. It's all very well saying, 'We're going to lose half a million quid on this project, but it's an important project to win' and that's the decision you make. But if you don't know what you're spending and you don't know what you're losing, that's when it all goes wrong."

A scan of Prodrive's greatest hits over 40 years would include the decade when the blue Subarus blazed a trail in the WRC with McRae, Richard Burns and Petter Solberg. Prodrive won six drivers' and manufacturers' titles.

"There's as much for me in winning the appropriate way, the correct way, as it is winning by all means"

"Sometimes in life, you just hit a sweet spot where everything comes together," says Richards. "We had a British driver [McRae] who was a great character, promoted by a computer game, which was coming to the forefront. We had a car that was consistent in the way we presented it in the blue and yellow. It had an extraordinary sound from that boxer engine. There was an emotion about rallying in this country at the time. Colin won in Chester, the final round [in 1995]. He was touch-and-go on equal points with Carlos Sainz, both driving for us – there was a management challenge if ever there was one. It wasn't just on the sports pages, it was on the front pages of the papers."

Wanting to measure himself against the big beasts in F1, Richards had a brief spell as team principal at Benetton in 1998, and won an important contract in 2001 from BAR-Honda for Prodrive to take over the F1 operation. The team was based at the same Brackley headquarters that the Mercedes F1 squad operates out of today.



Sytner won BTCC crown in 1988, an unfamiliar venture for Prodrive

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



BAR squad celebrates Button's second place in 2004 San Marino GP

The team was “a mess” when they took over, but by 2004 Richards had brought in Jenson Button and they finished second that season behind the Ferrari juggernaut and Michael Schumacher. Button had a pole at Imola and the team scored 11 podiums in 18 races. Prodrive exited the following year after Honda bought 45% of the team. Richards’s ally Nick Fry stayed on to run it and eventually it became Honda, then Brawn GP and now Mercedes.

“There’s as much for me in winning the appropriate way, the correct way, as it is winning by all means,” says Richards. “Maybe that’s why I’m not cut out to be at the top end of F1 these days. I cannot remember in our history, more than a handful of times we’ve ever protested anything and it’s been a philosophy of ours; we try and stick to doing things professionally and avoid any confrontation with the governing body or organisers that necessitates getting involved in protests.”

Perhaps less well-known is that Prodrive attempted to enter F1 >>



Solberg and co-driver Phil Mills won four rallies on way to 2003 title

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MARAGNI/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

in its own right on two occasions, both highly political times that Richards found himself caught up in. The first was 2006 when its entry for 2008 was accepted, as then FIA president Max Mosley attempted to squeeze the major manufacturers competing in F1. Prodrive's plan was to run customer McLaren-Mercedes cars, but that foundered on a protest from Williams. When Mosley launched a tender for new teams to enter in 2010, Prodrive made an application but balked at the FIA's condition, imposed at the 11th hour, that the team had to use Cosworth engines.

In its first decade Prodrive, then still very much a rally operation, found itself competing in the BTCC and winning, with Frank Sytner and BMW. "It was something completely new to us," recalls Richards. "I remember Frank saying, 'I want to go motor racing with you, we'd like you to build a racing car.' We didn't really know what we were doing at that point. But we won the BTCC. And then we went on to win with Ford Motor Company with the Mondeo [in 2000], which was a great season. We had proper budgets in those days. Touring car budgets were £15m a year. I guess they're about 10% of that now. Which is not a bad thing. But not a good thing for a



JEP

“We’ve got to get back to innovation and create formulas where innovation gets rewarded”

company like Prodrive. But there we go!

“And then all the Aston Martin success that we’ve had of late and that’s been very rewarding, because that’s a programme that goes right across the globe. Of course, the Dakar project is just very frustrating that we finished so close; on the podium now, last couple of years and so close to winning but we’ve not quite done it yet. Fingers crossed now for the new car, which is looking really, really good.”

The Dakar has become something of an obsession. Prodrive has been close to winning a number of times but not quite made the top step. What is it about the desert classic that captures the imagination?

“I like the freedom of the regulations, it’s a lot more freedom than you get in a lot of circuit racing regulations,” says Richards. “So a lot more engineering goes into the car. It’s a very complicated car. It’s a piece of kit, you can’t believe it’s really technical.”

“I like the drivers; we’ve got a great team of drivers. They’re characters and extraordinarily talented. And the pure adventure of the unknown. And if you see a film of them going across the desert or into some mountains, it’s just extraordinary to see that they can drive for those lengths of time. And there’ll be examples like last year, where they drive for six hours, they wouldn’t see the other competitor for six hours. And then two cars of different makes cross the line within 10 seconds of each other. Amazing! How do you account for that?”

So what will Prodrive be all about 10 years from now, when it celebrates its half centenary?

“We’ve got to take, as a company, a very responsible approach to environmental issues and in what we do in motorsport going forward, and it’s no coincidence that we’ve run all our Dakar programme on sustainable fuels,” he says. “We are very conscious about the way we behave.”

Dakar's extraordinary challenge has become a focus as victory remains elusive



Richards stresses importance of being at the forefront of sustainable motorsport

JAMES ALLEN

"I'm firmly intent on us being the first non-F1 or Formula E team to have a three-star rating from the FIA. On the roof of this building we have two football pitches of solar cells, full solar operation. Over 50% of our power comes from the roof. And so I want to make sure that we're at the forefront of what needs to be sustainable motorsport. If we don't address these issues and make motorsport relevant in the long term, or continue to be relevant, as an entertainment sport, I think it'll lose its shine.

"We've got to get back to innovation and create formulas where innovation gets rewarded. Society will then accept motorsport as a driving force for innovation, especially environmental innovation."

PRODRIVE STAR CARS



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

SUBARU IMPREZA (WRC)

Prodrive had already tasted some rallying success with the Legacy but the Impreza, which appeared in 1993, took things up a notch. It was the car to have in 1995, when Colin McRae pipped team-mate Carlos Sainz to the drivers' title and Subaru won the manufacturers' crown as the Impreza became a rally talisman. Subsequent versions continued winning for a decade, with Richard Burns (2001) and Petter Solberg (2003) adding further drivers' crowns.



J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FORD MONDEO (BTCC)

The Mondeo had been through a rough period in the British Touring Car Championship when Prodrive took over the programme for 1999. Anthony Reid and Alain Menu endured a tricky learning year, with Menu taking just one win and Ford finishing only seventh in the standings. But the multi-million-pound project delivered in 2000, the final year of Super Touring in the BTCC, as Menu, Reid and Rickard Rydell finished 1-2-3 with the sophisticated V6 machine.



J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

ASTON MARTIN DBR9 (GT)

Following success with its Ferrari 550 Maranello, Prodrive started a partnership with Aston Martin that lasts to this day with the DBR9. The V12 car was an immediate success, winning GT1 on its debut at Sebring in 2005. A fierce duel followed with the works Pratt & Miller Chevrolet Corvette team, with the Aston highlights being class wins at Le Mans in 2007 and 2008. Many successful Astons followed across a variety of GT categories and the latest Vantage is an LMGTC3 frontrunner.



INSIDE HYUNDAI'S RALLY-MEETS-NURBURGRING CHALLENGE

It's not often the worlds of rallying and circuit racing collide but, when they do, it creates a memorable scenario. Hyundai Motorsport invited Autosport to witness a unique test...

TOM HOWARD

PHOTOGRAPHY HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT

Three left minus, long, bumpy', may resemble an ordinary rally pacenote. But this is how a World Rally Championship driver views one of motorsport's most famous corners – the Karussell at the Nurburgring Nordschleife. To test its WRC title-leading crew Thierry Neuville and Martijn Wydaeghe, Hyundai Motorsport set a unique rally-meets-race-circuit challenge.

The pair were tasked to drive the 73-turn Nurburgring to pacenotes as if it were a rally stage, behind the wheel of a TCR-spec race-prepared touring car. Autosport was invited to follow the crews and witness the art of pacenote-making first-hand for an insight into how a rally crew operates outside their comfort zone.

The undulating and relentless 12.9-mile ribbon of asphalt nestled in Germany's Eifel mountains is one of few of the world's renowned permanent circuits that can mimic a rally stage, barring Australia's Mount Panorama or even Spa. The Belgian venue, indeed, featured as part of a WRC event – the 2021 Ypres Rally, which resulted in the first of seven rally wins to date since Neuville and Wydaeghe joined forces. But Spa and Monza – the Italian venue appeared on the calendar during the

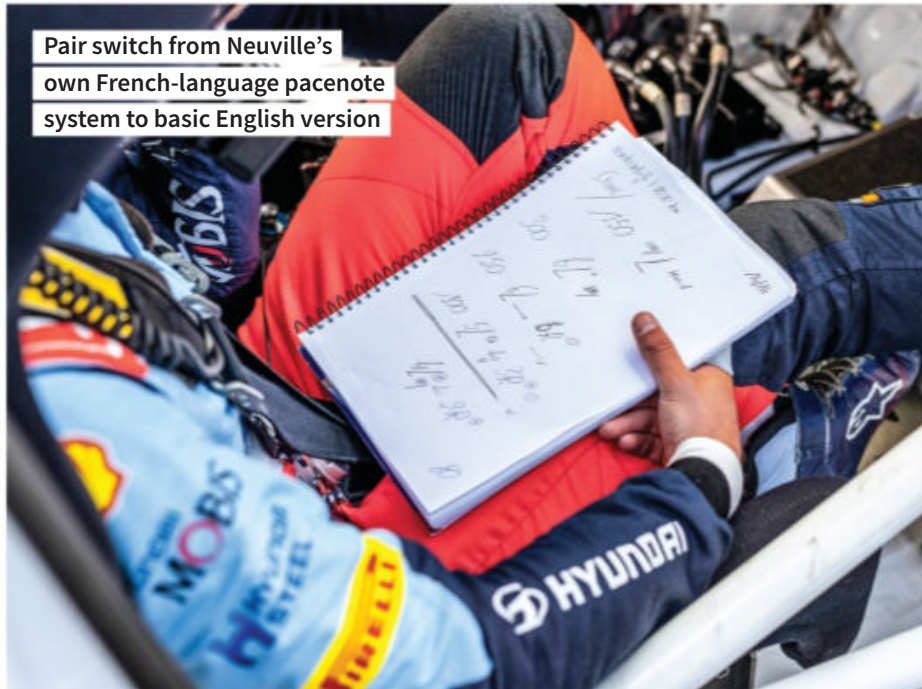
WRC's 2020-21 COVID-19-affected seasons – are the only world-famous circuits to have graced the WRC calendar in recent years. Taking on the Nurburgring as a rally stage is therefore an unusual task. "It's one of the most challenging circuits, a bit like Rally Finland but on Tarmac," declares Neuville. "That is what I can compare it to. There are similarities in the pacenotes too!"

Two days after finishing third on Croatia's WRC asphalt stages, Neuville and Wydaeghe swapped the narrow roads for the expanses of the Nurburgring and traded their Hyundai i20 N Rally1 car for the marque's i30 N TCR. For Neuville, the Nordschleife is a venue that holds childhood trackside memories watching the Nurburgring 24 Hours. But now it's time to do a rally-style recce of the place.

"The recce is one of the most important parts of our job," points out Neuville. "We are allowed to run a stage twice during the recce to make our pacenotes, which is basically our description of the road we are going to drive. This is very important information that the drivers trust from the co-driver that is giving the pacenotes. As you can imagine, if the pacenotes are too slow or too fast, it is very hard to find confidence and it is very hard to go fast. At asphalt rallies we



Neuville describes challenges of the Nurburgring as "like Rally Finland on Tarmac"



Pair switch from Neuville's own French-language pacenote system to basic English version

"Witnessing this process in action, it's quite clear that this is a science that takes years to perfect"

the stage – a process that is usually conducted in the evenings before the stage is run.

To add an extra level of complexity, the pair are using English pacenotes instead of their usual French, as Wydaeghe explains while Neuville sweeps through Flugplatz: "Normally we are using a system in the French language, but that is hard for everyone to understand, so today we are making pacenotes in English. It is a basic system that everyone knows from the rally computer games. We are using a 1-6 system where six is the fastest, so we have the number of the corner, the direction left or right and the length of the corner.

"We normally have a very specific system, and we are the only ones using this system in the WRC. It is a system of 10-170 based on speed actually. We also have the length of the corner built into the pacenotes, so for example this [corner we are approaching] could be left 130, tightens 80 for example. So it is a left that goes more or less at 130km/h over 30 metres and tightens to 80km/h."

Neuville interjects: "The system was something I developed in 2013; basically I came up with a different system. Going from slower to faster cars, I needed something simpler. Talking about speed is the easiest for everyone to understand."

Wydaeghe continues: "He has a good memory. Thierry tries to imagine at what speed he can pass. It is really important to write everything down as quick as possible, so Thierry can carry on his speed during the recce. If I cannot follow and we need to slow down all the time, we are breaking our own recce speed. It is then difficult for him to continue to imagine the speed of the next corners."


Witnessing this process in action, it's quite clear that this is a science that takes years to perfect. If a recce doesn't go to plan, it can quite easily have an adverse effect on a crew's performance at a rally. "If the recce is done wrong and I come to a corner where it is a three and I have put a one, then I could drive the corner much faster," Neuville confirms. "After that, my stage time would be bad."

As the final straight comes into view, Wydaeghe puts his pencil down. The lap is complete. But this is only the start of >>

are driving to tenths so the pacenotes are the key factor to go fast.

"Rallies like Finland where we are limited to 70km/h [on the recce] and in the rally itself, you are driving close to 200km/h [124mph] for most of the time, it makes it very difficult to judge the speed you can go; depending on the angle of the corner and the variation of grip, or if it is over a crest or through a dip, or the corner is hanging a bit to the outside or the inside. All those parameters have a big influence on the actual speed you can go. This is only possible [to achieve] with a lot of training, and you have to know your car."

For this recce, Autosport perches on the back seat of a road-going Hyundai i30 N to see how Neuville and Wydaeghe go about the task of making pacenotes. The first aspect made abundantly clear is the level of teamwork required. The onus is on Neuville to instantly read the road and communicate that to Wydaeghe, who scribbles down the information, in pencil, into a pacenote book. The use of pencil is important since it allows changes to be made if required when all of this information is analysed and compared against onboard videos of



Wydaeghe and Neuville out of their comfort zone, but the opportunity is "just magic"

NORDSCHLEIFE ‘RALLY STAGE’



Smooth asphalt and distance between corners makes co-driver's job more comfortable, less hectic

the process to prepare for a rally stage.

What's it like for a co-driver to make pacenotes around the Nordschleife? "The road is very smooth and very wide, so it is very comfortable for me to sit in this recce car to write pacenotes," explains Wydaeghe. "For example, in Kenya, it is very bumpy and my pacenote book is hard to read as you are moving around a lot. Today was an easy game!

"But still, you have some nice profiles going up and down and sometimes you have some more twisty parts where there is a corner into another corner, and then another corner. It is quite wide, but this is something you could have in Rally de Catalunya for example."

Pacenotes written, the crew now has to analyse them alongside the onboard video recorded from GoPro cameras attached to the car. This process is normally conducted in a hotel room, but today it's a swift trip to the Devil's Diner, which overlooks the circuit. A laptop is whipped out and analysis begins. This is where any changes to the notes can be made in the pursuit of perfection.

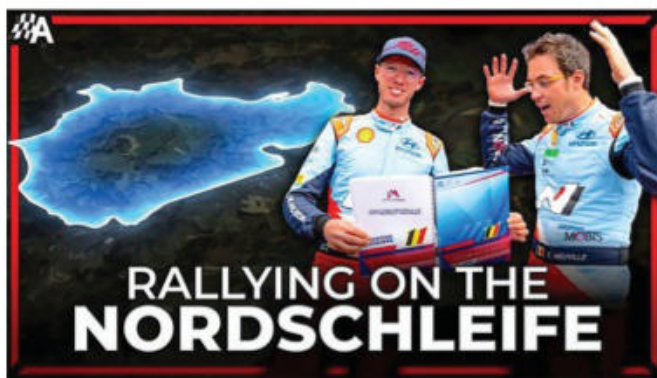
"After recce we watch the videos, and we try to optimise [the pacenotes]," confirms Neuville. "Sometimes we will take out some information we don't need. If it is too much information, we simplify the notes. Sometimes we change the angle and the speed of the corner. With only two recce passes sometimes, it's hard to make the perfect note and it's important to do the fine-tuning to find the little adjustments, which helps you to go faster."

Wydaeghe continues: "We analyse our first pass on the video to get it to perfection for the second pass to find some extra speed here and there. The second pass through stages can be completely different, with stones coming through the road and so on, so we need to add this into the pacenotes as well. If you don't write them with pencil, it would be a mess to read everything."



Howard rides along during recce to record meticulous pacenote-making process





Watch the World Rally Championship's current points-leading crew craft their pacenotes, then put them into action
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Nurburgring veteran
 Willhardt is in awe of
 "totally crazy" rally guys

"It's been a beautiful experience. I was relying on the pacenotes in places I was not 100% sure, and it works"

"Before I was with Thierry, I was doing rallies in slower cars and I was writing much smaller. But then I realised when I stepped into the WRC and the speed is so high and on bumpy roads, it's easy to get lost in the notes. So, I write big – but it's still a challenge to get it right all the time."

Now it's time for Neuville and Wydaeghe to put all their work into action as they climb aboard the 350bhp i30 N TCR, a vehicle Neuville raced in TCR Germany in 2019. While this is a downgrade in terms of power from their 500bhp i20 N WRC Rally1 car, driving to pacenotes at ten-tenths around the Nordschleife can never be underestimated. A day's work ultimately boils down to around eight minutes, for which Neuville and Wydaeghe don their open-face helmets, plug in their intercom and complete a flying lap in the style of a rally.

"It's been a beautiful experience," says Neuville. "I was trusting my memory and relying on the pacenotes in the places I was not 100% sure, and it works. I'm sure it is going to help me remember the track even better because I'm not a specialist here. It was a great experience to be back in the TCR car even if it was only for a few laps. I will do more once I retire from rallying."

Wydaeghe adds: "It was much more comfortable than being in a gravel stage in the WRC, it was really smooth and you have a lot of long corners and a lot of distance in between the corners as well compared to the normal rally stages. If you compare with the Tarmac rallies on the WRC like Monte Carlo and Japan, there it is corner into corner, it was a bit more relaxed for me let's say. It was just magic to do something like this on this circuit."

The pair impressed Nurburgring 24 Hours veteran Marcus Willhardt. He's conducted thousands of laps around the revered asphalt as an instructor, but never to pacenotes and admits he found himself "wondering if they can trust in it".

"I would not be comfortable after two recce laps, that is very strange for me," observes Willhardt. "I think they have the hardest job. I love racing but I would never go on a rally stage, I would be too afraid. These guys are totally crazy. The confidence they have and the trust they have in their car and themselves is amazing."

The Nordschleife is unlikely to join a round of the WRC as a stage any time soon, but this experiment outlines the enormity of work undertaken by rally crews before any stage can be tackled at pace. It's a meticulous process to unlock the vital tenths of seconds that ultimately decide rallies – Rally Italy earlier this month was decided by 0.2s.

Thousands of petrolheads make the pilgrimage to the Nordschleife to test their mettle around its famous curves and no doubt they would most definitely benefit from pacenotes. Perhaps Wydaeghe could have inadvertently stumbled upon a business opportunity...
 "That's a good idea actually – you can take a 5% cut!"

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- Relevant experience in a similar role, ideally within the motorsport industry.
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- Ability to apply structural engineering techniques for part validation (FEA).
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- Development and testing of motion cueing algorithms.
- Control systems tuning of active mechatronic systems in the simulator.
- Maintenance and calibration of simulator hardware (visuals, control loaders, motion).
- Maintenance of the terrain and graphics tracks library of the simulator.
- Integration of (v)ECUs in the simulator. Simulator data logging infrastructure.
- Contact for technical support for simulator operations.

Skills, qualifications & experience:

Required:

- Excellent degree in Engineering, Physics, Mathematics, Data Science or a related discipline.
- Strong problem solving, mathematical and analytical skills.
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- Capacity to report complex technical information concisely and professionally to tight deadlines.
- Coding experience in MATLAB/Simulink and C/C++.
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- Documentation of looms build, and sensors configured
- Fault finding of wiring looms
- Demonstrate soldering skills as required
- Calibrate sensors and actuators and perform tests on specific test benches
- Manages and carries out electrical component and system testing as required.

Technical Skills required:

- Experience in motorsport electronics
- Familiar with high density motorsport and military connectors (Souriau, Deutsch, MIL-Spec, Raychem)• Knowledge of Motorsport electrical standards (System 25, IPC 620) and experience with high voltage of electric vehicles desirable but not essential
- Understanding of low and high voltage automotive electronics as applied in a racing environment.
- Knowledge of MS Office (Excel, Access, Outlook).
- Working knowledge of LV and HV wiring as applied in a racing environment.

Personal Skills required:

- Fluent English both written and spoken
- Self-motivated and proactive in the working environment
- Ability to work both independently and as a team player.

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- Work to improve the quality of the content, liaising with reporters on longer-term projects and investigations
- Guide the more junior reporters to develop their skills
- Given the nature of sport and that it is global, weekend and shift work will be required

Skills And Experience

Candidates must demonstrate a track-record of producing agenda-setting and high-quality digital, print or audio content, either by themselves or by the team they lead. Ideally this will be for a sports audience.

They must have the following skills:

- Experience working at a senior level with a track record on a newsdesk
- A fluent and articulate communicator who can manage multiple reporters on the ground at once
- Able to work under pressure and be able to react to events as they unfold
- Passionate about producing high-quality motorsport content and developing new media formats
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Capabilities:

- Previous experience with working on GP2/F2 or LMP2 is essential.
- Knowledge of motorsport sequential and H pattern gearboxes is essential.
- An understanding of the design and manufacture of gearbox components is preferable but not essential.
- Basic fabrication and machining skills is preferable but not essential.

Personal Attributes / Skills:

- Be able to work independently to strict deadlines as well as being a strong team player.
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Fairclough's fortunes fluctuate again

British F4 points leader has another mixed event at Silverstone



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Spa 24 Hours historic supports prove a hit

HISTORICS

Bumper grids are expected for two historic Peter Auto-organised categories that will support next week's centenary celebrations for the Spa 24 Hours.

The enduro's roots are in tin-tops, and two races for saloons built between 1966 and 2000 will be held. Almost 40 entries have been received for the Heritage Touring Cup contests, and many of these are BMWs – ranging from the 3.0 CSL through to 635 CSis and E30 M3s.

Current BMW factory driver Maxime Martin is due to pilot one of the M3s with

his father Jean-Michel, who is also a Spa 24 Hours winner. Eric van der Poole, a five-time victor, is in another E30, while 2013 British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan is due to share one with Paddy Shovlin.

The other main marque represented is Ford, and Barwell team boss Mark Lemmer has entered alongside Simon Graves in an Escort RS1600. Capris, a Mustang and a Sierra RS500 are also on the list.

Meanwhile, the Endurance Racing Legends grid has attracted 50 GT machines built between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s. The Chrysler Viper GTS-R that triumphed in the first two Spa 24 Hours contests for GTs

(in 2001 and 2002) is due to be raced by Eric Mestdagh and Christophe van Riet, while two examples of the Maserati MC-12 have entered, one of which will be driven by Sam Hancock. Peter Kox, the 1995 winner, will drive a Lamborghini Murcielago, while another past winner, Mike Hezemans, is piloting a Lotus Elise. Jordan is due to drive a Chevrolet Corvette C6 as well as a Porsche 996 shared with his father Mike.

Alongside the races, a special 'Gallery of Time' collection of historic cars including a Volvo 240 Turbo, Mazda R100 and Peugeot 806 will be assembled in the paddock as part of the 100th birthday commemorations.

Optimum vows to avoid repeat of 2023 GT4 woes

BRITISH GT

Optimum Motorsport boss Shaun Goff said it is imperative his team rights the wrongs of last year by winning the 2024 British GT4 title.

Jack Brown and Charles Clark could have sealed the 2023 championship with two rounds to spare, but one points finish across the final three weekends dropped the Optimum McLaren duo behind Academy Ford pair

Erik Evans and Matt Cowley.

Brown, who now races alongside Zac Meakin, has made a terrific start to 2024 and the McLaren Artura GT4-mounted pair top the standings by 26 points ahead of this weekend's Spa event.

"That championship last year still hurts us," said Goff. "It was ours and somehow it wasn't to be. So, this year we have to make sure we put right what went wrong."

Goff said Optimum has



worked with McLaren to improve the Artura's reliability after it made its British GT debut last year.

"This time last year we were in a similar position leading the championship, but the wheels pretty much fell off,"

he added. "So we need to make sure that those later races in the season are good."

Asked if he is confident for 2024, Goff said: "Absolutely. We've learned from last year and we've implemented it."

ED HARDY

Stellar line-up set for Thruxton Historic event

HISTORICS

Cars raced by Alan Jones, Henri Pescarolo, Rolf Stommelen and Derek Warwick in the 1970s are among many returnees set to star in this weekend's Thruxton Historic extravaganza, which celebrates the Hampshire venue's past masters, Jochen Rindt and Ian Taylor.

Populating an exciting 16-race programme, the strongest entry and greatest variety of categories yet to grace the annual event should make it the best yet.

Single-seaters from Formula 2, F1 Atlantic, F3, Formula Ford 2000 and FF1600 will recreate the spectrum of frontline classes in which established aces and rising stars competed at the British Automobile Racing Club's home.

Austrian Rindt, who dominated the European F2 championship rounds at the track from 1968-70, is remembered in the feature race, promoted by Classic Racing Car Club founder Rob Manger.

Last year's victor Rory Smith defends his crown in his ex-Jeff Krosnoff Ralt RT4, but



Smith will return to defend his Jochen Rindt Trophy win

Benn Tilley (March 712), Clive Wood (Chevron B29), Martin Wood (March 73B), Chris Porritt (Chevron B39) and Gary Ward (Ralt RT3) should be in the running.

Tim Jacobsen saddles the March 74B that future F1 world champion Jones raced, John Cottrill debuts his ex-Pescarolo Brabham-FVA BT30, and Simon Langman returns in his ex-Stommelen BT30 in period Eiffelland Caravans colours.

Ex-F1 racer Mike Wilds joins Peter Venn's F1 Atlantic Lynxcar team, while Rob Moores and nephew Chris Hodgen race the ex-Derek Daly and Warwick Chevron B38s, reunited on

track with Neil Jenkins's ex-Beppe Gabbiani version and Richard Trott's B43.

Raimund Fein brings the ex-Taylor March 733 over from Germany, with Taylor, founder of the Thruxton racing school, set to be remembered in the Heroes of FF1600 Sprint Cup. Thruxton's first 1000cc F3 race since 1970 – continuing the category's 60th anniversary celebrations – will feature Jon Milicevic, Andrew Hibberd, Peter de la Roche and Ross Drybrough among the favourites to win the BARC's Chris Moore Memorial Trophy, last presented at Crystal Palace in 1971.

MARCUS PYE

Seaman completes charity drive in 1927 Bentley

HISTORICS

Historic single-seater and sportscar racer Steve Seaman has successfully completed a charity challenge earlier this month, driving his 1927 Bentley on a lap of every race circuit in England and Wales.

Seaman was raising money for the Race against Dementia charity in

memory of his late father.

Across five and a half days, he visited 16 tracks and relevant venues with the Bentley 4½ Litre. As well as all 14 active circuits in England and Wales, he also visited Brooklands and Llandow in South Wales, finishing at Oulton Park on 5 June. The Bentley covered 1356 miles, with fellow racer Adam Bagnall as co-driver.

"The star of the tour has to be the Bentley," said Seaman. "Apart from one oil leak, which just needed a spanner, she took it all in her stride."

"Many thanks go to the circuit staff who did everything possible to make it work. I hope this encourages more people to use old cars as they were designed to be used."

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David Bain 1953-2024

OBITUARY

Competitors and friends made across six decades of motorsport will be shocked to learn of David Bain's death on 6 June, aged 71, following a short illness.

Introduced to racing aged 15 by family friends who took him to Mallory Park, Bain was hooked and six years later, in 1974, he debuted his road-going MG Midget, in which he'd slept overnight!

While studying to become a solicitor – he qualified in 1980 – Bain hillclimbed and sprinted Minis, rallied a Hillman Imp and raced the first of several Mallocks.

Bain also teamed up with David Gibson to race Lenhams built by Dutch FISC series promoter Pieter Bakker, with Cadwell Park his favourite circuit.

"Although he 'stopped' racing when he got married, when he had his first child and regularly after that, somehow another car would be in the garage and another series

commenced," wife Tacey recalled.

After the millennium, Bain joined the Formula Junior fraternity, campaigning an Elva 200 from 2002-08. An Oulton Park class win in 2003 and trips to Pau and Porto were among the highlights.

Goodwood's Revival in 2004 was also memorable, finishing 15th in the Chichester Cup contest, before racing his Classic Clubmans Mallock U2 Mk11B in 2019-20. His final event was a Wiscombe hillclimb last year, sharing David Gibson's Ginetta G4 after his Lenham developed a misfire en route.

He is survived by Tacey, daughters Athene, Cecily and Esme, and infant granddaughter Sofie, to all of whom he was devoted.

A service of thanksgiving will be held at St Albans Church, Bayswater Avenue, Bristol at 1300 on Wednesday, 3 July, to which all racing friends are invited.

MARCUS PYE



Veteran back in the fast Lane after op

HISTORICS

Veteran racer Mike Lane has returned to competition this season in his Formula Atlantic Chevron B49 after an 18-month break for a heart operation.

Lane, who first raced in 1973 and is now 72 years old, felt unwell during a race at Donington Park in 2022 and subsequently needed heart surgery to have a pacemaker fitted. He even took his HANS

device into the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford so that the surgeon could see where best to fit the pacemaker and not impede his ability to return to the cockpit.

"Getting my licence back was a massive deal," said Lane, who has worked hard to regain fitness and be ready to race. "The medics at the hospital were wonderful and fully supported me getting fit to go racing again."

The Nottingham driver briefly held the Donington Park outright lap record from racing a Mallock in the Clubmans race at the first meeting when the circuit reopened in 1977, but later suffered a major accident at the same track, breaking 23 bones in total.

He made his return at Donington earlier this month in the Derek Bell Trophy, when he took a best result of 12th.

PAUL LAWRENCE

FIESTA JUNIOR PRIZE BACK

The British Racing & Sports Car Club has announced the details of the 2025 Fiesta Junior Scholarship. The scheme, which was held for the first time this year and won by Daniella Sutton, will return at the end of the season, taking place on 28-30 October at Blyton Park. The winner will receive a prize package equating to £65,000, which includes use of a Mk7 Fiesta in the full 2025 season, as well as mentoring from British Touring Car race winner Josh Cook. To book one of the limited places, visit brscc.co.uk.

LISTON'S UK DEBUT

Australian Formula Ford regular William Liston made his British racing debut last weekend in Castle Combe FF1600 and picked up a pair of third places in class C aboard a Souley Motorsport Van Diemen RF88. He plans multiple races in various series this year on the run up to the Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy at the end of the season.

SINGLE-SEATERS FOR KEEN

Ferrari Classic racer Jago Keen has joined the historic single-seater ranks this year with a Palliser WDB2. The wingless Lotus twin-cam-engined car was last raced by John Rand but had not run for around 10 years before Keen found it and brought it back into racing specification. "I'm learning how to drive a single-seater and there's so much to learn," said the Hampshire driver. He plans to run both the Palliser and his Ferrari 308 GTB at the Thruxton Historic this weekend.

RIDER TO BE ON STAGE

British Touring Car Championship broadcaster Steve Rider will attend this year's Super Touring Power event at Brands Hatch as a special guest on the Sunday. Rider (below), who has fronted ITV's coverage of the BTCC for a number of years as well as Formula 1 and other motorsport categories, will appear on the Autosport Stage and meet with fans during the event on 29-30 June.



BRITCAR CHAMPION GAMSKI MAKES RACING RETURN

BEC

Three-time Britcar champion Witt Gamski made his first racing appearance in six years during last weekend's British Endurance event at Silverstone.

Gamski, who also won the 2010 Britcar 24 Hours, was reunited with the MJC team and his old driving partner Ross Wylie in a Bentley Continental GT3, and the duo took second despite Wylie wrestling a car not suited to a wet track in the final stint.

The weekend was not without its dramas, as a wheel-bearing failure in testing led to a replacement part being rushed from Bentley partner M-Sport's headquarters on Friday evening.

"I've been trying to get back into it," said Gamski (below). "This car came up – we've raced Ferraris for years but I'm getting a bit big for them! It's an exciting car. We've had some issues with the back-end and the bearing failing. I had to go to Liverpool last night to get the bits and M-Sport met halfway. The lads stayed up and put it all together."

Wylie added: "It's the first time I've really had any laps in the car. I enjoyed every lap, it's great to be back with MJC."

STEVE WHITFIELD



MICK WALKER



DAVID BAXTER

Summers continues fine form with another victory at Doune

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

Alex Summers continued his stunning early season form to extend his lead in the British Hillclimb Championship at Doune over the weekend, as the category made the first of two visits to the Scottish hill this year.

Summers added a second place and then a win in his DJ Firestorm to make it five victories from nine run-offs to date. The weekend allowed Summers to extend his championship lead to an impressive 16 points, as the consistently quick Will Hall moved into second place in his Gould GR59.

It was a mixed weekend in Scotland for title contenders Matthew Ryder and Wallace Menzies. Ryder took a handy fourth in the opener after a massive effort to rebuild his car following his Shelsley Walsh accident a fortnight beforehand, but he lost out in the second run-off when he ran first on a very wet track and had to find out how much grip was available. Menzies,

meanwhile, took fourth in the rain for his best finish of a challenging season so far.

In the dry on Saturday, Sean Gould was stunning and pipped Summers by 0.011 seconds to bag another Doune victory in the car he shares with Ryder. Hall took the final podium place, ahead of Ryder but Menzies was back in seventh behind Trevor Willis and David Warburton.

However, when the rain came down on Sunday afternoon, Summers qualified fastest and ran last. Being able to see what everyone else had done was no handicap and Summers was quick in the lower part of the hill before carrying that speed all the way to the finish. His mighty 39.46s was the only sub-40s climb in the second run-off and eclipsed Gould and everyone else by over half a second. Warburton was sensational in his 1600cc Gould GR59 and bagged third ahead of Menzies, Hall and Dave Uren.

PAUL LAWRENCE

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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Grassroots disciplines will be in the spotlight next month



MAX EAREY

National Motorsport Week is revived

MOTORSPORT UK

Governing body Motorsport UK has revived its National Motorsport Week initiative for this year, with the scheme designed to shine a spotlight on the diverse range of disciplines that make up the sport in this country.

A diverse mix of events from 11-21 July will be given extra promotion in a bid to inspire more people to get involved in the sport. There will be a focus on less expensive grassroots contests, such as autotests, autosolos and trials.

The initiative also incorporates high-profile fixtures such as the Goodwood Festival of Speed

and concludes with the UK's round of Formula E. A total of 103 events are planned during National Motorsport Week, and these also include the British Hillclimb Championship visiting Bouley Bay in Jersey, British GT in action at Snetterton, and the Nicky Grist Stages forest rally. Qualifying events for the British Indoor Karting Championships are also due to be held.

Alongside the competitive events, a range of other schemes will be in action during the week, all demonstrating other ways of getting involved in motorsport. FIA Girls on Track UK, F1 in Schools and Formula Student will be promoted, as well as efforts to recruit new marshals.

Hedley to make GB3 comeback with Rodin at the Hungaroring

GB3

James Hedley will return to GB3 this weekend, taking the place of Ugo Ugochukwu in the Rodin team as the British series prepares to race in Hungary.

McLaren development driver Ugochukwu will be at the Hungaroring this weekend but will focus on the Formula Regional European Championship by

Alpine with Prema. The American sits only 17th in the FRECA standings, compared with fourth in GB3, having taken three podiums, but will prioritise the former.

It means Hedley will race in GB3 again this weekend having made sporadic appearances this season for VRD Racing by Arden. Most recently, the 20-year-old Briton competed at Monaco in Formula 3 with Jenzer Motorsport as he targets a full-time drive in 2025.

"I know the [GB3] car really well and it will be a good place for me to come back to the series," said Hedley, who finished sixth in the 2023 GB3 standings with two wins. "All these things [this year] have been one-offs, but I think one opportunity leads to another. This year I wasn't even supposed to be racing, we wanted to do F3 but never got the budget so our thinking this year was just to go and learn the European tracks."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Former Ginetta Junior champion has driven for VRD by Arden this year



JEP

SCHREINER BACK IN F4

F1 Academy race winner Carrie Schreiner made a return to British Formula 4 at Silverstone last weekend, eight years after she last competed in the series. She was tackling the Silverstone Grand Prix round amid the dearth of F1 Academy events between early May and the end of August, and will also participate in British F4's upcoming Zandvoort event. Schreiner took a best result of 18th on her return, driving for Chris Dittmann Racing.

BARASHI TO CDR FOR GB3

Another driver joining the Chris Dittmann Racing fold is Isaac Barashi, who is due to make his GB3 debut with the team at the Hungaroring this weekend. He finished 20th in the British Formula 4 standings last year, having taken two reversed-grid podiums for Argenti, but is tackling Eurocup-3 as his main programme this season.

FF CORSE'S NEW ACADEMY

Stalwart Ferrari squad FF Corse has launched a new GT Driver Academy and has named its initial nine-strong intake. Among the inaugural batch of drivers are GB4 racer Harry Burgoyne, Ginetta Junior competitor Archie Clark, Radical SR1 pilot Marcus Littlewood, Fiesta Junior driver Thomas Merritt and a quintet of karting starlets. All nine will get the chance to test FF Corse's Ferrari Challenge machinery as well as receive media and fitness training, alongside access to the iZone simulator facility.

NOLLER'S BUSY ANGLESEY

It was a busy weekend at Anglesey for Jack Noller. A triple winner in the Mazda MX-5 Championship, he also stepped up as a late replacement for Kristian Rose in the Fun Cup. "I got a call about 0730 and qualifying started at 0900," he said. Sharing with Truck racer Martin Gibson (below), the pair finished seventh in race two, after losing a wheel in the opener. Both contests were won by defending champion Olympian-GRD with Chris Dovell, Simon Rudd and Riley Phillips at the wheel.



PETERSCHERER



Mixed weekend for British F4 points leader Fairclough

SILVERSTONE
BARC
15-16 JUNE

Deagen Fairclough consolidated his British Formula 4 points lead by taking his fifth win of the season on Silverstone's full Grand Prix layout, while Alex Ninovic strengthened his own title hopes with three podium finishes.

After romping clear following an early safety car period, Fairclough led a Hitech GP 1-2 in the opener ahead of Reza Seewooruthun. Jack Sherwood went out in a first-lap collision while battling his Rodin Motorsport team-mates James Higgins and Ninovic, the Australian eventually grabbing third into Copse from Higgins, who slid off the road and finished fourth.

Ella Lloyd took fifth after gaining five places at the start and holding off Yuanpu Cui and her JHR team-mate Leo Robinson.

Fairclough was one of four drivers to end up in the Becketts gravel trap at the start of the partially reversed-grid race, with

Sherwood again out after tangling with Maxwell Dodds, and the melee resulted in just three green flag laps. Robinson scored a maiden win, while Lloyd slipped back from pole to sixth but was later promoted to second. It was Lloyd's best single-seater result, and came after Ninovic, Joel Bergstrom, Higgins and Bart Harrison were all handed post-race penalties for overtaking her under safety car conditions.

Seewooruthun converted his first pole into his second victory of the season in the finale, finishing 1.760s clear of Fairclough, while Ninovic passed Sherwood to take his seventh straight podium. Sherwood lost a further two places to Robinson and Dodds, but reclaimed fifth from the Virtuosi driver when he dived up the inside at Club.

Peter Erceg and Marcus Clutton continued their unbeaten start to the British Endurance Championship season by taking a dominant victory in the two-hour enduro. The PB Racing by JMH duo's biggest challenge proved to be the changeable conditions, with Erceg handing

the Audi GT3 over to Clutton as a rain shower arrived at the halfway mark. "Just as I got into the car it started raining and we were committed to going," revealed Clutton about his treacherous out-lap on slicks. "I went straight across Maggotts and Becketts, didn't even make it, and I was straight on the radio for wets."

After switching to more suitable tyres, Clutton eventually finished three laps clear of Ross Wylie, who climbed to second after taking over the MJC-run Bentley Continental GT3 from racing returnee Witt Gamski (see News).

Team Brit's Aaron Morgan ran second in the race's first half before handing over the McLaren 570S GT4 to Paul Fullick, but the pair were pipped to a class win and overall podium spot by Xentek pair Bal Sidhu and Josh Steed in a Porsche GT4. Nick Hull and Richard Avery were denied fourth after their Porsche 992 ground to a halt late on.

Chris Bialan and Simon Mason won both Britcar Trophy contests to double their season victory tally in their Cupra. They triumphed in the opener, in which they finished second behind Snetterton Saloons winner Luke Allen (VW Golf), the two grids combining for a field of 38 cars. Axel van Nederveen survived a late off at Copse to take second in his Ginetta ahead of Lee Goldsmith's BMW M3. Bialan and Mason led home van Nederveen and Goldsmith in race two, with Maurizio Sciglio recovering from an early spin to fourth.

The opening Caterham 310R contest was decided by a final-lap shootout. After storming from the back of the grid, Tom Wyllys lost out on victory in a photo-finish to Taylor O'Flanagan by 0.016s. Wyllys made amends by edging O'Flanagan by an



WEEKEND WINNERS

BRITISH F4

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 Deagen Fairclough; 2 Reza Seewooruthun +4.770s; 3 Alex Ninovic; 4 James Higgins; 5 Ella Lloyd; 6 Yuanpu Cui. **Fastest lap** Fairclough 2m01.055s (108.85mph).

Pole Fairclough. **Starters** 23.

Race 2 (8 laps) 1 Leo Robinson; 2 Lloyd +4.772s; 3 Ninovic; 4 Joel Bergstrom; 5 Higgins; 6 Bart Harrison. **FL** Robinson 2m01.559s (108.40mph).

P Lloyd. **S** 23.

Race 3 (9 laps) 1 Seewooruthun; 2 Fairclough +1.760s; 3 Ninovic; 4 Robinson; 5 Jack Sherwood; 6 Maxwell Dodds. **FL** Seewooruthun 2m01.503s (108.45mph). **P** Seewooruthun. **S** 23.

Points 1 Fairclough 225; 2 Ninovic 196; 3 Higgins 133.5; 4 Seewooruthun 133; 5 Sherwood 118; 6 Abbi Pulling 92.

BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Peter Erceg/Marcus Clutton (Audi GT3)

BRITCAR TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Chris Bialan/Simon Mason (Cupra Gen 1)

SNETTERTON SALOONS

Luke Allen (VW Golf, below)

CATERHAM 310R CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Taylor O'Flanagan

Races 2 & 3 Tom Wyllys

CATERHAM 270R CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Ben Timmons

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Race 1 Paul Goldstein

Race 2 Jonathan Emery

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Bruno van Dyke



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

even tighter 0.008s margin in the sequel and then won again by beating Hugo Bush by 0.131s in race three.

Ben Timmons took a victory clean sweep in three similarly tight 270R encounters. He prevailed in a drag race to the line in race one with Theo Theato, who was disqualified for eligibility reasons, drove around the outside of Ryan Wilby at Woodcote to snatch his second win by 0.015s, and then beat Wilby again in a red-flagged finale.

Paul Goldstein made a final-lap pass at Luffield to win the Roadsport opener ahead of Barry Thompson and Nick Highton, but Goldstein was narrowly denied in race two by Jonathan Emery, who took his third victory of the season.

STEVE WHITFIELD

EX-BRITISH F3 RACER'S NEW GT PATH

Bridger made his GT debut alongside Ip



Former British Formula 3 driver Jay Bridger is aiming to enter the British GT Championship next season after making his first foray into endurance racing in last weekend's British Endurance Championship contest at Silverstone.

The 36-year-old, who won the 2008 British F3 National Class and more recently raced in Formula Ford 1600, shared a McLaren 570S GT4 with fellow debutant 'Jonny' Chun Cheong Ip with his own team, Bridger Motorsport.

"I've been out of racing for a long time, around 14 years since I last was doing it seriously," said Bridger. "I have my good friend Jonny as my co-driver. I used to work at Lotus Cars and I met him there about 10 years ago and he always wanted to go racing in GTs. We've been doing testing with him and trackdays and then we decided we'd have a go at racing.

"It's not going too bad – it's gone well considering the lack of experience we've got running these cars."

Despite admitting to having "to shake off the rust a bit", Bridger impressed with the fourth-fastest time in a wet qualifying. "It's good to be back," he reckoned. "It's the first time we've really been out in the wet, so it was a bit of an eye-opener.

"We haven't done pitstops, we have

quite an inexperienced crew. It's completely new, we're pulling people in every day, trying them out. This is why we're doing this because it's all brand new. It's a good experience not just for the drivers but for the team as well.

"Ultimately, we want to get to British GT next year – that's the plan. We will get a GT3 car this year and we start testing in about a month's time. We've got a lot of work to do, we're using this year to get as much experience as possible, get Jonny up to speed, he's progressing really well.

"We've got a lot to get on with, we've got to grow the team a lot. It's actually more enjoyable than when I was racing 14 years ago because I took it way too seriously."

After starting from the pitlane, Ip climbed through the field to sixth before the car suffered a mechanical failure after just three laps, while Marcus Clutton and Peter Erceg won after surviving a mid-race rain shower.

"They were in the pitlane three minutes early, and because we're new to the championship we didn't realise it shut so fast, so we missed the window," Bridger revealed. "He was making good progress and then the gearbox went, which is annoying because we haven't had any issues. It's come out of nowhere. Very frustrating because the car's been quick.

"It's a really nice championship, that's why we went for this one. We haven't got all the equipment we need yet, so we're just turning up and seeing what a race is like. It's the first GT race I've ever done so still it's an experience for me. I'm thoroughly enjoying it. I think we are going to come back for another race this year in this championship."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Even the wrong tyres didn't stop Erceg/Clutton



American delight as FF1600 makes Lydden return

LYDDEN HILL
MSVR
15 JUNE

Aspiring American talent came to the fore at Lydden Hill last Saturday as teenagers Caleb Gafrarar and Jason Pribyl shared the United Formula Ford wins between them as FF1600 racing made a long-awaited return to the Kent venue.

Squally weather made driving conditions difficult in race one but Gafrarar, who celebrated his 16th birthday in the week leading up to the race, made a superb start from the outside of the second row to move his Ammonite Motorsport Ray GR18 into second behind poleman and early pacesetter Jason Smyth. In contrast, 2022 series champion Morgan Quinn made a tardy getaway, falling to ninth from second on the grid in the 17-car field.

For the opening 10 laps, Gafrarar shadowed Smyth's Team Dolan Van Diemen RF00/JL12 relentlessly before Smyth slid off at North Bend, handing Gafrarar an advantage he maintained to the finish. Pribyl (Ray GR20) claimed second, while Charlie Mann's similar Ray overcame a stubborn defence from Pascal Monbaron to claim third after a race-long struggle.



Gafrarar (r) pressured
Smyth into mistake

Monbaron spun at Chesson's Drift before the end, promoting the recovering Quinn to fourth.

Conditions were better in the second encounter and so was Quinn's start as he leapt up from fourth to second to challenge fellow fast starter Pribyl for the lead after poleman Gafrarar was slow away.

Quinn was a constant presence in Pribyl's mirrors in his Van Diemen RF99 throughout the 27-lap contest, but Pribyl never put a wheel wrong and he held on to record an impressive win. A number of late-braking moves, most notably at Devil's Elbow, helped Smyth claim third after a

superb charge from the back of the grid, while Gafrarar salvaged fourth.

The first Classic and Modern Motorsport Club Super Saloons/Tin Tops event required a restart after Dave Avis spun his BMW M3 into the tyre barriers exiting the Devil's Elbow, as he battled with fellow M3 racers Jacques Whitehead and Paul Watson.

Once racing resumed, Chris Bassett carried on where he left off by leading in his Peugeot 306 GTI, but the stoppage had allowed Whitehead, Watson and the Ford Escort of Martin Reynolds to close up.

Reynolds moved up to third when Watson suffered successive sideways

Walker wins after Fisher nets corner-cutting penalty

CASTLE COMBE
CCRC
15-16 JUNE

British GT racer Alex Walker won the eighth round of the Castle Combe Racing Club's Formula Ford Championship in his Van Diemen last weekend after Felix Fisher's Ray was penalised for cutting The Esses.

Race one winner Rory Smith led the early stages in his Medina, as

both Fisher and Walker passed Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum) on lap three at Quarry – the South African admitting to being “humbled” on his return to Formula Ford just six days after claiming a victory in the Porsche Carrera Cup at Thruxton.

The pair chased after Smith and passed him on lap five, with Fisher grabbing the lead at Quarry and Walker impressively passing Smith at Camp corner.

An intense battle followed, with Walker drawing alongside Fisher on the run to The Esses on lap nine of 10. Fisher then missed the following sequence of corners, which frustrated Walker, who ended the race 0.119 seconds behind Fisher.

The race result was decided in the officials' room, where Fisher was judged to have retained position by cutting the corner and therefore the reigning champion was unable to take his first win of the year. Walker consequently claimed his third victory of the season after double honours in May.

Smith had earlier claimed his second win of the season in race one by just 0.216s from Luke Cooper's Swift, with Fisher coming out on top of a tight tussle for third – again with Walker – as wet poleman Rackstraw dropped to fifth.

Caterham Graduates Sigma 135 race one winner Jamie Winrow impressively took second on the line in race two after spinning on lap four at The Esses and dropping as low as 18th. He pipped Alaric Barney and Giles Derry on the dash out of Camp but Paul Armitage beat them all by 1.6s. Meanwhile, Jamie Ellwood narrowly won both 150 races, which included passing Thomas Horton at Camp on the last lap of race one.

Craig Tomkinson won both Hot Hatch races in his highly developed Vauxhall Nova but was under constant pressure in two fast-paced encounters. Ross Parker's Honda Civic chased him home in race one after Shaun Goverd retired his Citroen AX with brake failure. Craig Fleming's Civic



Moore bagged a brace
in the JSCC at Combe

OLLIEREAD

GARY HAWKINS



GARY HAWKINS

moments at North Bend and Paddock, only for the positions to reverse when Reynolds endured an unsettling moment of his own exiting North Bend on lap five of eight.

Moments later, Whitehead spun across the circuit following an off-track excursion at Paddock just after he had usurped Bassett for the lead along Dover Slope. No other driver became involved, but the incident helped Bassett win ahead of Watson.

Race two was also interrupted by a red flag after Bob Hosier's SEAT Leon struck the tyre wall heavily going down Hairy Hill.

Bassett led again at the restart, but a wide moment at Paddock lost him momentum and enabled Reynolds to snatch a lead he would not relinquish, while Whitehead took third.

The sole Trackday Championship event was dominated by Justin Roberts/Nicole Drought in their Honda Civic Type R, although Charlie Palk kept them honest right up to the flag in his Renault Clio. Third place was claimed by the Civic of Paul McHugh/William Heslop, but not before Heslop had twice clashed with Jonny Milner's VW Golf during his stint.

MARK LIBBETER



OLLIE READ

took the battle to Tomkinson in race two.

Jonathan Moore dominated both Junior Saloon Car Championship races. He led home Harry Smith in race one, while Luca Masarati scored his first podium in race two. Kieran Roberts took a pair of thirds despite only starting on row five in race one.

Josh Smith's RLM 260-powered Caterham won the opening local GT race in dominant fashion by over nine seconds before being beaten by Dylan Popovic's seven-litre V8 Ginetta G50 in an ever dampening second race. Darren McCormack – in only his fifth event – scored a pair of thirds on his Castle Combe debut aboard a Caterham 420R.

Stephen Berry dominated all three Mini Challenge Clubsport races, but Jamie Ringer and Freddy Hewitt shared the victories in the tightly contested Cooper S class.

Gareth Porter narrowly won both Track Action races in a Peugeot 205 with an Mi16 engine, while Steve McDermid dominated both MG Owners Club races in his ZR. Race one Saloons winner Harrison Chamberlain (Volkswagen Golf) broke down on the penultimate lap in the second bout, gifting Dave Spiller (Audi TT) victory.

JOSH BARRETT

WEEKEND WINNERS

LYDDEN HILL

UNITED FORMULA FORD

Race 1 Caleb Gafrarar (Ray GR18)

Race 2 Jason Pribyl (Ray GR20)

CMMC SUPER SALOONS/TIN TOPS

Race 1 Chris Bassett (Peugeot 306 GTI)

Race 2 Martin Reynolds (Ford Escort, below)

MSVT TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP

Justin Roberts/Nicole Drought
(Honda Civic Type R)

MSVT TRACKDAY TROPHY

Justin Roberts/Nicole Drought
(Honda Civic Type R)



GARY HAWKINS

CASTLE COMBE

CCRC FF1600

Race 1 Rory Smith (Medina Sport JL18)

Race 2 Alex Walker (Van Diemen RF01)

CATERHAM GRADUATES (SIGMA 135)

Race 1 Jamie Winrow

Race 2 Paul Armitage

CATERHAM GRADUATES (SIGMA 150)

Races 1 & 2 Jamie Ellwood

CCRC HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Craig Tomkinson (Vauxhall Nova)

JUNIOR SALOON CARS

Races 1 & 2 Jonathan Moore

CCRC GT

Race 1 Josh Smith (Caterham RLM 260 Edition)

Race 2 Dylan Popovic (Ginetta G50)

MINI CHALLENGE CLUBSPORT

Races 1, 2 & 3 Stephen Berry

TRACK ACTION

Races 1 & 2 Gareth Porter (Peugeot 205 GTI)

MG OWNERS CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

CCRC SALOON CARS

Race 1 Harrison Chamberlain
(Volkswagen Golf GTI, below)

Race 2 Dave Spiller (Audi TT)



OLLIE READ

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The elements could not stop Jones winning in his MG L Magna at Cadwell Park

Jones battles through rain and shine to take Mary Harris Trophy

CADWELL PARK
VSCC
15 JUNE

Charles Jones took a thunderous win in the Triple M Mary Harris Trophy race in his MG L Magna after the skies decided to open during the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Cadwell Park meeting last weekend.

After the sun shone in the morning, rain began to fall during the third race of the day before there was a downpour on the Triple M contest. With the organisers keen to push on due to a packed schedule, the race began in the worst of the conditions, with Jones making a great launch from pole while other drivers moved away gingerly on the wet surface.

Jones quickly established a large lead, perfectly balancing his car in the conditions, which didn't relent, with thunder and lightning echoing across the track. Jones then took the flag under blue skies after six laps, as if the weather had merely tried to test his quality. Mike Painter finished second in an MG Kaye, with Adrian Beer taking third in his MG K3.

Despite not being stopped by the rain,

the meeting did eventually hit delays that caused a late finish and a combined race for two of the grids.

The delays were initially started by a red flag in the Historic Seaman & Flockhart Trophies contest after Alex Simpson pulled his Alvis Goodwin Special over on the downhill section after Barn. It was restarted with 10 minutes to go, and polesitter Charlie Martin was able to recover from his earlier poor start in his Cooper-Climax T53, which had demoted him to fourth, to take the win followed by Jon Milicevic, who had made the best of Martin's misfortune in his Brabham BT6 to hold a strong lead before the stoppage.

"The pole position was on the wet side of the circuit so I was quite pleased about that," said Milicevic. "When the red lights went out, we had a better start and managed to get away on the first run."

"I think we all went off going up through The Mountain on the grass, but I managed to pull a few seconds' lead. Unfortunately, a car crashed coming out of Barn which stopped the race and, while we waited, the track was drying. I then had to start on the wet side of the track and Charlie got the better start and we couldn't catch him down the straights."

The combined Scratch race for pre-war machines was also red flagged after a car stopped on track, the shortened affair giving polesitter Anthony Seber the win in his Wolseley Hornet Special, followed by Simon Gallon's Austin 7.

Theodore Hunt drove well to take the Len Thompson Memorial Trophy win after his nearest competitors all suffered mechanical issues at various points in the race. In what was initially a three-horse



Hunt won the Len Thompson Memorial race with Frazer Nash

WEEKEND WINNERS

TRIPLE M MARY HARRIS TROPHY

Charles Jones (MG L Magna)

HISTORIC SEAMAN & FLOCKHART TROPHIES

Charlie Martin (Cooper-Climax T53)

SCRATCH RACE FOR PRE-WAR CARS

Anthony Seber (Wolseley Hornet Special)

LEN THOMPSON MEMORIAL TROPHY

Theodore Hunt (Frazer Nash TT Replica)

MELVILLE & GEOGHEGAN TROPHIES

Christopher Mann (Alfa Romeo 8C Monza)

BOLZANO TROPHY

David Johnson (Frazer Nash Super Sports)

JOE FRAZER-NASH TROPHY

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards
(Frazer Nash Super Sports)

VINTAGE SEAMAN TROPHY

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards
(Frazer Nash Super Sports)

SPERO & VOITURETTE TROPHIES

Nicolas Komaroff (Austin 7)

For full results visit: theresultslive.co.uk

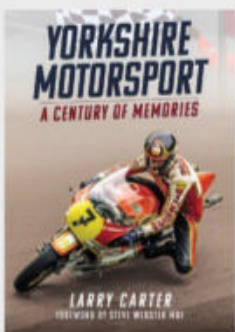
battle, Hunt made a good start from second to take the lead in his Frazer Nash TT Replica from Ben Maeers, who struggled off the line in his GN Parker. Maeers dropped to third behind Michael James in his Riley 12/4, unable to follow in the corners, but he quickly made his way back to the front due to being extremely rapid on the straights.

Heartbreakingly, Maeers retired with five minutes to go. Hunt inherited the lead and was kept honest by James before he too suffered mechanical problems and had to settle for second, 14s behind.

HAMISH BAILEY

FINISHING STRAIGHT

A county's motorsport story



BOOK REVIEW
YORKSHIRE
MOTORSPORT
– A CENTURY
OF MEMORIES
Larry Carter
RRP £15.99

For all of its prodigious size, Yorkshire isn't exactly endowed with a great number of racing circuits. But that's not to say that the white rose county doesn't have any racing pedigree, as new book *Yorkshire Motorsport – A Century of Memories* makes clear.

Written by motorsport broadcaster and journalist Larry Carter, the book takes readers through the history of motorsport in Yorkshire, from long-gone racing circuits through to the marques that started there, and the racers who hail from God's own country (*no prizes for guessing where our reviewer hails from!* – Ed).

The book starts with the champions to have come from Yorkshire. F1 legend

and 1958 world champion Mike Hawthorn is perhaps the best-known title winner, but two-time Superbike world champion James Toseland, speedway champ Gary Havelock and famed trials family the Lampkins provide more pedigree.

It's the Lampkins who are the focus of the next chapter, where we learn more about how the family became one of the best in trials history, and the people who made up that family. This off-road motorcycling history continues throughout the book, as the abundance of fields and agriculture, and lack of circuits, gives rise to tales of hillclimbs, off-road races, trials and rallies.

The arduous 70-mile Scott Trial (at which the Lampkin family has 14 wins) receives two chapters, while the UK's only natural road-race track – Oliver's Mount in Scarborough – was formerly host to motorcycling royalty, bearing the names of Giacomo Agostini, John Surtees, Mike Hailwood and Barry Sheene on its entry lists.

The hills and valleys of the Dales also offered motivated riders a chance to try their hand at hillclimbing, something the book covers with great detail and some fantastic period photos.

North Yorkshire's Croft Circuit also features, exploring the history of the venue and how it came to be, explaining the surprising story behind the original owners. The circuit is now a stalwart of the British Touring Car Championship calendar, providing no end of drama (and usually at least one wet race through the day!).

Yorkshire racers Chris Meek, Mick Grant, Tony Sugden and Denis Parkinson also have brief biographies, while the book's closing chapter is dedicated to

Leeds-based manufacturer Ginetta. Its motorsport ladder has given birth to many fantastic racing careers, with F1 driver Lando Norris, three-time W Series champion Jamie Chadwick and BTCC star Tom Ingram among its alumni.

Each chapter comprises roughly four pages – two pages of text, two of photos – which is a good balance and feels like you have enough information on a subject. The period photography really allows you to take a look back into motorsport as it was at the time, with the subjects getting progressively more modern – sepia-toned images of smiling, leather-helmeted motorbikers and goggled gentleman drivers with no thought to safety giving way to the sleek, modern bikes and cars of today.

Yorkshire Motorsport does a brilliant job of showcasing the enthusiasm and ingenuity of the people of the county. Almost every chapter tells the story of someone who had an idea, a dream, and started doing what they could to make it happen.

While Yorkshire might not be able to claim any world-famous circuits like other parts of the country, there's certainly some interest to be had for everyone – especially fans of motorbikes. Each chapter takes you back to a time when motorsport was different, teaches you its history, and shows you the events themselves.

It's fascinating looking at the images of places you recognise, but not quite in the same way you're seeing them – a time when people raced for the fun and the challenge of it, and motorsport was more open to people who fancied a go. It's also a reminder that while history and heritage might not always be apparent, for those who know where to look, it's there. And Yorkshire has it in abundance.

TOM JEFFRIES



WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Spanish Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 10/24
Barcelona, Spain
23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV Highlights Sky Sports F1, 1700



GRANT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Formula 2
Round 6/14
Barcelona, Spain
22-23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1310, Sun 1030

Formula 3
Round 5/10
Barcelona, Spain
22-23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 0935, Sun 0900

F1 Academy
Round 3/7
Barcelona, Spain
22-23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 1700, Sun 0745

IndyCar Series
Round 8/15
Laguna Seca, USA
23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 2300

Indy NXT
Round 6/12
Laguna Seca, USA
22-23 June
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 2025, Sun 2055

Super Formula
Round 3/7
Sugo, Japan
23 June
TV Live Motorsport.tv, Sun 0613

IMSA SportsCar
Round 6/11
Watkins Glen, USA
23 June
TV Live IMSA.com/tvlive

Formula Regional European by Alpine
Round 4/10
Hungaroring, Hungary
23 June
TV Live YouTube

NASCAR Cup Series
Round 18/36
New Hampshire, USA
23 June
TV Live Premier 2, Sun 1900

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park BARC
22-23 June
BTCC, Caterham Seven UK, Mini Challenge, Porsche Sprint Challenge, Radical Cup
TV Live ITV4, Sun 1145

British GT
Round 4/7
Spa, Belgium
23 June
TV Live britishgt.com

GB3
Round 4/8
Hungaroring, Hungary
22-23 June
TV Live gb-3.net

Silverstone CSCC
22 June
BMW Championship/New Millennium/Slicks Series/Special Saloons & Modsports, Modern Classics/Future Classics/Morgan Challenge, Open Series/Magnificent Sevens, Turbo Tin Tops/Tin Tops/Puma Cup, Swinging Sixties/Classic K

Kirkistown 500MRCI
22 June
BOSS Ireland, FF1600, Fiestas, Globals, Libre Saloons/GTs, Minis, Mazdas,

Roadsports, SEAT Supercopa, Superkarts

Thruxton BARC
22-23 June
Ferrari Club, FISCAR, Guards Trophy, Heroes of FF1600, Historic F3, Historic FF2000, Jochen Rindt Trophy, Mighty Minis, Swinging Sixties

Lydden Hill BARC
23 June
2CVs, Historics

Snetterton 750MC
22-23 June
5Club MX-5, 750 Formula, Classic Stock Hatch, Club Enduro, F1000, Formula Vee, Historic 750 Formula, Hot Hatch, Locost, MR2, Roadsports, Sport Specials
TV Live Alphalive.co.uk

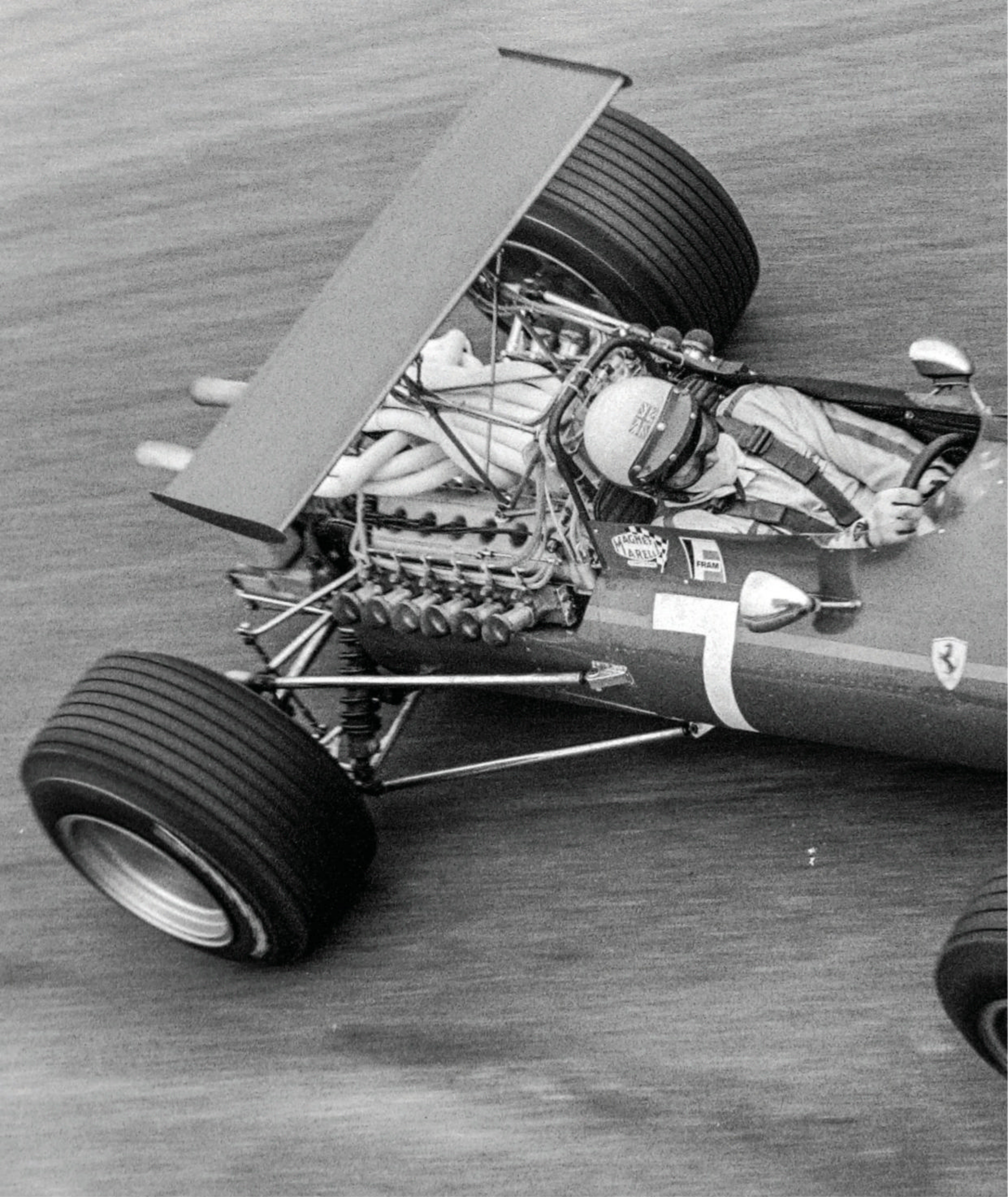
Donington Park BRSCC
22-23 June
C1 Endurance, CityCar Cup, Clubsport Trophy, Evolution Trophy, MG Metro Cup, Modified Fords, Super Classic Pre'99 FF1600, Super Sport Endurance Cup, Zeo Prototypes



Autosport Podcast: Will F1's 2026 regulations improve the racing?
The FIA recently announced the first draft of its new F1 regulations, set to debut in the 2026 season. There are some big changes on the horizon, including smaller and nimbler cars, a reduction in the minimum weight limit, as well as multiple modes for the front and rear wings to adjust downforce. On top of this are the power unit changes and a manual override mode, which drivers can activate to achieve a greater top speed.
Jake Boxall-Legge joins host Bryn Lucas to discuss the changes and ponder the question: will the changes improve the spectacle?



British GT
British GT returns to Spa after a year away



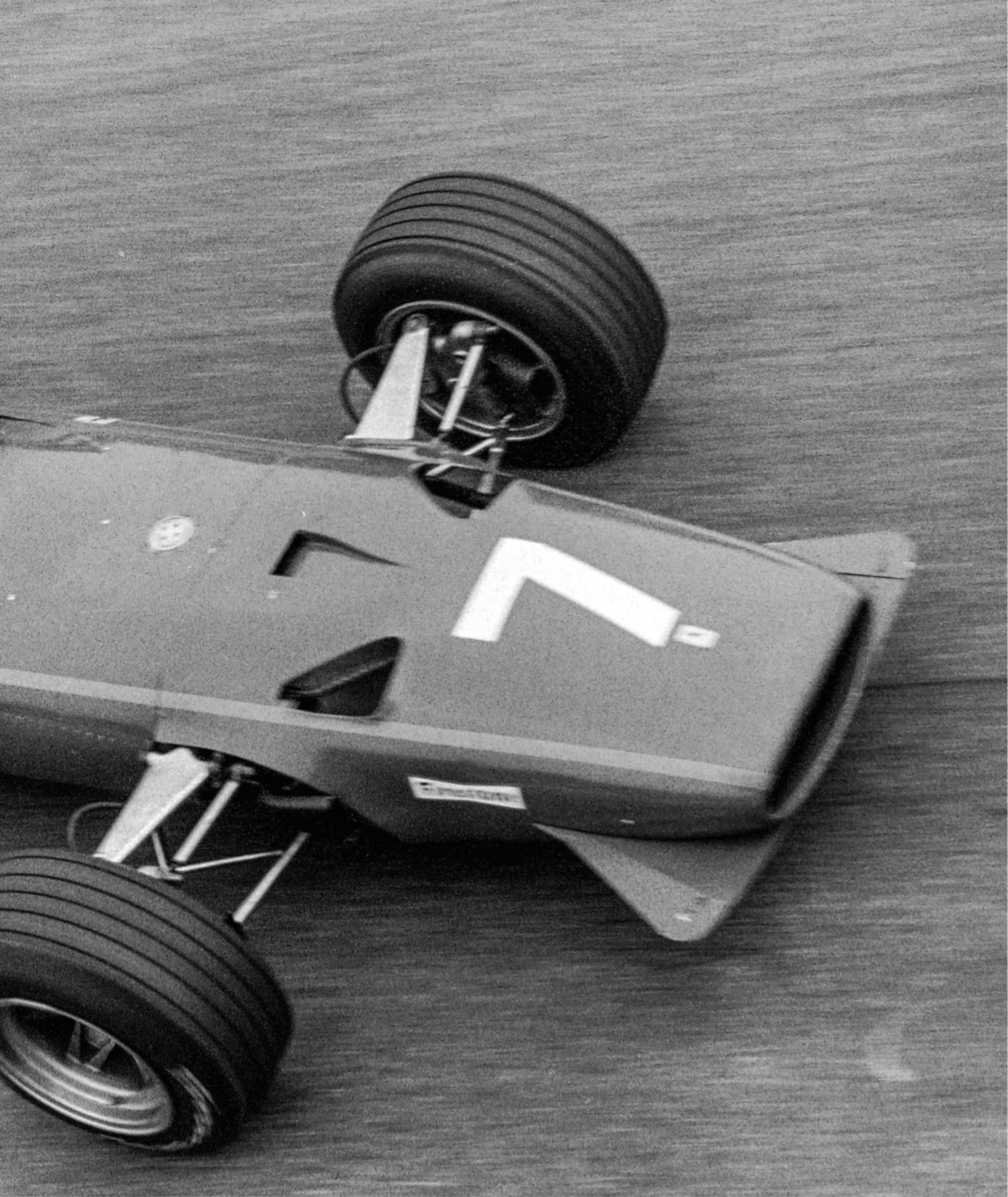
FROM THE ARCHIVE

Derek Bell drifts his Ferrari 312 on his world championship F1 debut in the 1968 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. His car, and those of team-mates Jacky Ickx and Chris Amon, sported a new,

adjustable rear wing. Autosport described the “aerofoil” thus: “The angle is controlled by an hydraulic device, the pressure being supplied by oil from the engine. There are two positions for the wing, horizontal and

minus 15 deg, the signal coming from several sources: a hand control on the dash, pressure in the brake lines, and road speed”, also noting that during practice “the sight of them moving up under braking added to

the spectacle”. Bell qualified eighth, starting on the third row alongside reigning champion Denny Hulme (McLaren M7A) and Jackie Stewart (Matra MS10), but retired with fuel feed issues after just four laps.





Audi R18 e-tron quattro

Perhaps it should be no surprise that Benoit Treluyer picks the Audi R18 e-tron quattro as his favourite car. He won the Le Mans 24 Hours twice in LMP1 racers bearing that name, and claimed the 2012 World Endurance Championship title in R18 machinery. But his pick from the e-tron quattro family, each year's variant bearing differences of varying significance, is the 2015 iteration he raced to victory in high-downforce trim at that year's Silverstone WEC season-opener.

"That car was just crazy to drive," enthuses Treluyer, who prevailed with Andre Lotterer and Marcel Fassler after a frenetic back-and-forth duel with the Porsche 919 of Neel Jani, Romain Dumas and Marc Lieb. "Silverstone is one of my best memories in terms of sensation driving; going to Becketts with the car nearly flat everywhere was amazing.

"We had to release the throttle – we couldn't stay flat on the entry of Becketts just because it was bouncing, and the hybrid couldn't accept this bouncing with oscillation. But the car could have gone much quicker."

The V6 turbodiesel racer had been totally revamped in response to Toyota sweeping the 2014 WEC drivers' and manufacturers' standings, moving up a megajoule class on hybrid power from 2MJ to 4MJ. To a new single energy-retrieval system was added all-new aerodynamics, and suggestions from



tests at Sebring and Motorland Aragon that Audi was onto a good thing were confirmed at Silverstone. Strong in the high-speed sections, without giving up low-speed performance thanks to effective mechanical grip, it was highly impressive once in clear air when Lotterer ambushed Dumas.

"It's always difficult in Silverstone at the time of year, which is very cold to put the tyre in the temperature window," reflects Treluyer. "We had our high downforce set-up, so it was much easier. We had big air intakes below the high beams and everyone was thinking it was for cooling the brakes, but not at all. It was just downforce."

Victory in the next round at Spa was Audi's last of a year ultimately dominated by Porsche. Audi withdrew from the WEC the next season but, with 13 Le Mans wins including three for Treluyer, Lotterer and Fassler, it had certainly left its mark.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Motorsport Network Media UK Ltd,
151 Wardour Street, London, W1F 8WB

Email autosport@autosport.com

Individual email firstname.surname@autosport.com

Website www.autosport.com **Twitter** @autosport

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK +44 (0) 344 848 8817 **Overseas** +44 (0) 1604 251451

Email help@asm.secureorder.co.uk **Back issues** 0344 8488817

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Chief Editor **Kevin Turner**

Deputy Editor **Marcus Simmons**

Grand Prix Editor **Alex Kalinauckas**

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ADVERTISING

Tandem Media

Director **Richard Rowe**

richard@tandemmedia.co.uk **Tel** +44 (0) 1233 228757

Account Manager **Joel Tanton**

joel@tandemmedia.co.uk **Tel** +44 (0) 1233 228753

RECRUITMENT

Head of Motorsport Jobs **James Robinson**

james.robinson@motorsport.com

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

autosport@tandemmedia.co.uk **Tel** +44 (0) 1233 220247

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