

F1 Verstappen defies Norris in Spanish GP



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Are McLaren and Norris ready to fight Red Bull everywhere?

Now things are getting interesting. Yes, Max Verstappen won *again* last weekend, but McLaren's pace at a circuit many expected to be prime Red Bull territory suggests we have some fine battles to come.

Lando Norris's early fight with Verstappen in Spain – hard but just about fair – also suggests he's ready to consistently challenge the Dutchman. A championship contest might be a little far-fetched – Verstappen is 69 points ahead and has won seven of the 10 grands prix so far in 2024 – but we're now at a stage where we should have some interesting races at the front of the Formula 1 field.

Aside from our Spanish GP coverage, which starts on page 12, this week we look back at one of the great periods in touring car history. Tom Howard previews this weekend's Super Touring Power event at Brands Hatch (p50), Marcus Simmons talks to two-time British Touring Car champion Alain Menu (p52), and we pick out the top 10 machines of the 1991-2001 two-litre era (p58). Autosport will be on stage at Brands to hear from some of the period's key figures, so we look forward to seeing you there on Saturday and Sunday.

Jake Hill will be one of the stars at Brands, both on and off track, and he strengthened his 2024 BTCC title credentials by moving to the top of the table at Oulton Park. Our report starts on p28.

The Spa 24 Hours is 100 years old in 2024 and, ahead of this weekend's enduro at the famous Belgian circuit, Gary Watkins picks out the milestone moments of an event that's had its ups and downs.

Look out for a full report in next week's issue, which will also include Austrian GP action, our British GP preview and highlights from the Brands Hatch tin-top extravaganza.



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PIT + PADDOCK

Briatore back in Alpine advisory role; Sainz moves into frame for 2025 seat

FORMULA 1

Alpine has formally given ex-Benetton and Renault Formula 1 team boss Flavio Briatore an advisory role, 14 years after he resigned for his part in the Singapore Grand Prix crash scandal.

Following weeks of speculation that Alpine was sounding out Briatore about a role in the squad as it evaluates its F1 future, the French manufacturer confirmed at last weekend's Spanish GP that the Italian "will predominantly focus on top-level areas of the team including scouting top talents and providing insights on the driver market, challenging the existing project by assessing the current structure and advising on some strategic matters within the sport".

While Briatore helped steer the Benetton and Renault teams to world title success with Michael Schumacher in 1994-95 and Fernando Alonso in 2005-06, his tenure at the squad ended in one of F1's biggest controversies. He was initially given a lifetime ban by the FIA for his role in the crash scandal, in which he was implicated in a plot that involved Nelson Piquet Jr deliberately crashing early in the race to trigger a safety car that helped his teammate Alonso win. Briatore managed to overturn the ban in the French Tribunal de Grande Instance in 2010, and continued to keep an involvement in F1. He remains part of Alonso's management team, and also played a role in various commercial deals.

Briatore's appointment to Alpine comes at an interesting point in the team's history, as it ponders abandoning its position as a manufacturer squad and becoming a customer operation from 2026. It is

understood that Renault CEO Luca de Meo, to whom Briatore will report, is evaluating whether the huge investment needed for Renault to produce its own engine is worth it, considering the success that customer teams can enjoy in F1. Alpine looks most likely to secure a customer engine from Mercedes if it was to go down that route.

While de Meo has commanded a large number of senior personnel changes over the past 12 months since the dismissal of previous team boss Otmar Szafnauer, Briatore's appointment is seen as the most eyebrow-raising so far. But team principal Bruno Famin shrugged off questions about Briatore's past in Spain. "I don't really mind about the past, I'm always looking [at] the future, what we can do to get our team

better," Famin said when quizzed on the subject. "Flavio has 40 years of experience in Formula 1, he knows how to operate a winning team. He has a very good record, quite a number of world titles and he will bring this experience, this fighting spirit to the team. He is the adviser to the Group CEO but he will advise the team. I'm looking ahead, not backwards."

Briatore is also believed to be helping de Meo put together the team's 2025 driver line-up, with Esteban Ocon leaving the squad and Pierre Gasly out of contract. The Italian was a big presence in the Spanish GP paddock and it has since emerged that Alpine has made a late bid to secure Carlos Sainz, who had been facing a choice between Williams and Sauber/Audi.



S BLOXHAM



Briatore oversaw Schumacher's two titles with Benetton



Famin "looking ahead, not backwards"

Briatore (left) at the Spanish GP
with Carlos Sainz Sr



Autosport's sources have revealed that serious talks have been held with Alpine, and it has even been suggested that an attractive contract offer has been made for Sainz to commit his future to the squad.

Sainz's father Carlos Sr was seen visiting various motorhomes – including Sauber and Williams – on race morning at Barcelona, as discussions continue about his son's future, and was also spotted in talks with Briatore. Alpine has shown some progress in recent weeks despite not radically upgrading its car, outscoring Haas, Williams and Sauber so far.

Meanwhile, Aston Martin has stepped up its bid to secure Red Bull's departing design legend Adrian Newey. Sources have revealed that Newey was hosted for a secret visit to Aston Martin's Silverstone facility recently to see how the squad shapes up. It has been suggested that Aston Martin's staff were requested to vacate the factory during the visit to try to stop news about Newey's arrival being leaked out. Ferrari and Aston Martin have been the favourites to secure Newey, though sources suggest that McLaren and Mercedes are also quietly pushing behind the scenes to get the 65-year-old on board.

JONATHAN NOBLE & FILIP CLEEREN

...AS TEST FOR SCHUMACHER WIDENS NET

FORMULA 1

Mick Schumacher will test an Alpine Formula 1 car next week as the team continues to weigh up its options for its 2025 driver line-up.

Schumacher will have an opportunity to show his potential as a candidate on 3 July, when he will drive an A522 from the 2022 season at Paul Ricard. The German, who lost his Haas seat at the end of 2022, remains a Mercedes F1 reserve alongside his Alpine Le Mans Hypercar drive in the World Endurance Championship.

The French squad announced earlier this



month that it would part company with Esteban Ocon at the end of the current season, while team-mate Pierre Gasly's contract also expires after 2024.

Also in the mix are Carlos Sainz (see main story, left) and current reserve driver Jack Doohan, who took part in FP1 at the recent Canadian Grand Prix at

the wheel of Ocon's car.

While Gasly is expected to be retained by Alpine, the Frenchman is also on the list of candidates being considered by Audi boss Andreas Seidl to partner Nico Hulkenberg should Sainz decide to go elsewhere, a possibility that appears to be increasing.

CHRISTIAN NIMMERVOLL



Both sides claim court victory

FORMULA 1

Both the Haas Formula 1 team and its former sponsor Uralkali have claimed victory after the Swiss arbitration court issued a ruling on the parties' long-running dispute.

The two sides had been at loggerheads since March 2022, when Haas dropped Nikita Mazepin and his sponsor Uralkali in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Uralkali, the Russian fertiliser company headed up by Mazepin's father, claimed Haas breached its contract and was seeking a refund on the \$13million fee it had already paid the squad for the 2022 season.

Haas rejected Uralkali's claims and the matter went to court.

Uralkali claimed in a statement: "The tribunal found that Haas was in violation of the contract and obliged the team to pay compensation to Uralkali".

Then Haas released a statement saying: "The arbitration panel ruled that Haas had 'just cause' to terminate its sponsorship contract with Uralkali." Based on Haas's version, that means it could keep the portion of sponsorship that covered up to 4 March 2022, refund the balance of the \$13m total and not pay compensation to Uralkali.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

McLaren Hypercar is 'more when than if'

WEC/IMSA

McLaren's ambitions to repeat its 1995 Le Mans 24 Hours victory remain on track and have been given a boost by the extension of the current prototype regulations until 2029. Zak Brown, boss of McLaren Racing, has stated that an entry into the Hypercar and GTP classes of the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship respectively is "more when than if".

Brown explained that the decision to extend the lifecycle of Le Mans Hypercar and LMDh regulations by two years beyond 2027, announced on the Friday of this month's Le Mans, has given McLaren "more breathing space".

"Costs in all motorsport are critically important and I think the extension definitely helps our business

model that we have laid out internally," said Brown, who has spoken openly about McLaren's aspirations at the pinnacle of sportscar racing since taking up his current role in 2018. "We would have to work on a two-year lead time: if we were talking about 2026 we would need to make a decision tomorrow. You wouldn't want to enter a championship [category] in its last season."

Brown revealed that McLaren is "looking at all the scenarios" with regard to its first top-flight sportscar campaign since the F1 GTR programme of the 1990s. "But clearly if you are in sportscar racing you want to win Le Mans," he added.

McLaren has previously stated that its ambitions lay in the WEC with a factory team of LMDhs and potentially customer cars in IMSA. "LMDh would be the



more favourable category," Brown confirmed.

Brown also stressed the importance that a top-flight sportscar programme doesn't distract from McLaren Racing's other activities. "If we take on another project

we have to make sure it doesn't disrupt our other activities," he said. We are not far away from feeling we could take on another project without diluting our F1, IndyCar or electric teams."

GARY WATKINS

Derani tipped for WEC after Cadillac/AXR exit

WEC/IMSA

Four-time Sebring 12 Hours winner Pipo Derani will part ways with Cadillac and Action Express Racing after six seasons at the end of this year. What has been billed as a mutual decision comes against the backdrop of a reshuffle in the General Motors marque's roster of teams in both the IMSA SportsCar Championship and World

Endurance Championship, and could also signal a change in career direction.

The IMSA stalwart, who took the overall title in 2021 and 2023, has made no secret of his ambitions to race full time in the WEC's Hypercar class. Leaving Cadillac could be a way to facilitate that.

The Brazilian's management team is known to have been shopping around for him in the paddock. The departure

of a driver who has consistently been at the forefront of Cadillac's IMSA campaigns since joining Action Express for 2019 suggests it may have already been successful.

"We have mutually agreed not to go forward together past this year," Derani said in a statement issued during last weekend's Watkins Glen 6 Hours enduro. "We've had a fantastic time together with two championships, two endurance championships and many race wins and pole positions. I truly have enjoyed my time with this team and with Cadillac. All the good times we've had together will forever be in my memory."

Wayne Taylor Racing with Andretti is expected to return to the Cadillac fold next season with two V-Series.R LMDhs, while the Jota team is certain to do the same in the WEC, both teams taking over from Chip Ganassi Racing. Action Express seems likely to continue with one car Stateside, although GM is keeping its cards close to its chest.

GARY WATKINS



Porsche bulks up for Spa 24 Hours centenary

SPA 24 HOURS

Porsche heads to this weekend's centenary running of the Spa 24 Hours with the numbers in its favour. The German manufacturer's assault on a race it last won in 2020 has been boosted by three additional entries over the trio that are contesting the full GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup this year.

Come Ledogar's CLRT squad, Rutronik Racing and Pure Rxacing are the teams fielding the 992-shape Porsche 911 GT3-R in all five rounds. They are joined for Spa, which also counts as round three of the Intercontinental GT Challenge, by DTM stalwart SSR Performance and two teams from Asia. The extra cars are packed with factory drivers in a bid for what would be Porsche's ninth win in the Belgian classic.

SSR has linked up with Herberth Motorsport for its return to the Porsche fold after its switch to Lamborghini for the DTM in 2023. Frederic Makowiecki, Matt Campbell and Mathieu Jaminet have been



brought in from the 963 LMDh roster to form the driver line-up.

WEC points leaders Kevin Estre and Laurens Vanthoor, both winners of the 24 Hours at Spa with Porsche, have been drafted into the HubAuto team's entry to drive with fellow factory driver Patrick Pilet. It will be a first Spa assault for the Taiwanese team, which is being logistically supported by Manthey Racing, since 2021.

The second team supported by Porsche Motorsport Asia Pacific is the new-for-2024 Phantom Global Racing squad from China.

Its 911 will be run by Timo Bernhard's Team 75 operation for its European debut and raced by factory drivers Thomas Preining, Jaxon Evans and Joel Eriksson.

Porsche-contracted drivers on the Spa roster among the marque's regular GTWCE teams include Julien Andlauer, Sven Muller and Patric Niederhauser (Rutronik), Klaus Bachler (Pure), and Ayhan Guven (CLRT).

GARY WATKINS

P44 SPA 24 CENTENARY

SRO/JEP



Bell to the fore on rain tyres

NASCAR

Last Sunday's NASCAR Cup round at New Hampshire Motor Speedway ended up a tale of two races and potentially different winners.

Tyler Reddick had used a pit strategy gamble to grab the lead, hoping the approaching bad weather would reach the track before the end of the race. He was right and it appeared that his 23XI Racing Toyota might pick up the win when the race was halted after 219 of 301 laps with severe thunder in the area.

NASCAR, however, elected to wait out a nearly two-hour, 15-minute rain delay

and mandated teams to run the final 77 competitive laps on wet-weather tyres – the longest stint since their use was implemented on some oval tracks. The change in tyre and conditions drastically altered the race, with Christopher Bell driving to the front and passing Reddick with 60 laps to go. His Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota then held on through four restarts – including one in overtime – to win by 1.104 seconds over Chase Briscoe (Stewart-Haas Racing Ford).

Josh Berry finished third from Kyle Larson and Chris Buescher, while Reddick dropped to sixth place.

JIM UTTER

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HAAS U-TURNS ON EXIT

Gene Haas is to remain in NASCAR after all despite the recent announcement of Stewart-Haas Racing folding at the end of 2024. In a sudden turn of events, Haas confirmed last Thursday that he will launch the Haas Factory Team in 2025, operating a two-car NASCAR Xfinity Series team and retaining a single Cup charter. Front Row Motorsports has already stated its intentions to buy one of the other three SHR charters once a new agreement is reached between the teams and NASCAR.

PARAGUAY TO HOST WRC

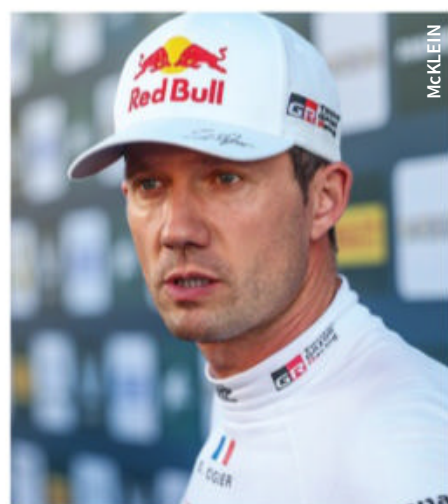
The 2025 World Rally Championship calendar is edging closer to completion with the news that Paraguay is set to make its debut next season. The announcement was made last Saturday evening in capital city Asuncion by president Santiago Pena at the ceremonial start of Petrobras Rally Transchaco, the third round of the Paraguayan national championship. The gravel rally will be based out of the southern city of Encarnacion, although it has yet to be official confirmed by the WRC.

BEZZECCHI'S APRILIA RIDE

Another piece of the MotoGP rider market jigsaw for 2025 has fallen into place in the past few days with news that Marco Bezzecchi is on his way to Aprilia to partner Jorge Martin. The Italian therefore becomes a factory rider for the first time after three seasons at Ducati satellite VR46.

OGIER IN RECCE CRASH

Eight-time World Rally champion Sebastien Ogier (below) and co-driver Vincent Landais were undergoing medical checks as we went to press following a crash on reconnaissance on Tuesday morning for this week's World Rally Championship round in Poland. Details of the accident and the condition of the factory Toyota drivers was unclear.



McKLEIN



PIKES PEAK Ford's F-150 Lightning SuperTruck electric demonstrator set the fastest time at the Pikes Peak hillclimb last weekend, despite briefly coming to a halt and having to perform a reboot. Romain Dumas, the record-holder on the 12.42-mile course, took his fifth outright victory in the event with a time of 8m53.553s despite losing an estimated 26 seconds to the problem. Co-developed by Austrian company STARD, the whispering SuperTruck produces over 1600bhp. Hyundai World Rally Championship driver Dani Sordo won the Exhibition class aboard an IONIQ 5 N TA, also electric-powered, with a time of 9m30.852s. **Photograph by Ford**

Sauber seeks Pourchaire seat

INDYCAR

The Sauber Formula 1 team is looking to find reserve driver Theo Pourchaire a new home in IndyCar after he was dropped last week by Arrow McLaren.

It was announced by Arrow McLaren that it has signed a multi-year deal with Nolan Siegel to occupy its #6 car starting with last weekend's Laguna Seca round. The news came only weeks after McLaren had confirmed that 2023 Formula 2 champion Pourchaire would remain in the car for the remainder of 2024, in a deal with Sauber to loan its 20-year-old academy driver as a replacement for the injured David Malukas.

With the Frenchman leaving his seat in Super Formula to race in IndyCar and immediately impressing on his first outings, the news of his replacement came as a shock.

Sauber's Alessandro Alunni Bravi told Autosport: "We understand McLaren's position. Of course, we cannot be happy, mainly because Theo has lost the opportunity to have a strong racing programme. This is something that can happen in motorsport, we cannot blame McLaren. But we need just now to look at the future and find another good opportunity for Theo. We are already

working with him to secure another seat in IndyCar. Hopefully we can do some races this year."

Dale Coyne Racing could be an option for Pourchaire, with the team yet to fill the #51 entry for early July's Mid-Ohio round and beyond. For 2025, Sauber's priority is to find Pourchaire an IndyCar seat at a top team, with the Swiss squad aiming to keep its reserve driver race ready. "We are focused for him to have a strong 2025 programme with one of the best IndyCar teams," Alunni Bravi said.

FILIP CLEEREN



TONS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

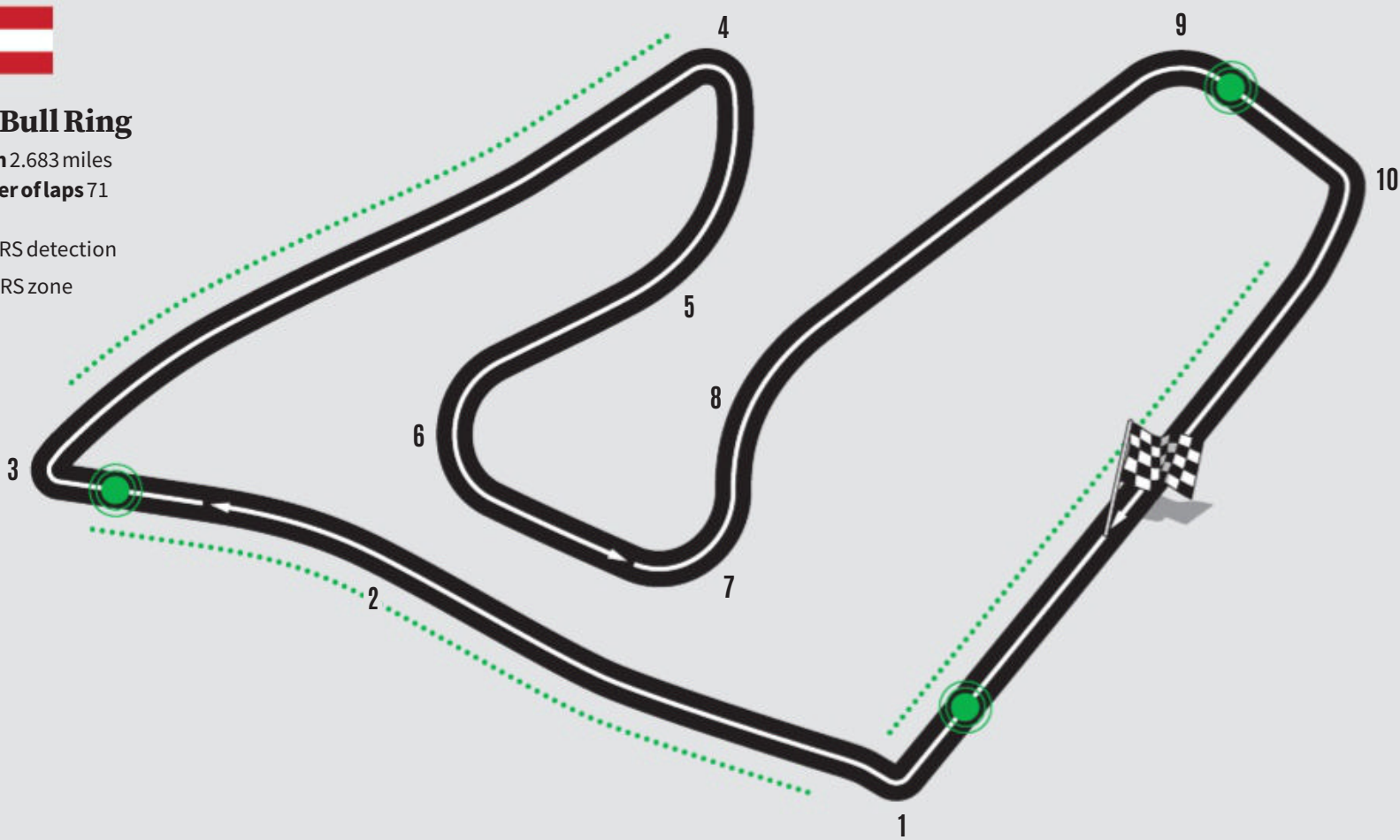
F1 AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Red Bull Ring

Length 2.683 miles
Number of laps 71

DRS detection
DRS zone



UK START TIMES

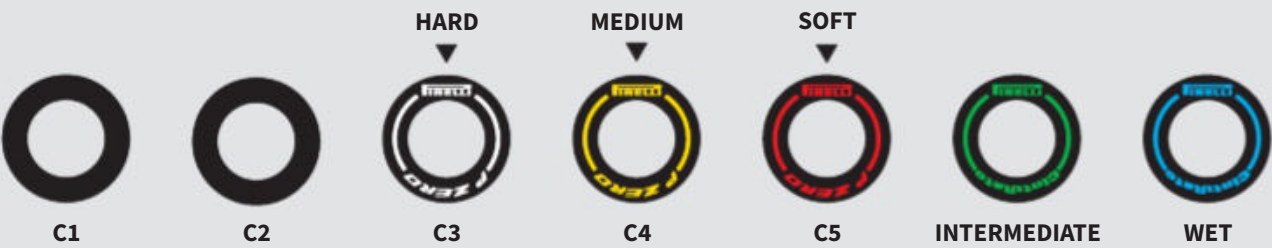
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CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers			Constructors		
1	Verstappen	219	1	Red Bull	330
2	Norris	150	2	Ferrari	270
3	Leclerc	148	3	McLaren	237
4	Sainz	116	4	Mercedes	151
5	Perez	111	5	Aston Martin	58



Red Bull to run rings around them?

RED BULL RING STATS

Previous winners

2023	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2022	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari
2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2021	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2020	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2019	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2018	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2017	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes

2023 POLE POSITION
Max Verstappen
1m04.391s

POLE LAP RECORD
Valtteri Bottas
1m02.939s (2020)

RACE LAP RECORD
Carlos Sainz
1m05.619s (2020)



Jo Siffert (right, next to Stewart) took his final GP win at Österreichring in 1971

Red Bull Ring podiums

Max Verstappen	8
Valtteri Bottas	7
Lewis Hamilton	6
David Coulthard	5
Michael Schumacher	4
Charles Leclerc	4
Jacques Laffite	4
Nelson Piquet	4
Rubens Barrichello	4
Alain Prost	3



A ruthless marker laid down

Was Lando Norris's robust move against Max Verstappen off the line at Barcelona an indication of how their future encounters will play out? We can't wait to see

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

I know his birthday present already – it's either like a big mirror or some glasses and it will be fine!" Max Verstappen was all jokes and smiles after winning the 2024 Spanish Grand Prix. Perhaps the sight of his once great rival, Lewis Hamilton, flat on his back on the Barcelona press conference sofa as he waited for Verstappen and (especially) Lando Norris to finish speaking to TV crews downstairs had tickled the Red Bull driver. Maybe he enjoyed Bob Marley's *Could You Be Loved*, which Hamilton was playing from his phone.

More likely, Verstappen was finally able to be gracious about Norris's stiff defence off the line three hours earlier at Barcelona, since the race was won. He certainly wasn't overly happy behind the wheel just after a move that had Verstappen skipping his right-front wheel across the grass lining the pitwall – "I got pushed off on the grass", he needlessly reported to engineer Gianpiero Lambiase and the eavesdropping officials. Yet it really was fantastic viewing – tough, but just the right side of fair.

"It's always difficult to judge in that situation," Norris replied when Autosport asked for his take on the move, plus our pondering of whether it was the first sign of more hard racing to come between the pair. "I can't get a tape measure out and measure it perfectly. I'm not going to make his life easy. There was enough space, I think... What? I'm just going to stop talking..."

"We've now seen the lengths he is willing to go to at the front of the field"

I think it was just racing. I gave him enough space. I don't think at any point there wasn't enough space for him to stay on the track... What? Do you want to answer it?"

Norris was marked by more Verstappen and Hamilton jokes – off-mic this time. The 24-year-old is well known in the media for his effusive answers, good days or bad. With his more regular appearances in the FIA press conferences, these have been longer of late – apparently something his fellow professionals can't abide. But if we can't have Norris's thoughts on the prospect of full-blooded battles between two friends, two of the best drivers of their era, we'll share our own instead.

At the risk of having to pen another open letter in apology to Norris (14 December 2023), we'll start with the negative. There's an argument that, had Norris been willing to chop across

Verstappen's bows even more brutally, perhaps from a position already pointing towards the Red Bull on the front row, he might have won the contest. That's whatever George Russell and his Mercedes start rocket did on the run to Turn 1. Verstappen, as much as he a tad disingenuously later joked about Norris's move, would surely have done exactly that.

But actually, as Norris said, "that's what happens in Barcelona". The 0.36-mile run to Turn 1 is rather similar to the start of the other GP where Norris started on pole: Sochi 2021. There, another one of his friends, Carlos Sainz, jumped ahead to lead a race he had no right to. Without Russell's steely presence on the grippy outside line on Sunday, Norris reckoned he "still could have kept on to first around Turn 1".

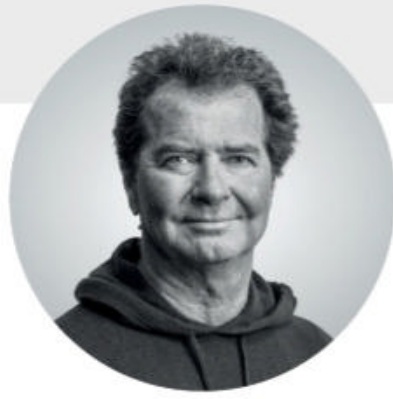
Norris had headed the grid after producing a scintillating qualifying lap. It corrected something of an underwhelming run following his Miami win, where team-mate Oscar Piastri had beaten him in Imola and Monaco qualifying, while Russell emerged as Red Bull's closest challenger in Montreal. Norris told Autosport exclusively ahead of the Spanish weekend that, while he felt his 2024 season so far had been "very good", he'd noted tiny elements going wrong in qualifying that had made big differences.

He just wants "to attack more and simply it's the wrong thing to do" for McLaren's car package. How, using his subconscious ability of sensing where and how hard to brake – "I rarely, hardly ever use brake markers," he claimed – he'd too often apply one or two bar of pressure harder to the pedal than was ideal. This led to extra tyre stress, grip and time elsewhere lost. Norris set out to correct this in Spain and it paid off. He built up to taking Barcelona's quickest turns flat, or as close to flat as the McLaren could manage (see page 16), and got all the lap time the MCL38 could deliver.

It was interesting to also hear how Norris feels Piastri "just seems happier to not push and can get more out of the car by not trying as hard, let's say". Piastri had led the McLaren line in Monaco, where hooking up his personal best sectors from across qualifying showed how this was another event – along with the Montreal triumph lost in the safety car swing – that the team should have won this term.

Now it and Norris head to venues where they have absolutely shone before. Think Norris defeating Hamilton in Austria in 2021, or tearing past Verstappen at Silverstone last year on his way to matching his then-best F1 career result. If these are to be parts two and three of 'Norris vs Verstappen: no holds barred', we've now seen the lengths he is willing to go to at the front of the field. He always said he would and now he's backed it up. Bravo. 🏆

➔ P12 SPANISH GP REPORT



Is the superlicence doing its job?

In light of the latest tweak to the FIA's eligibility regulations, a future update could be what's needed to create a groundbreaking opportunity in F1 for a female driver

TREVOR CARLIN

With the news that the FIA has updated its Appendix L of the International Sporting Code to add flexibility to its superlicence requirements for drivers under 18, the superlicence points system has been called into question once again.

I agree that there needs to be a framework in place to control who can drive what and when. However, the current system is imperfect and the latest update is in a way an admission of that.

That current system was introduced for 2016, to prevent a repeat of the 'Max Verstappen scenario' – in other words a 17-year-old with just one season of car racing under their belt going straight into Formula 1. However, that 'solution' did not encompass the full picture.

Max had been driving some form of vehicle since he was three, and he had been karting competitively for 10 years or more. Under the current rules he would therefore have scored just 20 superlicence points – a result of him finishing third in the 2014 FIA Formula 3 European Championship – and he would also have been too young for F1. But all he need have done is race one more year in F3, finishing top-three again, and he would have been in anyway. What was the best preparation for him for F1: another year of F3 or a year in F1 with a small team?

The superlicence points system was created to encourage drivers to participate in the full ladder of junior racing – to gain experience, to prove themselves, and to prevent moneyed drivers from buying F1 seats. Those 'pay drivers', although not necessarily the fastest in the world, had always provided much-needed funding to keep smaller teams alive, so they used to be essential. However, those days are mainly over, because F1 teams are now sufficiently funded, and the focus has therefore shifted towards their running the fastest drivers. I say "mainly over" but there are still a few anomalies when you take into account wealthy team owners' and/or sponsors' wishes, which allow a few *slightly* less able drivers still to find their way in.

One driver who has won superlicence-qualifying championships but was still not awarded the full allocation of superlicence points is Britain's Jamie Chadwick, who won three consecutive titles in the now defunct W Series – yet, because the path to F1 still remained nigh-on impossible for her, she was forced to head across the Atlantic to pursue her career in the States. She is now on the Road to Indy programme, contesting the Indy NXT Championship, and she dominated the recent round at Road America, converting pole to a win, the first woman in history to do that.

It surely cannot be beyond the realms of possibility that she will be racing in IndyCar next year. After all, there is no barrier to entry for her from a licensing point of view; she has the support

of a great partner, DHL; and the realisation that motorsport is being followed by ever-greater numbers of female spectators is rapidly driving forward such sponsorship and marketing.

DHL is not the only company to get in on the act. Cosmetic brands e.l.f and Charlotte Tilbury are embarking on major support for, respectively, Katherine Legge in the Indianapolis 500 and Lola Lovinfosse in the F1 Academy, and other brands will surely follow their lead.

"Thanks to the F1 Academy and Girls on Track, the door is now at least slightly ajar"

Jamie is one of the best female drivers in the world, but she is by no means the first woman of real ability. We at Carlin had the pleasure of testing Danica Patrick in our British F3 car in 2001, because she had taken the brave decision to leave the comfort of her native USA and try her luck in the UK, to further her career in the hot house that was British Formula Ford. Although her results were mixed, she finished second in the Formula Ford Festival in 2000 – good enough for her to be noticed by Bobby Rahal, the then team principal of Jaguar Racing (now Red Bull). In the end Bobby could not support her climb up the F1 ladder, but he did help her find her way back to the USA, namely to IndyCar, and she went on to create new records for a female in pro racing, winning overall an IndyCar race at Motegi in 2008.

Twenty years have passed between Danica's first steps to success in the US and Jamie's excellent performances in the same country now. That delay is not the result of lack of talent, or insufficient physical fitness, as is widely touted. Rather, it is a consequence of the small number of women who even start racing. That has been recognised by Susie Wolff, whose F1 Academy is booming, and more good news is that the Girls on Track initiative in the UK will deliver longer-term benefits by allowing more females to go racing.

So, what are the chances of a female driver getting into F1? With the current superlicence points system, that is many years and millions of dollars away. However, thanks to the F1 Academy and Girls on Track, the door is now at least slightly ajar, not slammed shut. In a few years' time the FIA could perhaps make a special dispensation to grant a superlicence to a credible woman who could at least do some F1 FP1s and thereby act as a role model to girls who aspire to race at the highest level. 🏁

RACE CENTRE




FORMULA 1

NORRIS TAKES THE FIGHT TO VERSTAPPEN AT A 'RED BULL TRACK'

Many expected that the reigning champion would disappear around Barcelona with all that Red Bull downforce, but McLaren proved it is now a serious threat

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL AND  motorsport
IMAGES

Norris couldn't quite close the gap to Verstappen and deny him 2024 win number seven

GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

W

e need to leave now.” Little did Autosport know, when McLaren press attache Harry Bull’s hand came gently but firmly down upon our right shoulder, that we were on the cusp of witnessing all the good that Formula 1 can offer.

Just 27 hours before Lando Norris so nearly won the 2024 Spanish Grand Prix against who else but Red Bull’s Max Verstappen, his McLaren squad was facing unexpected, serious jeopardy. The first signs were the lights going out inside the team’s giant Hub motorhome as midday approached on Saturday. Then came hurried shouts preceding the instructions for all to exit. The smoke followed, its smell hanging horribly in the air around the empty two-storey structure for the rest of the weekend in the way only an electrical fire can.

Norris left the upper level without time to put on his shoes. First Alpine, then Aston Martin team members and even Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola came charging in with additional fire extinguishers before Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya marshals and fire staff converged. Thankfully, only one McLaren team member needed hospital assessment, and they were discharged by Saturday evening. The team relocated its drivers to rooms in its engineering trucks. Its communications team decamped to the FIA’s massive motorhome. Meals were consumed in the team garage. Through it all, they persevered.

“The assistance, the solidarity, the sympathy, the support we received from each and every one of all the other teams, F1, FIA – that gave us a genuine true emotion,” McLaren team principal Andrea Stella would later reflect. “The feeling at McLaren is, we’re really impressed by the sense of community – the support that we have received. And this has made the execution of the weekend, obviously, more simple. We could keep our focus on racing, because we were taken care of.”

On Sunday, McLaren and Norris engaged in a tense contest for the Barcelona win. There was brilliant passing, strategic nous and two of F1’s best going ferociously wheel to wheel, then each charging to the finish. The sporting good followed the goodwill wonderfully.

Norris had got things under way on this front with his brilliant effort to pip Verstappen to pole by just 0.020 seconds (see page 17). Able to live with the McLaren bouncing mid-corner through the fastest turns of the Barcelona track, Norris claimed his second career F1 pole. Verstappen, for the first time in an age, looked anxious.

Not so in the opening few seconds of the race the next day. As they lined up ahead of Mercedes pair Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, the two friends occupied the front row for the second time in four races. Norris had long vowed to make life harder for Verstappen if there was a prize at stake. And so, after reacting well enough before the Red Bull accelerated quicker in the second phase leaving the grid, he acted.

Across came the McLaren, squeezing the Red Bull ever more towards the grass-lined pitwall. Its front wheels were alongside the McLaren’s rears and, with Norris not giving up, the right-side one skipped across the grass Verstappen had mistaken for asphalt. “My initial launch was better than Max,” Norris explained.

“WE’RE REALLY IMPRESSED BY THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY - THE SUPPORT THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED”

“The second phase, the drive out, was not as good...”

The pair raced down the 0.36-mile, steep dive to the opening corners. Norris edged fractionally further ahead as they did so, then moved back towards the racing line. But suddenly Verstappen wasn’t his biggest problem. A race-defining moment was already upon this contest. Russell had launched past Hamilton immediately, then, picking up the slipstream from the nearly conjoined leaders, he shot ahead on the outside line. Here, two important factors aided his surge to the lead. The first was braking on the rubbered-in racing line. The



Rubbered-in
racing line aids
Russell's surprise
attack on front-row
starters...



...as Norris is obliged to
back out, opening the
door for Verstappen

second was how “we had a headwind, so I knew I could brake quite late”, Russell explained after the race.

As Russell steamed around the outside of the front-row pair, Norris still had Verstappen on his inside. Pinched and fearing “if I brake two metres later, I would have taken everyone out with me”, he backed out and “let George have it”. At the same time, Verstappen, who enjoyed the “hard racing” element of Norris’s start defence once his win was secure, was still in play on the inside. As Norris backed out, he surged ahead and chased Russell.

“We were quite late into Turn 1,” he said. “But then I was quite determined to try and get the lead.” His resolve was galvanised by a call from engineer Gianpiero Lambiase as the leaders rounded the Turn 10 hairpin on the second lap. This was for Verstappen to consider “wisely” attacking, which he did at the start of the third tour. With DRS activated immediately, Verstappen closed a 0.6s gap running down to Turn 1 and attacked around the outside of the Mercedes. Russell held on, but his tighter line sapped momentum and Verstappen was gone.

This was important. Both Verstappen and Red Bull had feared the consequences of being stuck behind another car. At this stage, not only was Norris still looming but, after just a few laps of chasing and sliding in dirty air, Verstappen knew his tyres would rapidly overheat and degrade considerably. “Once I was in the lead,” he explained, “I could look after my tyres a bit better, and that definitely made my race.”

At the end of lap three of 66, Verstappen was 1.1s clear of Russell. He extended this by an average of 0.25s over the next 11 tours, reaching a high of 3.8s. But it wasn’t all plain sailing, Verstappen nearly dropping it at Turn 8 on lap 12.

Russell kicked off the pitstops for the leaders. Everyone had started on soft tyres, and he exchanged these for medium rubber on lap 15. McLaren asked Norris whether they should cover Russell immediately, but he was resolute already: “No, we need to go and get Max.”

The possibility of that happening any time soon looked remote given the leader’s early march clear, but it wasn’t inconceivable given Norris had shrunk Verstappen’s 5.6s lead, after Russell pitted out of his way, »

Verstappen's DRS-assisted around-the-outside move on Russell at the start of the third lap...



at Turn 4, extending the battle by moving back alongside through the right-hand hairpin and staying there all the way until Norris finally swept ahead for good at the Turns 7/8 chicane.

"I had so much understeer in Turn 4 all day," Norris said of this moment. "And the Mercs had a lot of front end in Turn 4. He could carry a lot more speed in 4, get back to the outside, but then I could cut back on Turn 5 on the exit and get him into Turn 7. It was a good fight. It cost me a lot of time and hurt my gap to Max in the end. But yeah, it was pleasant. It was on the edge, was close, but respectful."

The lead gap here stood at 9.3s. Would Verstappen's typical tyre-maintaining prowess end the contest with half the race still to run? Or could Norris unleash something different with those six-laps-younger mediums?

to 4.8s by the time Red Bull stopped the leader for his mediums on lap 17. Verstappen called this strategy "aggressive".

Here McLaren knew what to do. Stella said his team "were very surprised when we saw people go in lap 16-17". "For me, that's a bit of self-inflicted pain at this circuit," he added. "Because the degradation is so high, overtaking is easy. We actually thought, 'This is going to bring us back in the race...'"

So, Norris was left out to build a tyre-life offset to Verstappen – his only chance of closing the gap that had swollen during his time "stuck" behind Russell. He pounded around for another six tours, with his pace on the ageing softs holding in the 1m20s bracket – quicker than Verstappen before he had pitted. Only Charles Leclerc, never a victory contender this time as Ferrari struggled with getting the best from the tyres, went longer on the first stint. Norris eventually came in on lap 23, his service for mediums lasting 2.4s compared to Verstappen's 1.9s. Every tenth would ultimately end up critical. And the McLaren emerged with plenty of work left.

Norris was now running behind not just the two Mercedes, but Carlos Sainz too, thanks to the considerable power of the undercut around here. This was exacerbated by the race day temperatures coming in hotter than many in the paddock had expected. He took three laps to catch the home hero, then passed him with DRS in Turn 1. Hamilton was next, with Norris pressing him into two track limits 'strikes' at Turn 5 and an early Turn 1 defence, before another simple DRS pass was made into Turn 1 for the McLaren to retake third.

Then Russell was finally despatched with a superb power punch around Barcelona's famous Turn 3 on lap 35. Except Russell wasn't finished. He left Norris "quite surprised" by reattacking immediately

It was to be the latter. Over the next eight tours, Norris halved Verstappen's lead at a rate of 0.57s per lap. When the Dutchman stopped for a second time on lap 44, Norris had actually shrunk the gap below the maximum Verstappen had enjoyed over him in the first stint. For the first time, Red Bull looked really vulnerable. Not only was the McLaren quicker, but Verstappen's squad had completed a relatively lengthy second service in switching him back to the soft tyres: 2.8s.

Again, Norris cycled to the lead. McLaren asked him to make certain he would be able to pass the Mercedes pair if the undercut factor again came into play. Norris was initially certain, before doubt crept in. "Depends if we want to finish first or third?" he asked his engineer, Will Joseph. But the subtext was clear: the upside of retaining the tyre-life offset for the run to the flag was a shot at victory, so Norris was prepared to make more moves on the Mercedes drivers. It didn't matter, however, for he emerged ahead of them anyway.

What did matter was how a slow right-rear tyre change meant Norris's stop lasted 3.6s – a net 0.8s loss on the rare occasion Red Bull had lost time in the pitlane.

Both leaders had returned to the soft tyres, as did Hamilton for what was to prove a pivotal final stint in reclaiming third against Russell, which he did with a forceful move at Turn 1 on lap 52. Russell had been the only frontrunner to try the hard tyre for the last stint, which he felt "was pretty rubbish".

"Soft and medium delivered the best performance," explained Isola. "Despite the higher temperatures, the hard struggled a bit in terms of overall performance, while not offering a decisive advantage when it came to degradation."

Norris had had one more moment of Mercedes menace, when

QUALIFYING



“I knew for the final lap; I’ve got to go balls out and do it,” said Lando Norris, illustratively explaining how he pipped Red Bull’s Max Verstappen to Spanish Grand Prix pole. Practice had teased a potential four-team scrap for the top spot on the Barcelona grid, with McLaren, Mercedes and Ferrari drivers topping those sessions and Verstappen feeling his Red Bull “was not really connected”. But in the end, it came down to the two half-Belgians.

Verstappen had suddenly looked much happier traversing Q1 behind Lewis Hamilton and Ferrari’s Charles Leclerc. At this stage, 0.08 seconds was the world champion’s margin on Norris. In Q2, this became an ominous 0.219s, with the double runs of both Mercedes drivers getting them between the pole protagonists thanks to the considerable track evolution factor.

Then came the final segment. Verstappen led the way after the opening fliers, his 1m11.673s providing a 0.123s advantage over Norris, with Hamilton a further 0.02s back in third. Hamilton had briefly enraged team-mate George Russell by waiting late to take Esteban Ocon’s tow on the Mercedes pair’s out-laps. Verstappen improved to a 1m11.403s on his second attempt, running ahead of Norris.

The McLaren driver arrived at the end of the second sector 0.125s up. The critical differences to this point had been Verstappen’s Turn 4 understeer, and his then going into the downhill Turn 5 too hot, the Red Bull ending up wide of the apex and shipping 0.1s to Norris. Plus, for the first time in qualifying, Norris had taken Campsa flat – something the Red Bull with the bigger rear wing fitted post-practice had been able to manage from the off.

In the final sector, Norris had to risk it all. Having been at 76% throttle on his first Q3 run through the final corner, he took it at 90% for the last time. Again, Verstappen being able to pin it flat meant the gap between them was always going to close. But Norris had done enough – a 1m11.383s and pole was his. “It was my best lap by a long way,” he said after scoring his second career GP pole.

Verstappen was left to rue running a rear wing that was “maybe a bit too draggy for qualifying”, especially as the conditions had cooled since FP3. This generally aids Red Bull’s balance even on its lower-downforce arrangement.

Behind, Hamilton edged Russell for the second time in 2024 non-sprint qualifying, with a 0.035s margin covering the three following cars. These were Russell and the two Ferraris, while Pierre Gasly’s Alpine beat Sergio Perez in the other Red Bull. Home hero Carlos Sainz blamed a “bouncing phenomenon” that cost the Ferrari drivers confidence, which Red Bull and McLaren suffered from to a lesser extent in the fastest Barcelona turns.

“IT WAS A GOOD FIGHT. IT COST ME A LOT OF TIME. IT WAS ON THE EDGE, WAS CLOSE, BUT RESPECTFUL”

he’d followed his delayed second pitstop by barely getting out of the pitlane ahead of Russell at the start of the 48th lap. When he came back around, he faced a 7.7s deficit to Verstappen.

Here Norris “was feeling good”, his only question the same as everyone else’s: “Could I close the gap in the amount of laps that I had?”

Over the first five laps of Norris’s final stint, he brought Verstappen’s lead down to 5.3s. Then, with Lambiase urging his charge to “push to the end”, Norris actually lost 0.5s over the next two laps.

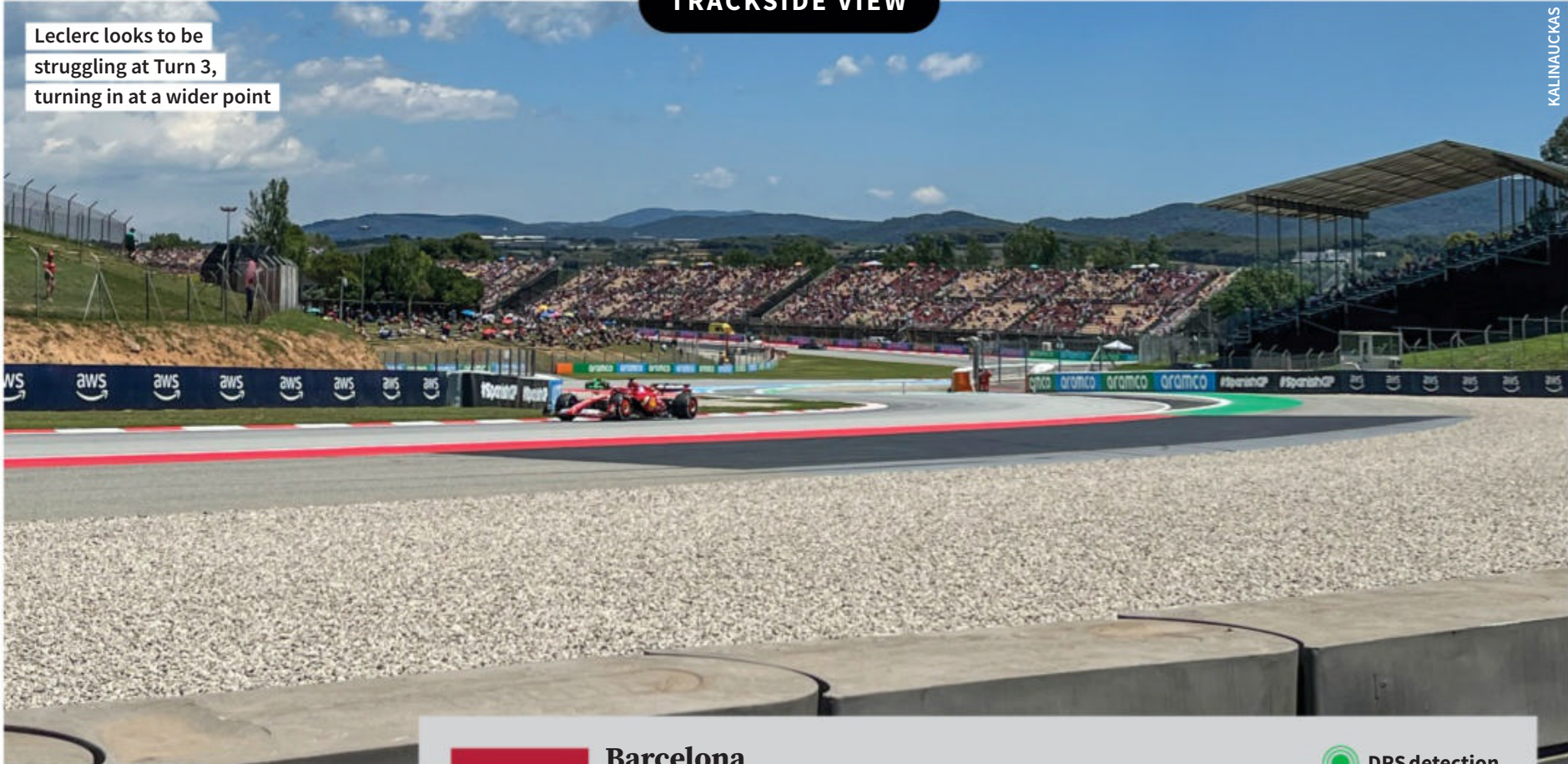
Red Bull could see that Norris “wasn’t saving anything in Turn 3 and Turn 9, and the last two turns”, according to team boss Christian Horner. “The information was given to Max to say, ‘You can start pushing,’” Horner continued. “And he’s got such capacity in his driving. He knows the stint length; he knows what he needs to take out of the tyres – and that’s where he really is a masterclass.”

But it was still a close-run thing. Over the final 11 laps, Norris’s speed increased again, as he cut a further 3.7s from Verstappen’s lead at a 0.33s superior average, with the McLaren driver typically rapid in the first two sectors before the Red Bull responded in the last. All the while Norris hoped to “get a couple of DRSs from backmarkers [Lance Stroll, Zhou Guanyu and, unbelievably here, Fernando Alonso] and hopefully they could help me out a little bit to try and catch up”. But it wasn’t enough.

Verstappen held on, winning by 2.219s to take his seventh victory of the campaign and the third with Norris within four seconds. All »



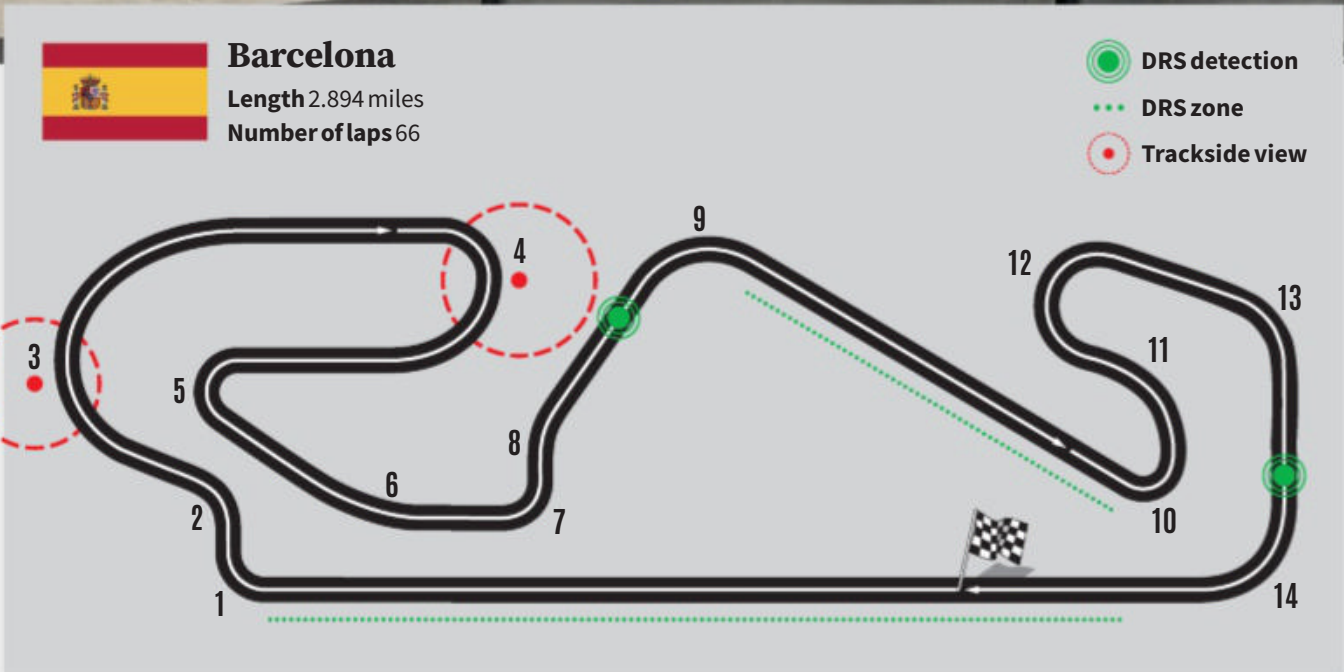
TRACKSIDE VIEW



For all this place’s foibles, the first sector of the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya remains a classic. The wheelbanging duel between Nigel Mansell and Ayrton Senna, so many lonely testing days, that near-crash between Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton – the main straight and opening corners here have hosted it all.

Autosport has one particular spot to reach in baking hot conditions as FP1 commences. But we start off outside the track’s famed Turn 3. From here we can see down what is a deceptively steep hill to the opening right-left of Turns 1 and 2.

Two things stand out. The first is how, far in front of us, it’s still possible to detect how much Charles Leclerc is struggling with his Ferrari. Time and again during the early stages he’s catching a snap of oversteer rounding Turn 2, the wobble worse than anything else here. Then, as Leclerc continues to Turn 3, like team-mate Carlos Sainz and McLaren’s Lando Norris, he’s turning in from a wider point than the rest. It’s a whip-like



movement, but the red cars still seem to be leaning more through the turn, rather than the rapid direction change of the Red Bulls.

After 20 minutes we amble on and reach our stated aim: Turn 4. This right-hander isn’t quite as illustrious as the one before – although famously it was the end point of the crash between Mercedes pair Hamilton and Nico Rosberg in 2016. But here is where you can really see what makes Verstappen a special F1 driver.

The Dutchman throws his RB20 in from a wider entry line than team-mate Sergio Perez. He carries more speed all the way through – later verified by a 3.1mph difference in their minimum speed at this point on their best FP1 laps from GPS trace data – but it’s an early steering input that energises the Red Bull’s front end and means Verstappen must live with the rear kicking out. It’s well known how Verstappen can do this and Perez cannot, while at the same time over a race stint he’s able to protect his

“The nose of Norris’s MCL38 is jittering at least once each time by here”

tyres better because that early steering input means slightly unwinding the lock soon afterwards and so giving the rubber a breather. It’s not a massive amount of movement viewed from a hundred metres back, but it’s there. Perez is tighter throughout the corner each time, his momentum slightly sapped as a result.

Other driving style quirks stand out here too. Again, it’s all relative and tiny differences at that, but it’s possible to see how smooth Oscar Piastri is at his McLaren’s wheel. It’s always one long, clean arc, while the nose of Norris’s MCL38 is jittering at least once each time by here as it responds to the additional steering inputs his high-energy style requires.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS





Close-run finish leaves Norris to reflect that “we should have done better today”

told, Norris shipped 1.3s in the pits.

“The car was incredible today,” Norris said in parc ferme, after climbing from a car with a smaller rear wing than Verstappen’s, which would have come at tyre life cost with additional sliding. “For sure, the quickest. I just lost it in the beginning...”

“I think as a whole package, performance, we had a good race,” reflected Verstappen, who had switched from a lower-downforce rear wing to aid tyre preservation after Friday practice. “We really tried to maximise everything. But I do think that we were struggling a bit for the optimum pace, lacking a bit of tyre deg towards the end of every stint. So, it wasn’t a very straightforward, easy race. Lando was catching quite hard at the end. But luckily, it worked out that it was just enough.”

When asked in the post-race press conference whether he thought a shot at 2024 world title glory is on now that he’s up to second in the standings ahead of fifth-place Barcelona finisher Leclerc, Norris replied: “I think so. We should have done better today. We should have got some points back on Max. Potentially, there was a chance to beat him in Canada. So, two races that I finished second and he’s won. But Max needs to stop winning in order to achieve that.

“Even though I moved into second in the championship, that doesn’t matter. I couldn’t care if I was second or 10th. It’s more about the gap to Max and he’s still extending it at the minute. That’s something we can’t afford – to kind of let him run away with it at this point of the season. But we can do it. We have what it takes. It’s just about putting it all together.”

Horner said Red Bull had looked at Verstappen’s initial second stint gap and thought, “Oh, nine seconds looks pretty decent, but with a tyre

“THE CAR WAS INCREDIBLE TODAY. FOR SURE, THE QUICKEST. I JUST LOST IT IN THE BEGINNING...”

offset of six laps on a medium, and then three or four on the soft, those gaps come back at you pretty quickly”.

“So, today was all about not making any mistakes,” added Horner, who also revealed that Red Bull had been struggling with a radio issue all weekend in Spain, which explained Verstappen’s lap 54 confusion over Lambiase’s engine setting instruction. “Max drove a perfect race. It’s all those small details. We knew that Lando would come back towards us at the end of the race, but we felt we should have just enough at hand, which is the way it played out.”

This had been a contest between two of F1’s best drivers, where each showcased their supreme abilities. Norris had one final talent to produce: his innate, deep, self-reflection. “I think the last three laps, the gaps were pretty big in terms of how much it was coming down,” he concluded. “It’s a hard one. I don’t know if maybe I pushed a bit too much in the beginning [of the final stint] and struggled a little bit more at the end. It’s very difficult to judge these things.”

After returning to the track on used softs – another critical difference in that Verstappen was running new softs at this late stage, with the pair having the same tyre allocation heading into the race – Norris had tried to bed them in. He first produced a 1m17.3s before backing off to a 1m17.9s. Then he clocked the race’s fastest lap at 1m17.115s. But he never got back to such a pace again, with the tyres retaining heat when a driver presses on without taking a margin – especially in the highest-speed corners here – and that comes at a cost of shedding grip.

Verstappen was even slower in the 1m19s over the final three laps, but Norris had lost the edge that might have kept him in the 1m17s. That, plus the pitstop losses, stopped him ever getting within DRS threat.

But this was still a performance that had Red Bull rattled. And with “two of my favourite tracks in terms of performances and where we’ve performed well at” coming up for Norris in Austria and Britain, it’s tantalisingly onwards for F1. 🏁



**NEXT
F1 REPORT**

Austrian Grand Prix
4 July issue

THREE-STOP PEREZ FAILS TO MAKE MUCH OF A DENT

Christian Horner reckoned that eighth place was the maximum that Sergio Perez could achieve at the Spanish Grand Prix, after starting 11th thanks to a three-place grid penalty collected last time out in Montreal.

Perez qualified eighth knowing he had the penalty for driving on track in Canada with a heavily damaged car, which Red Bull said was a move to avoid a safety car.

In the early stages, Perez struggled to make ground; although he got ahead of Fernando Alonso, he lost a place at the same time to a fast-starting Nico Hulkenberg. To give Perez opportunities to attack with fresh tyres, Red Bull implemented a three-stop strategy in a bid to pounce on those managing tyres during a high-degradation race. This put much of the onus on Perez to make the overtaking moves stick, although this meant he spent much of the grand prix battling with the Alpine pair in the lower reaches of the top 10.

"It was so difficult to pass on that first stint and then my race was over," Perez griped. "I was stuck behind Nico and I was just sliding around really badly. It was a nightmare of a race. We switched to a three-stop and managed to come back to [Pierre] Gasly and secure eighth, but everything was compromised from that first stint."



MAUGER



TEE

Battling Ferraris stir Sainz of discontent from Leclerc

Charles Leclerc accused Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz of wanting to do "something spectacular" for his Formula 1 career as the two came to blows at the Spanish Grand Prix, when Sainz put a move on him into Turn 1 around the outside on lap three.

Leclerc sat at the inside kerb at the opening right-hander, and his front wing clipped Sainz's right-rear wheel; the Spaniard ended up taking to the escape road across the opening two corners, which put him ahead at the entry of Turn 3. The Monegasque reckoned that the contact made his own race more difficult, owing to a small laceration to his wing.

The first corner also yielded a point of consternation for Sainz later on, when Lewis Hamilton made his overtake for position at Turn 1 on the 19th tour. The Briton hugged the inside and the two went wheel to wheel, making a little contact as Sainz was left to take to the run-off. This incensed Sainz, who felt Hamilton forced him off track and should have handed the position back, and the stewards' decision to pursue no further action created further fury.



GALLOWAY

"I felt like he ran me off the track," Sainz sniffed. "I was half a car length ahead. Normally the rule this year says that if you're ahead around the outside, they need to give you space..."

Leclerc ultimately finished ahead of Sainz as the two diverged on strategy. Leclerc benefited from his extended first two stints to finish on a set of soft tyres, while Sainz went shorter and ended with hards, which proved much more difficult to extract performance from. Sainz ultimately ceded position to let Leclerc chase George Russell in the final laps.

“IT’S TIME TO WORK HARDER, TO TALK LESS, TO DELIVER MORE.”

Fernando Alonso reacts to Aston Martin’s poor 2024 form and pointless Barcelona race in front of his home fans



MAUGER

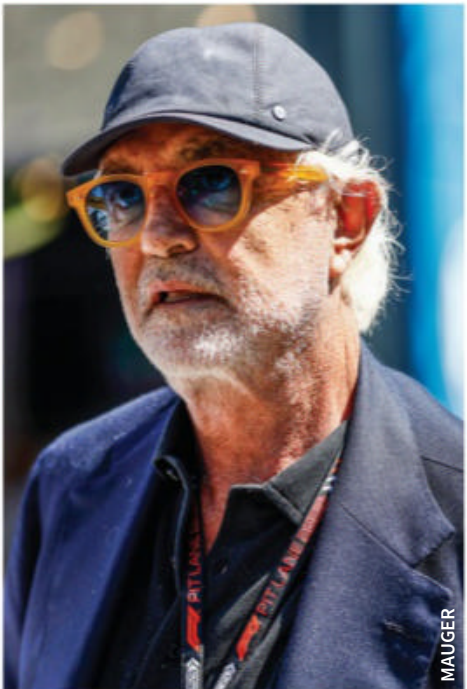
Barcelona ‘reality check’ as Williams struggles for pace

Alex Albon’s slip off the road at Turn 4 rather compounded Williams’s misery at Barcelona as the team struggled for pace throughout the weekend.

The Anglo-Thai washed out going through the 180-degree right-hander, and his car snapped into the gravel, which he was able to eventually gather up. Both Williams drivers had qualified on the back row, but Albon was granted a pitlane start after taking on a new battery and

electronics outside of his season’s allocation. He finished 18th, the only driver to start on medium tyres, while Logan Sargeant finished last after a long afternoon fighting tyre degradation.

“We wanted more this weekend,” said Albon. “The car has made a huge step forward compared to last year and we made the right choices throughout the race. But this track is a bit of reality check.”



ALPINE SURPRISED BY SPANISH GP FORM AS BRIATORE RETURNS

Alpine team principal Bruno Famin had predicted a difficult weekend at the Spanish Grand Prix, so the team was pleasantly surprised to get both its cars into the points and move up to seventh position in the constructors’ championship.

Both drivers made it into Q3 after looking strong throughout practice, and then finished ninth (Pierre Gasly) and 10th (Esteban Ocon) in the GP. The French duo stated that the team needed to try and understand its felicitous showing, given its distinct lack of expectations going into the Barcelona weekend.

“I think no one really saw that coming,” Gasly reckoned. “It’s nicer when we get to explain why we overperform rather than underperform! Coming here we definitely didn’t expect to have a Q3 car.”

This followed news that Alpine had brought former team principal Flavio Briatore in to serve as an advisor, on the orders of Renault Group CEO Luca de Meo. The previously disgraced Italian had initially been banned from F1 for life for his part in the Singapore Grand Prix crash scandal of 2008, although had this overturned in 2010.

“I’m about trying what we can do to get our team better,” Famin said. “And that’s really our goal; what I see with having Flavio as an advisor of the team is the opportunity to have his experience and to help us.”

Q&A

DANIEL RICCIARDO RB DRIVER

How was your race?

We weren’t really there. It was a really strange weekend for us to have dropped off so much. But in my race today, honestly I felt good. I was happy with the race, happy with what I got out of it. But 15th is not something that we can be happy about.

Do you feel things aren’t going the way you want?

I didn’t have a bad feeling in qualifying. In the debrief, Yuki [Tsunoda] and I felt we did good laps and honestly, we felt like the balance wasn’t bad. I think we simply lacked the



load and we probably don’t really get everything out of the new package. But today in the race, I definitely felt a few more limitations.

Is that frustrating within the team as well?

It is, because the learning for us drivers, but the whole team, you feel this momentum, you feel this kind of energy and everyone gets this confidence. Going out in Q1 and then today we executed a good race, we got 15th. These ups and downs are part of it. But, of course, the team feels it as well. That’s where we have to bring each other together.

Are you having to dig deeper than you have before?

I’m all in. I am certainly putting everything into it to try and get everything out of it. I think back to like eight, 10 years ago and I feel like it did come a little easier. But I also feel like just naturally with more data now, more onboards, more sims, the field is tighter. A bad day probably pays much more of a price than it used to.

Any temptation to go back to how the car was from the next race?

I think that temptation probably only exists maybe in 72 hours. If we’re still unsure or there’s no clear answer then maybe we say, ‘OK, for the time being go back’. But I’m not there yet to resort to that.

LEGENDARY CARS SPECTACULAR RACING

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SAT 21 & SUN 22 SEPTEMBER 2024



BRIAN JAMES

TICKET INFORMATION:

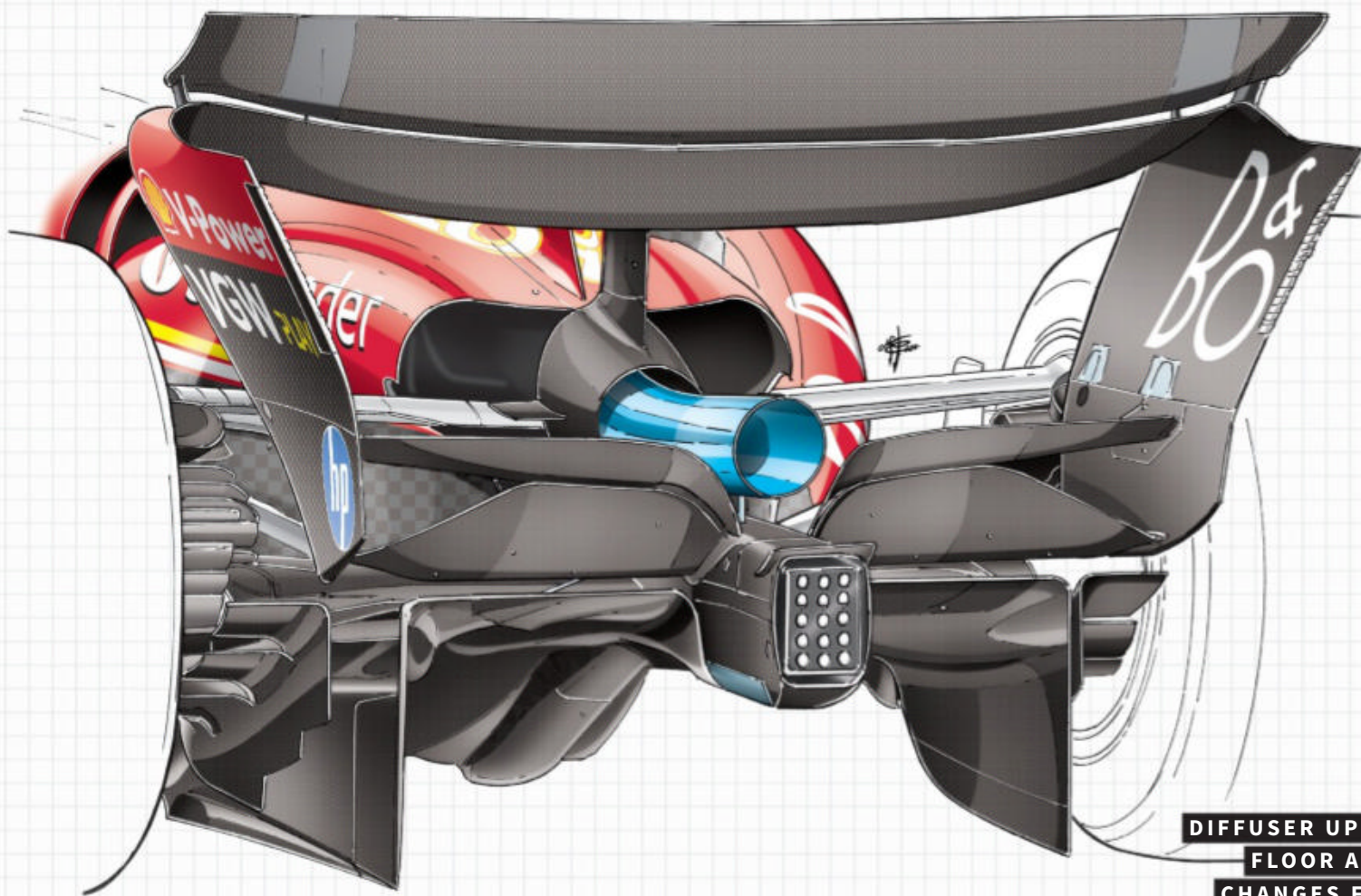
One-Day: On-the-day price Adult **£25** Concessions (65+) **£20**

Full Weekend: On-the-day price Adult **£35** Concessions (65+) **£30**

**Display Passes, Exhibition Space and Discounted
Public Admission for Clubs.**

DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



**DIFFUSER UPGRADE PLUS
FLOOR AND SIDEPOD
CHANGES FOR FERRARI**

FURTHER FLOOR WORK FOR FERRARI

Thanks to its status as a long-time test circuit, Barcelona has for many years been a popular venue for teams to take healthy upgrade packages to, owing to the vast data sets that each squad has on tap. Ferrari had a series of updates to its floor and sidepod package to suit, reworking the undercut around the 'Coke bottle' section at the rear in

conjunction with modifications to the floor edge and fences. The diffuser also received a rework, with a greater volume thanks to the optimisation of the 'boat tail' section underneath.

Ferrari's pre-event notes stated that this offered "more local load gains", the floor edge offering more control over the diffuser flow.

Senior race engineer Jock Clear stated that there were similarities to the package it took to Imola last month, "targeting the same areas: the floor edge, what wraps under the floor in front of the rear tyre, and then what energises the diffuser expansion at the back. Both the upgrades are looking at similar areas. Subtle differences,

but differences nonetheless. So they do complement each other."

He added that this had been fast-tracked to ensure that the team could use Barcelona to get a better read of its potential, and should offer a similar quantitative gain in performance as its Imola package added.

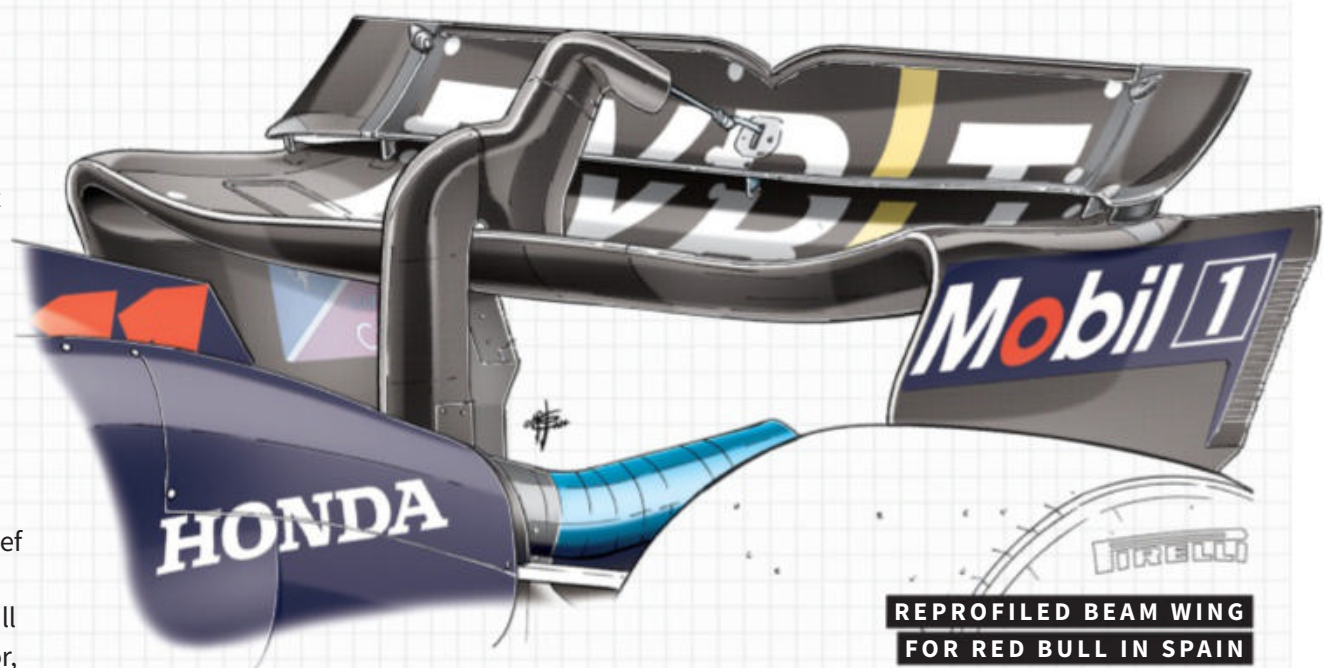
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RED BULL'S FINE LINE ON COOLING

Red Bull declared a trio of upgrades to combat the Spanish summer heat, as it looked to maintain the level of cooling aboard its RB20. This featured changes to the sidepod inlets, engine cover and floor to accommodate the greater mass flow rate required.

This had knock-on effects for the rest of the car, particularly when it came to flow patterns at the rear where hot air is expelled. "You'll be surprised how sensitive everybody is," said chief engineer Paul Monaghan. "You start opening holes in the back of the bodywork, and you spill tumbling dirty air towards the beam wing, floor, edges, that type of thing, and it hurts. And the sensitivity to aerodynamics around here, it's high enough that you're arguing for a grid slot or two if you get it wrong."

The team also introduced a new rear wing,



**REPROFILED BEAM WING
FOR RED BULL IN SPAIN**

featuring a reprofiled beam wing with a wider span, which fits in with a new endplate developed to bump up the downforce produced. Max Verstappen felt that the rear wing was a

little too draggy for his purposes in qualifying, so it suggests that the design was perhaps a little more race-orientated in its development intent.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

20 Albon #23
1m13.153s

18 Ricciardo #3
1m13.075s

16 Magnussen #20
1m12.937s

14 Stroll #18
1m12.372s

12 Bottas #77
1m12.227s

19 Sargeant #2
1m13.509s

17 Tsunoda #22
1m12.985s

15 Zhou #24
1m12.738s

13 Hulkenberg #27
1m12.310s

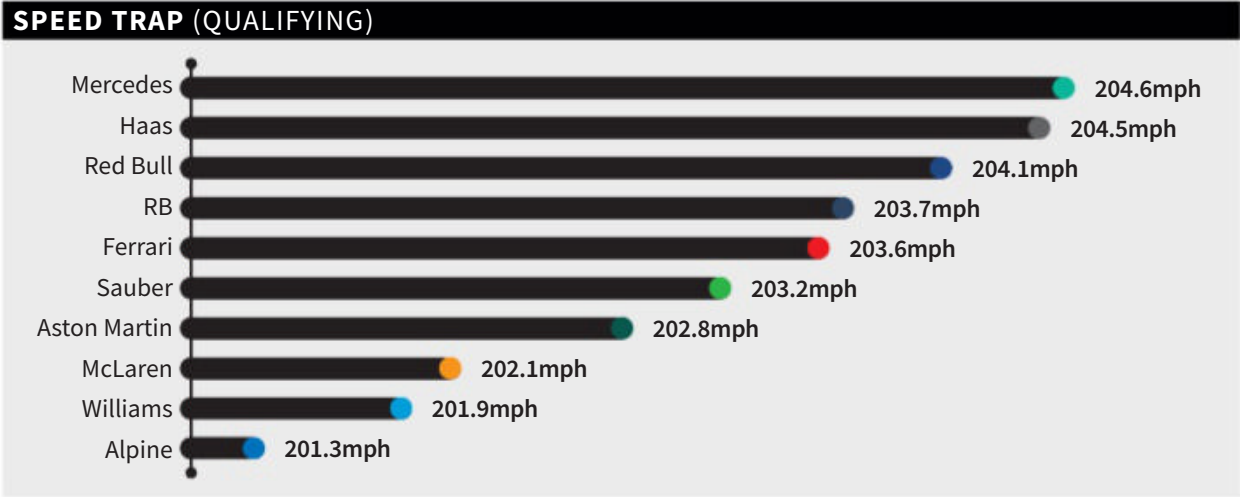
11 Perez #11
1m12.061s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Norris	1m14.228s	1	Hamilton	1m13.264s	1	Sainz	1m13.013s
2	Verstappen	1m14.252s	2	Sainz	1m13.286s	2	Norris	1m13.043s
3	Sainz	1m14.572s	3	Norris	1m13.319s	3	Leclerc	1m13.050s
4	Russell	1m14.614s	4	Gasly	1m13.443s	4	Verstappen	1m13.087s
5	Perez	1m14.692s	5	Verstappen	1m13.504s	5	Russell	1m13.164s
6	Piastri	1m14.867s	6	Leclerc	1m13.597s	6	Hamilton	1m13.359s
7	Hamilton	1m14.911s	7	Piastri	1m13.622s	7	Perez	1m13.723s
8	Ocon	1m15.086s	8	Russell	1m13.722s	8	Albon	1m13.753s
9	Alonso	1m15.222s	9	Ocon	1m13.766s	9	Alonso	1m13.786s
10	Albon	1m15.417s	10	Bottas	1m13.924s	10	Piastri	1m13.907s
11	Leclerc	1m15.434s	11	Magnussen	1m14.021s	11	Ocon	1m13.950s
12	Bottas	1m15.472s	12	Hulkenberg	1m14.053s	12	Gasly	1m13.964s
13	Gasly	1m15.484s	13	Perez	1m14.081s	13	Hulkenberg	1m13.975s
14	Stroll	1m15.512s	14	Alonso	1m14.091s	14	Bottas	1m14.024s
15	Ricciardo	1m15.580s	15	Tsunoda	1m14.211s	15	Magnussen	1m14.074s
16	Zhou	1m15.616s	16	Ricciardo	1m14.257s	16	Ricciardo	1m14.161s
17	Magnussen	1m15.644s	17	Zhou	1m14.345s	17	Stroll	1m14.254s
18	Sargeant	1m15.752s	18	Stroll	1m14.402s	18	Tsunoda	1m14.420s
19	Bearman	1m15.865s	19	Albon	1m14.807s	19	Zhou	1m14.572s
20	Tsunoda	1m15.916s	20	Sargeant	1m15.070s	20	Sargeant	1m14.729s

WEATHER Sunny, air 29C track 46-47C

WEATHER Sunny, air 25-26C track 43-46C

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-28C track 42-46C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m12.143s	1	Verstappen	1m11.653s	1	Norris	1m11.383s
2	Leclerc	1m12.257s	2	Hamilton	1m11.792s	2	Verstappen	1m11.403s
3	Verstappen	1m12.306s	3	Russell	1m11.812s	3	Hamilton	1m11.701s
4	Norris	1m12.386s	4	Norris	1m11.872s	4	Russell	1m11.703s
5	Sainz	1m12.403s	5	Sainz	1m11.874s	5	Leclerc	1m11.731s
6	Russell	1m12.456s	6	Piastri	1m12.011s	6	Sainz	1m11.736s
7	Piastri	1m12.460s	7	Leclerc	1m12.038s	7	Gasly	1m11.857s
8	Perez	1m12.477s	8	Perez	1m12.054s	8	Perez	1m12.061s
9	Alonso	1m12.505s	9	Gasly	1m12.079s	9	Ocon	1m12.125s
10	Gasly	1m12.651s	10	Ocon	1m12.109s	10	Piastri	no time
11	Ocon	1m12.691s	11	Alonso	1m12.128s			
12	Hulkenberg	1m12.708s	12	Bottas	1m12.227s			
13	Bottas	1m12.758s	13	Hulkenberg	1m12.310s			
14	Zhou	1m12.880s	14	Stroll	1m12.372s			
15	Stroll	1m12.881s	15	Zhou	1m12.738s			
16	Magnussen	1m12.937s						
17	Tsunoda	1m12.985s						
18	Ricciardo	1m13.075s						
19	Albon	1m13.153s						
20	Sargeant	1m13.509s						

WEATHER Sunny, air 24-25C track 34-36C

NEXT RACE

30 June

Austrian GP

Red Bull Ring

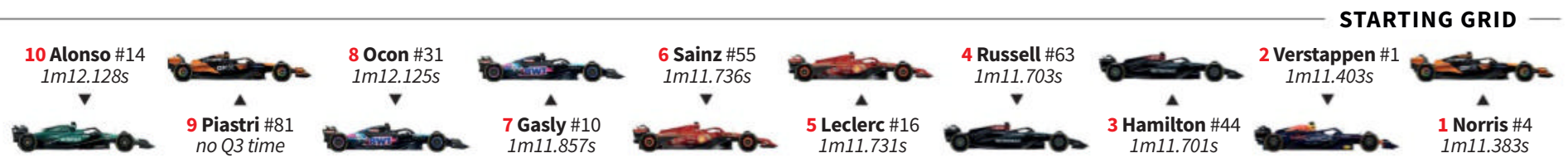
SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	219	1	1
2 Norris	150	1	1
3 Leclerc	148	1	1
4 Sainz	116	1	2
5 Perez	111	2	2
6 Piastri	87	2	2
7 Russell	81	3	1
8 Hamilton	70	3	3
9 Alonso	41	5	3
10 Tsunoda	19	7	7
11 Stroll	17	6	9
12 Ricciardo	9	8	5
13 Bearman	6	7	11
14 Hulkenberg	6	9	9
15 Gasly	5	9	7
16 Ocon	3	10	9
17 Albon	2	9	9
18 Magnussen	1	10	13
19 Zhou	0	11	15
20 Bottas	0	13	10
21 Sargeant	0	14	13

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 Red Bull	330
2 Ferrari	270
3 McLaren	237
4 Mercedes	151
5 Aston Martin	58
6 RB	28
7 Alpine	8
8 Haas	7
9 Williams	2
10 Sauber	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	10	0	Perez
Hamilton	2	8	Russell
Leclerc	7	2	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	7	3	Piastri
Alonso	6	4	Stroll
Gasly	4	6	Ocon
Sargeant	0	9	Albon
Ricciardo	2	8	Tsunoda
Zhou	0	10	Bottas
Magnussen	2	7	Hulkenberg

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

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

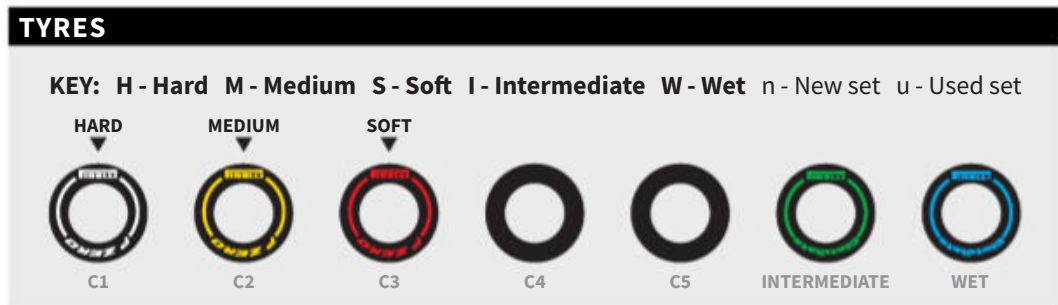


RESULTS ROUND 10/24 (66 LAPS - 190.91 MILES)					
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	MaxVerstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	1h28m20.227s	55	Su, Mn, Sn
2	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+2.219s	9	Sn, Mn, Su
3	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+17.790s		Su, Mn, Su
4	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+22.320s	2	Su, Mn, Hn
5	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+22.709s		Sn, Mn, Su
6	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+31.028s		Sn, Mn, Hn
7	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+33.760s		Su, Mn, Su
8	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+59.524s		Su, Su, Mn, Su
9	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m02.025s		Su, Mn, Hn
10	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m11.889s		Su, Mn, Hn
11	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m19.215s		Sn, Mn, Hn
12	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+9.497s		Sn, Mu, Hu
13	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+15.476s		Sn, Mn, Hn
14	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+25.252s		Sn, Mu, Hu
15	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+44.050s		Sn, Mn, Hn
16	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+53.313s		Sn, Su, Hn
17	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+54.788s		Sn, Mn, Hn
18	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+58.149s		Mn, Sn, Sn
19	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+1m08.904s		Sn, Mn, Hn, Sn
20	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+4.866s		Sn, Mn, Hn

WEATHER Sunny then overcast, air 24-25C, track 39-44C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 129.667mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 135.089mph.

FASTEST LAPS				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Norris	1m17.115s	-	51
2	Verstappen	1m17.776s	+0.661s	54
3	Perez	1m17.785s	+0.670s	51
4	Hamilton	1m17.809s	+0.694s	46
5	Piastri	1m17.874s	+0.759s	56
6	Leclerc	1m17.897s	+0.782s	52
7	Russell	1m18.290s	+1.175s	50
8	Alonso	1m18.334s	+1.219s	50
9	Sainz	1m18.539s	+1.424s	39
10	Hulkenberg	1m18.609s	+1.494s	49
11	Zhou	1m18.771s	+1.656s	50
12	Ocon	1m18.982s	+1.867s	54
13	Gasly	1m19.045s	+1.930s	51
14	Albon	1m19.132s	+2.017s	45
15	Stroll	1m19.318s	+2.203s	50
16	Tsunoda	1m19.447s	+2.332s	56
17	Ricciardo	1m19.450s	+2.335s	61
18	Bottas	1m19.608s	+2.493s	13
19	Magnussen	1m19.805s	+2.690s	33
20	Sargeant	1m20.172s	+3.057s	38



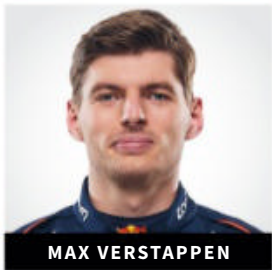
LAP CHART																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
	Norris	Verstappen	Hamilton	Russell	Leclerc	Sainz	Gasly	Ocon	Piastri	Alonso	Perez	Bottas	Hulkenberg	Stroll	Zhou	Magnussen	Tsunoda	Ricciardo	Sargeant	Albon					
G	4	1	44	63	16	55	10	31	81	14	11	77	27	18	24	20	22	3	2	23					
1	63	1	4	44	16	55	10	81	31	27	11	14	18	77	22	20	24	2	3	23					
2	63	1	4	44	16	55	10	81	31	27	11	14	18	77	22	20	24	3	2	23					
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64	1	4	44	63	16	55	81	10	11	31	27	14	24	18	3	77	20	23	22	2					
65	1	4	44	63	16	55	81	10	11	31	27	14	24	18	3	77	20	23	22						
66	1	4	44	63	16	55	81	11	10	31	27														
KEY:		1	Classification		1	Lap number		G	Starting grid		20	Lapped		24	Pit entry		3	Overtook		2	Overtaken			Retirement	

SPANISH GP DRIVER RATINGS

It's another tie for highest-scorers Norris and Verstappen, both Mercedes drivers shine, while an Aston Martin slump contrasts with an Alpine revival

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **2nd** — Result **1st**

9 Missed out on pole, but getting past Norris at the start was one half of the job done, making no bones of pass on Russell that effectively secured the win. Did well to fulfil strategy brief and had just enough in hand to hold off Norris. He's responding well to being challenged more often.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **11th** — Result **8th**

5 Team reckoned simulations put him eighth at best and he managed that, but outright pace remains elusive. Way off Verstappen in Q3 – a whopping 0.66 seconds – and struggled to make early progress, but nonetheless delivered some points with a three-stop strategy.



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **3rd** — Result **3rd**

8 Clinched long-awaited first podium of the year, although started poorly and bogged down. Sustained pace well through opening pair of stints, making the final stint on soft tyres possible. Pass on Russell ensured third was his, and kept life in softs to ensure no late-race hiccups.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **4th** — Result **4th**

8 Had brilliant moments: his sweeping pass on Verstappen and Norris to claim the lead was one, then his battle with Norris spanning half a lap was another. But he fell short of overall pace and struggled to unlock much from the hard tyres. Held off Leclerc at the end to keep fourth.



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **5th** — Result **5th**

7 Sustained front-wing damage in brief clash with Sainz, a move he "didn't understand". Also questioned Ferrari "Plan A" choice, but it ultimately carried him above his team-mate thanks to longer medium stint. Put Russell under pressure late on, but didn't have enough pace to make a move.

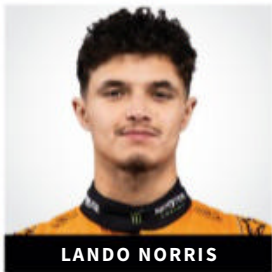


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **6th** — Result **6th**

6 Was arguably saddled with a worse strategy than Leclerc, but threw caution to the wind with early tyre saving to pass Leclerc in a move that could have been cleaner. Undercut efforts didn't work and hard tyre unlocked little in the way of pace, and he got frustrated by Hamilton pass.

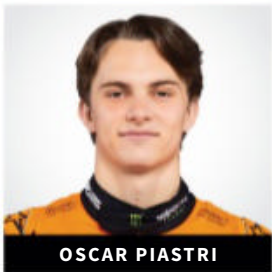
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **1st** — Result **2nd**

9 Losing out at start forced him into sitting back a bit, as McLaren dug out offset strategy. Kept life in initial soft tyres brilliantly to build six-lap advantage, but got bogged down in fighting Merc duo – albeit impressively – on medium stint. Ran out of time to challenge Verstappen despite great pace.



OSCAR PIASTRI

Started **9th** — Result **7th**

6 Put together a decent race, but deficit to Norris across qualifying and race too great. Mistake on final Q3 lap cost positions, and struggled to match Norris's laps across first stint. Tyre management needs work, although moves to reclaim position from Perez and Alpines sweetened the pill.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **10th** — Result **12th**

5 A drive that fell short of his lofty standards, not helped by alarming Aston Martin regression. Eleventh was best he could manage in qualifying, and dropped further positions amid tyre struggles and near-off at Turn 13. Fell too far behind Hulkenberg to exploit Haas driver's penalty.

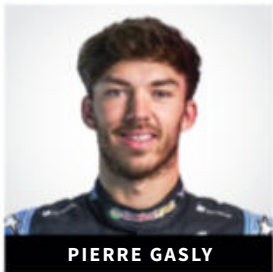


LANCE STROLL

Started **14th** — Result **14th**

4 See Alonso, but with an even weaker race. Had got ahead of his team-mate in early stages, but soon dropped behind and medium stint was later cut short, precipitating longer-than-ideal stint on hards. Got passed by Zhou in final stint, and lost a further 10s to the Sauber driver by the end.

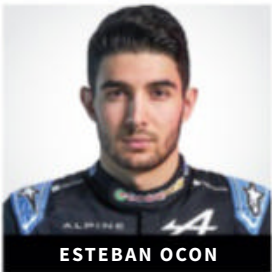
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **7th** — Result **9th**

8 Took advantage of surprise Alpine pace to qualify seventh. Almost had points effort derailed by slow pitstop, but recovered well to spend second half of race in eighth. Dispatched by Perez late on to fall to ninth, but this barely took the shine off a strong weekend. Faster than Ocon throughout.



ESTEBAN OCON

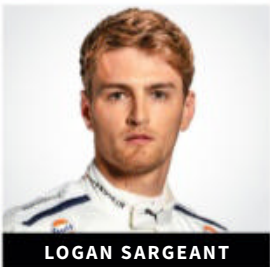
Started **8th** — Result **10th**

7 Not as impressive as Gasly, but still shrugged off recent instability to net a point. Was quarter of a second shy of team-mate in qualifying, but Q3 was a good feat. Chopped through lower midfielders after second stop with hard tyres, and saw off Hulkenberg challenge.



TEE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started **19th** – Result **20th**

3 Over three tenths shy of Albon in qualifying, then earned a penalty for impeding Stroll. Struggled to keep tabs on managing tyres throughout. Spent the day miles off Albon, who was also flummoxed by overall lack of pace. Ultimately finished two laps down.



ALEX ALBON

Started **20th** – Result **18th**

4 Visibly frustrated with snap that put him in Turn 4 gravel. Williams pace was poor; team gambled on pitlane start with medium tyres, but this did not offer much strategic advantage. Mired in midfield, and then off moment caused front-wing damage. Difficult weekend was “a reality check”.

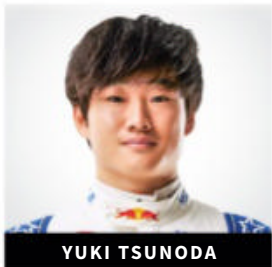
RB



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **18th** – Result **15th**

5 Felt like his Q1 lap was good enough for Q2, but RB missed the mark despite upgrades. Instead, felt the car was simply “not quick”. Got stronger two-stop strategy, hence beat Tsunoda. Made late moves on Bottas and Magnussen, having lost ground to them under blue flags.



YUKI TSUNODA

Started **17th** – Result **19th**

4 Like Ricciardo, pleased with Q1 lap but dismayed by overall lack of speed. Saddled with three-stop strategy that he didn’t have the pace to make work, citing problems with handling and balance that flap-angle changes in the pitlane couldn’t fix. Loses a point for a pitlane speeding penalty.

SAUBER



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **15th** – Result **13th**

6 Reversion to pre-Imola chassis seemed to lift confidence and helped path into Q2. Pitted early and produced mammoth stint on mediums, and hard-tyre pace versus Bottas was far more impressive, although stint was significantly shorter. A much more encouraging day after recent difficulties.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **12th** – Result **16th**

5 Tried to make a bold strategy work with two consecutive soft stints and, despite heavy tyre management, couldn’t eke out the second set so had to pit early. Felt final hard-tyre stint was too long as a result. Played a fair team game with Zhou to make divergent strategies work.

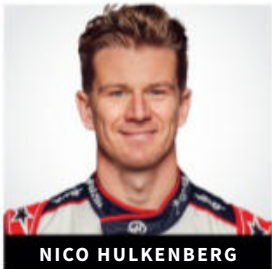
HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **16th** – Result **17th**

5 Was within a whisker of making Q2. Had to do more than half the race on same set of hard tyres, which is admirable. Made up a place in the opening laps, but his race was rather defined by early pitstop. Hard-tyre stint at the end was consistent but did little for him with track position.

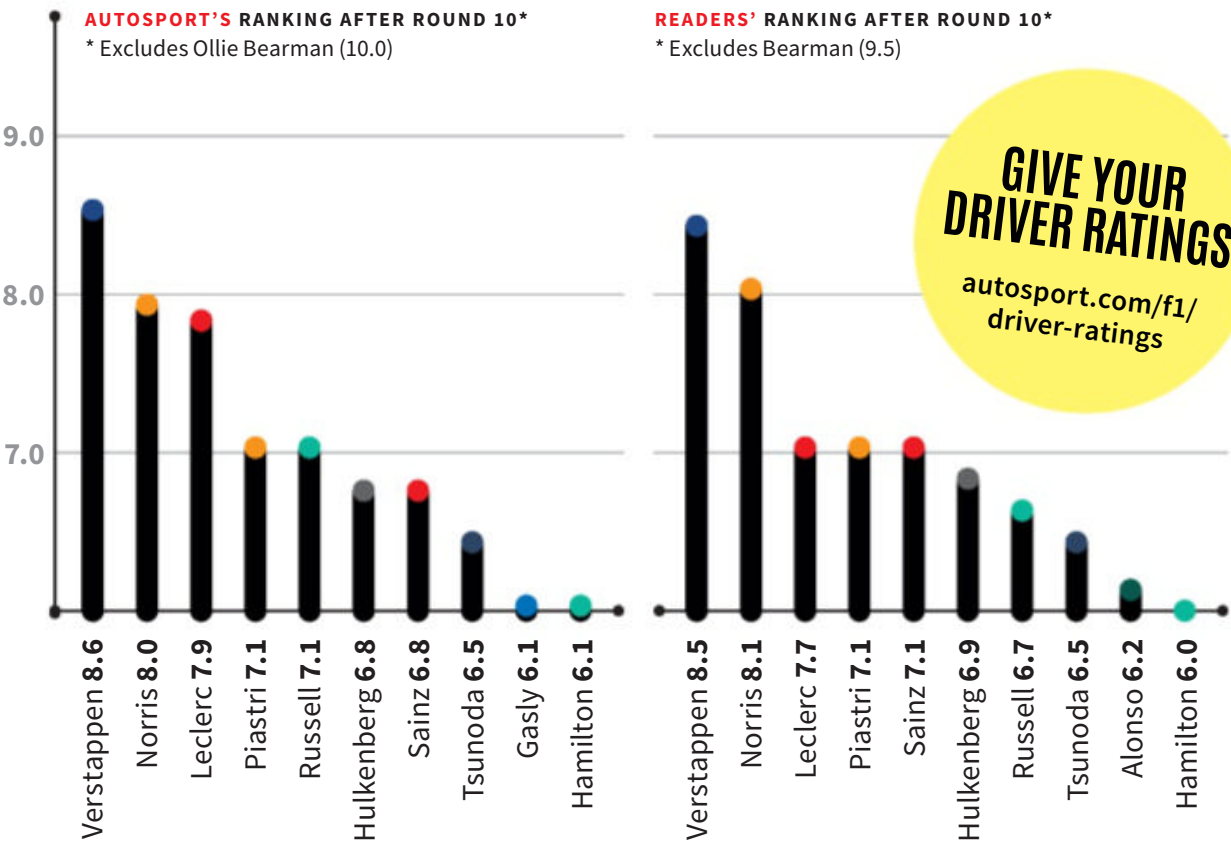


NICO HULKENBERG

Started **13th** – Result **11th**

6 Well ahead of Alonso at finish, so five-second pitlane speeding penalty caused no change to position. Got into top 10 with rapid start, but Haas lacked pace in high-speed corners so unable to hold on. Got close to Ocon by the end with overcut help, then couldn’t keep pace with the Alpine.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS





BTCC

Hill over Hilltop to take himself to the top

The BTCC at Oulton Park looked like turning into a Sutton-versus-Ingram battle. But weird goings-on, tyres and loose bodywork turned it on its head

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

At 4.02pm last Saturday, British Touring Car Championship title contender Jake Hill snatched a little bit of glory away from underdog up-and-comer Mikey Doble, and this laid the foundations for him to do a total smash-and-grab on the very same poor little fella as he took the points lead at 5.50pm on Sunday.

For the first 90% of the opening 10-minute phase of qualifying at Oulton Park, Hill had been struggling. His West Surrey Racing-run, Laser Tools-liveried BMW 330e M Sport had looked OK in the early morning free practice session. Perhaps this lulled his corner of the garage into a false sense of security, because he just carried on his prep work in FP2 using carryover medium-compound Goodyear tyres rather than dialling himself and his car in on the soft rubber that was standard for the weekend.

As Hill went into his final lap of Q1, it looked as though his BMW – restricted to just three seconds per lap of the hybrid power boost, due to his second place in the championship – was going to miss the top-six cut to progress. Then Hill set a purple opening sector, this portion of the lap comprising the high-speed Old Hall and Cascades, where the hybrid has little effect. He couldn't even match his own personal best times in the remaining two sectors, but that start to the lap had been enough. Just. Up to fifth he went, an infinitesimal 0.001 seconds clear of sixth-placed Josh Cook, and just 0.002s ahead of the unfortunate Doble, who had been forced into the drop zone at the last gasp, and by the narrowest of margins.

He may have only just squeezed into the 12-car Q2, but Hill went much better here and ended up seventh. This time *he* was the driver edged out at the chequered flag, when Dan Rowbottom

Hill pulls off a great move on Doble with just a mile to the finish line to go



A well-earned dousing for Hill



Doble greeted by Power Maxed crew

finally got in a lap that wasn't taken away for track limits escapades. But with the scarcity of hybrid at his disposal, that was fine by the diminutive Kentishman. "In FP2 we ran the medium tyre and we were doing 1m25.4s, and the chassis felt fantastic," Hill reflected when the dust had settled. "We thought we could make up the half-second to Ash [Sutton, pre-weekend championship leader] on a set of softs, and then hopefully we could find another half-second. That should get us in the top six. The car felt amazing to drive, but quite clearly doesn't have the ultimate pace. That's the most frustrating thing – if it's a bit shitty, you know you can make it better. And the hybrid [or lack of it] is killing it as well because of those uphill climbs."

Now let's go forward almost 26 hours... The Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra may be the longest in the tooth of the current field

of BTCC machinery, but it's still a decent little weapon. Doble had started his from pole position for the reversed-grid finale, with team-mate Aron Taylor-Smith alongside. And the second-year BTCC racer just drove away from the ebullient Irish veteran, who did a sound job of keeping at bay a marauding pack of series heavyweights. "I had clear air, and I didn't have the pressure behind that he did," pointed out Doble. "For the first time, I could do my lines, not make any mistakes, and pull away in the lead."

With five and a half laps remaining, Hill finally pierced Taylor-Smith's defences, and it was absolutely critical that he did so at that time. "I saw he was starting to struggle a bit, and he had used his hybrid and I was keeping mine back," said the BMW man. "I was able to stay with him even without using my hybrid, and I got a really good run through Cascades, got on the punch on the way »

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Ingram (leading) and Sutton make contact in race one, while Cammish chases



SMILES BREAKING OUT FOR SMILEY AND RESTART



While the battle for the BTCC Independents' title between Aron Taylor-Smith and Mikey Doble took the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall team-mates to giddy heights at the head of the overall field at Oulton Park, it was also a good weekend for their main rival.

Chris Smiley and Restart Racing have been up against it since firming up their plans to run two of the ex-Team Hard Cupra Leons for the Northern Irishman and rookie team-mate Scott Sumpton, but the Cheshire track showed that one-time BTCC race winner Smiley at least is on an upward trend. He took the team's best result to date with eighth in race two, and even held fastest lap for a third of the race before Josh Cook eclipsed it. And that wasn't a tyre fluke, because 13 of the 20 runners were on the soft Goodyears. As if to prove it, he was ninth in the final race.

"If you look at Snetterton, we should have had that result there," said Smiley, referring to a race where he was called into the pits because his passenger door had come open. "That unravelled our day really – our first kick in the nuts! Thruxton we were just a little bit off all weekend, but here we've been on the fringes of the top 10 in qualifying, but it just didn't fall our way after we missed part of FP1 with an engine ancillary issue that pushed us a session behind."

Smiley was one of those forced off track by the Taylor-Smith/Chilton/Morgan chaos: "I just closed my eyes – there was a BMW going backwards towards me. Without that we'd have been in the top five, and we passed a lot of other cars on the soft tyre. That was done on pace."

"If I didn't use the hybrid he was going to get past me. After that I was hanging on for dear life!"

down to the hairpin, and I must admit I was a bit surprised but he kindly let me have the corner. I braked really late, he braked quite early I think, and ultimately I managed to get the corner."

Through the remaining half of that lap, Hill's hybrid use got him to within half a second of Doble, but now he had used all of his three-lap allocation, and the leading Vauxhall had two of its six still remaining. Now it was Doble's turn to get on the button, but with two laps to go he'd run out, and still that pesky BMW was large in his mirrors. "I thought if I didn't use it when I had it, he was going to get past me at that point," Doble explained. "And after that I was hanging on for dear life!"

They were closer than ever heading into the final lap, and Hill pulled out from the slipstream to try around the outside of the Island hairpin. Doble, pinned in, could not prevent the blue-and-white machine remaining side by side as they headed uphill, over the crest and down to the Hislop's chicane. Here, Hill braved it out around the outside of the right-handed entry, and claimed the inside line for the following left. Job done. And, to the credit of both drivers, they had proved you actually *can* go side by side here without at least one taking a short cut across the grass...

"I was going to brake as late as I dared without running him off the track," grinned Doble, happy to have proved himself despite his late defeat. "He made a great move." The admiration was mutual. "There was a tiny bit of argy-bargy but hey, he's fighting for his first win, and it's the last lap," nodded Hill. "Really clean – nothing to worry about. Mikey did a fantastic job. I applauded him as we came in because I thought he deserved it. He drove really well; he soaked up my pressure for as long as he could."

How it even came to a Hill-versus-Doble scrap making the headlines was down to a combination of your standard good old-fashioned BTCC 'oh my days, what on earth is going to happen next?' action combined with the 2024 tweaks to the sporting regulations. On Saturday evening, everyone had been talking about the majesty of polewinner Tom Ingram and the latest act of sorcery from four-time and reigning champion Sutton, alongside him on the front row. >>



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SCAN ME

The regulations for the Oulton weekend mandated the use of the soft tyres for two races, and the hard for one, but with the tweak for 2024 whereby the top 10 finishers from the opening 15-lapper have to use the hardest available Goodyear left from their allocation for race two. The effect of this was that each of the top seven in qualifying started race one on the soft, with just one of the remaining 13 on the hard. So, basically, the finishing order was exactly as you'd have predicted but, instead of the field being moderately close together, there was a massive chasm from the soft-tyred runners to the rest.

“My choice was fairly easy – just to jump the chicane, it's the safest thing to do in that scenario”

Not that there weren't some major talking points from this one. Ingram, down to third in the championship for this weekend, was as a result up to 5s per lap of hybrid on his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback. “With five seconds you just about get away with it – it's an amount you can do something with,” he declared. “It's just felt hooked up. People will probably say I'm an arsehole, but it's been easy to do the time, from the way you can position your front end, control the speed on the way in. We're just nibbling away with it.” Sutton, on just 1s per lap of hybrid in his Alliance Racing-run NAPA Ford Focus ST, was just 0.124s adrift. “It was phenomenal to put ourselves in that position,” he said as he peered through sunglasses to protect himself from pollen (he was suffering from “the old man flu” and hay fever). “Tom had a couple of tenths over us in terms of hybrid, so he *should* be in front of us.”

Their battle almost boiled over in the opening race. Sutton chiselled half an opening on the Hyundai at the Island hairpin on the second lap, and Ingram caught the slide before they headed down to the chicane. Here, Ingram was slightly ahead on the outside and turned in, but Sutton wasn't yielding and, after more contact, the 2022 champion bounced across the grass and shortcut the second apex. From here, Ingram pulled out two seconds for victory.

Afterwards, they were putting on a decent show of bonhomie for the cameras, perhaps mindful that each of them could be held slightly more responsible for one or other of the incidents. “We didn't even go to the TOCA bus [the BTCC equivalent of the criminal court],” professed Ingram later on. “It seemed he tried to blunder his way past [at Island], and mistimed it, and kind of caught me into a half spin, and then I guess his intention was then to say he yielded time by letting me get alongside. I don't really know what



Ingram reached a milestone of 30 BTCC career wins

his plan was – either way it seemed a bit clumsy. I came down towards the chicane, got a knock in the right rear wheel, my choice was fairly easy if I'm perfectly honest with you – just to jump the chicane, it's the safest thing to do in that scenario.”

“At the hairpin, he left a gap and I filled it – a standard touring car move,” countered Sutton. “But he tried to close it and there's a car there. We had the run down to the chicane, bit of contact, I left him the room, he straight-lined the chicane across the grass. We came out very similar. If I was further alongside I could probably make more of a fuss about it, but I was only at the rear wheel. He did squeeze me to force the contact, but that's touring car racing.”

There was more contact at Island between them on the opening lap of race two, where the leading contenders were on the hard rubber. Ingram's engineer Spencer Aldridge explained that the Hyundai's tyres had been pressured to come in later in the race, but would make him vulnerable early doors. “He ended up being really slow,” reckoned Sutton, “and I think Hill got into the back of [Dan] Cammish, he got into me, and I got into Tom. It was just a massive concertina effect. I wasn't trying to pull a move on him or anything, I think Tom just had a moment which caused us all to check up into the back of him.”

What it did do was allow a second parting of the seas in half a lap for Cook. In the best of the Speedworks Motorsport-run Toyota Corolla GR Sports, he had narrowly failed to deprive Taylor-Smith of the honour of leading hard-tyred runner in race one. With them and a big gang behind them now all on softs, and an estimated delta of at least a second between the two compounds, they were both looking good. But Taylor-Smith found the door closing on him into Old Hall and pushed Tom Chilton into Adam Morgan, »



Sutton had problems with loose bodywork in two of the races



Ingram leads Sutton at the start of the day, but things would change

both of whom had shone in making it to Q3 and posted top-six results in the opener. Cook drove around the outside of them all as havoc broke out behind and then, half a minute later, spurred past the delayed Sutton, Cammish and Hill to grab second. Taking the lead was a formality, which he did at Lodge, with Ingram confessing that he “put the indicator on and said, ‘Just get past and go into the distance and leave me alone, so I can manage it.’”

While Cook sailed to victory, Ingram finally lost his challenge from Sutton with the Ford’s damaged right-rear bodywork – “I’m not sure whether it was from a bit of contact,” he puzzled – prompted a black-and-orange flag and he was forced to pit. Just before he did so, he let team-mate Cammish and Hill through into Lodge, both brushing him as they went past. This wasn’t, as was widely reported at the time, Cammish playing the team game to prevent Sutton having to pit. “The laps prior to it I spent trying to hit the tyre stacks in the chicane – I spent three laps trying to peel it off,” related Sutton. “We did a bit of it and managed to turn it, but never quite remove it.”

Cammish is in a much better place psychologically of late, and looked on course to extend his run of consecutive podiums to five. But then Hill shook off the soft-shod Vauxhalls of Taylor-Smith and Doble and came after him, and got past the Ford into the chicane on the final lap, the BMW squirming on the brakes. A terrific move, and the first part of a recovery from a small error in race one. Here, Hill had risen from seventh to fourth, on the tail of Cammish, when he locked up at Island and conceded positions to Dan Rowbottom and the sister WSR BMW of Morgan.



Speedworks’ tyre gamble paid off for Cook in second race

“I wanted Jake to win it, so he can lead the championship. I’d rather have extra hybrid for Croft”

Rowbottom was buoyed by the recruitment of veteran tin-top engineer Paul Ridgway for his Alliance Ford for the rest of the season. But the bearded Midlander’s luck was out again, and a late black-and-orange flag, which went unheeded, for bodywork damage almost identical to Sutton’s later on was converted to a costly time penalty that denied him a hard-earned fourth place.

Remarkably, Sutton had another such instance in the finale, in which he had stormed from 16th on the grid onto the tail of sixth-placed Rowbottom when things went awry on the exit of Cascades: “I was charging through on the softs, it was looking phenomenal, and we picked up a bit of bodywork damage again, and it caused a puncture. I can only put it down to a couple of brushes from the tyre stacks in the chicane, just loosening it up, and then it finally gave up at Cascades where it dug in.”

Ingram had his own problem, the oil return pipe from the turbo on his Hyundai coming adrift as he shadowed Taylor-Smith for the final place on the podium, to the extent that there was a fire as he returned to pitlane after the race. “I was was happy to put pressure on Aron obviously, but just sit there,” said Ingram. “Happy to bag the points, stay in there. I wanted Jake to win it, so he can lead the championship. I’d rather have an extra little bit of hybrid for Croft – that was in the back of my head.”

Hill found this theory rather amusing when it was relayed to him after a weekend that was kind to him, and evil to team-mate Colin Turkington, who slipped further from the title fight. Clutch failure meant he couldn’t get away in race one, before he scythed to seventh in race two, but lucked out when the grid draw for race three reversed only the top six. Even so, Turkington was hanging on nicely as the only leading runner on hard tyres in the finale when contact with Chris Smiley knocked him down the order, and then a knock with Aiden Moffat spun him out.

Gloom in one corner of WSR, joy in another. “The main thing is we didn’t lose faith,” smiled Hill. “For sure it wasn’t ultimate pace, but it doesn’t always have to be perfect, just good enough to get me on the podium, and today it got me a P3 and a win – and with some last-lap wonderful moves.” He can say that again. 🌟

➡ P82 BTCC SUPPORTS REPORT

RESULTS

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 5/10, OULTON PARK (GBR), 23 JUNE RACE 1 (15 LAPS – 33.390 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	21m39.143s
2	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+1.913s
3	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+4.557s
4	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	+10.230s
5	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	+14.700s
6	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	+16.238s
7	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (H)	+26.078s
8	Josh Cook (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+26.646s
9	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+30.817s
10	Rob Huff (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+31.366s
11	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (H)	+35.664s
12	Ronan Pearson (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (H)	+37.165s
13	Chris Smiley (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon (H)	+37.944s
14	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport (H)	+39.218s
15	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (s)	+39.858s
16	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST (H)	+40.996s
17	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N (s)	+50.082s
18	Daryl DeLeon (PHL)	Unlimited Motorsport / Cupra Leon (H)	+51.842s
19	Scott Sumpton (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon (H)	+1m34.773s
20	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport (s)	-1 lap

Winner's average speed 92.52mph. Fastest lap Cammish 1m25.358s, 93.88mph.
TYRES (S) = soft; (H) = hard

Q3 1 Ingram 1m24.194s; 2 Sutton 1m24.318s; 3 Cammish 1m24.391s; 4 Chilton 1m24.497s; 5 Rowbottom 1m24.502s; 6 Morgan 1m24.782s.
Q2 Ingram 1m24.354s; Cammish 1m24.469s; Sutton 1m24.582s; Morgan 1m24.583s; Chilton 1m24.599s; Rowbottom 1m24.661s; 7 Hill 1m24.710s; 8 Taylor-Smith 1m24.805s; 9 Turkington 1m24.873s; 10 Cook 1m24.894s; 11 Huff 1m24.992s; 12 Moffat 1m25.020s.
Q1 – GROUP 1 Sutton 1m24.486s; Rowbottom 1m24.498s; Morgan 1m24.578s; Huff 1m24.930s; Turkington 1m25.068s; Taylor-Smith 1m25.104s; 14 Watson 1m25.250s; 15 Pearson 1m25.285s; 17 Osborne 1m25.764s; 19 Sumpton 1m25.901s.
Q1 – GROUP 2 Ingram 1m24.628s; Chilton 1m24.866s; Cammish 1m24.944s; Moffat 1m25.056s; Hill 1m25.101s; Cook 1m25.102s; 13 Doble 1m25.103s; 16 Smiley 1m25.368s; 18 DeLeon 1m25.814s; 20 Halstead 1m27.524s.



Contact from Moffat scuppered Turkington

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1

RACE 2 (15 LAPS – 33.390 MILES)
1 Cook (s) **21m52.594s**; **2** Ingram (H) +8.016s; **3** Hill (H) +9.879s; **4** Cammish (H) +10.430s; **5** Taylor-Smith (s) +10.856s; **6** Doble (s) +11.452s; **7** Turkington (s) +12.197s; **8** Smiley (s) +13.420s; **9** Rowbottom (H) +14.705s; **10** Watson (s) +18.972s; **11** Huff (s) +19.896s; **12** DeLeon (s) +20.084s; **13** Pearson (s) +27.111s; **14** Sumpton (s) +29.567s; **15** Osborne (s) +33.011s; **16** Sutton (H) +46.548s; **17** Morgan (H) +58.564s; **18** Halstead (s) +1m07.413s; **R** Chilton (H) 7 laps-steering rack; **R** Moffat (s) 3 laps-boost pipe.
Winner's average speed 91.57mph.
Fastest lap Cook 1m26.058s, 93.11mph.

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

RACE 3 (15 LAPS – 33.390 MILES)
1 Hill (s) **21m42.189s**; **2** Doble (s) +0.749s; **3** Taylor-Smith (s) +2.410s; **4** Ingram (s) +2.856s; **5** Cammish (s) +3.714s; **6** Rowbottom (s) +4.150s; **7** Morgan (s) +6.758s; **8** Cook (s) +7.474s; **9** Smiley (s) +9.744s; **10** Moffat (s) +12.474s; **11** Pearson (s) +14.991s; **12** Huff (s) +15.065s; **13** DeLeon (s) +20.717s; **14** Watson (s) +20.902s; **15** Turkington (H) +30.738s; **16** Sumpton (s) +39.908s; **17** Halstead (H) +1m03.918s; **18** Sutton (s) +1m17.217s; **R** Osborne (s) 10 laps-exhaust burning chassis/smoke; **R** Chilton (s) 0 laps-empty fire extinguisher.
Winner's average speed 92.30mph.
Fastest lap Sutton 1m25.406s, 93.82mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1** Hill 211; **2** Ingram 207; **3** Sutton 187; **4** Cammish 169; **5** Cook 153; **6** Turkington 146; **7** Taylor-Smith 107; **8** Morgan 107; **9** Moffat 96; **10** Chilton 94.



Cook quickly got into the lead on soft tyres before driving into the distance

NEXT
REPORT
Croft
1 August issue



Different plot, same Laguna story for Palou

INDYCAR
LAGUNA SECA (USA)
23 JUNE
ROUND 8/15

We've seen this movie before: Alex Palou's previous IndyCar masterpiece is Laguna Seca 2022, when he won by more than 30 seconds from 11th on the grid. Last weekend was a bit like watching *Jaws 2* in that (spoiler alert) he kills the shark, but with an even more elaborate storyline.

This time Palou set pole position in his Honda-powered Chip Ganassi Racing car, but the first plot twist occurred when Andretti Global talent Kyle Kirkwood lunged deep into, appropriately enough, the Andretti Hairpin, where he drove around the outside of the reigning champion with a bold move to lead. "Played it too nice," rued Palou.

Behind Felix Rosenqvist's Meyer Shank

Racing car in third, Alexander Rossi of Arrow McLaren touched wheels with Colton Herta (Andretti) at Turn 3 and got ahead of his fellow Californian. The top three then ran nose to tail over the opening 20 laps, with Rossi and Herta duelling 2s in arrears.

Rossi pitted from fourth on lap 24, undercutting to the lead on fresh softer alternate tyres ahead of Palou, as Kirkwood fell to third from Herta and the Kiwi Scotts, Dixon (Ganassi) and McLaughlin (Penske). Palou, who opted for used primary tyres for his second stint, then got jumped by the Andretti train of Kirkwood and Herta at the Andretti Hairpin and fell to fourth. This didn't appear to be going to script!

The race was neutralised when Luca Ghiotto comprehensively shunted his Dale Coyne Racing car at Turn 4. It triggered a second round of pitstops for half the field, during which Rossi was slow exiting his

pitbox and Herta jumped ahead of him. Dixon bizarrely hit the barrier on entry to the pits and was collected by McLaughlin, but both continued.

Palou boldly stayed out to lead an already off-strategy Pato O'Ward (Arrow McLaren) and Romain Grosjean (Juncos Hollinger) as two different approaches emerged. Herta led the pitters in 14th, from Rossi and Kirkwood.

Grosjean grabbed second from O'Ward at the restart, but the race went yellow again when Arrow McLaren new boy Nolan Siegel spun off. Palou sprinted away at the next restart, with Herta mired in the midfield.

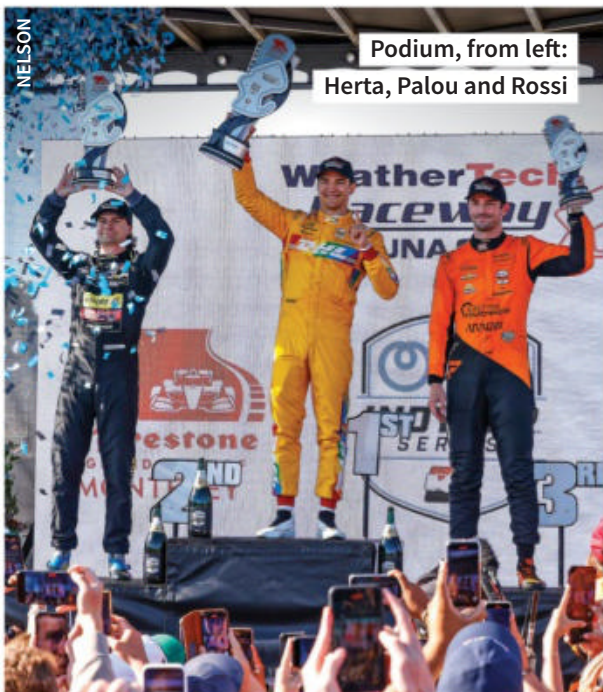
Palou charged before his second stop, knowing a caution before it would kill his "risky" strategy, but he made it to lap 55 with a 22s advantage over Herta. He rejoined in third, behind Herta and Rossi but ahead of Kirkwood. And this is where the race swung.

To the tune of John Williams's famous 'da, duh' *Jaws* theme, Palou picked off Rossi and chased down Herta. He gobbled him up at Laguna's signature turn, the Corkscrew. In truth, Herta was powerless as he was in fuel-saving mode, while Palou's more evenly spread strategy meant he could run hard when he pleased. "The best thing for us was to go as fast as possible," he said.

Herta and Rossi made their final pitstops on lap 68 for new primaries and used alternates respectively. Palou stopped three laps later for used primaries.

What Palou couldn't control was a cluster of cautions that negated his advantage. His 10s lead over Herta vanished when a turf war between Christian Lundgaard and Marcus Armstrong at Turn 4 sent the Kiwi into a looping spin across the track, where





he was almost collected by Graham Rahal at 130mph. Feeling that the stranded Armstrong wasn't in immediate peril, race control held off on throwing the yellow, which allowed Penske's Josef Newgarden, who had earlier been penalised for going off at the pit exit, to make his final stop and rejoin in a shock second place.

Palou sprinted clear of Newgarden and Herta at the restart, the Andretti man having to defend from Rossi and Grosjean. McLaughlin clumsily attacked team-mate Will Power at Turn 5 but managed to spin on the exit, earning a drive-through penalty and race-ruining damage.

Erstwhile points leader Power, who qualified 15th and fell to last on the opening lap after being shuffled wide at Turn 4, had earlier pulled an incredible pass on Dixon at the Corkscrew. But his impressive redemption arc hit the buffers and he ended up seventh. To complete Penske's misery, Newgarden went off twice at Turn 6 in the closing stages and finished 19th.

Jack Harvey's engine expired, causing another caution, from which Palou made a tardy restart with 11 laps to go but Herta couldn't find a way past through Turn 1. Yet another yellow was required when Kyffin Simpson spun after contact with Agustin Canapino, and Rahal smashed into him and then a concrete wall.

At the final restart, Palou didn't fluff his lines and pulled away to win by 2s from Herta to move into the points lead, with Rossi just holding off a frisky Grosjean for third. Kirkwood was a disappointed fifth from Dixon, Power and O'Ward.

CHARLES BRADLEY

RESULTS ROUND 8/15, LAGUNA SECA (USA), 23 JUNE (95 LAPS – 212.610 MILES)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	2h04m09.8545s
2	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Global with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	+1.9780s
3	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.5136s
4	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.8243s
5	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	+8.6768s
6	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.1504s
7	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.9964s
8	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.6214s
9	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+11.0025s
10	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	+11.6398s
11	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+12.7088s
12	Nolan Siegel (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.1305s
13	Christian Rasmussen (DNK)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.3770s
14	Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+14.7541s
15	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+15.0744s
16	David Malukas (USA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+18.5009s
17	Linus Lundqvist (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+20.1723s
18	Agustin Canapino (ARG)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+23.5447s
19	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+27.2568s
20	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
21	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
22	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
23	Kyffin Simpson (CYM)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	86 laps-accident
24	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	86 laps-accident
25	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	82 laps-engine
26	Rinus VeeKay (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	72 laps-gearbox
27	Luca Ghiotto (ITA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	34 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 102.740mph. Fastest lap Ericsson 1m08.9728s, 116.811mph.

Q3 1 Palou 1m07.1465s; 2 Kirkwood 1m07.2204s; 3 Rosenqvist 1m07.2917s; 4 Herta 1m07.2972s; 5 Rossi 1m07.3594s; 6 Lundgaard 1m07.5112s.	1m08.0344s; 19 Rahal 1m08.0922s; 21 Rasmussen 1m08.3711s; 23 Siegel 1m08.6785s; 25 Robb 1m09.1304s.
Q2 Palou 1m07.2572s; Kirkwood 1m07.2841s; Herta 1m07.3150s; Rosenqvist 1m07.3157s; Rossi 1m07.3638s; Lundgaard 1m07.3725s; 7 McLaughlin 1m07.3994s; 8 Grosjean 1m07.4286s; 9 O'Ward 1m07.4900s; 10 Dixon 1m07.5874s; 11 Armstrong 1m07.6143s; 12 Malukas 1m07.8422s.	Q1 – GROUP 2 Palou 1m07.2751s; Herta 1m07.3090s; Kirkwood 1m07.3232s; O'Ward 1m07.3825s; Rosenqvist 1m07.4216s; Lundgaard 1m07.6087s; 14 Newgarden 1m07.7246s; 16 Lundqvist 1m07.8056s; 18 Ericsson 1m07.9233s; 20 VeeKay 1m07.9897s; 22 Simpson 1m08.1571s; 24 Fittipaldi 1m08.1824s; 26 Harvey 1m08.4730s; 27 Ghiotto 1m08.5078s.
Q1 – GROUP 1 Grosjean 1m07.6813s; Rossi 1m07.7175s; Armstrong 1m07.7208s; Dixon 1m07.7296s; McLaughlin 1m07.7931s; Malukas 1m07.8255s; 13 Canapino 1m07.8976s; 15 Power 1m08.0178s; 17 Ferrucci	CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Palou 285; 2 Power 262; 3 Dixon 253; 4 Herta 217; 5 Kirkwood 210; 6 O'Ward 208; 7 Rossi 198; 8 McLaughlin 188; 9 Newgarden 181; 10 Rosenqvist 176.





Crawford leads Colapinto to feature race win in Spain, his first F2 victory of the season

DUTCH PROTOAGENCY

Martins and Crawford take wins as Correa finds a happy ending

FORMULA 2
BARCELONA (ESP)
21-23 JUNE
ROUND 6/14

Victor Martins and Jak Crawford secured their first Formula 2 wins of 2024 at Barcelona, while Juan Manuel Correa's emotional rollercoaster ended in a first podium since his championship return at the end of 2022.

ART Grand Prix driver Martins has endured a torrid season after finishing his debut campaign in 2023 as the highest placed rookie. The Frenchman arrived in Spain with just 11 points to his name, and is already all but out of contention for the title. But his fortunes changed in the sprint race when he stole a march on polesitter Kush Maini (Invicta Racing) on the run to the first corner and never looked back.

While Alpine junior Martins's luck had improved, it was the opposite for Prema's Ferrari protege Ollie Bearman, who dropped like a stone after his FP1 Formula 1 appearance with Haas, falling from a

disappointing 15th grid slot to second last.

Joining Martins and Maini for the sprint race podium was Correa, who finished in the top three for the first time since his involvement in the 2019 crash at Spa that left him with serious injuries to his legs and claimed the life of Anthoine Hubert. But DAMS driver Correa was among eight drivers to receive a post-race penalty for exceeding track limits. The five-second sanction dropped him to eighth and promoted Hitech GP's points leader Paul Aron onto the podium. Also penalised were Andrea Kimi Antonelli (Prema), who dropped five places to 15th, and Franco Colapinto (MP Motorsport), who fell seven spots to 18th.

Remarkably, Sunday's feature race featured no penalties for track limits, although a handful of drivers were still shown the black and white warning flag for taking liberties. As well as things had gone for Martins on Saturday, the second outing brought back his wretched luck when he was collected by Dennis Hauger at Turn 2 and forced to retire with damage.

Polesitter Aron led with little challenge until second-placed Crawford pitted his DAMS car to fit hard tyres. Aron stopped a lap later and exited the pits still in the net race lead, but lost this position at Turn 4, where Crawford eased past with his tyres already up to working temperature.

Aron remained on the gearbox of the Aston Martin F1 junior until lap 15 when a snap of oversteer at the final corner fired him into the gravel, dropping him to third place behind Colapinto.



This time Correa (right) kept his podium

FERRARO/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA 2

BARCELONA

Race 1 Victor Martins
ART Grand Prix

Race 2 Jak Crawford
DAMS

FORMULA 3

BARCELONA

Race 1 Mari Boya
Campos

Race 2 Arvid Lindblad
Prema



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Running on the alternate strategy of starting on hard tyres, Joshua Durksen (AIX Racing) looked strong for a top-five finish before a reliability issue struck and caused him to stop at the side of the track. This left Correa as the last driver to stop to fit soft tyres for a late charge.

After exiting the pits in sixth, Correa scythed past Gabriel Bortoletto (Invicta), Isack Hadjar (Campos Racing) and Aron. On the fifth anniversary of the last time he had legitimately stood on the podium – one he had shared with Hubert – the DAMS driver found retribution for his earlier loss.

Crawford's win lifts him to fourth in the standings, behind Aron, Hadjar and Rodin Motorsport's Zane Maloney, who failed to trouble the scorers at Barcelona. Colapinto's improved recent form now puts him level on points with fifth-placed Hauger ahead of the middle weekend of the current three rounds on the trot.

SAM HALL

Lindblad gains ground but Mini draws a blank

FORMULA 3
BARCELONA (ESP)
21-23 JUNE
ROUND 5/10

Arvid Lindblad dominated the Formula 3 feature race at the Spanish Grand Prix, moving himself firmly into the championship picture on a weekend where Gabriele Mini failed to score.

Prema-run Red Bull Junior Lindblad started Sunday's race behind Christian Mansell (ART) on the front row and was initially content to sit behind the Australian. But he did not wait long to make an ultimately race-winning move, using DRS into Turn 1 on lap five.

While Lindblad slowly eased out his lead, Mansell was forced to focus on the threat from Luke Browning behind. Despite trailing within DRS range for the majority of the distance, the Hitech GP driver was never able to launch an attack and instead dropped back into the clutches of Leonardo Fornaroli (Trident) in the closing stages.

A switchback pass through the opening chicane, which was completed on the long-radius Turn 3, allowed Fornaroli to drop Browning from the podium, with Campos Racing's Oliver Goethe pushing the Briton down to fifth by the chequered flag.

Prior to Lindblad's Sunday victory, Mari Boya (Campos) had ensured there were nine different race winners from the opening nine races of the campaign, highlighting the depth of talent in the 2024 field. Much like Lindblad's success, Boya appeared free to manage his race with ease from the front as he registered only the second top-three finish of his F3 career.



Lindblad held the F3 feature race upper hand

DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Boya's path to victory was made considerably simpler on the opening lap when Trident drivers Santiago Ramos and Sami Meguetounif, who had lined up alongside one another on the front row, collided into Turn 1 after DRS had been enabled, the Frenchman bouncing across the grass before collecting his team-mate at the apex. Judged as being "wholly responsible" for the incident, Meguetounif received a grid drop of five places for the feature race – putting him down in 16th. He finished that race just one place up.

After starting in fourth, Alex Dunne (MP Motorsport) made a piece of history of his own as he became the first Irish driver to stand on the F3 podium since the beginning of the FIA series in 2019. The McLaren protege was second, with Goethe third.

But the real entertainment was provided by Sebastian Montoya,

who had originally qualified on pole position but was stripped of his fastest time due to a track limits violation. He raced swiftly through the pack from his 27th starting position and had climbed 12 places by the time the Trident pair caused the safety car to be called into action.

Montoya's progress continued but it all proved to be for nothing when he collided with Mini – who had led the standings when arriving in Spain – on lap 18 of 21. With both cars stuck in the gravel, the safety car was called into action for the remaining duration.

Leaving Spain, Fornaroli is the new championship leader on 84 points, a position he holds by five from Browning. Mini drops to third, 12 points back from the lead, with Lindblad now fourth, just one point further off.

SAM HALL



Boya made it nine from nine on Saturday

MAUGER/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

Penske Porsche
bounced back from
disappointment at
Le Mans with IMSA
win at The Glen

Nasr's final charge lifts Porsche to defeat Cadillac

**IMSA SPORTSCAR
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
23 JUNE
ROUND 6/11**

An enthralling Six Hours of Watkins Glen last Sunday ended with another emphatic victory for Porsche Penske Motorsports pairing Felipe Nasr and Dane Cameron.

No fewer than nine of the 11 GTP entries led at one stage or another, but in the final reckoning, after a red-flag stoppage of more than 40 minutes due to heavy rain, Nasr immediately muscled his way to the front. The Brazilian held off a challenge from Renger van der Zande's Cadillac to become the first repeat winner this season.

The early stages were marked by an impressive charge by Phil Hanson aboard JDC-Miller's privateer Porsche 963. The 24-year-old Englishman started fourth after outqualifying the two factory Penske Porsches, and lost no time in slipping

ahead of van der Zande, who had deposed the polesitting WTR/Andretti Acura of Louis Deletraz on the opening lap.

Hanson maintained his advantage until the first round of pitstops. Even though the car never again featured at the sharp end of the competitive field, the little team from Minnesota had made its mark.

Fellow Brit Jack Aitken was the star of the second hour, forging to the front in the Whelen Cadillac he shared with Pipo Derani and Tom Blomqvist. But a hard-earned 12-second lead was erased when Aitken spun at the Inner Loop, whereupon another off by Derani cost a lap.

The middle portion of the race was characterised by intermittent and localised short showers of rain. Cameron moved to the front after 72 laps when his team elected not to pit during a full-course caution, then chose to stay out on slicks when all of the other frontrunners opted for wet tyres shortly before half-distance.

Going into the final two hours, Detroit winners Filipe Albuquerque and Ricky Taylor were now in contention, along with WTR/Andretti Acura team-mates Deletraz/Jordan Taylor, the two Penske Porsches, the #01 Cadillac and, remarkably, the BMW M Hybrid V8 of Connor De Phillippi/Nick Yelloly. Their BMW, built up from a spare car that was trucked overnight from Indianapolis following a tub-damaging crash by De Phillippi on Saturday, had started from the pitlane.

Ultimately, Albuquerque/R Taylor were undone by a wheel hub failure, and while Deletraz was out front following the red-flag stoppage, he was unable to maintain his advantage at the restart with only 17 minutes remaining. Nasr swept past under braking for Turn 1, and was followed by van der Zande and Mathieu Jaminet, who shared the second Penske Porsche with Nick Tandy.

Nasr held van der Zande at bay to win by less than a second, with Jaminet a close third after posting the fastest lap during the final stanza. Deletraz trailed home fourth.

Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas won GTD Pro in the Heart of Racing Aston Martin after the Corvette of Tommy Milner/Nicky Catsburg agonisingly required a splash of fuel just two laps shy of the finish.

The LMP2 and GTD categories were afflicted by timing glitches, especially in regard to the minimum drive times due to the red flag. The wins were claimed by Luis Perez Companc/Lilou Wadoux-Ducellier/Nicklas Nielsen's AF Corse ORECA and the Winward Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3 of Russell Ward/Phil Ellis/Indy Dontje.

JEREMY SHAW



Rain stops play as Nojiri claims nominal win

SUPER FORMULA
SUGO (JPN)
23 JUNE
ROUND 3/7

Tomoki Nojiri was declared the winner of a shortened Super Formula race at Sugo that was called off after several crashes amid terrible conditions. The result was called after just 12 of a scheduled 51 laps, but only two of those featured any green-flag running as two attempts at getting the race going resulted in a pair of near-identical accidents at the final corner. Naoki Yamamoto had been first to go off there during the warm-up, and the resulting damage to the barriers led to a one-hour delay to proceedings. Yamamoto himself was unable to take the start owing to the damage to his car. After five laps behind the safety car, Kazuya Oshima was next to fall foul of the standing water at the long, uphill right-hander leading on to the start/finish straight, bringing out the caution just moments after the race went green.



Organisers made one final attempt to get the race going again, and not long after it was Sena Sakaguchi's turn to go off, his crash again leaving the barriers damaged. With no time to repair them in the 75-minute time limit, the race was abandoned, with poleman Nojiri leading home Ayumu Iwasa in a Mugen 1-2. Sho Tsuboi (TOM'S) rounded off the podium in third ahead of Autopolis winner Tadasuke Makino (Dandelion Racing), Toshiki Oyu (Inging) and Kenta Yamashita (Kondo Racing), with the top six all finishing in grid order. Despite half-points being awarded, Nojiri's second win of 2024 means he

now leads the standings by 6.5 points from Red Bull junior Iwasa, while Makino slips to third, nine points down. Toyota junior Hibiki Taira, making his Super Formula debut in the Impul seat that was filled by Theo Pourchaire and then Ben Barnicoat for the season's first two races, finished in 17th place having started in 19th. Impul is believed to be in talks for a foreign driver bringing a budget to join the team from next month's fourth round at Fuji onwards.

JAMIE KLEIN
 Relive this race at Motorsport.tv

Pulling pushes on to pull clear

F1 ACADEMY
BARCELONA (ESP)
22-23 JUNE
ROUND 3/7

Abbi Pulling tightened her grip on the F1 Academy standings with victory in the opening race at Barcelona and a second-place finish last Sunday, in a race won with a commanding seven-second margin by Haas-backed Chloe Chambers. Alpine Academy driver Pulling arrived in Spain on the back of three consecutive race wins, and this streak was extended to four



when, after surviving a startline attack from Nerea Marti, she led the Tommy Hilfiger car to the flag trouble-free. This was aided by a lengthy safety car period that ran from lap one to seven after Ferrari's Maya Weug clattered into RB-backed Amna Al Qubaisi at Turn 5 and put both out of the race. For this, Weug was relegated to the back for race two. Chambers had finished third in the Saturday race but a perfect start in the second outing saw her jump Pulling off the line and through Turn 1, before putting in a dominant display to leave the rest trailing in her dust and take a maiden win. Doriane Pin returned to a race seat for the first time since fracturing a rib that forced her to withdraw from competing at the Le Mans 24 Hours. But a pair of dreadful starts denied her podium aspirations, and resulted in finishes of seventh and fifth. Pulling now leads the title battle on 147 points, with a 66-point gap to Pin and Chambers, the former ahead only through a second place-finish in Miami.

SAM HALL

WEEKEND WINNERS

- IMSA SPORTSCAR**
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
GTP Felipe Nasr/Dane Cameron
Penske Porsche Motorsport (Porsche 963)
LMP2 Luis Perez Companc/Lilou Wadoux-Ducellier/Nicklas Nielsen
AF Corse (ORECA-Gibson 07)
GTD Pro Ross Gunn/Alex Riberas
Heart of Racing (Aston Martin Vantage GT3)
GTD Russell Ward/Phil Ellis/Indy Dontje
Winward Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

SUPER FORMULA
SUGO (JPN)
Tomoki Nojiri
Team Mugen (Dallara-Honda)

- F1 ACADEMY**
BARCELONA (ESP)
Race 1 Abbi Pulling
Rodin Motorsport
Race 2 Chloe Chambers
Campos Racing

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GRANADA/SPAIN



Advantage Foster after double win

INDY NXT
LAGUNA SECA (USA)
22-23 JUNE
ROUND 6/12

Louis Foster was untouchable in the Indy NXT double-header at Laguna Seca. The 20-year-old Briton went lights-to-flag from pole in both 35-lap races for Andretti Global to sweep the weekend. He was forced to fend off HMD Motorsports rookie Caio Collet in both encounters, but coasted to an 8.2-second win in race one, followed by a margin of 4.4s in race two.



Sun shone on Foster in California

CHRIS JONES/IMS PHOTO/PEC

The performances have left Foster with a series-leading four wins for the year so far and have also vaulted him into the championship lead. He now sits 35 points ahead of rival Jacob Abel in the overall standings.

“Andretti has given me an amazing car, I’m just out there doing my thing,” Foster said. “It’s been a great weekend. Sunny skies in California, you can’t ask for anything more. Super-happy with that. We’ve worked really hard to be here, so I am really happy it’s paying dividends now.”

Abel came into the weekend as the championship leader and claimed the final spot on the podium in the opening race following a mistake at the final corner by Abel Motorsports team-mate Yuven Sundaramoorthy. But an ill-timed pass in the famed Corkscrew while battling Reece Gold for third led to contact and a drive-through penalty in race two, relegating him to 11th. The incident helped elevate Andretti Global rookie Bryce Aron to third and his first Indy NXT podium.

JOEY BARNES

WEEKEND WINNERS

- INDY NXT**
LAGUNA SECA (USA)
Races 1 & 2 Louis Foster
Andretti Global
- FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN**
HUNGARORING (HUN)
Races 1 & 2 Tuukka Taponen
R-ace GP
- INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN**
HUNGARORING (HUN)
Race 1 Simon Reicher/Christopher Haase
Eastalent Racing Team
(Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)
Race 2 Simon Connor Primm/
Leonardo Pulcini
Oregon Team
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2)
- NASCAR CUP**
NEW HAMPSHIRE (USA)
Christopher Bell
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Camry)

POWERED BY

For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Rain or shine, Taponen finds a Finn edge

FORMULA REGIONAL
EUROPEAN BY ALPINE
HUNGARORING (HUN)
22-23 JUNE
ROUND 4/10

Tuukka Taponen was the star of Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine’s Hungaroring round, taking poles and wins in the wet and the dry.

It initially looked like Van Amersfoort Racing’s Brando Badoer would be the benchmark driver after topping pre-event testing and practice, but when rain came on Saturday it massively reduced the grip and visibility, and that’s where Taponen’s Finnish upbringing proved advantageous.

The Ferrari junior did spin in qualifying for race one, but claimed pole in a direct fight against Badoer. His R-ace GP team-mate Zachary David topped the other qualifying group, meaning he started second. There was no battling between the pair during the race, with Taponen managing a small gap until David started to come under pressure from Badoer. At that point he



Taponen won both races at the Hungaroring

DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY

pulled away, and won by 3.1 seconds.

In David’s defence against Badoer, one move earned him a five-second penalty and he’d also jumped the start, meaning a 10s penalty in total, dropping him from second to seventh. That promoted Prema’s points leader Rafael Camara to third, the Ferrari junior’s seventh successive podium.

Sainteloc Racing had its three cars disqualified for breaching technical regulations. The French team has appealed.

Taponen started Sunday by beating Camara to pole by 0.056s and had a similar path to victory in race two, pulling away but only as his rival focused on defence.

Camara lost second to team-mate Ugo Ugochukwu at the start, and after eventually getting back past him then had to hold off Badoer. Having gained a podium post-race the day before, this time he lost one as a 5s penalty for contact with Ugochukwu demoted him to sixth and reduced his lead over Taponen to a still substantial 46 points.

Michael Belov failed to score on his series return with Trident, while Isaac Barashi shunned a planned GB3 debut to join MP Motorsport and finished his first FRECA race in 26th.

IDA WOOD



SPA 24 HOURS AT 100 MILESTONE MOMENTS

As Belgium's famous enduro hits a century, we pick out some of the key events since it all kicked off in 1924

GARY WATKINS



2021 Nothing ventured, nothing gained

The Iron Lynx Ferrari team looked home and dry in 2021 as the race entered the final hour. Its AF Corse-run 488 GT3 Evo driven by Alessandro Pier Guidi, Nicklas Nielsen and Come Ledogar had been on top for much of the race and had a clear margin over the second-placed WRT Audi R8 LMS GT3 shared by Dries Vanthoor, Kelvin van der Linde and Charles Weerts. But with rain in the air, WRT boss Vincent Vosse made what appeared to be an outrageous gamble.

With 50 minutes left on the clock, Vanthoor came in for the car's final pitstop and was sent out on wet-weather tyres – on a bone dry track. It wasn't raining anywhere around the 4.35-mile

length of the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. But it was in the immediate vicinity of the track.

WRT had an army of spotters on bikes circling the track in contact with the pits by radio. Vosse was getting reports that it was raining "200 metres from the circuit" and the Belgian team, whose high command of Vosse, Thierry Tassin and Pierre Dieudonne had seven Spa 24 Hours wins between them, "knew exactly where the weather was coming from and where it was going". Hence why Vanthoor was sent out on grooved rubber that came into its own when the heavy rain came halfway around his out-lap.

The gamble, reckons Vosse, panicked the

Ferrari team. That explains why it waited for a lap to bring in Pier Guidi, and a 20-second advantage turned into a deficit of just over a minute. The rain inevitably triggered a safety car. When the race went green with 27 minutes to go, sadly for WRT only a handful of cars sat between Vanthoor and Pier Guidi. The Italian hunted down the leader and took the lead with a breathtaking manoeuvre around the outside at Blanchimont with 10 minutes to go.

Vosse insists he wasn't disappointed: "It was one of those races where you do everything right, but you aren't fast enough. It was a fun call to make at the end. No regrets."



Whatever you do, don't stall. Start in 1971 as Camaro, Alpina BMW and Cologne Capri head the way



Local knowledge almost cost Iron Lynx the race

1924 How it all began

The Spa 24 Hours might be regarded as a copycat race, its inauguration following one year on from the first running of Le Mans in 1923. Yet there had been an enduro on the new Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps in 1922. A 40-lap event on the 9.31-mile road track established with a motorcycle race the previous year attracted 12 cars, all with four seats and a riding mechanic as per the regulations.

But Spa never quite emulated its French cousin. The economic crisis of the 1930s meant it didn't take place in either 1935 or 1937 - it alternated with the Belgian Grand Prix in that period. Reborn a year

before Le Mans after World War II, the race lapsed after the 1948 and 1949 editions before it was revived in 1953 as part of the inaugural World SportsCar Championship.

A total of 60 cars took the start at Le Mans, just 39 at Spa. Sharing the grid with the Jaguar C-types and Ferrari 375MMs were a smattering of touring cars - some Fiat 1100s and Borgward 1800s. The crowd was disappointing, and the Spa 24 Hours disappeared from the international calendar.

For the record, Henri Springuel and Maurice Becquet won the opening Spa 24 Hours in a Bignan on 20 July 1924.

1984 Jaguar finally does it

Jaguar and Tom Walkinshaw Racing had been trying to win the Spa 24 Hours as part of its European Touring Car assault since 1982 to no avail. The pressure was on in 1984 and the XJS finally delivered victory in the big one – and in its 60th anniversary running – with team boss Tom Walkinshaw, Win Percy and Hans Heyer.

The Big Cat claimed the historic win by three laps from the Juma Racing BMW 635CSi shared by Thierry Tassin, Alain Cudini and Dany Snoeck. It wasn't all plain sailing, however. Walkinshaw twice lost time in the dreadful conditions that marred the night-time running. First he was held by a red light at the end of the pitlane and then, when only 20s behind the Juma car, it was he who was picked up by the safety car and not the leader. His fury doesn't bear thinking about!



Tom, Hans and Win... win.
Next stop for Jaguar, the
other big classic: Le Mans

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



FOX/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

2001 Race reborn with FIA GTs

The Spa 24 Hours had a problem after its 1980s and early-1990s glory years in the touring car era. Tin-top racing was changing, and in a direction not favourable to arguably its biggest race. What became Super Touring, the made-in-Britain two-litre formula that sounded the death knell for the homologation special, resulted in a breed of cars that were neither designed nor suitable for endurance racing. It took a while but it resulted in a seismic shift that took the Belgian enduro back to its sportscar origins.

“Those cars were designed for sprint racing and the manufacturers were reluctant to do Spa,” recalls Pierre Dieudonne, a two-time winner at Spa who worked for race organiser the Royal Automobile Club de Belgique as a consultant in 1994-2000. Among the ideas he came up with was an experimental class dubbed the EcoTech Challenge: its importance lies in bringing diesel machinery back into sportscar racing rather than saving Spa as a touring car fixture. By the turn of the century, the promoters of the event, Jean-Francois Chaumont and Josse Dekens, decided to knock on Stephane Ratel's door. From 2001, the 24 Hours became a round of the FIA GT Championship.

“It was like a dream come true: we were being offered a major event with a big crowd, even if it was artificial because of all the tickets the race sponsors gave away,” explains Ratel, who was still in the process of relaunching his series following its near-collapse after the end of the GT1 era in 1998. “Every series needs a big event. FIA GTs was starting to grow again, but we didn't have that.”

FIA GTs ran to a three-hour format for GT1 and N-GT machinery, but there were few concerns about adding a race of eight times that duration. “The manufacturers thought it was good news and so did the teams,” says Ratel. “There was certainly no doubt in my mind that it was the right thing to do.”

And so began a new era for Spa as a double-points FIA GT round. Chrysler, Ferrari, Maserati and Porsche (with a secondary class N-GT car) would all triumph during this period. There was, however, a concession to the format of the regular races. The quarter points awarded at six and 12 hours, which remain to this day, were put in place due to early fears over the reliability of the cars.



Ferrari wins again at Spa
as Lilian Bryner (inset)
soaks up the moment

2004 Bryner makes history in Ferrari duel

Lilian Bryner posted a major achievement at the Spa classic in 2004: she became the first woman to win a major sportscar 24-hour race. The Swiss amateur, a stalwart of the GT racing scene alongside partner Enzo Calderari, triumphed in a BMS Scuderia Italia Ferrari 550 Maranello GTS they shared with Fabrizio Gollin and Luca Cappellari.

Bryner and her team-mates came out on

top in an all-Ferrari battle, though not between two of the Prodrive-built 550s that were so important to the resurgence of FIA GTs at the start of the new century. Spa 2004 turned into a fight between the 'British' Ferrari and its factory-sanctioned equivalent, the 575 GTC. The GPC Squadra Corse entry with Mika Salo, Fabio Babini, Vincent Vosse and Philipp Peter driving was the quicker car, but the Spa gods

didn't smile on them that weekend.

A broken diffuser did for their chances. Five minutes lost to repairs lost them a one-lap lead and then some, and the hobbled car, with the rear wing jacked up to regain some downforce at the back end, eventually lost out by a lap. Ferrari still took its first Spa 24 Hours victory since 1953, and Bryner achieved something that has yet to be emulated.



Little and large: Mini
Cooper S and Mercedes
300 SEs in action, 1964

1964 Touring car recharge

Paul Frere is rightly regarded as the father of the Spa 24 Hours in its touring car iteration. He came up with the idea of reviving the race and communicated his thoughts to the RACB. The result was a tin-top race on the traditional end of July weekend in 1964.

Frere had opted to retire from racing after winning Le Mans with countryman Olivier Gendebien at the wheel of a Ferrari 250 Testa Rosa. That didn't stop him turning out in the odd event, the 1962 and 1963 editions of the Nurburgring 12 Hours tin-top events included. These may or may not have sown the seed of what might be possible at Spa.

As a journalist, however, he had close links with the motor industry and was testing all the new sporty saloons rolling off the production lines in the boom years that followed the post-war slump. "Paul understood the needs of the automotive industry and was testing all these new cars," says Pierre Dieudonne. "It was perhaps natural that he should propose a kind of big race for these cars."

His ideas coincided with the launch of the European Touring Car Championship, which also came on stream in 1964. The history of Spa and the series known simply as the ETC would be intertwined until deep into the 1980s.

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Soper (far left) stuck around for podium. The new daughter can wait!

1992 The greatest finish?

Showered and shaved, suited and booted, Steve Soper announced to the Rafanelli team that he was off home. There were still a handful of hours to go, and the BMW M3 Evo he was sharing with Christian Danner and Jean-Michel Martin was firmly in second place, but he had to get back home to London to see his newborn daughter. Team boss Gabriele Rafanelli had other ideas: he wanted his star driver back in harness. What followed led to one of the most dramatic finishes in the history of the Spa 24 Hours.

“I wanted someone angry enough to drive like crazy and get the car to the front to win the 24 Hours,” recalls Rafanelli. “Steve was that man. I told him he was getting back in the f***** car!”

Soper had to overcome a deficit of nearly two laps to the leading Schnitzer M3 shared by Eric van de Poele, Jo Winkelhock and Altfred Heger when he climbed aboard. One of those laps was clawed back when the leading M3 needed a new driveshaft with just under two hours remaining. Van de Poele had pitted just before he could go to the end without the need for a splash, Schnitzer instructing its driver to eke out his fuel.

It gave Soper the scent of victory, his heated discussion with Rafanelli probably helping his charge: “When I did get in I was probably more hyped up and aggressive than I normally would have been. At the start of my stint I was probably taking two or three seconds a lap out of the leader, then all of a sudden it was five, six or more.”

“The team were telling me to stick to 7500rpm, which was nothing,” recalls van de Poele. “But I had no choice; the team would have killed me if I had run out of fuel.”

Van de Poele’s cause wasn’t helped by the failure of the pits-to-car radio. The information he was getting came from the pitboard and was therefore “a lap out of date”. With a radio, the most successful driver in the history of the 24 Hours with five victories is insistent he could have held on to win.

Soper caught the Schnitzer car at the old Bus Stop chicane on the penultimate lap, gave him the slightest of nerfs and got a run down to La Source. Van de Poele had got an ‘ATTACK’ board as he passed the pits and trailed him across the line by 0.49s. His pace – he remembers setting the car’s second fastest race lap at the death – belies the idea that the car was about to run out of fuel and that its driver was shot.

Van de Poele collapsed after trying to get out of the car and missed the podium. He hadn’t been given a drinks bottle when he got in, but he reckons that had no effect on his driving. “I think,” he says, “I proved that on the last lap.”



Classic era as BMW M3s to go to war. Soper claimed one of his best wins



AUDIAG



From left: Ekstrom, Scheider, Vosse and Franchi in 2011

HOCH ZWEIF



Audis didn't just win at Le Mans. R8 LMS gave the car maker another string to its bow. WRT won in 2011

2011 Another new era arrives with GT3

The Spa 24 Hours boomed – and continues to boom more than a dozen years later, witness the centenary edition's 67-car grid – after what might seem like an obvious decision ahead of 2011. Yet making the enduro GT3-only wasn't initially in the plan when Stephane Ratel restructured his realm of GT racing in 2010.

That was the year of the launch of what turned out to be the short-lived FIA GT1 World Championship. Alongside a series based on the format of two one-hour sprints he'd pioneered in GT3, his eponymous organisation started a new series for the GT2 machinery that had been part of the grid in FIA GTs. Even with the Spa blue riband at its centre, the FIA GT2 European Championship was stillborn. The Belgian enduro would be the one and only round of what was downgraded to cup status, won by a Scuderia Italia Porsche 911 GT3-RSR driven by Romain Dumas, Jorg Bergmeister, Wolf Henzler and Martin Ragginger. "It didn't work because all the GT2 competitors wanted to race with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest in the Le Mans Series," explains Ratel. "I think maybe at one point we had six or eight cars ready to sign up, but everyone else was looking at the LMS."

Ratel had to think again and his mind turned to GT3, a category he'd never envisaged for endurance racing when he'd created it with the FIA for 2006. But it had been part of the grid from year two of its existence, initially

in a bizarre manifestation. GT3 machinery would take part in three-car relay teams competing for the Coupe du Roi manufacturer's prize.

There were only two takers, but a year later there were multiple entries and a further 12 months down the line an Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo run by the Phoenix team took third. GT3 machinery could go the distance. Ratel credits Michelotto Engineering, which was just launching the first officially sanctioned Ferrari GT3 car, the 458 Italia GT3, for sowing the seeds of the idea of a swap of category.

"I remember Luigi Dindo [Michelotto's technical director] coming to me and saying, 'But you don't do endurance anymore. That's what our clients like.' It all happened very quickly, and everyone was up for it."

SRO launched the Blancpain Endurance Series with Spa at its centre without FIA sanction (it had done an exclusivity deal with the ACO ahead of the relaunch of the World Endurance Championship for 2012). The series took off immediately. There were 30-plus cars for the series opener at Monza in April, and three months later 54 of the 62 cars on the grid at Spa were GT3s. It really was the obvious thing to do.

NEXT WEEK
Spa 24 Hours report
4 July issue

SUPER TOURING POWER IS BACK FOR MORE

Twelve months on from the first tremendously successful celebration of the 1990s racers, Brands Hatch is set to echo again to the much-loved two-litre tin-tops of yore

TOM HOWARD



Almost 25 years since its demise, the love for tin-top racing's halcyon Super Touring era remains as strong as ever. Last year, Brands Hatch managed to successfully recapture the spirit of the 1990s with its Super Touring Power homage to a period when touring car racing was truly box office. Following the inaugural event's overwhelming success, which reunited British Touring Car Championship superstars Alain Menu and Paul Radisich with their famous cars, it's back by popular demand for a second edition this weekend.

Brands Hatch owner MotorSport Vision and the Classic Touring Car Racing Club have again combined to deliver a nostalgia hit. Once again, the Indy and Grand Prix Circuit layouts will play host to a packed schedule of touring car races featuring cars from the early 1960s, via Group A to BTC Touring regulations. While the Super Tourers will headline the action, this year a special Group A race joins the schedule to cater for the likes of the mighty Ford Sierra RS500 Cosworths and BMW M3s.



Cleland's 1995 title-winning Cavalier will hit the track

JEP

STARS AND CARS

When it comes to Super Touring greats, Laurent Aiello was among the best of the period and is this year's headline special guest. The Frenchman won the 1999 BTCC crown driving a Ray Mallock-prepared factory Nissan Primera in what was his only season in championship, but his haul of 10 wins left an indelible mark as he beat team-mate David Leslie to the title. Not only did Aiello enjoy success in the BTCC, he also starred for Peugeot, taking the 406 to the German Super Tourenwagen Cup title in 1997, winning 20 races across a three-year spell. During that period, he also took victory in the 1998 Le Mans 24 Hours with Porsche.

Joining the cast of BTCC champions is 1989 and 1995 title winner John Cleland. The much-loved Scot became a household name during the Super Touring era thanks in part to his role in the infamous 1992 title showdown against Steve Soper and Tim Harvey, but the Vauxhall stalwart's greatest success came in 1995, when he piloted a factory RML-developed Vauxhall Cavalier to the crown. This car will also make the trip to Brands Hatch to take part in demonstration laps.

Cleland's 1992 sparring partner Soper is among the talent assembled to do battle around Brands, with the former BMW factory driver set to pilot a 1997-spec E36 that was raced in the Italian championship. Anthony Reid, the 1998 and 2000 BTCC runner-up, will race one of three Nissan Primers alongside current title contender Jake Hill, who took a clean sweep of all four victories driving the Richard Wheeler-owned Nissan at the inaugural Super Touring Power. Adding to the tin-top heroes are four-time BTCC champion Andy Rouse, former Mazda/Peugeot driver Patrick Watts and Vauxhall veteran Jeff Allam. The trio will join their contemporaries in sharing stories from the past on the Autosport Live podcast stage throughout the weekend.

40 YEARS OF RAY MALLOCK LIMITED

Respected motorsport and engineering organisation Ray Mallock Limited will celebrate its 40th anniversary at the event with a special



**Super Touring
machinery will
be back in action
at Brands Hatch by
popular demand**



BTCC (and here STW)
champion Aiello will be
headline special guest

display of cars from the past four decades. Founded in 1984 by Ray Mallock, who will be in attendance, RML was a regular presence on the BTCC grid during the Super Touring era before going on to achieve success in the World Touring Car Championship. RML ran the factory Vauxhall operation from 1994-96, and was also responsible for the works Nissan programme from 1997-99.

During the 21st century, RML ran the official works effort in the BTCC for SEAT before bringing Chevrolet to the domestic championship alongside its successful World Touring Car Championship campaigns with the American manufacturer. It was during this period that RML dominated on the world stage, with Yvan Muller and Rob Huff claiming world titles as part of a superteam that also included Menu. Huff is set to be reunited with his 2012 WTCC title-winning Chevrolet Cruze for demo laps as part of the celebration.

To complete this festival of touring cars, displays of famous machinery have been carefully selected to rekindle memories. Budding Aiellos and Menus will also be able to indulge themselves by playing vintage computer games from the period, with retro consoles loaded up with the *TOCA Touring Car Championship* and *TOCA 2* titles. 🌟

➔ P52 ALAIN MENU ON A GOLDEN ERA

➔ P58 TOP 10 SUPER TOURING CARS

TIMETABLE

SATURDAY 29 JUNE GP CIRCUIT

0900	Support race qualifying
1015	Super Tourers qualifying
1040	Support race qualifying
1135	RACE 1 CTCRC Pre-'83 and Pre-'66 Touring Cars
1155	Touring car demonstration
1210	RACE 2 CTCRC Classic Thunder
1240	RACE 3 Clubmans Sports Prototypes
1310	Lunch break and spectator grid walk
1345	RACE 4 Super Tourers
1415	RACE 5 Bernie's V8s and Historic Outlaws
1450	RACE 6 CTCRC Group A/Pre-'03/Pre-'93 Touring Cars/Blue Oval Saloons
1520	RACE 7 CTCRC Pre-'83 and Pre-'66 Touring Cars
1550	RACE 8 CTCRC Classic Thunder
1620	RACE 9 Clubmans Sports Prototypes
1700	RACE 10 Super Tourers
1730	RACE 11 Bernie's V8s and Historic Outlaws
1805	RACE 12 CTCRC Group A/Pre-'03/Pre-'93 Touring Cars/Blue Oval Saloons

SUNDAY 30 JUNE INDY CIRCUIT

0905	Pitlane walkabout
1000	Support race qualifying
1050	Super Tourers qualifying
1115	Support race qualifying
1200	Touring car demonstration
1215	RACE 13 CTCRC Pre-'83 Touring Cars
1245	RACE 14 CTCRC Pre-'66 Touring Cars
1305	Lunch break and spectator grid walk
1335	RACE 15 Super Tourers
1405	RACE 16 CTCRC Classic Thunder
1435	RACE 17 CTCRC Group A Touring Cars & Pre-'93 Touring Cars
1505	RACE 18 CTCRC Blue Oval Saloons & Pre-'03 Touring Cars
1530	RACE 19 CTCRC Pre-'83 Touring Cars
1600	RACE 20 CTCRC Pre-'66 Touring Cars
1640	RACE 21 Super Tourers
1710	RACE 22 CTCRC Classic Thunder
1740	RACE 23 CTCRC Group A Touring Cars & Pre-'93 Touring Cars
1810	RACE 24 CTCRC Blue Oval Saloons & Pre-'03 Touring Cars



Current BTCC title
contender Hill swept
the board last year

Unbridled joy from Menu on clinching the 2000 BTCC crown at Silverstone with Ford...

SUPER TOURING'S TWO-COURSE MENU

As we gear up for Super Touring Power, it's time to look back with the only driver to twice win the BTCC during what is regarded as its golden era

MARCUS SIMMONS

Today, it's nice to be remembered and it's nice when I remember it, but, you know, it doesn't change my life. It's hard to say it was the top touring car championship in the world because it's not fair on some of the others, but it was definitely extremely high level with all the manufacturers, the money that was spent, the drivers were top class most of them, and we had huge crowds."

Alain Menu is talking of his status as the only driver to twice win the British Touring Car Championship in its halcyon Super Touring era of 1991-2000. What's more, he did it with two different manufacturers: Renault in 1997; Ford in 2000. It's a typically frank assessment from the 60-year-old Swiss. He hasn't changed a jot. He was rarely one for histrionics, but had – and still has – an easy charm, a twinkle in the eye that made him a joy to deal with – and perhaps belied the determination that had evolved through a tough road to the top of his sporting field.

Menu was blown away by his reception at last year's inaugural Super

Touring Power, although regrettably can't make this weekend's second instalment at Brands Hatch due to prior commitments. It reinforced this Anglophile's love for a country to which he initially moved in 1987, battling against a lack of finance through the domestic Formula Ford 1600, Formula 3 and Formula 3000 championships: "Most of my career was in the UK from Formula Ford, so I just love the UK and the public."

That Menu even raced in the BTCC was via an accidental route into touring cars, sparked – but then almost scuppered – by his own nationality: "At the end of 1990 for the last few races of the British 3000 Championship, I got help from the Marc Surer Foundation, and in 1991 Marc was in charge of all the BMW DTM drivers. BMW organised a test in the summer of 1991 in France. Marc pushed really hard to convince BMW to invite me to the test. Originally they were reluctant because of the size of the Swiss market; they were not interested in a Swiss driver. I went to the test, and Steve Soper was there as the benchmark and one of the judges. And then I just waited. I was waiting for months, you know?"

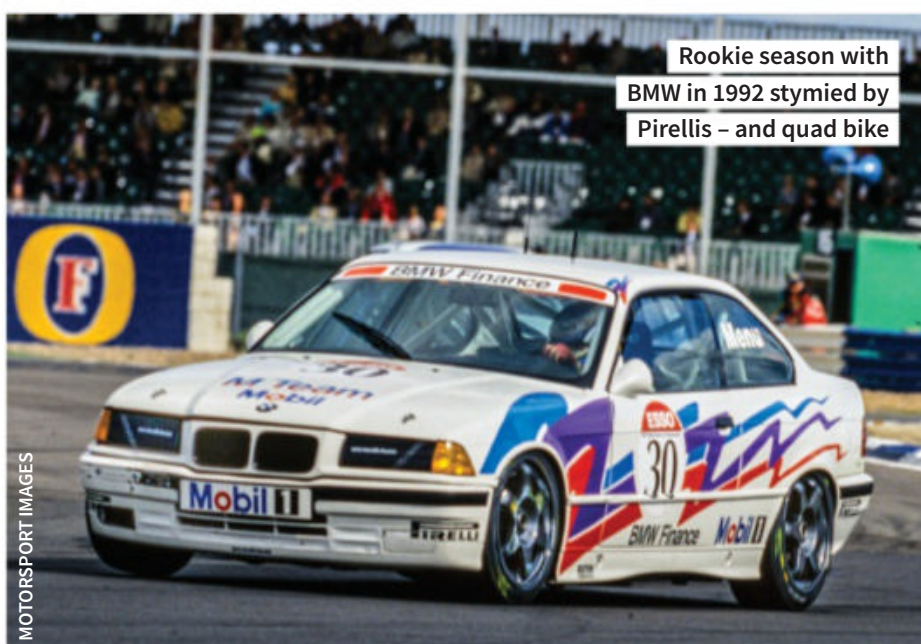
...three years after
completing the job at
Snetterton with Renault



GRIFFITHS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Rookie season with
BMW in 1992 stymied by
Pirellis – and quad bike



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“Just before that test I had no interest in touring cars. I was just dreaming of Formula 1. But I had no chance because I had no money. But then Marc called me and said, ‘I’ve got great news – BMW are going to sign you up to do the British Touring Car Championship next year, and – and – you are going to get paid!’ I would have driven for free.”

Menu contested two late-season rounds of the 1991 DTM, subbing for veteran Dieter Quester, and then headed for Prodrive, which would run him alongside Tim Sugden in the BTCC the following season. But the David Richards-helmed Banbury squad was hamstrung by its Pirelli

tyres, while the Vic Lee-run BMWs, including that of eventual champion Tim Harvey, were on the superior Yokohamas. “The team was really good but it was Prodrive in its infancy,” recalls Menu. “Even with the rally programme they must have had 40 or 50 employees max.” Two of those employees would later become instrumental in his later success at the Williams Renault team: “We had one race engineer who was Mark Ellis, and the team manager was Ian Harrison. But the tyres were crap.

“I remember at Silverstone [the British Grand Prix support], I was fighting for P4 with David Leslie and Tim Harvey and I lost the car with four or five laps to go, and I thought DR [Richards] will go mad at me. And it was the exact opposite. He was, ‘Fantastic Alain, you were pushing so hard, we know the tyres are not up to the job, don’t worry about the spin. Basically, you should not have been where you were fighting for P4.’”

But soon came Knockhill, where Menu had a quad-bike accident in the paddock, smashing his right knee and ruling him out for the rest of the season, and which “I’m still paying for 30 years later. Even if I walk for an hour or two it’s very painful for days. My problem is I had that in the summer of 1992, and then at Nogaro at the end of 1993 we went with the Renault 19 for the last round of the French championship, and I had a shunt and damaged the same knee again. I had surgery with one of the top surgeons in Europe, in London. He told me at the time he did a great job but ‘I’m not God so it won’t be as good as it was!’”

Crucially, the restructured knee never caused an issue when driving, even though Menu “never left-foot braked”. And his dropping by BMW was not related to any quad-bike shenanigans. “BMW had too many drivers for 1993, and even though I did a good job in that half-season they couldn’t offer me a contract,” he explains. >>

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Menu rates 1995 season as his finest BTCC campaign

But Renault UK was on the verge of entering the BTCC. Menu already had a relationship with the organisation through the company he had set up with wife Caroline to supply SNC racewear, and the new-for-1991 Clio Cup UK was a client. “Tim Jackson [the late head of Renault UK motorsport] contacted me early in 1992 before my Knockhill accident, and told me that it was still a secret at the time but we would very much like to enter the BTCC in 1993, and we are interested in your services as a number two,” he recalls. “I guess also because I spoke French, and people noticed that I had done a good job in the Pirelli-shod BMW. When Renault UK signed me up I was still on crutches. I had to go and see one of their own doctors before signing me, to make sure I was not telling them fibs and I was fit to drive. That was another piece of luck, that Renault decided at that time to enter the BTCC, otherwise my BTCC career would probably have been the six or seven races I did in 1992.”

Menu holds Jackson and Renault UK chief Michel Gigou in the highest regard, lamenting “it’s a shame because we won the championship in 1997 and Michel left Renault UK at the end of 1996”. Up until the end of 1994, the programme – initially with the recalcitrant 19, then with the Laguna – had been run by Giles Butterfield’s MCT operation, before Renault pushed the boat out for 1995 and recruited a new touring car offshoot of the Williams F1 team.

Here, Menu was reunited with team chief Harrison and engineer Ellis, not that he viewed this as entirely positive: “In 1992 I didn’t really

“I HAD TO GO AND SEE ONE OF THEIR OWN DOCTORS, TO MAKE SURE I WASN’T TELLING FIBS AND I WAS FIT TO DRIVE”



With Harrison, who put together Williams team

JEP



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

get on with Mark, because I thought he was very much Tim Sugden-biased. We didn't really get on, and we didn't keep in touch in 1993 or 1994. Ian was setting up the whole Williams touring car operation, and he asked me to come to his office, and he told me, 'We are getting Mark Ellis and I want him to be your race engineer'. And my answer was, 'No way'. 'Why?' 'Well, 1992, we didn't really get on, he was really with Tim.' He said, 'Listen, Mark really wants to work with you, we can win the championship'. I'm not completely stupid so I went, 'Yeah OK', and it was fantastic. Mark is top notch – he's the best I've come across."

Menu and Williams finished as BTCC runner-up in both 1995 and 1996 (he had also taken second place in 1994), before sledgehammering their way to 12 wins in 1997 and the title. Not only had Gigou left Renault UK, but Harrison had also departed Williams in order to become a director of the new Triple Eight Vauxhall team; perhaps his absence played its part in a tale Menu tells about the pre-season...

"There was massive development from Sodemo [the French company that built the Renault engines]," says Menu. "They came up with their own ECU and engine management system [to replace the Magneti Marelli kit used by the team]. We tested at Jarama and we kept having niggling issues with it. It would work and then it would stop and then it would have a misfire. At the end of the week they had to make the decision and I said, 'We've got a car to win the championship, we've got to hit the ground running, and with that system it's not ready yet – maybe it will be later on during the year, but right now it's not'.

"We all agreed, and then at the meeting nobody said anything! Bernard Mange was there, the big boss from Sodemo, and even Tim Jackson was there, and I had to say it. I said, 'Look sorry guys, but we cannot start like that'. And yeah, that didn't go down very well with the French, but I was right – we ended up winning the first four races." >>



"No chance" to beat Biela and Audi in 1996, says Menu

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On a hot weekend at Snetterton in August, Menu became champion. Was it a relief to finally be crowned after coming so close three times? “It was, but at the same time I knew it was coming maybe two weekends before. At the end of the day I hate losing more than I love winning, but when you’ve been second three times that means you’ve been competitive for three years in a row. And to win a championship you also need a bit of luck. I still think one of my best seasons, if not *the* best season, was 1995, my first year with Williams. But there we had some reliability issues, my car was finished the day before the first meeting. If not I would have won the championship in 1995, I’m convinced.”

Menu stayed for one more season with Renault in 1998, but that summer came news that he would return to Prodrive in 1999 alongside Anthony Reid (recruited from Nissan). The team had been given Ford’s works deal, with the plan of returning the Mondeo to the front of the field. All the talk at the time was of big-money contracts – perhaps stereotypically when we’re talking of a Swiss and a Scot – but, even now, Menu shrugs that off.

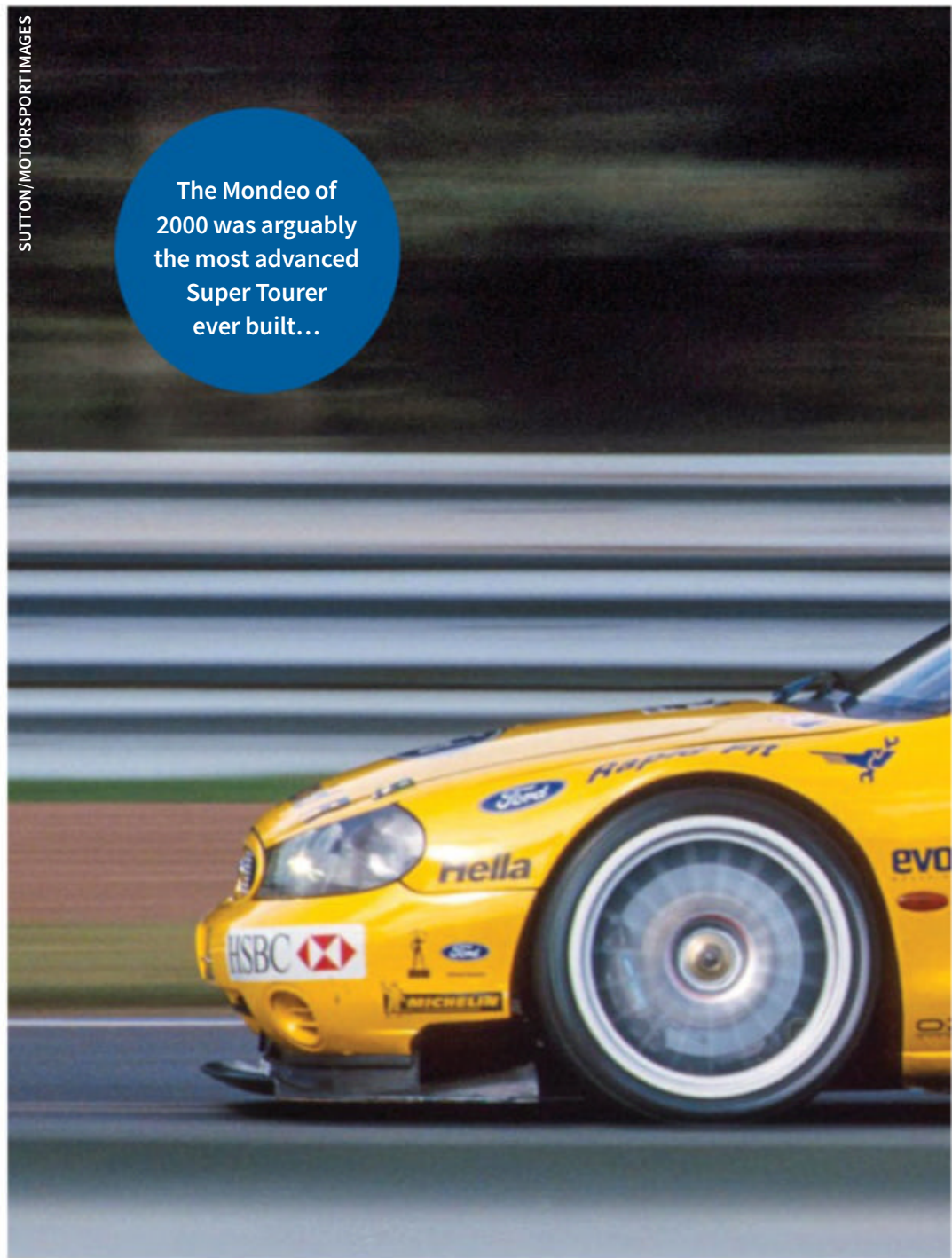
“I had kept in touch with David Richards and David Lapworth [Richards’s right-hand man and Prodrive technical leader] from 1992,” he recounts. “DR was trying to get me back for 1995 with the Alfa Romeos, and before that at the end of 1992 he was talking to Mercedes for 1993. I knew what the plan was, and they were going to do the engines themselves. It was like Williams – a massive undertaking. I was talking to different manufacturers, and at one point I had to make a decision, so I took an A4 sheet of paper and I did two columns for each manufacturer, with pluses and minuses. And the Ford one had I think 10 or 12 minuses and two pluses, and I ended up going there... It was a gut feeling. It was not money, because I asked every manufacturer for the same amount. Actually, Anthony probably got more money than me.”

As a prelude to the current BTCC-bestridding double act of Menu’s future protege Ash Sutton and engineer Antonio Carrozza, he insisted on Ellis – who went on to become a key part of Red Bull’s F1 domination – going with him: “Initially he wasn’t that keen, and I was really pushing. I was talking to David Lapworth about it. I said, ‘It doesn’t matter what it costs, you’ve got to get this guy’. And that made the difference, because the team is not just one person for sure.”

Menu took one win in 1999, before a winter of development led

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

The Mondeo of 2000 was arguably the most advanced Super Tourer ever built...



...and was able to brush aside bollards



J.BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



“I SAID, ‘IT DOESN’T MATTER WHAT IT COSTS, YOU’VE GOT TO GET THIS GUY’. AND THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE”

by Ellis and George Howard-Chappell produced an all-conquering Mondeo for 2000. He and Reid would also be joined by Rickard Rydell, on ‘loan’ from sister marque Volvo after its pull-out from the BTCC. The grid was small, but the competition was fierce between Ford, Honda and Vauxhall, and also within the teams themselves...

Menu’s second crowning as king of the BTCC, on a dark September night at Silverstone, was the polar opposite to his 1997 title. Three years earlier, it had always looked likely and his only intra-team opposition came from rookie Jason Plato: “It was massive because my two team-mates were top, top drivers. I’m not saying that Jason wasn’t, but 1997 was his first year. And then the last race was at night, and I don’t like racing at night – I’ve never been keen. Plus I went off in race one. I was behind the Armco thinking, ‘Shit, I’ve lost it, stupid’. And then I started to do the maths again and thought, ‘Oh no, maybe it’s still doable’. There was massive pressure going into the last race, so that was completely different to 1997 where I was totally relaxed, because if it did not happen for some reason at Snett then it would happen at the next race meeting.”

While Tom Kristensen won the last race of the BTCC’s Super Touring era for Honda, Menu was its final champion. An era had ended not only on-track, but also off-track. Menu became firm pals with Rydell, and says he also got on well with Renault team-mates Harvey and Will Hoy. But in a racing context he was a social loner. While his BTCC rivals played golf together, he preferred to spend time with his family.



Little harmony with Plato at first, but the pair are now mates

J.BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

“I was not part of the gang!” he laughs. “They used to go out for dinner together on Friday or Saturday. Tim tried to get me into golf in 1993, but I think I went twice – it was too frustrating. They would go out together for dinner before a race, all happy as Larry, and on a Sunday then they would shout at one another. I could not see the point.

“Everybody knows Jason and I didn’t have the best relationship – it was OK in 1998, but 1997 not. Now we are good mates. Anyway, driving back home from Snetterton, I’d won the championship, Jason had won his first race. And probably for 20 minutes Chloe [his daughter], who was three years old, was singing, ‘I love Jason, I love Jason Plato’. We could not help but laugh. Kids are great...”

TOP 10 SUPER TOURING CARS

Many machines had their moment in the sun during Super Touring. Here's our pick of the best – taking into account global success, not just the British Touring Car Championship

KEVIN TURNER



FOX/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

10

VOLVO S40

TITLES 1

HIGHLIGHT Volvo finally cracking the BTCC with Rickard Rydell's crown in 1998

Volvo made a big impact in the BTCC with the 850 SE/GLT estate, won races with the 850 saloon, and finally took a crown with the S40. The Swedish marque didn't manage to win the teams' or manufacturers' contest, but Rickard Rydell did enough in 1998 to take a well-deserved drivers' title.

The Tom Walkinshaw Racing-run S40 arrived in 1997. It showed some promise in the wake of Renault's domination, Rydell scoring three seconds and two thirds before a breakthrough victory at Brands Hatch.

Consistency was the key in 1998, although the season began with a stunning qualifying

performance by Rydell at Thruxton, where he took pole by more than a second. The Swede bagged points early on, and 12 other podiums to go with his five wins was enough to defeat Anthony Reid, who came on strong for Nissan.

The Primera was too quick in 1999, particularly in Laurent Aiello's hands, but Rydell finished as best of the rest with four wins before Volvo joined the BTCC exodus.

The S40 also starred during the brief period when the famous Bathurst 1000 was run for Super Tourers. Rydell teamed up with tin-top legend Jim Richards to win in 1998, pipping the Primera of Matt Neal and Richards's son Steven.

RYDELL SAYS "We didn't have the quickest car all the time [in 1998] but we were strong throughout. The short circuits were our biggest problem with the S40 – we were always good on circuits that had more quick corners than slow, so to go to Silverstone [for the finale on the slower International circuit] and be as quick as Nissan was good for the whole team.

"It was a big achievement for me and TWR, but I don't think people in Britain understand how important the win was for Sweden and Volvo. About 10% of the Swedish population watched the BTCC."



Tarquini's Accord often outpaced the Alfas in Europe

PHOTO 4/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

9

HONDA ACCORD

TITLES 3

HIGHLIGHT Tom Kristensen's dominant Silverstone double in 2000, the final BTCC Super Touring event

The Accord appeared in various forms – run by MSD, Prodrive, West Surrey Racing and JAS Motorsport in the BTCC – and won titles in Japan and North America. But it gets onto this list as much for the pace the final version showed towards the end of Super Touring.

Prodrive's Ford Mondeo was the car to have

in the BTCC in 2000, the final year for the ruleset in the UK, but the Accord won the last three races of the season. At the same time, Peter Kox finished second in the European Super Touring Cup behind Fabrizio Giovanardi's Alfa Romeo 156 before the cars got their last hurrah in the 2001 European Super Touring Championship.

Giovanardi became champion, leading Nicola Larini in an Alfa 1-2, but Gabriele Tarquini won more races than those two combined. The JAS Engineering driver's nine victories and six poles underlined the pace of the Accord, which was almost certainly the best Super Tourer not to take a major European title.

TARQUINI SAYS "From a driveability standpoint, the Honda Accord was a much better car than the Alfa Romeo 155 [he had raced before]. The Honda was a much better performing car, but the rules were also much different at this time; the engine was moved lower and the suspension was allowed to be different from the road car.

"With the Honda, it was like we always needed to find the last element. The first Honda we used came from Prodrive, and the first car was a fantastic car but it was homologated late without testing and the car wasn't ready; that meant it wasn't possible to change the homologation.

"Then, later on, we'd have a very strong engine but the chassis and suspension was not OK, so even if the drivers were very good, as we had myself, James Thompson and Tom Kristensen, even with this line-up and despite the effort that Honda made, we never had all the components right to win a championship."

Tarquini was speaking to Neil Hudson



Cleland and the Cavalier peaked in 1995 BTCC

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8

VAUXHALL CAVALIER

TITLES 2

HIGHLIGHT John Cleland beating eight other works-backed teams to claim the 1995 BTCC title

It didn't score huge success around the globe, but the Cavalier was a mainstay in the BTCC for the first half of the era. The front-wheel-drive machine also took John Cleland to the drivers' crown as the championship arguably peaked in the mid-1990s.

The first Dave Cook Racing version appeared in 1990 as the two-litre contest played second fiddle to the Ford RS500s. Cleland missed out on class honours to BMW's Frank Sytner, and it was a similar story after they took centre stage.

Cleland was again the top non-BMW driver in 1991, finishing second to Will Hoy, and only missed out on the 1992 crown in the dramatic

and controversial Silverstone finale. Team-mate Jeff Allam was also a race winner.

BMW and Ford proved faster in 1993, though Cleland still scored a victory, before RML took over the Vauxhall programme. Like everything else, the Cavalier was outgunned by the Alfa Romeo 155 in 1994 but Cleland won two races.

It all came together in 1995. The now bewinged Cavalier worked from the moment it arrived, and Cleland took six victories to defeat Renault's Alain Menu and Volvo star Rickard Rydell to the title. Vauxhall also took the teams' prize to add to its 1992

manufacturers' spoils before the Vectra replaced the Cavalier for 1996.

Elsewhere, the 'Opel Vectra' Mike Briggs used to win the 1995 South African title was actually what Brits would call a Cavalier, while Anthony Reid took wins Japan.

CLELAND SAYS "Dave Cook built a really strong car – you knew it was going to last. Ray Mallock only put on the cars what was really needed. Dave did a great job making the car competitive and reliable. He knew what he was doing, but Ray came along with sportscar experience and knowledge of aero. And he was really good on suspension.

"It was crucial we got the front end right. On an FWD it was all about the front. We did a test at Silverstone where we tried loads of splitters for 1995. There was one the team was convinced would be better because it had shown great numbers on the data. I'm no engineer but the one I said was best was the best on the stopwatch as well – and it wasn't the one they thought!

"The high-speed corners were never a problem, but with the wing and the splitters you knew you had more grip. You could also chuck it into a tight corner, always make the apex, and the tyres would last longer because you weren't sliding.

"We had Williams and TWR, with two of the best drivers in Alain and Rickard, and we beat them with this fleet car. The Cavalier kept us up at the sharp end."

7

RENAULT LAGUNA

TITLES 1

HIGHLIGHT Alain Menu recording the biggest BTCC championship winning margin in 1997

Like several other cars on this list, the Laguna didn't win bags of titles, but it did set the BTCC benchmark at a time when the UK-based series was arguably an unofficial Super Touring Car world championship. Eight manufacturer-backed teams were on the grid for the 1997 season and the Williams-built Laguna was the dominant car.

Alain Menu won 12 of the 24 races, clinched the title with six races to go and ended up finishing 110 points clear, which remains a BTCC record. Menu's rookie team-mate Jason Plato also won twice, and only missed out on runner-up spot in the standings by one point to Audi's reigning champion Frank Biela.

The Laguna had first arrived in 1994, built by MCT. It was a winner in the hands of Menu, who was runner-up to Alfa Romeo's Gabriele Tarquini,

and Tim Harvey. Williams took over for 1995 and the Laguna became an increasingly potent weapon, albeit sometimes an unreliable one. Menu was second in the drivers' standings twice more before his 1997 domination, and the Laguna took its final BTCC win in the hands of Plato in 1999, five years after it had first appeared.

Unlike some of the cars on this list, the Laguna didn't appear much elsewhere. It probably should have won the Bathurst 1000 in 1997 and did twice win the Tourist Trophy. But its 36 wins make it comfortably the most successful car of the BTCC's Super Touring era, and few modern tin-tops have achieved such iconic status.

MENU SAYS "It was a massive effort from Renault UK, from Michel Gigou, he was pushing.

He increased the budget, he gave [engine tuners] Sodemo more money, so there was loads of hard work behind the scenes in the winter of 1996-97.

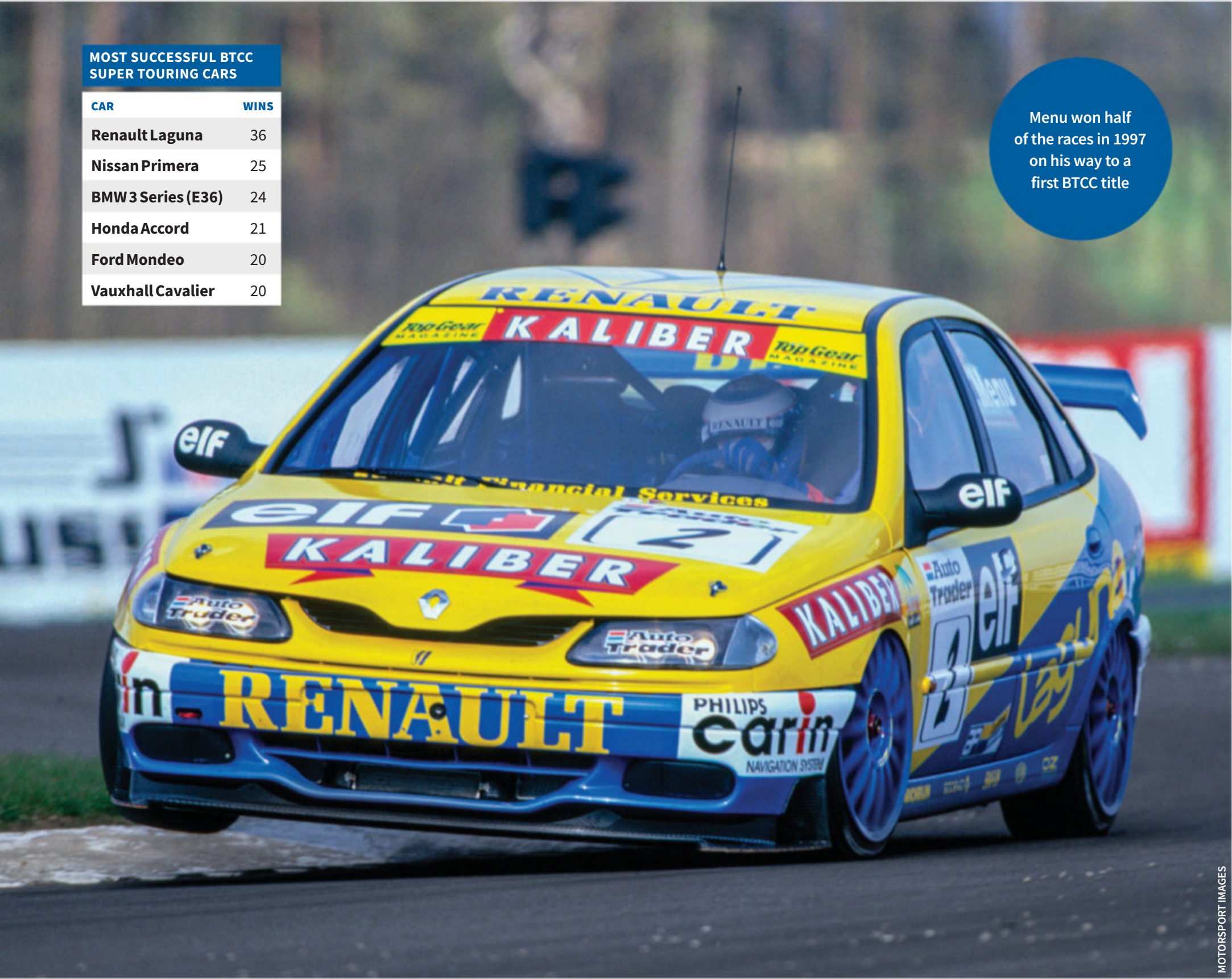
"And Williams, the team did an amazing job as well. I will never forget it – the very first time we tested the car was in Jarama. We were there for five days – in those days big budgets – and really, after two laps I knew we had the car to win the championship because the front end was so much better, to the point that in the fast corners the car was very tricky.

"The Laguna was really good the first third of the season maybe, but then some of the others caught up and at times we were not the fastest. We were just more consistent. In the second half we went through quite a few races without winning."

Menu was speaking to Marcus Simmons

MOST SUCCESSFUL BTCC SUPER TOURING CARS	
CAR	WINS
Renault Laguna	36
Nissan Primera	25
BMW 3 Series (E36)	24
Honda Accord	21
Ford Mondeo	20
Vauxhall Cavalier	20

Menu won half of the races in 1997 on his way to a first BTCC title



6

PEUGEOT 406

TITLES 3

HIGHLIGHT Defeating Audi, BMW and Opel on their home ground in the 1997 STW Cup

BTCC fans might be surprised to see a car that failed to win a race in the UK on this list, but we're not simply relying on the fact that the 406 was one of the best-looking cars of the era. The sleek Peugeot makes it in thanks to its success in the competitive German Super Tourenwagen Cup, though it also won titles in France and South America.

Laurent Aiello had been a race winner in the 1996 STW but Audi tended to set the pace, chased by BMW. Peugeot and BMW both jumped ahead the following year, and Aiello battled Joachim Winkelhock for the title. BMW took the manufacturers' laurels, but Aiello scored 11 wins from 20 races and only failed to make the podium three times to secure the drivers' championship.

Aiello fell just three points shy of retaining his crown in 1998, defeated by BMW's Johnny Cecotto, but the Frenchman and team-mate Jorg van Ommen racked up seven victories before Aiello and Peugeot looked elsewhere.

In the UK, the 406 was hamstrung with an aero package better suited to German circuits and a weak engine. The closest it ever came to winning in the BTCC was Tim Harvey's

wet-tyre gamble at Thruxton in 1997, when he finished just 0.7 seconds behind winner Tarquini's slick-shod Honda on a wet track.

The 406 was a race winner in Australia, courtesy of Patrick Watts, perhaps helping to explain why he bought one...

AIELLO SAYS "In 1996 we suffered with understeer and were hard on the tyres so we had to go towards an oversteering car. I'm not saying I wanted an oversteering car, but it was the only way to save the tyres.

"I was supposed to come to England to race one, but it didn't happen. I would have loved to have raced my 406 in England.

"I had a special race against 'Winki' at Salzburg in 1997. We had a big fight but so fair. He was driving incredibly. There was a fast corner and he was able to look in the mirror and see where I was to position the car. I learned a lot from that – he was perfect.

"We overtook each other several times without touching and eventually I won, so that is a good memory."



Aiello was a constant at the front in Germany

5

FORD MONDEO

TITLES 1

HIGHLIGHT Topping an international field to win the inaugural FIA World Touring Car Cup at Monza

Early in its life the Mondeo scored two FIA World Touring Car Cup wins and at the end it was probably the most sophisticated Super Tourer, arguably the ultimate expression of the breed. In between, the Mondeo had some difficult times and Ford's works programme moved around different teams.

Rouse Engineering's Mondeo appeared halfway through the 1993 BTCC season and Paul Radisich immediately became a frontrunner, winning three of the last five rounds and finishing a remarkable third in the standings. He closed the campaign

by winning the World Cup at Monza ahead of an international field.

Radisich was often fast in 1994, but not quite as quick as Gabriele Tarquini's Alfa 155 and some unreliability hindered his challenge. He still took two wins, third in the points – and finished the season by again winning the World Cup, this time at Donington, as well as the TOCA Shootout.

The bewinged 1995 version was less competitive, though did take a win apiece in the hands of Radisich and Kelvin Burt, and a Schubel-built version run by West Surrey

Racing arrived the following year. Ford slumped to the bottom of the BTCC table and the next two seasons weren't much better, even with Reynard involved, aside from Will Hoy's rain-affected victory at Silverstone in 1998 and Nigel Mansell's famous Donington cameo.

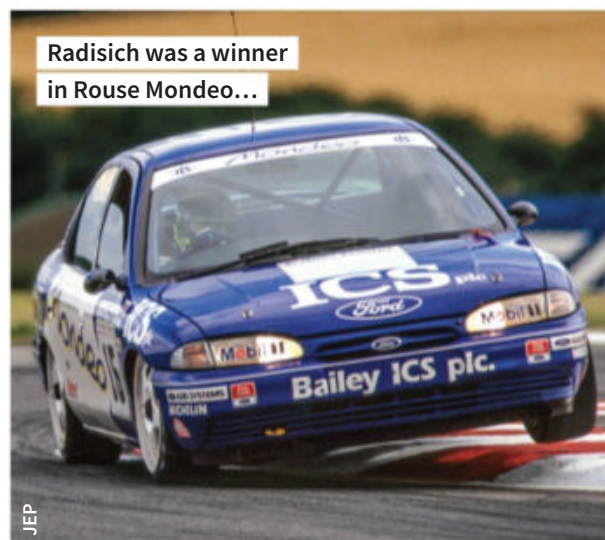
Prodrive took over for 1999 and, after a learning year, produced the final Super Touring version of the V6 machine. Menu, Reid and Rydell won 11 of the 24 rounds and finished 1-2-3 in the drivers' standings as the era came to an end in the BTCC.

MENU SAYS "The Ford was competitive, but it was not the quickest on every track. I remember the very first meeting at Brands Hatch, Yvan [Muller] was very quick in the race in the Vauxhall.

"I guess the car hit the ground running with all we'd learned in 1999, and what we knew needed to be improved. The guys did a fantastic job – they gave us the tool and I think it's fair to say that it was the best Super Touring car.

"It was not easy and we also had the weight – depending on your result you had 20, 30 or 40kg [of success ballast] added to your car for the next meeting. Once or twice I backed off just for the sake of having 10kg less for the next meeting."

Menu was speaking to Marcus Simmons



Radisich was a winner in Rouse Mondeo...



...while Menu was a champ with Prodrive

4

NISSAN PRIMERA

TITLES 2

HIGHLIGHT Taking 14 victories from 26 races across three drivers in the 1999 BTCC



Aiello and Leslie
led the way in 1999

The Primera was a winner in Britain and Germany in the first half of the decade but makes it this high up the list thanks to how it finished. RML took over the BTCC programme in 1997, produced arguably the fastest car of 1998, and then crushed the opposition the following year.

Anthony Reid and David Leslie scored nine wins in 1998, giving Nissan the best tally of all the manufacturers, but early-season engine issues and Rickard Rydell's consistent campaign for Volvo meant Reid missed the title by 15 points.

Reid joined Ford for 1999 and French star Laurent Aiello stepped in alongside Leslie. After a wobbly start, the newcomer proved the class of the field, taking 10 poles and 10 wins from 26 races. Leslie added three more victories to complete a Nissan 1-2 in the drivers' standings in a season that featured six factory-backed squads.

Nissan withdrew for 2000, but the Primera was still good enough to win in the hands of privateer Matt Neal, who had famously won at Donington the year before to scoop £250,000. Tommy Rustad also won the Swedish Touring Car Championship in his Primera.

Neal and Team Dynamics then took their

latest-shape version to the category's last hurrah in the 2001 European Super Touring Car Championship, managing a win and three other podiums against top-level opposition.

AIELLO SAYS "The Nissan had been developed for two or three years before I got there and you could tell. It was perfect right from the start, I just had to bring the car to me. It was a bit more understeery than the Peugeot and the first thing I did was put more power steering on the car.

"I remember we went to Thruxton to test and after five or six new-tyre runs I was 1-1.5s off David. I spoke to my engineer to try a race run but after three laps it was a nightmare, sliding everywhere, so I had to stop – no way to race like that.

"Between the test and the race I spent so long trying to understand and looking at the data. In qualifying I was close to David [less than a tenth] and then I won both races. When it came to the races the pace was there and I don't know why; we didn't do much to the car!

"There were so many things to learn. I would have loved to defend my title in 2000 but it was also good to be in the DTM as it came back."

3

ALFA ROMEO 155 TS

TITLES 4

HIGHLIGHT Revolutionising Super Touring with bewinged domination in 1994

The pretty 156 took one more Super Touring title and was a strong candidate for this list, but its predecessor had the bigger impact on the category. It changed the game.

By homologating 'add-on' wings and splitters, Alfa Romeo was able to push the aero boundaries with the 155 'Silverstone'. Alfa cleaned up in Spain, winning three titles in four years, but made its biggest mark in the BTCC.

Gabriele Tarquini and the works Alfa Corse team moved the goalposts when they arrived in 1994. Tarquini won the first five races on the trot, was eliminated from the sixth due to a multi-car shunt, and then missed the seventh at Oulton Park when controversy over the Alfa's aero appendages really kicked off and the team was told it had to run with its front splitters pushed in.

The size of the rear wings had been reduced as early as the third meeting at Snetterton, and following Oulton Alfa was allowed to run with the front splitters optimised until 1 July, after 11 of the 21 races.

At that point, the draconian weight penalty for the BMWs was reduced and other teams started introducing their own aero kits. Tarquini still added five podiums and

an eighth victory to take the title by a whopping 76 points.

The 155, now run by Prodrive, was outclassed in 1995 as the Class 2 aero rules were freed up to avoid more homologation controversy and everyone jumped on the bandwagon. Wings were here to stay and



Super Touring would never be quite the same again. The impact of the 155 can be seen on every other car in this list.

TARQUINI SAYS "The 155 was fun. It was built right at the beginning of the front-wheel-traction era and we were starting from a blank sheet of paper, and the car was built at the last minute.

"At the beginning, we had a lot of trouble with braking and with locking the inside front wheels, while in the rear we had a system to unlock the inside rear wheel manually, so one button was on the steering, the other on the gear lever. We had this new front-wheel differential from the Lancia Delta – so it was a very fun time as you could invent something new every week, and if it paid off you could have a difference of one second.

"The rear wing impact on the Alfa Romeo was zero, it was just so you could put a plate on it to eat your lunch! Even with the extension to put the wings higher, the downforce we got from it was zero. The front wings made a small advantage for the front brakes, so when we lost it we could feel the difference."

Tarquini was speaking to Neil Hudson

Audi and Biela swept into the BTCC in 1996, a year when the A4 won all the major Euro titles



2

AUDI A4 QUATTRO

TITLES 15

HIGHLIGHT Winning the three big European tin-top titles – Britain, Germany and Italy – in 1996

Four-wheel drive wasn't new and had already scored success in the period thanks to the Audi 80. But the A4 was one of the cars that pushed things forward as the competitiveness of Super Touring ratcheted up in the mid-1990s.

The solid A4, with its excellent traction and balanced tyre wear, was a winner immediately, Emanuele Pirro easily taking the 1995 Italian crown. Frank Biela led an Audi 1-2 in the FIA Touring Car World Cup at the end of the season, and a remarkable 1996 followed in which the A4 took titles in Australia, Belgium, Britain, Spain, Italy, South Africa and Germany, as well as winning the Macau Guia race.

Audi's UK attack was led by Biela in a new team under Richard Lloyd and John Wickham, and Biela won five of the first eight races. Perhaps predictably, the Audi was then hit with an extra

30kg, but Biela carried on racking up podiums and points. Three wins in the second half of the season and incredible consistency meant he still easily won the title at his first attempt.

Williams and Renault moved things on in 1997 but Audi remained a frontrunner, particularly in wet or damp conditions when traction was at a premium and when the 30kg was dropped after the early rounds. Biela and John Bintcliffe scored seven victories between them, and the German finished second in the table before Audi pressed on with the front-wheel-drive version of the A4.

That car, as driven by Yvan Muller in the 1998 BTCC, was never as effective, but the full-house 4WD A4 continued winning in Europe.

PIRRO SAYS "There was a lot of technology behind that car. Of course it had the quattro

technology, which gave it an advantage over a rear-wheel-drive car, which had an advantage over a front-drive car. There was the weight compensation to make things equal, but it was always difficult to know how much that should be.

"It was difficult to understand the value of the car if you weren't involved in the programme and saw all the development that went into it. Audi spent a lot of time reducing the friction in the differentials. That was key because the car was always a little slower on the straights.

"It was a user-friendly car. The 80 was good, but not really superior to everything else. There was definitely room for improvement on the aero.

"With the 4WD you could exploit the limit of the tyre grip. You could brake later and get on the power earlier. The advantage was on braking and turn-in."

Pirro was speaking to Gary Watkins

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Being the last on the brakes isn't just a test of skill, it's also a test of how much confidence a driver has in their brakes.

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Cecotto won the STW Cup with the BMW in 1998

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Winkelhock and Soper set the pace early on in 1993 with the Schnitzer 3 Series

1

BMW 3 SERIES (E36)

TITLES 30

HIGHLIGHT Johnny Cecotto's 1998 German crown, six years after the model first appeared

Title successes from Europe to Japan, via South America and Australia, plus outright victories in the Spa and Nurburgring 24-hour classics, make the only rear-wheel-drive car on this list an easy winner. Oh yes, and the 3 Series also won at Macau and Bathurst.

The E36 had a hard act to follow given the legendary E30 M3 was its predecessor, but was more rigid and adjustable, and made its own mark. Across two-door, four-door, 318i and 320i versions (all with two-litre powerplants), it was a frontrunner in touring car championships around the globe for most of the 1990s.

In the BTCC, the highlights came early. The UK programme, run by Vic Lee Motorsport, was the first to get the new model in 1992, such was the importance of the championship. After a shaky start, Tim Harvey came on strong and won six races in the ABS-equipped machine before clinching the title in *that* Silverstone finale.

Schnitzer took over the programme for 1993 and swept to a 1-2 in the table with Jo Winkelhock and Steve Soper. Not for the last time, BMW was punished for having the driven wheels in the right place with extra weight. "It didn't slow us down, it killed us," is Soper's assessment of the situation

at the start of 1994, which coincided with Alfa's arrival. Halfway through the year, the RWD BMWs were allowed to run lighter and the FWD rivals heavier, essentially halving the previous 100kg difference. Winkelhock and Soper duly reeled off five wins in the second half of the campaign.

Schnitzer was replaced by Gunther Warthofer's Nurburgring-based team in 1995, and there were no victories as increased downforce appeared to solve some of the woes of FWD rivals, but Schnitzer's return the following year brought five more wins before BMW left the BTCC.

Elsewhere, highlights included Soper's 1995 Japanese title against tough home opposition, Winkelhock completing a title hat-trick that same year by adding German honours to his British (1993) and Asia-Pacific (1994) crowns, and Johnny Cecotto pipping Peugeot's Laurent Aiello to the 1998 STW Cup summit. Plus, there were three Macau Guia victories, one more than Audi's A4.

The 3 Series was also robust enough for an extensive career in endurance competition. To four consecutive Spa 24 Hours victories were added overall successes in the 1995 Nurburgring 24 Hours and the 1997 Bathurst 1000.

The E36 even went on competing (and winning)

in Australia into the 21st century, after Super Touring had ended in Europe. No other car gets close for longevity or weight of success during touring cars' golden age.

SOPER SAYS "Traction was its biggest strength, though the later FWD cars evened that up, and the car had a nice balance.

"It was very progressive with the developments. Every year whatever you're racing they do more work on it, so it's always better than the year before. But the 1992 car was fun to drive. It had ABS, which none of the others had, and anything that gives you an advantage the drivers like!"

"Japan was my highlight. They were desperate to have BMW in there but didn't want us to win. In the scrutineering bay, the Toyotas, Mazdas and Hondas would go in one end and out the other, virtually without stopping. The BMW was in for an hour... It was very strong and lots of manufacturers were involved – and there were a lot of good drivers. That was satisfying. Schnitzer had no premises in Japan; they flew over the week before and prepared the cars out of the truck. What they achieved in those circumstances was phenomenal."

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- Conduct quality control checks to ensure finished graphics meet the highest standards of craftsmanship and durability.
- Assist with on-site installation of graphics at races and events, including international travel as required.
- Actively contribute to a positive and collaborative team environment, sharing knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

The Person

- Extensive experience in the preparation of vinyl graphics, preferably in a motorsport or automotive setting.
- Proficiency in operating Roland printers and related software, with a strong understanding of print processes and colour management.
- Skilled in Adobe Illustrator, with the ability to create and edit vector graphics to a professional standard.
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Verstappen to make
Goodwood debut



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Ricciardo is among the other past and present Red Bull drivers due to tackle the hill

KALISZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Verstappen plans Festival of Speed debut

GOODWOOD

Triple Formula 1 champion Max Verstappen will make his Goodwood Festival of Speed debut next month as part of a major Red Bull presence at the event.

Verstappen is due to drive the RB16B, in which he claimed the first of his F1 titles in 2021, up the famous hill at Goodwood on the Sunday of the 11-14 July event – and this car is one of seven Red Bull F1 models scheduled to be in action. His appearance will mark the first time in the event's history that the reigning F1 world champion will be in attendance.

The Dutchman's current team-mate Sergio Perez is down to drive an RB19 from 2023,

while team boss Christian Horner is also due to get behind the wheel, in an RB8 from 2012.

Former Red Bull drivers Daniel Ricciardo, David Coulthard, Mark Webber and Christian Klien are slated to pilot the other cars up the hill, including the RB1 with which the team made its F1 debut 20 seasons ago. The extensive Red Bull line-up will follow the world debut of its new, Adrian Newey-penned RB17 Hypercar on the Friday of the festival.

"In its 31-year history, this is the first time that the Festival of Speed has celebrated a Formula 1 team on this scale," said event founder the Duke of Richmond. "To have both the current drivers – not to mention the reigning world champion – the CEO

and team principal, as well as so many team icons is fantastic.

"Goodwood's motorsport events have always prided themselves on the access that they offer fans and I am delighted that Red Bull Racing has fulfilled our ambition by bringing together such an illustrious and outstanding group of drivers and cars."

Other F1 teams will also have a presence at the motoring extravaganza, with Ferrari, Mercedes, McLaren, Alpine and Williams all joining Red Bull. McLaren has announced that Emerson Fittipaldi will drive the M23 with which he won the 1974 F1 world title 50 years ago and Bruno Senna will drive his uncle Ayrton's 1991 championship-winning MP4/6.

Bike racing star Boast eyes switch to cars

CLUB RACING

Versatile motorcycle racing legend Peter Boast is planning a switch to four-wheeled motorsport in UK club racing this season.

Former British Superbike and Isle of Man TT competitor Boast was a multiple flat-track champion and professional speedway rider. He has recently started preparing for a switch to car racing, probably in single-seaters.

"I've turned 60 and have been racing motorcycles all my life, but I've always had an interest in four wheels," said Boast, who is the current rider coach for Marvel HCL Motorsport Honda competitor Franco Bourne in the British Superbike Championship. "It's about getting up to speed and I've got to start at the bottom."

"My aim is to get into historic racing. I'd love to go as high there as I can get."



Boast is looking at series like Formula Vee for his car debut

Boast, who has already started driving karts and at trackdays, is planning to run the car himself. Formula Vee and Formula Ford are likely

options for his debut, though he is also considering the 750 Motor Club's F1000 category and Radicals.

KEVIN TURNER



STEVE JONES

BARC launches Heritage programme

HISTORICS

The British Automobile Racing Club is drawing on its history with the creation of a BARC Heritage brand, launched at last weekend's Thruxton Historic showpiece.

The aim, which includes a reintroduction of the club's traditional shield logo, is to deliver events for classic and historic racing car owners alongside the BARC's ongoing commitment to the British Touring Car Championship, 20-plus club race events per year and the three Goodwood blockbusters.

The UK's oldest racing club was rooted in the Cycle Car Club of 1912, before it became the Junior Car Club in 1919, then

amalgamated with the Brooklands Automobile Racing Club in 1949. Brooklands did not reopen post-war, so the club's HQ moved to Goodwood, subsequently changing the acronym to 'British'. Following Goodwood's closure in 1966, the BARC moved to Thruxton in March 1968.

"We have talked for a long time about making more of the club's heritage," said CEO Ben Taylor. "The retro scene is very relevant and popular and, although BARC has the fabulous Classic Touring Car Racing Club, we haven't been properly represented in this space for a while."

"We are absolutely not looking to compete with the big historic meetings and festivals,

but may be able to offer something for those who want to go racing for fun, with their friends at decent circuits, for a fair price."

Long-time racer Rob Manger, the driving force behind the revival of the Jochen Rindt Trophy for single-seaters up to two litres that has headlined the Thruxton Historic meeting since 2021, will lead the BARC Heritage push.

"What I have learned from the JRT [above] is these drivers want to be able to race their lovely cars a few times a year," he said. "They don't necessarily want the bells and whistles of the big invitation-only meetings, or to chase championships, but like to feel that they are wanted and getting value for money."

MARCUS PYE

One-day CSCC entries close to record

CSCC

The Classic Sports Car Club came close to breaking its record single-day entry at the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit event last weekend, falling just short of the highest number achieved in 2020's post-lockdown boom.

The 290 entries were split across five grids, combining 15 of the CSCC's

19 championships and series, with three reaching – or close to – the circuit's 61-car limit. Despite the packed fields, the meeting featured very few incidents and finished more than half an hour ahead of schedule.

"The pull of the Grand Prix circuit is there," said club director Hugo Holder. "We were creative and made sure that the grids were full

because we wanted to make sure as many people as possible could actually have a chance to race on the GP track.

"We were creative with the starts – some were rolling, some standing, some split, some not split, and it worked really well. I think everyone was very mindful of what was going on, and there was remarkably little



MICK WALKER

CSCC grids were packed on visit to Silverstone

contact of any kind really, which was brilliant."

MARK PAULSON



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Halo, improved aero and new engine will be a step forward for GB4 drivers



GB4 to introduce new car for 2025, featuring halo cockpit protection

GB4

The GB4 Championship will introduce a new car for next season that will feature the halo cockpit head protection structure for the first time.

The Tatuus MSV GB4-025 will incorporate the chassis previously raced in GB3 since 2022, but which has been replaced by the UK's top-level single-seater championship for 2025. The decision by category organiser MotorSport Vision means GB4's new car will be a step forward from both a safety and performance perspective, although next year's challenger will be downrated from the GB3 specification.

These tweaks include a single-plane front and rear wing set-up with a shortened diffuser, while the championship will move away from the turbocharged engine currently used

in GB4 and British Formula 4, and will instead adopt a two-litre, four-cylinder, normally aspirated Mountune. It means the new car will mirror the current GB4 power-to-weight ratio, allowing the series to continue running drivers who are 15 years old, in line with other F4 categories.

GB4 was created in 2022 as a more budget friendly entry point into F4 racing, using the old Tatuus chassis that had previously been raced in Italian, German and Spanish championships.

MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer said: "The Tatuus MSV-022 GB3 car has been one of the most widely acclaimed packages in junior single-seater racing for quite some time and, in its new GB4 evolution, the car will maintain the championship's cost-effective focus, while offering a significant step forward in safety."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Ramyead 'OK' after Eau Rouge shunt

BRITISH GT

British GT's qualifying session for GT4 cars was cancelled last Saturday and the grid's starting order based on practice times after a sizeable Eau Rouge crash for Century Motorsport BMW racer Ravi Ramyead.

Ramyead had the accident halfway into the first 10-minute segment of Spa's GT4 qualifying and, although his injuries were light, the

BMW M4, shared with Charlie Robertson, was withdrawn from the race.

Century boss Nathan Freke said: "Firstly, Ravi is OK. It was a big impact. He had to go to hospital for some checks, he had a stiff neck and sore shoulder but was fine.

"He took a little bit too much kerb on the right-hand side at the bottom of Eau Rouge and unsettled the car. The car stood up to [the impact] very

well, too difficult to repair here but we'll get it sorted."

The qualifying session was not resumed due to barrier damage, and the starting grid was instead based on times from the second free practice session. This resulted in a jumbled order since many drivers, such as championship leader Jack Brown, had not set a representative lap time in 'pre-qualifying'.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

GOTZ FEARED FOR WIN

Maxi Gotz feared that his first British GT win at Spa last weekend would be lost after side-by-side contact with GT4 points leader Jack Brown when lapping the Optimum McLaren. The pair made contact at Les Combes as leader Gotz aimed his 2 Seas Mercedes to the McLaren's inside and, although both continued, Brown dropped two positions after cutting across the run-off area.

LUCKY ESCAPE FOR PRIBYL

Jason Pribyl was fortunate to escape with just bruising after a hub failure in Thruxton's Heroes of Formula Ford 1600 Sprint Cup finale last weekend threw a wheel and pitched his borrowed Reynard 89FF into a series of rolls on the exit of Allard. Marshals and rescue crews were swiftly on the scene, but the 19-year-old Chicagoan climbed out of the ex-Joey Foster car. Pribyl, currently second in the United FF1600 standings, a point behind Morgan Quinn, expects to be fit for the next round.

CHRIS MOORE MEMORIAL

Andrew Hibberd was the proud recipient of the British Automobile Racing Club's rejuvenated Chris Moore Memorial Trophy as winner of both 1000cc Formula 3 races at the Thruxton Historic last weekend in his ex-Chris Irwin Brabham BT18. These were the first standalone Thruxton races for the cars since 1970, when Chris Skeaping won the BARC Forward Trust finale. The trophy is named after promising Brabham and Lotus F3 driver Moore, who died of a brain tumour in March 1968, aged 25.

PORRITT'S CHEVRON B39

Chris Porritt raced his newly restored Chevron B39 in last weekend's Thruxton Historic Jochen Rindt Trophy headliner. The works development car (below) initially saw service in Formula Atlantic trim with Fred Opert Racing in 1977, but was also raced in F2 by Divina Galica at Donington. Porritt, who retains his B19 sportscar and FAtlantic B29, intends to acclimatise with an FA-spec 1600cc BDA engine, then upgrade to a two-litre BDX F2 unit.



BURTON BACK AT CENTURY

Gus Burton will return to the Century Motorsport fold to tackle the British Grand Prix-supporting Porsche Supercup event at Silverstone next weekend. Burton spent three seasons with the team, including taking the British GT4 title in 2021, and has been a race winner in the Porsche Carrera Cup North America this year. Burton joins current Century Carrera Cup GB racers George Gamble and Angus Whiteside in the squad's Silverstone line-up.

MALVERN'S HISTORIC BOW

Ex-Formula Ford and Formula Renault champion and current GT racer Scott Malvern is due to make his first foray into historic competition at Snetterton this weekend. Malvern, who has raced a Porsche in the Le Mans Cup this season, will drive an ex-works Lotus Cortina and Ford Capri RS at the new Snetterton Classic event.

McRAE'S 6R4 ON DONEGAL

The MG Metro 6R4 Colin McRae and Nicky Grist drove to class victory on the three-day Donegal International back in 2006 returned to Ireland last weekend with current owner Stuart Blair taking a trip across some of the famous stages (below), including Atlantic Drive and Knockalla. "We had it sympathetically restored mechanically and thought it was about time we brought it back over here and get the memories back," said Blair, who also had McRae's 1995 boots and gloves to wear.



Higgins takes the BHRC spoils on Argyll Rally in Triumph TR7

HISTORIC RALLYING

Mark Higgins and Carl Williamson topped the British Historic Rally contenders on a tough Argyll Rally on Friday and Saturday over fast and technical stages on the Cowal Peninsula in south-west Scotland.

Three-time British Rally champion Higgins was mighty in the Triumph TR7 V8 from David Appleby Engineering and took maximum BHRC points after outpacing the Porsche 911 of Seb Perez and Gary McElhinney. The result leaves Perez ahead on points after six of the 11 rounds, but Higgins is chasing into contention and could yet feature once dropped scores are factored in.

"This was probably one of the toughest UK Tarmac events we have done," said Higgins after 18 special stages on closed public roads. Their only scare came on stage three on Friday evening, when a heavy landing after a jump knocked an electrical

connection out and they coasted to the end of the stage before sorting the issue.

Perez ran a strong second but admitted that he was not as close to Higgins's pace as he would like to have been. Rivalling Perez until the middle of Saturday were Daniel Mennell and Richard Wise in their Ford Escort Mk2 after a stunning performance by Mennell on his first experience of a closed-road Tarmac event.

That was until the Escort got out of shape over a jump on the Loch Fyne stage and they clobbered a big rock in the undergrowth and ripped the back axle out of the car. Both crew members suffered broken ribs in the incident. Instead, rounding out the BHRC podium was another Escort Mk2 in the hands of Mike Simpson and Dale Gibbons.

Callum Black and Jack Morton won the event outright in their Ford Fiesta Rally2, almost two minutes clear of Euan Thorburn's VW Polo R5.

PAUL LAWRENCE

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A win-win situation

A quicker GB3 car being introduced for 2025 and a halo arriving in GB4 have both been well-received

STEFAN MACKLEY

“Wow, look at the aero on that,” was just one excited response from a current GB3 driver to the new generation of car that was unveiled earlier this month ahead of its debut in the championship next season. With more efficient aerodynamics, a boosted Mountune engine – producing 280bhp instead of the current 250bhp – and featuring the drag reduction system (DRS) for the first time, there’s no denying that the performance of the Tatuus MSV GB3-025 is going to be another step up for the UK’s premier single-seater category.

The MotorSport Vision-run championship made its maiden visit to the Hungaroring last weekend, where it also went toe-to-toe, so to speak, with its direct rival in the single-seater hierarchy in the shape of the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine, which offers a similar level of performance with its current steed.

Lap times in race trim showed that GB3 had the edge by around a second, although the usual caveat of differing track conditions means there is always going to be some contention around the true pace of each car. What can’t be in question, however, is that the 2025 GB3 car will be even quicker, which will only serve to further bridge the gap to FIA Formula 3.

The next step on the single-seater path is one that has already been reached by many GB3 alumni, including reigning

“Introducing the old GB3 chassis is essential if GB4 wishes to remain relevant”

champion Callum Voisin, Alex Dunne, Joseph Loake, Max Esterson and James Hedley from last term’s line-up.

“GB3 is a really important level between the F4 level and FIA F3,” says MSV chief executive Jonathan Palmer. “There is a big gap, FRECA is there but it’s not the perfect championship – I’m not saying ours is either but we’re certainly working very hard with our teams to come up with what we are very much intending will be the best championship between F4 and FIA F3 for 2025.”

This season GB3 has three overseas European rounds as part of its schedule, which has already included a trip to Spa in Belgium ahead of the first outing at the Hungaroring, with a return to Zandvoort in the Netherlands coming up next month.

Visiting more and more European venues used by F3, F2 and F1 has become a noticeable shift for the championship in recent

years, and Palmer has stated that five overseas rounds could feature on the calendar next season. Whether such a decision means GB3 starts to pull away from being a UK category is a debate for another time, but there’s no denying the ambition.

While the new machine is a boost for GB3, the old car will also have its uses further down the ladder, having only been in service since 2022. As first revealed by Autosport in this column in the 30 November 2023 issue, the current GB3 chassis will be downgraded and used for the GB4 Championship, a development that was formally announced this week (see News).

Since its introduction in 2022 as a more budget-friendly alternative to British F4, but using the older generation of Tatuus chassis, GB4 has attempted to carve out a space for itself in the UK’s single-seater landscape with limited success. The decision to introduce the old GB3 chassis is not only a logical one, but essential if GB4 wishes to remain relevant, because single-seater championships without the halo are becoming all but redundant.

“It’s clearly better and in fashion, so for both those reasons it was the time [to introduce the halo],” says Palmer. “It’s not the only reason, but certainly it was a contributory reason to bring our Gen2 GB3 car for 2025 because that releases the existing GB3 car to be downrated to a GB4 car, and that includes the all-important halo in terms of the standard of single-seaters at this sort of level.”

Numbers this season in GB4 have peaked at a slightly disappointing 16, although there’s no shortage of attempts to entice new drivers onto the grid. These include a €30,000 prize to the leading female driver in this year’s championship towards a spot on the 2025 F1 Academy grid, while the 2024 Ginetta Junior champion will receive a £50,000 scholarship towards a seat in GB4 next season.

While financial incentives are fantastic, it’s not always guaranteed that they will have the intended results. In fact, perhaps the biggest disappointment with GB4 so far has been that, despite £50,000 being offered to previous champions Nikolas Taylor and Tom Mills to continue their journeys up the single-seater pathway, neither was able to do so – which Palmer admits “is a shame”.

“It [GB4] hasn’t been as competitive as British F4 or as GB3, but nevertheless it has put them on the map, and we have had GB4 drivers like [Jarrod] Waberski who have gone on and done a pretty good job in GB3,” says Palmer. “It doesn’t change the fact that it is a very good training ground to develop skills.”

Running cars with a halo is a step in the right direction for GB4, and with GB3 set to introduce an even quicker car, on paper at least the latest changes from MSV seem like a win-win. 🏁



P80 HUNGARORING GB3 REPORT

Gotz and Tse finally rule the BGT waves

SPA
BRITISH GT
23 JUNE

There is no shortage of potent-looking crews in British GT in 2024. But, as the entry list was confirmed for this campaign, one looked at least as threatening as any other. Former DTM champion Maxi Gotz was paired with amateur Kevin Tse, who actually won on his British GT debut in 2021. And they'd race with the reigning champion squad 2 Seas in a Mercedes GT3.

Yet, somehow, heading into the Spa meeting last weekend, their best finish so far this year was seventh. And it wasn't due to a lack of pace. On the contrary, they had looked quick everywhere, and even took pole for the blue-riband Silverstone 500. But in the races – all of which were rain affected and jumbled – things persistently fell against them. Plus at the Oulton Park season opener they lost a front-row grid slot, and were sent to the back, for the maddening reason that the team called Tse in during the qualifying session before he'd set the required two timed laps.



At Spa they again took pole, and this time they got the clear run that they'd craved all year (ironically too, given Spa's reputation, even rain stayed away on race day). It therefore resulted in the outcome that had been threatened all year, a dominant Tse/Gotz win.

Things were fairly close initially during Tse's race-opening stint in Belgium but, as the mid-race handover pitstop approached, he edged clear by enough to make things comfortable, and Gotz subsequently stretched away further. The only minor drama was right at the end, when the Mercedes had contact with Jack Brown's lapped GT4 McLaren, as Gotz tried to dive past at Les Combes. But Gotz could triumphantly continue to the flag.

"Finally we got it," Gotz said. "We had in all sessions, all laps, good pace. We showed

the whole season good pace. So hopefully we will continue like that."

The closest challenge to the victorious 2 Seas Mercedes was from another crew having a breakout 2024 race. But in the case of four-time champion Jonny Adam alongside Giacomo Petrobelli in their Blackthorn Aston Martin Vantage, the breakout was in pace rather than points. One rarely gets rich betting against Adam in this championship, but this season he had been a footnote before Spa. Now it appears all are getting their heads around the new-for-2024 Evo package, and the Vantage at last showed its expected form.

Petrobelli said: "Learning the car has been a big thing. Clearly the Evo car is very different from the old car. It does have a very defined window where the tyres work really well. So understanding that has been

BMW BOUNCEBACK FOR GOUGH AND WRIGLEY IN GT4

British GT's GT4 race at Spa, just like GT3's, had a long-awaited breakout winner. Ian Gough and Tom Wrigley were outside contenders for last year's GT4 title and, with a switch to a BMW M4 with reigning teams' champion Century for 2024, much was expected. But results so far this year had been disappointing.

However, at Spa, matters suddenly came good, taking them all the way to victory. Gough stayed in range to vault into first at the pitstops, thanks to the Pro-Am runners' shorter minimum halt time, and Wrigley stayed out of reach for the remainder.

Yet don't think that they fell into this win through circumstance. The BMW had pace; indeed only the Mahki Lotus that finished last set a faster race lap. Only the Charles Dawson/Seb Morris Team Parker Mercedes threatened, but their charge was dashed by a track-limits penalty and they ended up fifth.

"The BMW's obviously a fantastic car, you can see the results it's getting in Europe," said Gough after his Spa win. "But the start of the season back in the UK it's been cold and wet and those aren't conditions that the BMW is particularly strong in. When it's right, we can deliver."

The GT4 race, on top of the truncated length, also had a jumbled grid. Qualifying was cancelled after a large Ravi Ramyeed crash at Eau Rouge (see News), so the starting order came from the 'pre-qualifying' second practice. As usual the grid was based on an aggregate of both drivers' best, but a good few racers hadn't set a competitive mark, or in some cases any mark, in that session. This was explained variously by waiting for the damp track to dry, and by a late red flag and full-course yellow. At least one admitted, though, they simply didn't think of the need to do it...

Championship leaders Jack Brown and Zac

RACE RESULTS

GT3

(36 laps) 1 Kevin Tse/Maximilian Gotz (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo, below);

2 Shaun Balfe/Adam Smalley (McLaren 720S GT3 Evo) +6.663s; 3 Rob Collard/Ricky Collard (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2); 4 Alex Martin/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini); 5 Ian Loggie/Phil Keen (Mercedes); 6 Matt Topham/Josh Rowledge (Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo). **Fastest lap** Raffaele Marciello (BMW M4) 2m16.190s (115.04mph). **Pole** Tse/Gotz. **Starters** 20.

Points 1 Martin/Mitchell 95.5; 2 Balfe/Smalley 92.5; 3 Collard/Collard 90.5; 4 Loggie/Keen 76.5; 5 Mark Radcliffe/Tom Gamble (McLaren) 66; 6 Morgan Tillbrook/Marcus Clutton (McLaren) 49.5.

GT4

(34 laps) 1 Ian Gough/Tom Wrigley (BMW M4); 2 Marc Warren/William Orton (Aston Martin Vantage GT4 Evo) +4.725s; 3 Jamie Day/Mikey Porter (Aston Martin); 4 Erik Evans/Marco Signoretti (Ford Mustang 2024); 5 Charles Dawson/Seb Morris (Mercedes-AMG GT4); 6 Adam Hatfield/Alex Walker (McLaren Artura). **FL** Gordie Mutch (Lotus Emira) 2m29.481s (104.81mph). **P** Freddie Tomlinson/Stuart Middleton (Ginetta G56 GT4 Evo). **S** 16. **Points 1 Jack Brown/Zac Meakin (McLaren) 102;** 2 Warren/Orton 99; 3 Porter/Day 98.5; 4 Dawson/Morris 76; 5 Gough/Wrigley 50.5; 6 Evans/Signoretti 46.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



The 2 Seas crew (18) was finally able to convert pace into prizes



qualifying yellow (caused by Adam spinning, of all things).

Points leader Sandy Mitchell reckoned he and partner Alex Martin in the other Barwell Lamborghini had done all they could while carrying the maximum success penalty to come fourth (Martin also lost a couple of places at the start as he struggled to see the lights over Petrobelli's Vantage rear wing ahead). Yet now just five points cover the top-three crews in the table, with Balfe/Smalley and the Collards breathing down Martin and Mitchell's necks.

There was an irony too that Tse and Gotz at last got a serene run in this one, as matters were hardly smooth sailing elsewhere. This was to such an extent that we actually got a 90-minute race rather than the planned two hours – and 15 minutes of the 90 was behind the safety car – thanks to a 45-minute stoppage repairing barrier damage from a multi-car shunt in the initial plunge to Eau Rouge.

With much of the GT3 field seemingly wanting to settle the race on lap one, Chris Buncombe's Team RJN McLaren and Sacha Kakad's J&S Racing Audi collided, which spun Kakad (the officials found Kakad responsible). Then Carl Cavers' Century BMW collided with Simon Orange's McLaren in dodging Buncombe, and Cavers and Orange both had sizeable impacts with the outside barrier. Fortunately, there were no injuries.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

a lesson for us and also set-up, but we're getting closer and closer."

They didn't get their deserved runner-up finish, though, as Adam stopped in the final minutes with an engine problem. Second place instead went to Shaun Balfe and Adam Smalley in their Garage 59 McLaren. Their race was built on Balfe smartly jumping five places to third at the opening La Source turn by taking the clear outside line. From there, their only trouble was Ricky Collard's Barwell Lamborghini getting fairly close to Smalley in the final minutes, but Collard getting heavily baulked in GT4 traffic ended his charge and he had to settle for third.

The Rob and Ricky Collard Lamborghini was recovering from a 10-place grid drop, received because Collard Jr was adjudged not to have slowed enough under a

Meakin, meanwhile, finished outside the points, after their Optimum McLaren lacked pace following lap-one rear contact from Erik Evans's Academy Ford Mustang. Meakin said: "There was a little bit of a different vibration with the rear, it was a bit weird, so the car definitely didn't feel 100%."

Therefore Forsetti's pair of Aston Martins – which finished second and third at Spa – are within 3.5 points of Brown/Meakin at the top of the table. Polesitter Freddie Tomlinson had led the race's opening half in his DTO Ginetta but the car lost power later on and dropped back.

GRAHAM KEILLOH



Century crew earned GT4 win after the DTO Ginetta faltered

Louis back to the Sharp end with victory

HUNGARORING
GB3
22-23 JUNE

The lead of the GB3 Championship was passed around between three drivers during the course of the series' first venture to the Hungaroring, while a trio of different winners underlined the competitiveness of this year's grid as the season reached its halfway mark.

As has been the case so often on GB3's international trips over the past two years, Hitech looked to hold the upper hand, and it was Chinese driver Gerrard Xie who set the pace by landing two pole positions in qualifying.

He converted the first of those into his second series victory but had to fend off a strong challenge from team-mate and pre-event championship leader Tymek Kucharczyk, who challenged into the first corner and remained close behind for the rest of the 20-minute contest. Xie took the flag with a half-second margin to the Polish driver, who extended his points lead while Hitech stretched its win streak to seven in succession. JHR's John Bennett completed the podium, with James Hedley fourth on his Rodin debut ahead of Hitech's Will Macintyre and Elite's McKenzie Cresswell.

However, Sunday's action meant the title battle turned on its head, with Rodin's Louis Sharp starring in the second contest as Hitech's winning run



was over. The New Zealander started fifth on the grid, but took the lead midway round the first lap. His charge began by passing Cresswell and Macintyre at Turn 1, before he then went around the outside of Kucharczyk at the following corner and completed the move up the inside at Turn 3. Polesitter Xie was leading but, when his car slowed on the approach to the chicane, Sharp needed no invitation and blasted into first place.

From there he established a 2s lead to claim his first victory since the Oulton Park season opener, finishing clear of Kucharczyk. But Kucharczyk was later disqualified from the results after his car's fire extinguisher had gone off on the formation lap, and his machine was therefore technically non-compliant.

That handed the series lead to Macintyre, who inherited second place ahead of Cresswell. JHR's Patrick Heuzenroeder claimed a season's best fourth ahead of Elite's Jarrod Waberski and Bennett.

Sharp's team-mate Arthur Rogeon

then completed a perfect Sunday for the Rodin squad by dominating the partially reversed-grid finale. From second, he passed JHR's polesitter Josh Irfan at Turn 2, and then dominated, taking his first series victory over 5s clear of Irfan, with Waberski completing the podium.

But Sharp's fourth place, having retained his starting position, was enough for him to snatch the championship lead, with Macintyre only eighth and Kucharczyk failing to score after pitting early to replace a broken front wing.

"If you'd told me before the first race that I'd be the championship leader at the end of the weekend, I wouldn't have believed you," said Sharp, having been only ninth fastest in qualifying. "We made a few changes to the car after race one and all of a sudden it came alive. Coming away with the championship lead means we've maximised everything we could, and I'm looking forward to Zandvoort."

RICHARD RANDLE



RACE RESULTS

GB3

Race 1 (11 laps) 1 Gerrard Xie; 2 Tymek Kucharczyk +0.523s; 3 John Bennett; 4 James Hedley; 5 Will Macintyre; 6 McKenzie Cresswell. **Fastest lap** Kucharczyk 1m40.179s (97.80mph). **Pole** Xie. **Starters** 21.
Race 2 (11 laps) 1 Louis Sharp; 2 Macintyre +4.097s; 3 Cresswell; 4 Patrick Heuzenroeder; 5 Jarrod Waberski; 6 Bennett. **FL** Sharp 1m39.584s (98.36mph). **P** Xie. **S** 21.
Race 3 (14 laps) 1 Arthur Rogeon; 2 Josh Irfan +5.582s; 3 Waberski; 4 Sharp; 5 Heuzenroeder; 6 Hedley. **FL** Kucharczyk 1m40.409s (97.56mph). **P** Irfan. **S** 21.
Points 1 Sharp 233; 2 Macintyre 231; 3 Kucharczyk 212; 4 Bennett 201; 5 Cresswell 175; 6 Ugo Ugochukwu 155.

For full results visit: gb-3.net



BMW driver West took a victory at Silverstone

MICK WALKER

West and Bradley secure honours for BMW over GT machinery

**SILVERSTONE
CSCC
22 JUNE**

BMW may have been roundly beaten at Le Mans a week ago but Bavaria's best defeated Ferrari and Porsche on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit last Saturday during the Classic Sports Car Club's meeting.

The BMW Championship shared the track with GTs from the Slicks Series but it was M3 E46s that came home first in each 20-minute thrash as Jason West and Niall Bradley split the wins.

Polesitter West commanded the opener from lights out, as Bradley and Bryan Bransom first dealt with James Card before trading second, Bradley eventually securing the position by squeezing through a fast-closing gap at Brooklands. Starting the sequel alongside West, Bradley snatched the lead on lap two of eight before West was then rounded by Bransom at Stowe and couldn't quite respond.

David Harrison's Slicks Porsche 991.2 GT3 Cup duelled with Andrew Christopher's Ferrari 488 Challenge as they carved

through the BMW pack from a secondary grid. After trading the lead, Harrison shook off Christopher to win the opener and rise to third overall. Christopher held sway later – beaten only by Bradley – until hit with a five-second track-limits penalty. Danny Cassar (Honda Integra) and Mark Wyatt (BMW M3 E92) topped the concurrent New Millennium bouts.

On its return to Swinging Sixties, the throaty Morgan +8 of Will Plant and father Richard took a comfortable win, its first for five years, in a capacity field combined with Classic K. Plant Jr's authoritative opening stint enabled dad to cruise home 36s clear of Geoff Taylor's TVR Griffith, which in turn edged Malcolm Johnson's Lotus Europa. Jon Wolfe (TVR Tuscan) and Steve Hodges (Lotus 7) both expired when in the battle for second.

Sam Polley (Mini Marcos) topped the smaller cars in fourth overall, chased by Connor Kay despite his MG Midget shedding its front bodywork. Neither a spin nor getting stuck in second gear over the last two laps prevented Ben Snee's Lotus Elan snaring Classic K honours after Steven Osborne (Jaguar E-type) was hit with a 40s penalty for a short pitstop.

Plant Jr enjoyed a much closer contest with Andrew Thompson in the Morgan Challenge. Both had spells in front, before Thompson's similar +8 eased clear – only to spin in traffic. A slightly quicker pitstop helped Thompson close back in, then seize the lead at Stowe, before Plant pulled up on the penultimate lap. By then, leading Modern Classics runner Clinton Ewen had jumped the pair in his BMW M3 E36. Thompson responded but Ewen triumphed by 0.25s, while Alex Taylor's lightweight



Plant father/son duo won with Morgan +8

MICK WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS

BMW CHAMPIONSHIP/SLICKS SERIES/ NEW MILLENNIUM

Race 1 Jason West (BMW M3 E46)

Race 2 Niall Bradley (BMW M3 E46)

SWINGING SIXTIES/CLASSIC K

Will Plant/Richard Plant (Morgan +8)

MORGAN CHALLENGE/FUTURE & MODERN CLASSICS

Clinton Ewen (BMW M3 E36)

TIN TOPS/TURBO TIN TOPS

Adam Brown (Ford Fiesta ST150)

OPEN SERIES/MAGNIFICENT SEVENS

Stephen Nuttall (Caterham Seven)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Mazda RX-7 pipped Mark Chilton's Nissan Skyline by just 0.1s in Future Classics.

Ford Fiesta-mounted Adam Brown took his first Tin Tops win of the season. Keeping 2024 dominator Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic) in sight before the stops, Brown knew that Windmill faced a hefty one-minute success penalty. Hampered by a misfire in qualifying, Danny Cassar was on a charge in the Integra started by Nigel Ainge and reached second before the mechanical gremlin returned and thwarted a lead bid.

Turbo Tin Tops victor Carl Chambers was third overall in his Peugeot 208, just holding off Windmill's remarkable fightback, as wheel-bearing and cambelt failures blunted the challenges of fast qualifiers Josh Brooks (Toyota Starlet) and Andrew Marson (Abarth Assetto Corse).

Stephen Nuttall's Open Series Caterham was untouchable, lapping the BMWs of nearest challengers Oliver Smith and Tommy Grout.

MARK PAULSON

Thompson and Donkin the Caterham stars

CATERHAM SEVEN UK

Oulton Park's tight and twisty nature is not renowned for always producing the most exciting racing, but the Caterham Seven Championship UK competitors still provided plenty of entertainment last weekend.

The limited overtaking chances the Cheshire circuit provides meant there were not the half-a-dozen lead changes per lap that Caterhams are renowned for at venues where slipstreaming has a greater effect, but there was plenty of side-by-side action nevertheless – and reigning champion Lewis Thompson and occasional Renault UK Clio Cup and Porsche Carrera Cup GB driver Paul Donkin were in the thick of the battle.

Polesitter Donkin shot into the lead in the opener but Thompson was soon on his tail and edged ahead over Hill Top. But Donkin was prepared for a scrap and an unsuccessful move at Old Hall was followed a couple of laps later by a great one around the outside of Cascades. Thompson made a replica pass on the next tour but Donkin was back ahead over Hill Top and this proved to be the decisive pass. Thompson was



Reigning champion Thompson picked up two hard-fought wins

struggling with an overheating engine and slipped behind Ben Simonds and William Smith late on as Donkin won by a second.

That was just a taster of what was to come as race two proved the highlight. Thompson made a sensational move around the outside of Donkin at Old Hall to grab the lead on a safety car restart but Donkin did not let his rival escape. The pair spent lap after lap running side-by-side but Donkin could not quite make a pass stick. He tried again around the outside of Lodge on the final tour but had to settle for being runner-up, just 0.263s behind Thompson.

"It was old-school kart racing and I was very defensive," enthused Thompson. "I wouldn't have been able to do that if I didn't

trust the people around me. It was hard but fair." Donkin described his rival as a "world-class driver" and said the "high risk" nature of Oulton's overtaking opportunities ultimately held him back.

The pair resumed their battle in the finale but Donkin's unsuccessful bids to unseat Thompson brought Smith into the mix. He tried to pass the pair into Old Hall, but could only pick off Donkin – who also slipped behind Harry Senior. Smith and Thompson banged wheels on the pitstraight before a caution period and the latter held on for a second victory, while Senior got the jump on Smith at Cascades to finish runner-up.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Bradshaw wins as Cayman title rivals come to blows

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Two wins for Tom Bradshaw at his local Oulton Park circuit have catapulted him into the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB title fight – especially after two collisions dented early leader Seb Hopkins' charge.

Hopkins led throughout a dull opener to win from Bradshaw and Will Jenkins, but

the Team Parker racer's event unravelled from there. He did finish second in race two, behind Bradshaw, however contact with stablemate Jenkins at the start resulted in Hopkins getting a three-place grid penalty and three-point deduction.

Worse was to come in the finale. Hopkins was all over Max Coates in a tussle for second when Hopkins went

for a wildly ambitious move at Hislops with no real hope of making the corner and succeeded only in tangling with Coates's Graves Motorsport car.

Hopkins was out on the spot and later given a 10-place grid penalty and another three-point sanction, while Coates was fortunate to continue, taking third having dropped behind Jenkins. Coates was frustrated by the "ridiculous" move, adding: "I'm most disappointed because of the cost of the damage."

There were no such concerns for Toro Verde driver Bradshaw as he serenely pulled clear to win by seven seconds. "It's fantastic – it's my home circuit and all my friends and family are here so it was the right place to do it!" he said of his maiden series wins. With Bradshaw growing ever quicker and the top three in the standings separated by just two points, an intriguing title battle could be in store.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Bradshaw (l) resists Hammerton en route to his second victory

Double delight for elated Edwards

MINI CHALLENGE

Nathan Edwards had yet to take a podium after graduating into the JCW class of the Mini Challenge for this year, but he banished that statistic in style at Oulton Park last weekend as he won twice, leading throughout both races from pole. Yet the Excelr8 Motorsport driver was not expecting such a successful event having not previously driven this car around the



Cheshire circuit. “And FP1 didn’t go too well,” Edwards added. “We had a bit of head-scratching after that. But, when I poled it in qualifying, I knew we were on for a good weekend – I’m over the moon.” His task was made a little easier in the opener as Tom Ovenden jumped front-row starter Max Hall, while Nelson King later demoted Hall at Hislops to complete an all-Excelr8 podium. And it was that trio on the rostrum again after race two, King moving into third when Josh Porter crashed exiting Druids. While Edwards’ fortunes improved, it was the opposite turnaround for another Excelr8 driver. Reigning champion Dan Zelos finished off the podium for the first time this season having struggled in qualifying with limited tyres available. “It’s like Monaco around here,” said Zelos of the importance of qualifying. But he was not too disheartened as fourth and fifth places still left him with a colossal 152-point lead. **STEPHEN LICKORISH**

More total domination for Lulham

RADICAL CUP UK

A combined winning margin of almost 92 seconds demonstrated Chris Lulham’s superiority in the Radical Cup UK at Oulton Park as his relentless domination of the championship continued. There was no stopping Lulham all weekend and even starting fourth on the partially reversed-grid for the finale was no barrier as the Valour driver blasted into the lead out of Old Hall. Lulham’s victory bid was aided by the miniscule 13-car field, which had dwindled from 24 at the Donington Park opener two months ago. With several classes across the SR3 and SR1 grids, there was the somewhat pointless

scenario of 10 of those 13 drivers being awarded trophies after the opener. Luke Hilton was again Lulham’s nearest rival in the first two races, not that he ever got especially close. A combined 15s of track-limits penalties inflated Lulham’s victory margin in the opener, while Hilton’s finale was a miserable affair as he picked up a 20s false-start sanction along with another 15s of track-limits impositions and got a reprimand for contact. All of that meant Jason Rishover was instead runner-up. The racing among the SR1s was generally much closer, with debutant Will Redford prevailing in the opener before Sam Shaw triumphed twice. **STEPHEN LICKORISH**



RACE RESULTS



CATERHAM SEVEN CHAMPIONSHIP UK
Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Paul Donkin (above); 2 Ben Simonds +1.037s; 3 William Smith; 4 Lewis Thompson; 5 Harry Senior; 6 Tim Dickens.
Fastest lap Matt Armstrong 1m27.431s (91.65mph). **Pole** Donkin. **Starters** 20.
Race 2 (13 laps) 1 Thompson; 2 Donkin +0.263s; 3 Smith; 4 Senior; 5 Dickens; 6 Nick Highton.
FL Smith 1m27.699s (91.37mph). **P** Donkin. **S** 20.
Race 3 (12 laps) 1 Thompson; 2 Senior +0.294s; 3 Smith; 4 Donkin; 5 Dickens; 6 Chris Fraser.
FL Dickens 1m27.553s (91.52mph). **P** Thompson. **S** 19.

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB
Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Seb Hopkins (below); 2 Tom Bradshaw +5.453s; 3 William Jenkins; 4 Matt Kyle-Henney; 5 Jacob Tofts; 6 Max Coates. **FL** Hopkins 1m23.454s (96.02mph). **P** Hopkins. **S** 22.
Race 2 (11 laps) 1 Bradshaw; 2 Hopkins +0.357s; 3 Ethan Hammerton; 4 Coates; 5 Jenkins; 6 Tofts. **FL** Bradshaw 1m23.833s (95.53mph). **P** Bradshaw. **S** 22.
Race 3 (15 laps) 1 Bradshaw; 2 Jenkins +7.100s; 3 Coates; 4 Hammerton; 5 Tofts; 6 Edward Stanton. **FL** Bradshaw 1m23.774s (95.65mph). **P** Bradshaw. **S** 22.
Points 1 Hopkins 45; 2 Bradshaw 44; 3 Coates 43; 4 Jenkins 35; 5 Hammerton 25; 6 Robert Cronin 15.

MINI CHALLENGE
(Both 13 laps) Race 1 1 Nathan Edwards; 2 Tom Ovenden +0.974s; 3 Nelson King; 4 Dan Zelos; 5 Max Hall; 6 Dominic Wheatley. **FL** Zelos 1m31.782s (87.31mph). **P** Edwards. **S** 20.
Race 2 1 Edwards; 2 Ovenden +0.487s; 3 King; 4 Hall; 5 Zelos; 6 Wheatley. **FL** Edwards 1m32.285s (86.83mph). **P** Edwards. **S** 20.
Points 1 Zelos 527; 2 Hall 375; 3 Wheatley 361; 4 Edwards 358; 5 King 346; 6 Jamie Osborne 346.

RADICAL CUP UK
Race 1 (19 laps) 1 Chris Lulham; 2 Luke Hilton +31.203s; 3 Oscar Joyce; 4 Peter Tyler; 5 Jason Rishover; 6 John Macleod. **FL** Lulham 1m20.177s (99.94mph). **P** Lulham. **S** 13.
Race 2 (19 laps) 1 Lulham; 2 Hilton +29.460s; 3 Macleod; 4 Joyce; 5 Tyler; 6 Gavin McAlpine. **FL** Lulham 1m19.868s (100.33mph). **P** Lulham. **S** 13.
Race 3 (13 laps) 1 Lulham; 2 Rishover +31.041s; 3 Tyler; 4 Joyce; 5 Macleod; 6 Hilton. **FL** Lulham 1m20.390s (99.68mph). **P** Rishover. **S** 12.



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Smith marches to Rindt Trophy glory against a quality line-up

THRUXTON

**BARC THRUXTON HISTORIC
22-23 JUNE**

Fifty years after Ontario's Bruce Jensen raced his March 74B to sixth in the Canadian Formula Atlantic championship, Newbury's Tom Smith added his name to the British Automobile Racing Club's Jochen Rindt Trophy winners' plaque with two scintillating drives in it at the Thruxton Historic event. A fortuitous second to Martin Wood (March 73B) on Saturday, Smith unleashed a sizzling 1m13.110s (116.01mph) fastest lap on Sunday to beat 2023 victor Rory Smith (Ralt RT4) and veteran Wood on aggregate.

Nurtured by circuit operations manager Pat Blakeney and his 1990s Formula Renault team-mate Rob Manger – whose Classic Racing Car Club disciples reimagined the prestigious JRT in 2021 – the colourful gathering scaled new heights. Slick organisation, superb marshalling, a wider spectrum of fine racing and NASCAR demos entertained a record audience, including car club members whose classics lined the banks in summer sunshine.

The capacity feature grid celebrating Thruxton's king of 1968-70 showcased F2, FAtlantic and the UK's best Classic F3 turnout in years. Callum Grant (March 79B) and Rory Smith set Saturday's race pace, but Tom Smith hounded them down and charged ahead, only to have a huge excursion lapping Neil Jenkins' F3 Chevron on the flat-out Village sweeper. "Round the outside was a bit ambitious," Tom reflected, after pitting to clear grass from his radiator.

As he shot back out, Grant and Rory Smith continued their fight until Callum spun as they scrambled out of the chicane on lap 13. "I cocked-up," he admitted. "I got a wheel on the kerb, the back came round and left Rory with nowhere to go." The cars tangled lightly, adjacent to the pit entrance, thus red flags flew. Wood, who spun out at Church when a rear upright failed on the

first lap of morning practice, took the chequer 4.493 seconds clear of fast closing Tom Smith on countback, with unrelated F3 star Andy Smith (March 783) third. "I'm ecstatic," said Wood, whose previous Thruxton win was in Clubmans in 1987!

With Rory Smith coming from the back, namesake Tom made haste on Sunday, finishing 34s ahead. Wood, Andy Smith, Clive Wood (again unrelated, although he ran Martin in F3 in 1983, Ayrton Senna's year!) in his F2 Chevron B29 and Benn Tilley (F2 March 712) headed the chase.

Thruxton's first 1000cc F3 screamer races since 1970 were for the BARC's Chris Moore Memorial Trophy, presented first to Alan Rollinson in 1969, then Mike Beuttler in 1970. On open pipes by Motorsport UK dispensation, recent Cadwell Park winner Jon Milicevic pressured Andrew Hibberd until his Brabham BT21's engine went off, whereupon Ross Drybrough (Merlyn Mk14) rose to the challenge. Although loss of power forced Hibberd (BT18) to "go down two cogs" to climb Woodham Hill at the end, he pipped the Scot on Saturday and Jason Timms (BT21) on Sunday.

New circuit owner Alex Thistlethwayte was master of all he surveyed in Sunday's Classic Sports Car Club Swinging Sixties race, qualifying his ex-Martin Thomas Chevrolet Camaro on pole and snarling through the 40-car field to victory. Connor Kay's best TVR Tuscan V6 lap was slightly slower and the combo had to settle for second, clear of Malcolm Johnson's Lotus Europa and Tom Pead's BMW 1600ti.

Greg Jenkins crafted a Super Mighty Minis double brilliantly over Steve Rideout, with David Kirkpatrick and Ben Butler sharing third. Olly Samways and Ahmed Shahrabani's initial Mighty class tussle was shaded later by a six-car scrap. Tripped by Stuart Coombs at the chicane in the opener, Will Burnham engineered a sensational maiden win over James Bryan and Sam Slater in the sequel's mad dash to the chequer, ending Samways' five-race streak.

Historic FF2000 poleman Samuel



Wood (l) and Smith (r) both won but Smith took the trophy

Harrison added two more wins to his quiver, completing a hat-trick over reigning champ Graham Fennymore with a phenomenal 1m17.860s (108.93mph) best lap in a car loaned by Adrian Reynard. "That's some engine – I can't stay with him in the tow," said Fennymore. Ben Glasswell was a strong third on Sunday after carb issues precluded Saturday's start.

Cameron Jackson beat Richard Tarling and race rusty James Clarke in the first Heroes of FF1600 Sprint Cup race in a one-lap dash following a safety car, after Andrew Ames smote the chicane barrier. A clash between Jackson and Tarling there in the finale – for which Cam apologised – broke Richard's suspension, but he was relieved by a red flag after hub failure



Hibberd just defeated Timms in second Historic F3 contest



Culver was one of three different Ferrari victors



WEEKEND WINNERS

CRCC JOCHEN RINDT TROPHY

Race 1 Martin Wood (March-BDA 73B)

Race 2 Tom Smith (March-BDA 74B)

HISTORIC F3 CHRIS MOORE TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Hibberd
(Brabham-MAE BT18)

CSCC SWINGING SIXTIES

Alex Thistlethwayte (Chevrolet Camaro)

MIGHTY MINIS

Races 1 & 2 Greg Jenkins (Super)

HSCC HISTORIC FF2000

Races 1 & 2 Samuel Harrison (Reynard SF79)

HEROES OF FF1600 IAN TAYLOR TROPHY

Race 1 Cameron Jackson (Van Diemen RF90)

Race 2 Richard Tarling (Reynard FF89)

FERRARI CLUB CLASSIC

Race 1 Gary Culver (328 GTB)

Race 2 Nicky Paul-Barron (F355 Challenge)

Race 3 Tristan Simpson (F355 Challenge)

FISCAR

Jonathan Abecassis (Austin-Healey 100/4)

HSCC GUARDS TROPHY

Robert & Ben Tusting (Lenham-t/c P69 Spider)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



sent American Jason Pribyl's Reynard rolling into the barrier at Allard. Tarling won the Ian Taylor Trophy on aggregate.

The Ferrari Club Classic again provided three winners. Gary Culver howled his 328 GTB ahead at two-thirds' distance on Saturday, while F355 Challengers Nicky Paul-Barron and Tristan Simpson prevailed on Sunday. The first was stopped when teenager Robin Fisk's Mondial crashed at Allard. In the finale, contact with Culver entering the chicane deflected Jim Cartwright into Chris Butler, firing the previous runner-up into the tyre wall. Tim Mogridge (F355) uniquely landed three podiums. "The car's been a nightmare for two years, but finally I've got it right," he said. Simpson was also thrilled with

a stonking 1m28.070s (96.30mph) record.

HWM co-founder George Abecassis did not race on Thruxton's early circuits in 1952/53, but grandson Jonathan topped Saturday's 14-marque Fifties Sports Car Racing pitstop event in his Healey 100/4. Abecassis and polesitter David Alexander (Lotus Elite) served drive-throughs for speeding in the pits, but Alexander snatched defeat from the jaws of victory when he spun exiting the chicane on the penultimate lap as Abecassis rejoined.

Resembling a microcosm of an early 1970s BARC Castrol *Motoring News* Special GT championship round, Saturday's Guards Trophy race ended unsatisfactorily. Onlookers believed they saw Callum Grant convert Ted Pearson's strong start in his

ex-David Purley Chevron B8 to a maiden victory, but – after painstaking interrogation of timing data – Lenham crew Rob and Ben Tusting were declared winners, despite a late drive-through. Mark and Hugh Colman's ex-David Good B8 was third ahead of Pre-'63 victor Benn Tilley in Paul Smeeth's Lotus 23B.

MARCUS PYE



BMW driver Cook enjoyed a successful MR2 comeback

Victorious MR2 return for Cook, Lockwood wins again

SNETTERTON
750MC
22-23 JUNE

The Toyota MR2 Championship produced two dramatic contests during the 750 Motor Club's visit to Snetterton last weekend, with Paul Cook taking his first victory in the series since his last full campaign in 2021.

Swapping the BMW M3 that he usually races elsewhere for a Mk2 MR2, Cook beat Shaun Traynor and Adam Lockwood's more modern Mk3 Roadsters to win the opening contest. He initially dropped to fifth after missing a gear at the start, while a frenetic four-way battle raged in front of him.

Daniel Bryant lunged up the inside of Traynor and Andrew Ruthven for the lead but lost control under braking and made contact with the latter. Cook soon passed Lockwood for second and then swept around the outside of Traynor at Brundle,

remaining ahead until the finish as 0.8 seconds covered the top three.

After making a front roll-bar change to his Mk2, Ruthven led race two before a small mistake allowed Cook through. Lockwood moved up to second and then reeled in Cook, who resisted several laps of pressure before spinning at Brundle on the penultimate tour. That gave Lockwood his fourth win of the year, while Ruthven prevailed in a photo finish for second with Traynor, who almost was forced to pit at one stage with a loose rear bumper.

The closest finish of the weekend came in the Locost opener, with Martin West edging Lee Emm and Shaun Brame in a three-wide drag race to the line, while mechanical gremlins denied Daniel Garrett a chance to fight for a fourth straight victory. Garrett exchanged the lead with Paul Clark in the sequel, but West eventually passed the pair before

taking another win. Garrett bizarrely snatched second from Clark under safety car conditions at the chequered flag.

Garrett got the better of West in less controversial circumstances in race three to take his fourth victory of the season, with West almost losing second to Angus Gough after making an error at the final corner.

Just three points separated Matt Harbot and Craig Bell heading into the latest Formula Vee round, where the pair were again closely matched in their AHS Dominators. Bell snatched the advantage from his rival on the opening lap in race one before Harbot fought back on lap two and then remained ahead until the finish, despite a mid-race rain shower leaving half of the circuit wet. Peter Belsey climbed from seventh in his Spyder Mk2 to snatch second from Bell on the final tour, the top three separated by less than a second.

Harbot and Bell swapped places several times in race two, with the latter taking the win by 0.485s. Peter Studer closed in on the squabbling duo late on in his TCR Challenger but just held off Belsey for third after fading on the final lap.

Chris Bialan benefited from a shorter pitstop than his rivals during a mid-race safety car period to take his first Roadsports win in his Cupra TCR ahead of Simon Mauger and Justin Middleton's Cupra Leon. Early leader Scott Parkin broke the lap record by 0.7s in his Audi TT as he tried to hunt down the top two, but he was handed a one-lap post-race penalty for not respecting light signals, which dropped him to 17th.

Reigning champion Stewart Place resisted race-long pressure from Chris



West doubled up in frenetic Locost outings

WEEKEND WINNERS

TOYOTA MR2

Race 1 Paul Cook (Mk2)
Race 2 Adam Lockwood (Roadster)

LOCOST

Races 1 & 2 Martin West
Race 3 Daniel Garrett

FORMULA VEE

Race 1 Matt Harbot (AHS Dominator)
Race 2 Craig Bell (AHS Dominator)

ROADSPORTS

Chris Bialan (Cupra TCR)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTI)

750 FORMULA

Races 1 & 2 David Bartholomew (PRS)

CLUB ENDURO

Scott Parkin (Audi TT)

HOT HATCH

Races 1 & 2 Shay Kavanagh (Honda Civic)

SPORT SPECIALS

Races 1 & 2 Paul Collingwood (Eclipse SM1)

MX-5 CUP

Races 1, 2 & 3 Ben Short

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA

Race 1 John Village (Village V2, below right)
Race 2 Christopher Jones (DNC LHD)



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

Dear to win the first Classic Stock Hatch encounter in his Peugeot 205 GTI, while Dear's 205 slowed with no fuel pressure on the run to the finish line and dropped to fourth behind Neil Dudman and Pip Hammond. Dear gave chase to Place again in race two but slowed with an issue on the penultimate lap, with Place taking another victory ahead of a charging Ben Bateman and Dudman.

David Bartholomew took two dominant 750 Formula wins in his PRS. He finished 6s clear of Dave Hodkin's HRD Mk2 in the opener, while David Reid prevailed in a late battle with Peter Bove and Bill Cowley to take third in his Racekits Falcon. Cowley finished second behind Bartholomew in race two despite driving one-handed due to his car jumping out of gear, while Bove edged Reid to third by 0.076s.

STEVE WHITFIELD

PARKIN SURVIVES RACE OF ATTRITION



Reigning champion Scott Parkin took victory in his Darkside Motorsport Audi TT in Sunday's Club Enduro encounter at Snetterton as baking hot weather made it a "gruelling" two-hour contest.

The start was delayed after Class B points leader Jonathan Packer's VW Golf ground to halt on the formation lap. Alan Henderson then led once the action got under way, while Parkin prevailed in a three-wide battle for second into Riches. Henderson was held up by two squabbling cars once he caught lapped traffic, and Parkin was also delayed and lost second to Joel Oswick's BMW M3. Parkin tried to fight back but ended up on the grass at Oggies before eventually reclaiming the position exiting Wilson hairpin.

Henderson built a 3.5-second lead before his Mazda MX-5 slowed and eventually retired, with Parkin making his mandatory pitstop at the 30-minute mark to remove grass from the radiator.

"We were always planning on stopping early but got shoved onto the grass so it forced our hand," Parkin explained. "I was just managing it, short-shifting, trying to get some clean air, manage the temperatures and came in, got the grass out, and then the car was faultless."

Oswick led Simon Mauger and Chris

Bialan, with the safety car briefly deployed at the halfway mark when Tom Collier's M3 came to a smokey halt. Mauger was the first of the front three to pit with 45 minutes remaining, with Justin Middleton taking over the Cupra. Bialan soon came in as well to hand over to Simon Mason, while Oswick's co-driver James Collins was eventually disqualified for failing to comply with flag signals.

"One of the hardest ones ever, so hot," Bialan surmised of his stint. "I didn't realise they left me out for an hour and 22 minutes! It was a case of just staying with [the front two] and not overcooking it as I didn't have enough grunt to overtake anybody. It was a war of attrition."

Parkin regained the race lead once the remainder of the mandatory stops had been completed and he eventually took victory by 31s ahead of Mason, who was the only other finisher on the lead lap. "After the early pitstop I ended up doing an hour-and-a-half stint, a little bit tiring but we'll take the win," said Parkin.

Chris Webster led Class B before his Gulf-liveried Ginetta suffered alternator failure, and Simon Glenn was another to hit trouble after damaging his BMW's undertray and then retiring with a broken coolant pipe and gearbox. The honours eventually went the way of William Puttergill and Ryan Bensley's Honda Civic.

"The first 15 minutes weren't too bad, when the safety car came out it gave us a little bit of rest and a chance for me to put my hand out the window and get some air in, but the last half an hour was a bit gruelling," said Bensley. "We seemed to not have much pace in the beginning but, as the fuel went down, the balance got better."

STEVE WHITFIELD



FINISHING STRAIGHT

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Austrian Grand Prix F1 World Championship Round 11/24

Red Bull Ring, Austria
29-30 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 1000, Sun 1355

TV Highlights
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1730,
Channel 4 1830

MotoGP

Round 8/20

Assen, Netherlands
29-30 June

TV Live TNT Sports 2,
Sat 1330, Sun 1215

TV Highlights TNT
Sports 2, Sun 2145,
ITV4, Mon 2000

Rally Poland

World Rally Championship Round 7/13

Mikolajka, Poland
27-30 June

TV Live TNT Sports 2,
Thu 1800, TNT Sports 3,
Fri 0730, 0915, 1245, 1430,
1745, TNT Sports 4, Sat
0715, 0845, 0930, 1215,
1445, 1615, 1700, TNT
Sports 1, Sun 0745, TNT
Sports 3, 0900, 1115, 1300
TV Highlights (Red Bull
TV Highlights) TNT Sports
4, Fri 2100, TNT Sports 1,
Sat 2330, Sun 1930

Formula E

Round 9/10

Portland, USA
29-30 June

TV Live TNT Sports 1,
Sat 2100

Formula 2

Round 7/14

Red Bull Ring, Austria
29-30 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 1225, Sun 0855

Formula 3

Round 6/10

Red Bull Ring, Austria
29-30 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sat 0825, Sun 0725

Spa 24 Hours

GT World Challenge Endurance Cup

Round 2/5

Spa, Belgium
29-30 June

► Livestream
crowdstrike24hoursofspa.
com/watch-live

Porsche Supercup

Round 3/8

Red Bull Ring, Austria
30 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1040

NASCAR Cup

Round 19/36

Nashville, USA
30 June

TV Live Premier 2,
Sun 2000

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 17/33

Nashville, USA
29 June

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 13/23

Nashville, USA
28 June

[youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom](https://www.youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom)



Exclusive interview with Fred Vasseur

James Allen speaks to the man with arguably the hardest job in Formula 1, Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur. Topics include how he secured Lewis Hamilton's services for the 2025 season, what (or who) Ferrari needs to win a world championship, and how Vasseur uses humour to get his way. Former Ferrari F1 engineer Rob Smedley, of "Fernando is faster than you" fame, helps us read between the lines, along with Motorport.com Italy's F1 editor Roberto Chinchero.



Spa 24 Hours

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park MSVR

29 June

Boxster Cup, Focus Cup,
GT Cup, Porsche Club

► Livestream

[YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

Brands Hatch MSVR

29-30 June

Bernie's V8s & Historic
Outlaws/CALM Porsche
Trophy, Clubmans Sports
Prototypes, CTCRC (BOSS/
Pre-'03/Group A, Pre-'83/Pre-
'66, Thunder), Super Tourers

Anglesey BRSCC

29-30 June

Ginetta Championship,
Ginetta GT, Ginetta Junior

Snetterton MSVR

29-30 June

HRDC (Allstars/Classic Alfas,
Gerry Marshall Trophy, Jack

Sears Trophy), MRL
(Pall Mall Cup, Pre-'63
GT, Pre-war Sportscars,
Woodcote Trophy &
Stirling Moss Trophy),
Retro GT Challenge

Donington Park MSVR

29-30 June

7 Racing (270R, 310R,
420R), EnduroKa,
Legends, Northern
Saloon & Sports Cars,
Miata Trophy,
Production GTIs

British Drag Racing Championship

Santa Pod
29-30 June



Austrian Grand Prix



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Super Touring power through the Thruxton chicane. It's August 1993, and Andy Rouse leads the sister Ford Mondeo of Paul Radisich and BMW of Steve Soper. In the middle of the

chicane are Will Hoy (Toyota) and Patrick Watts (Mazda), and in the background are Joachim Winkelhock's BMW and Jeff Allam's Vauxhall. Radisich would get past Rouse and go on to finish just 0.64

seconds behind race winner David Leslie, the late Scot taking the first BTCC victory for the RML-run Ecurie Ecosse team and its privately developed Vauxhall Cavalier. The next season, RML snared the factory

Vauxhall deal, setting itself on a road that encompassed numerous touring car titles with multiple manufacturers.

**Photograph JEP for
Super Touring Archive**



HARDWICK

Patrick Carpentier

Alex Tagliani spent three years alongside fellow French-Canadian Patrick Carpentier at the Forsythe Racing team from the start of his CART Indycar career in 2000. Although Tagliani was frequently left to lament misfortune that prevented him from taking an overdue maiden win until 2004 at Road America, after he'd left the team for Rocketsports, the 2011 Indianapolis 500 polesitter has fond memories of racing with Carpentier.

The pair spent a lot of time together not only across 57 race weekends, but also away from the track. Both were based in Las Vegas and even lived on the same street, and relished fitness training at Red Rock, where arduous climbs from 3000ft above sea level to 5000ft were par for the course. Tagliani is two years Carpentier's junior, and arrived in what was then the pinnacle of US open-wheel racing three years later. He picks his elder compatriot as his favourite from an illustrious list of team-mates that also counts Will Power and Justin Wilson.

"We spent a lot of time outside of racing doing stuff together, going for dinner with our wives, enjoying life and having lots of fun," reflects Tagliani. "We were living in Vegas five houses apart, so we were traveling together, testing, racing – most of it was all together."

Tagliani maintains that Carpentier was an open book when he arrived, despite a strong start that could have yielded two



Tagliani (above, right) and Carpentier had "good chemistry"

SEDGWICK

wins from his first three races if not for a penalty at Homestead and a spin at Rio. He also dominated at Road America in 2000 before the driveshaft failed.

"Data was shared and I don't think there was any mental games that we were playing against each other, because the time that we were spending outside of the race car together was so much that it would have made things extremely awkward," he remembers. "We had good chemistry, good atmosphere also."

Tagliani played a crucial role in setting up Carpentier's maiden win at Michigan in 2001, so perhaps it's no surprise that they stayed on good terms when Jerry Forsythe hired Paul Tracy for 2003 as Tagliani left. "Actually, I saw him not long ago," says Tagliani. "We're always trying to see if we can go for dinner. He stayed a really good friend of mine."

JAMES NEWBOLD



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JEP



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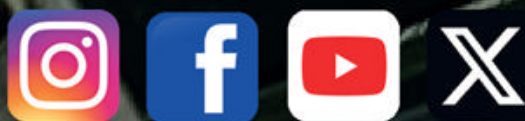


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