

# British GP preview and Austrian GP drama

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

4 JULY 2024

# AUTOSPORT

## Russell picks up the pieces...

## as Verstappen and Norris clash

Can Brits win at home now  
Red Bull cracks are showing?



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Aston Martin wins **Spa 24 Hours**

Aiello, Hill and Soper star at **Super Touring Power**







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SCAN ME





# Things get spicy before F1 heads back to Silverstone

It didn't take very long for good friends Max Verstappen and Lando Norris to fall out now that McLaren has established itself as a genuine threat to Red Bull. Norris always said that he'd fight Verstappen hard if the situation demanded it, and that's what happened at the Austrian Grand Prix last weekend.

Aside from his track-limits transgressions (not including the one that was part of an attempted pass on-track, which should surely be treated differently), Norris was hard but fair. Verstappen was probably a little over the line at times and really should have been able to avoid the contact that meant both lost the race. As Alex Kalinauckas argues on page 13, it does suggest that Verstappen will still revert to type when under real pressure.

While Autosport would like to see hard and fair racing between F1's top drivers without contact, the clash did give George Russell a well-deserved second GP victory (p16). Russell has kept Lewis Hamilton largely in the shade this season and deserves credit for bouncing back from a challenging 2023, so this was just reward.

It all sets the scene nicely for the British GP at Silverstone this weekend. We talk to all three home stars in our preview (p32).

• Thank you very much to the Classic Touring Car Racing Club, MotorSport Vision, all the star drivers and the thousands of fans who helped make the second Super Touring Power event at Brands Hatch and our live stage such a success. Please turn to p76 for our coverage.



*Kevin Turner*

**Kevin Turner**  
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Cover images  
Andy Hone/Sam Bloxham/Motorsport images

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# PIT + PADDOCK

## Hyundai poised to enter Le Mans Hypercar ranks

WEC/IMSA

Hyundai looks on course to become the next manufacturer to sign up to compete at the highest level of sportscar racing on the world stage and in North America. The South Korean marque is either close to or has already given the green light to a programme that would straddle the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship with an LMDh prototype.

There has been no confirmation as yet of a plan that would take Hyundai to the Le Mans 24 Hours for the first time, but Hyundai Motorsport team principal Cyril Abiteboul has suggested that an announcement about the marque's future is likely as early as September. He suggested it would lay out its plans for the World Rally Championship and its future ambitions.

"There will be announcement in due course by the relevant person," said the former Caterham and Renault Formula 1 boss, who took up his current role with Hyundai last year. "The first thing that we will announce, but we want to do it in the proper way, is our plan in the WRC. But first and foremost, we want to make it clear our ambition in this sport, not for this year, but also for the years to come and that is something that we are planning to clarify." He added that Hyundai is "exploring different categories".

Hyundai could start racing an LMDh as

early as 2026, the final year of the current set of technical regulations in the WRC in which it has mounted a factory campaign since 2014. That suggests that the Hyundai Motor Group, the world's third largest motor manufacturer by sales, could have two major programmes running concurrently. It outlined a commitment to rallying earlier this year, though a rules U-turn by the FIA means only a fraction of a new i20 N Rally1 car planned for next season will be able to be used through homologation jokers.

A 2026 entry in either the Hypercar class

of the WEC or GTP in IMSA – or both – would suppose that development of a Hyundai prototype and the internal combustion component of its hybrid powertrain is already up and running. It is understood that Hyundai has identified French constructor ORECA, which is responsible for the Acura and Alpine LMDhs, as its chassis development partner: an LMDh must be based on the spine of one of the stillborn next-generation LMP2 prototypes that were originally due to arrive in 2023. Hyundai would also most likely produce the LMDh engine in-house, like its WRC turbo fours.

It is understood that Hyundai is already in contact with Chip Ganassi Racing about running the cars in both series. The US motorsport giant's sportscar operation will be a free agent at the end of this year after announcing that it will part company with Cadillac at the end of this season. Its European base from which the WEC team runs is, like Hyundai Motorsport, based in Germany.

Hyundai has long had an interest in entering the sportscar arena, possibly under the banner of its Genesis luxury brand: it is known to have taken a seat on some of the relevant FIA technical working groups. The two-year extension to the life cycle of the LMDh and Le Mans Hypercar rules sets allowed in both WEC and IMSA appears



Hyundai project could be run by Ganassi, which fields current factory Cadillac effort

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/VINCENT THUILLIER



HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT GMBH/ROMAIN THUILLIER

Abiteboul says  
confirmation could  
come in September

to be crucial in its sportcar aspirations.

It has also been a key player in the exploration of the introduction of hydrogen in the WEC, currently scheduled for 2028. Hyundai is understood to have real interest in racing in the WEC and at Le Mans using hydrogen and has had a fuel-cell car, the Nexo SUV, in production since 2018. It appears that a conventionally fuelled LMDh could be a precursor to a switch to hydrogen when the next WEC/IMSA rules cycle begins in 2030.

Abiteboul was keen to scotch rumours of Hyundai exiting the WRC. "We will keep on implementing our plan for this year and next year, and focus on work for the longer term, which is 2027 [when new rules to be announced in December come into force]," he stated. "We are keen on understanding the direction of the sport from a business and a technology perspective so we can see what it looks like for us."

**GARY WATKINS & TOM HOWARD**

# Verstappen hints that he's staying, but could RB change?

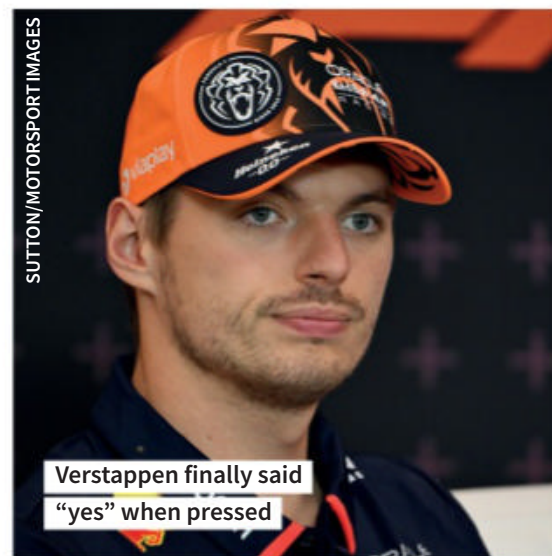
## FORMULA 1

Max Verstappen appears to have formally shut the door on leaving the Red Bull Formula 1 team for next year, while talks over who fills the second seat at its RB sister squad are looming.

Amid a rift between Verstappen's father Jos and trusted advisor Helmut Marko on one side, and Red Bull team principal Christian Horner on the other, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff has still held out hope that he can lure the three-time world champion away to replace Ferrari-bound Lewis Hamilton. But after dancing around the topic for weeks, Verstappen said in the clearest terms yet that he will stay on for 2025 when he was quizzed at the Austrian Grand Prix. "Yes," he said after being pressed by Autosport for a yes or no answer. "I have a long contract with the team, I'm very happy where I'm at and we're focusing also already on next year with things we can implement on the car. So, I guess that should say enough of where I'm driving next year."

The cold war between Horner and Verstappen Sr flared up again in Austria, with the 52-year-old accusing Horner of blocking his appearance in a legends parade before the race. While the F1 team says it did not try to stop Verstappen Sr appearing in the event, which was organised by Red Bull Austria, it did not want to use the imagery or footage on its social channels. Verstappen Sr furiously withdrew from driving, with his son reluctantly saying the flare-up "could have been avoided".

Meanwhile, Red Bull and its RB sister squad are set for a "quiet discussion"



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Verstappen finally said  
"yes" when pressed

during the summer break as they decide between retaining Daniel Ricciardo or promoting Liam Lawson to partner Yuki Tsunoda. Ricciardo was brought into RB as a possible replacement for Sergio Perez at the main team, but the Australian's unconvincing performances have led to Perez being handed a two-year deal instead. The team could now turn towards promoting 22-year-old Liam Lawson after the New Zealander made an impressive cameo during Ricciardo's 2023 injury lay-off.

Marko told Austrian media that Lawson should be in the car, but RB CEO Peter Bayer said both Red Bull squads would have a "quiet discussion" in August on what to do. "We're not in a hurry to take a decision for next year's line-up," added Bayer.

Horner remained coy when asked whether a mid-season swap is an option. "Daniel is in the seat and it's down to him to make the most of that," he said. "And then in Formula 1 things are always fluid."

**FILIP CLEEREN**



Lawson impressed  
as Ricciardo stand-in  
during 2023 races

MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



# Gasly and Stroll are staying put for 2025...

## FORMULA 1

Pierre Gasly and Lance Stroll are the latest Formula 1 drivers to commit their futures, with both drivers staying put at their current teams.

Gasly has signed a multi-year contract extension to remain with Alpine, which gives the Enstone squad some continuity into 2025 amid Esteban Ocon's departure. The Frenchman is currently in his second season with the squad, and finished 11th in the drivers' championship in 2023 – four points ahead of Ocon. Alpine has endured a difficult start to 2024, although steady improvements have led to an uptick in the team's performances and a pair of double-points finishes in the past few weeks. "It has always been the plan to build a long-term project with the team," said Gasly. "While on track it's been a challenging season so far, I remain faithful to the project and I am not going anywhere."



It is unknown who will partner Gasly, although Alpine has made a late offer to secure Carlos Sainz. Reserve driver Jack Doohan and Alpine World Endurance racer Mick Schumacher are also believed to be in the running for the seat.

Meanwhile, Aston Martin announced that Lance Stroll will race on alongside Fernando Alonso "for 2025 and beyond" in



what is being billed as a contract extension for the Canadian, whose father owns the team. Stroll has raced at Aston since 2019 after Lawrence Stroll's consortium bought the assets of the former Force India squad the previous year. He has contested 113 GPs so far for the team, with a best result of third in the 2020 Italian and Sakhir GPs.

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE & ALEX KALINAUCKAS**

# ...as Ocon and Bottas move into Williams frame

## FORMULA 1

Esteban Ocon and Valtteri Bottas have moved back into the frame for a seat at Williams in 2025 as Carlos Sainz continues to stall over his plans.

The Spaniard has been weighing up for weeks clear offers from both the Sauber/Audi team and Williams for next season. But just as the Ferrari driver appeared to be on the verge of making a final decision around last month's Spanish Grand Prix, Alpine made a last-ditch bid to get him on board. It is understood that Sainz asked for a further delay from Williams so he could weigh up what Alpine could offer. While Sainz's third option of Sauber/Audi is willing to hold fire for a little bit longer, Williams has decided that it needs to get a team-mate for Alex Albon sorted as soon as



possible, so it has reopened negotiations with others.

The team wants a race winner on board for next season, which leaves Bottas and Ocon as prime targets. Both drivers are well known to Williams team principal James Vowles through working together at

Mercedes, and preliminary discussions that were taking place earlier in the year before the Sainz possibility emerged have now restarted.

Critical to Williams is a driver who is completely committed to its long-term project, which is why Sainz's hesitation has left the squad

questioning his long-term loyalty. Sainz's call has further consequences, because Ocon is also of interest to Haas and Audi, while Bottas could be a Sainz alternative for his current team Sauber.

In a further push to show how it is moving forward, Williams announced the signings of a swathe of senior technical staff from rival teams, including ex-Alpine technical director Matt Harman. The five top hires are included in a group of 26 new engineers recruited by Williams, and include former Ferrari head of performance analytics Fabrice Moncade, ex-Haas principal aerodynamicist Juan Molina, Red Bull chief designer (composites and structures) Steve Winstanley, and Alpine's former head of performance, Richard Frith.

**JONATHAN NOBLE**





**FORMULA E** Ex-IndyCar and DTM star Robert Wickens drove a single-seater last Friday for the first time since the 2018 Pocono crash that left him paralysed, when he completed 11 laps at Portland in a Formula E car prior to the Oregon circuit's race weekend. Wickens, who became a champion in TCR touring car machinery last season, is targeting a return to leading echelons of racing. "For me it's not a matter of single-seaters, it's elite level of motorsport, whether it's IMSA, if it's the World Endurance Championship or Formula E," he said. "I think it's just racing against the best drivers in the world like I was doing in IndyCar and DTM prior to my accident. For me, that's what I need to get back to."



## Audi provides insight into F1 engine progress for 2026

### FORMULA 1

Audi has offered a first proper update of the progress it is making with its new Formula 1 engine for 2026, saying it is already covering race distances in dyno tests.

The German manufacturer is gearing up for a works entry in 2026, when it will officially replace the Sauber team on the grid. It had previously kept low-key in revealing how far advanced work was at its Neuburg headquarters.

In an interview it published with Audi Formula Racing CEO Adam Baker and chief technical officer Stefan Dreyer, Audi made it clear that work was on schedule. "After just two years, our power unit, consisting of a combustion engine, electric motor, battery and control electronics, is running dynamically on the test bench," said Baker. "The Audi power unit has already covered simulated race distances on the test bench. We gained a lot of testing time with the individual components in 2023 and were able to incorporate the experience gained into the next construction stages in parallel. Significant milestones and goals have been achieved."

As well as the work on the engine, Audi has made a huge investment in bringing its facilities at Neuburg up to F1 standard. Audi said it would be working with a current fuel supplier for its 2026 project and had recruited technicians from other F1 manufacturers to boost its knowledge base.

**JONATHAN NOBLE**

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Meyer Shank and Acura won Daytona together in 2023 – under a cloud

LEVITT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## Acura returns to Meyer Shank as IMSA works team

### IMSA

Meyer Shank Racing will return to the IMSA SportsCar Championship's GTP class next season to run a two-car GTP Acura assault. The move comes after its contract wasn't renewed for 2024 in the wake of its manipulation of tyre pressure data on the way to victory at last year's season-opening Daytona 24 Hours.

Shank has been brought back into the Acura IMSA fold to replace Wayne Taylor Racing with Andretti, which will be returning to Cadillac for next season. But there is a twist to the new deal with the IMSA champion team of 2022: Honda Racing Corporation USA will be more involved in the running of the two ARX-06

LMDhs and will race engineer one of them.

HRC USA, the organisation formerly known as Honda Performance Development that masterminds the Acura LMDh programme, will take what was described as a "larger operational role" in the programme. Shank will prepare and maintain the two cars, with personnel from HRC coming in for the race weekends.

"Running our own GTP car is the next, exciting step for our associates at HRC US," said company president David Salters. "We race to develop our people and technology and we are thrilled to be partnering with MSR to race our ARX-06 against some of the world's best sportscar teams. This is why the next logical step for us is race engineer our own car: buckle-up HRC boys and girls!"

Acura has turned back to Shank after WTR boss Wayne Taylor opted to renew links with Cadillac and General Motors that date back to the 1990s. It would be simplistic to say that Shank lost its IMSA deal as a result of the Daytona controversy: WTR already had a contract in place at that time to expand to two ARX-06s for this season. HRC also maintained a relationship with the Ohio-based team as its engine supplier for its IndyCar campaign and has now signed what was billed as a multi-year deal.

WTR's IMSA deal with Cadillac has yet to be announced. The team put out a statement in the wake of the Shank announcement, saying it "felt it needed to go in a different direction".

**GARY WATKINS**

## British racer Sowery set to make IndyCar debut



Sowery (left) with Enaam Ahmed and very young Lando Norris in 2016!

### INDYCAR

Briton Toby Sowery will make his IndyCar debut at Mid-Ohio this weekend, when he becomes the sixth driver to pilot Dale Coyne Racing's #51 entry this year.

The 28-year-old made his name in the US as an Indy Lights race winner, and got his first taste of IndyCar machinery in a test with Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing last year at Sebring.

He has been racing this year in the LMP2 category of the IMSA SportsCar Championship and in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup.

"Dale Coyne has been fundamental to IndyCar in giving drivers opportunities to prove themselves and I am eager for this challenge," said Sowery, a two-time McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist when he was a

leading runner in BRDC F3. "It'll be a difficult step to make having only one day in the car over a year ago as well as adapting to the hybrid system [which is introduced for this weekend], but I'm up for it!"

"I've been following Toby's career for quite some time now," Coyne said. "He's shown that he can quickly adapt to whatever car he is driving."

**JOEY BARNES**





**SUPER TOURING** French tin-top racing legend Laurent Aiello was reunited with the RML Nissan Primera in which he won the 1999 British Touring Car title at Brands Hatch's Super Touring Power event last weekend. He also signed a Tamiya model of the Peugeot 406 ST he used to win the 1997 Super Tourenwagen Cup – made by current BTCC points leader Jake Hill! “I was disappointed I only did one year in Britain and I thought people would forget, but the people are so passionate,” said Aiello. “It’s great to see.” **Photograph by MSV**

## Suzuka brings back 1000Km

### SUZUKA 1000KM

The Suzuka 1000Km sportscar fixture will be revived next year after an absence of eight years. The Intercontinental GT Challenge will return to the home of the Japanese Grand Prix, not as a 10-hour race as in 2018 and 2019 (pictured), but running to the traditional distance of the summer event that has been held as a round of the world sportscar championship and domestic Japanese series, most recently Super GT, in a history dating back to 1966.

IGTC boss Stephane Ratel has made no secret of his desire to take a series built around the Bathurst 12 Hour and the Spa 24 Hours back to Suzuka after its COVID-enforced disappearance from the calendar in 2020. Reviving it as a 1000km race rather than a 10-hour marathon reflects the growth of GT World Challenge Asia.

“I have never hidden that I wanted to go



back,” said Ratel. “But we have to be realistic about the number of cars we are going to get. We can hope for 10 or 12, so we need local competitors.

“We have that now with the success of GTWC Asia: I was at Fuji [late last month] and there were 41 GT3 cars, but many of the teams are not used to running endurance races. It would be pushing it a bit to ask them to do a 10-hour race; I think 1000km is more reasonable.”

There is no Asian IGTC round this year after the Gulf 12 Hours at Yas Marina in Abu Dhabi filled the slot in 2022 and 2023.

**GARY WATKINS**

## RATTICAN AND LEBBON ARE *LES BONS* AT SPA

### GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES

British youngsters Tom Lebbon and Josh Rattican extended their lead in the GT4 European Series by winning both Spa 24 Hours support races last weekend.

The Elite Motorsport pair hadn't yet taken a victory in 2024 before last Friday's opener, for which Rattican put their McLaren Artura GT4 on pole and led the first stint, with the Audi of Benjamin Lariche breathing down his neck. They pitted together, and Lebbon could not prevent Robert Consani – now in the Audi – passing on their out-lap. But the ex-GB3 ace dived back in front at Les Combes and pulled away to beat the Audi into second place.

Lebbon claimed pole for Saturday's race, but dropped to third early on behind Consani and the Toyota of Etienne Cheli. Following a safety car period, Cheli moved in front from Lebbon, as Consani fell away.

A late pitstop meant Rattican had overcut the Toyota, only for another safety car to allow the RAFA Racing McLaren of fellow Brit Jem Hepworth in front. When the race went green, Rattican went on the attack, and claimed the lead into Pouhon. Hepworth fell to fourth, with Benjamin Lessennes moving up to second in the BMW started by Ricardo van der Ende.



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# Ogier doubt for Latvia return

## WRC

A date for Sebastien Ogier's return to the World Rally Championship was yet to be confirmed as we went to press, after he was ruled out of last weekend's Rally Poland following a road traffic accident in the lead-up to the event.

The eight-time world champion and co-driver Vincent Landais were involved in a head-on collision with another car while preparing pacenotes. Ogier and Landais, along with the driver and passenger of the other vehicle, were taken to hospital – the Toyota crew by air ambulance – for medical checks. It was confirmed that all had escaped serious injury, with Ogier discharged after spending a night under observation.

The 40-year-old was pictured returning home wearing a neck brace and has since undergone further medical checks.

Ogier was expected to contest Rally Latvia as the next round of his partial WRC campaign later this month, but Toyota was yet to confirm whether he will be fit to return at the time of writing.

Kalle Rovanner, Toyota's other world champion part-timer, was already set to compete in Latvia anyway. The Finn was drafted in to replace Ogier on Poland at the eleventh hour, and claimed a remarkable victory.

Ogier paid tribute to his team-mates on social media on Monday and offered a brief update on his condition. "Congratulations to Kalle Rovanner and Jonne Halttunen and the whole Toyota team on the strong performance and amazing result at Rally Poland," he said. "I knew there would be no better replacement than you guys. Things are still improving and going in a positive direction. Thanks for all the support."

**TOM HOWARD**

**➔ P42 RALLY POLAND**



TOM BANKS / MCKLEIN

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

# Ferrari eyes 'joker' upgrade despite Le Mans victory

## WEC

Ferrari is eyeing a performance upgrade of its Le Mans 24 Hours-winning 499P that could come on stream before the end of this year's World Endurance Championship. The first evo joker to be invoked by the Italian manufacturer on its Le Mans Hypercar is set to arrive either this season or for the start of next.

Ferdinando Cannizzo, technical director of Ferrari's sportscar operations, has revealed that an unspecified upgrade is in the pipeline, but insisted that no timeline for its introduction has been laid down. "We are thinking about introducing a joker this year or next year: we know the areas we would like to improve," he said. "We haven't made any decision yet, but we are further developing this joker because we've identified areas for improvement."

Cannizzo explained that the events of last month's Le Mans blue riband round of the WEC had reinforced Ferrari's intent to introduce a joker. He pointed out that the Toyota GR010 HYBRID LMH with which the 499P again battled for victory on the Circuit de la Sarthe

was the more competitive car in wet and mixed conditions: "We need to be much more competitive in all conditions – Le Mans was a perfect lesson for us."

Ferrari opted not to introduce any jokers ahead of the start of its second season with the 499P in 2024. Cannizzo said in the run-up to the Qatar season-opener in March that "before we apply for any jokers we want to understand the ultimate performance of our car".

A manufacturer must apply to the WEC rulemakers – the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest – to be able to use one of the evo jokers available to it. The take-up of jokers is not in the public domain and is not shared by the FIA and the ACO with the manufacturers, but it is believed that Peugeot is the only Hypercar entrant to use the joker rules for this season.

Porsche's plans for a new version of the 4.6-litre twin-turbo V8 that powers its 963 LMDh remain on ice. When project boss Urs Kuratle was asked in the wake of Le Mans whether the revisions will be introduced, he replied "probably not".

**GARY WATKINS**





**EXTREME H** A new series was formally launched last Thursday aboard a ship upon the River Thames in London – as you do! Extreme H, the hydrogen replacement for Extreme E from 2025, got the green light aboard the St Helena, the vessel on which the entire ‘race without a trace’ circus floats around the world. The new Pioneer 25 machine, powered by hydrogen fuel-cell technology and developed by XE/Formula E chassis supplier Spark, was unveiled in the livery of new series backer Red Bull. Those in attendance including driver/team boss Carlos Sainz Sr, and fellow drivers Catie Munnings and Hedda Hosas – the Norwegian who has acted as a test pilot.

## Lambo's full-season IMSA doubt

### IMSA

Lamborghini and its factory Iron Lynx team might not run a full schedule of IMSA SportsCar Championship events next season with the new SC63 LMDh. There has been no decision on whether to expand the North American programme from the endurance events that its solo car is contesting this year.

Andrea Piccini, team principal at Iron Lynx, has revealed that a final call will be made in the coming weeks about whether the Detroit-based arm of an operation that will be expanding from one to two cars in the World Endurance Championship will contest the full season in GTP in 2025. That appears to be step back from the intent outlined on the launch of the SC63 last summer when a vision to run two full-season WEC entries and one in IMSA was presented.

“We cannot say a full season in America is confirmed,” said Piccini. “Definitely in the next few weeks the programme for next year will be decided.

“This is a developing programme and for sure there will be a bigger involvement next year because we have to run two cars in WEC,” continued Piccini, referencing the new rule that demands manufacturer



teams in the Hypercar class must run two cars. “What we do in IMSA hasn’t been decided, but we all know that North America is an important market for Lamborghini.”

Piccini played down the idea that Lamborghini and Iron Lynx would put themselves at a disadvantage next year if they only do the enduros, starting with a maiden assault on the Daytona 24 Hours.

**GARY WATKINS**

## ALBUQUERQUE: DI RESTA SUB

Filipe Albuquerque will race for the United Autosports LMP2 squad in the Mosport round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship later this month. The Portuguese, a team regular since 2017, has been brought in to replace Paul di Resta, who will be on duty for Peugeot in the clashing Interlagos World Endurance Championship fixture, alongside Dan Goldburg in the team’s #22 ORECA-Gibson 07. Albuquerque, who races for the Wayne Taylor Racing with Andretti GTP Acura squad in IMSA, is free to do the Canadian race because only the P2, GT Daytona Pro and GTD classes are taking part in the event.

## FUNDRAISING HILL

Damon Hill is raising money for Neuro UK, which tackles issues relating to neurological conditions, by cycling the Etape of the Tour de France on Saturday. Hill, who talks about his fundraising on the latest *James Allen on F1* podcast, has set up a JustGiving page to which donations can be made to the organisation.

## PRAMAC'S APRILIA SWITCH

MotoGP team Pramac, with which Jorge Martin currently occupies the series runner-up spot, has made official its move from Ducati to become a Yamaha satellite team in 2025. Amid the turbulent rider market, Fabio Di Giannantonio and Miguel Oliveira appear to be the frontrunners for a seat with the squad. Meanwhile, Alex Marquez has taken himself off that market by committing to the Gresini Ducati team for a further two seasons. Over at Yamaha, ex-Tech3 rider Remy Gardner was named as substitute for the injured Alex Rins for this weekend’s German GP as we went to press.

## COLAPINTO IN BRIT GP FP1

Exciting Argentinian Formula 2 talent Franco Colapinto (below) will make his Formula 1 FP1 debut tomorrow (Friday) at Silverstone. The Williams junior will take the seat of Logan Sargeant, before hopping back into his MP Motorsport F2 machine for the remainder of the weekend.





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# August

## VINTAGE PRESCOTT HILL CLIMB



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# Max proves he hasn't changed

*The world champion's battle with Lando Norris in Austria recalls notorious clashes from recent history and doesn't tally with the narrative that his approach has matured*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

**T**he end of last Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix was horribly familiar for motorsport purists – those who feel that the world's best drivers really shouldn't be driving into each other. But it was thrilling again for so many other observers, because it was Formula 1 2021 all over again.

There are similarities between Red Bull racer Max Verstappen clashing with McLaren's Lando Norris at the Red Bull Ring's Turn 3 and so many moments from Verstappen's campaign against Lewis Hamilton three years ago. That year ended with a distinct focus on unacceptable defending, after Verstappen's Brazil Turn 4 moves went unpunished and led directly to his actions in the race of disgrace that was F1's first visit to Saudi Arabia.

Last Sunday in Austria, it was a Verstappen defensive move that ultimately earned a penalty, which followed his repeated driving towards Norris in the braking zones of their two earlier engagements at the same spot. All included contentious Norris attacking moves given the McLaren driver was coming from far back with a big DRS speed discrepancy. But these were cloaked in the mitigating circumstances of Verstappen's aggressive defence. Oh so Silverstone 2021 and Hamilton not ceding ground at Copse.

McLaren team principal Andrea Stella – a consistent voice of calm sanity this year – summed it up: “The problem behind it is that if you don't address these things honestly, they will come back.”

**“Norris has shown that he too won't back down and inevitably there will be more contact”**

Verstappen acted as he did last Sunday because of how he has approached F1 combat in the past. Even hours after the clash he was claiming, “I honestly think I did leave a car's width on the white line”. The moves were also a reminder of the late-braking tactics earlier in his F1 career that led to the famed ‘Verstappen rule’. F1's racing rules have been tweaked since 2021, with necessary clarity brought to many things Verstappen was doing.

He was apportioned blame for the Norris crash. But McLaren feels more needs to be done to stamp out the earlier defending too. That doesn't mean Norris wasn't wrong to traverse track limits cynically – some would say desperately, at Turn 3 as he left the pits from his second stop and Turn 1 reputedly in his hasty chase – as he pushed to catch Verstappen when he realised a win was on. Nor that his first attack came from too far back.

But he adjusted and Verstappen did not. This is just one of Verstappen's innate characteristics. He is utterly unyielding. The lack of action in 2021 clearly tightened his resolve. But what F1 witnessed on Sunday was another of the markers he claims he doesn't lay down, but obviously does.

Verstappen came into the Austria weekend with a 69-point lead over Norris. He had no need to defend as hard as he did. But, as was clear in his hyper-aggressive driving towards Hamilton in early 2021, with echoes of the tactics of other controversial F1 greats Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher, he was plainly sending a message to Norris. And he got one right back. Norris remained dead straight against the outside line to Turn 3 when they collided. He didn't shift to the kerb as Verstappen did against Carlos Sainz and Leclerc here last year – all moves from the cars on the inside illegal.

Norris has rapidly realised that the only way to fight Verstappen is to give as good as you get. Maybe he always knew, given what F1 witnessed in 2021. He's done it immediately because, as much as Norris claimed to be in a 2024 title fight after his Barcelona near-miss, the points deficit means he can afford to take risks in a way Hamilton couldn't in early 2021.

The other element of this saga is how it blows away the suggestions that Verstappen had been “driving with great maturity” after his 2021 battle. This was how Red Bull boss Christian Horner put it at the 2022 French GP, but the point was always flimsy. That much was proven by the 2022 Brazilian GP, when there was another needless marker-maintaining crash, again with Hamilton. And later in that race, how Verstappen refused to help Sergio Perez in his doomed bid to finish second in the 2022 standings. This let the inner team tensions that Red Bull had been working so hard to suppress out in public spectacularly. Then in 2023, Verstappen had called Russell a “dickhead” for racing with exactly the Dutchman's uncompromising style in the Baku sprint.

GPS trace data shows Verstappen coming off the throttle and braking later than Norris in all but their initial clash where Norris went off – and even then, it's very close. This suggests Verstappen was moving fractionally before he braked, and why it doesn't compute – Schumacher-to-Ross-Brawn/Jerez 1997-style – that he was penalised for his actions. But in any case, it's how this impacts already committed Norris in the braking zone that matters.

And here the rules re-enter this already highly toxic debate. The FIA failed to act after Brazil 2021, when F1's spectacle was clearly prioritised over sporting purity. What will it do now? If it's nothing, again, Norris has already shown that he too won't back down and inevitably there will be more contact. Exhilarating for some, despair for others. 🍷

 **P16 AUSTRIAN GP REPORT**





# On the cusp of the F1 dream

*The BRDC SuperStar talks about his season so far in F2 with Prema, his F1 call-up and dealing with all the media attention*

OLLIE BEARMAN

**T**his has been a season of two halves. The Formula 1 side of things has been going really well with the free practice sessions and, of course, Jeddah with Ferrari. Every time I've been in an F1 car, even in private testing, I felt like my performances have been really strong, that I'm improving every time, and that I'm really starting to get comfortable. On the other hand, F2 has been difficult so far. We're really struggling to find consistency and to always find the correct feeling in the car. We still have some work to do at Prema to be the team we were last year.

I think the outright performance is very similar between the old and new F2 cars. We see it in qualifying, and even in the races – the trend is very similar and the lap time is very close. What we've understood is that the way we have to set the car up is quite different. The way that the car achieves downforce is quite different to the old car, and because of that, we have to run the car quite long and quite stiff, similar to how it is in F1 these days. So, on that side of things it's great preparation, but I think we've just struggled to fully get to grips with the new machinery.

Across the board, we struggled a bit more than we anticipated. There have been good performances, don't get me wrong. I feel like we've still been able to perform and get a decent lap time in qualifying, but the race pace is something we need to work on as a team. I'm as motivated as ever to go and get the results that we deserve because, at the moment, I don't feel like F2 is an accurate representation of my ability, and also the amount of hard work that the team has put into the season.

There have been a few high points this season. I didn't get to do the weekend in F2, but it was going really well in Saudi

Arabia, when I did the pole – that looked like it was going to be a really strong weekend.

Monaco as well, the race was really strong there. I started quite far back after a difficult qualifying, and I narrowly missed out on the podium just on pure pace and good strategy. And then, of course, it was good to win the sprint race in Austria. I was happy to be back on the top step of the podium as it's been a while, and it's the first podium of the year for the team. It's great to get a good result for Prema; hopefully it's a boost for morale and we can start some momentum from here. We have to keep working and trying to get some more of those good results.

I don't think I had a choice when I was offered the Ferrari drive in Saudi Arabia! My only concern was that I wanted to do F2 as well during the weekend, because that's my main target for the year. We quite quickly understood that wouldn't be allowed. It was an incredible experience and opportunity. I look back at a few things I could have done better, but that's quite normal. Hopefully I can get a few more of those in the future.

The coverage is something incredible. Going from F2 to F1 in one of the most unanticipated ways and with Ferrari, the attention was huge. It was quite insane to see the amount of interviews and people following me. Now with the amount of free practices I'm doing with Haas and the amount of running I'm doing in F1, the attention has been pretty strong.

I've been really happy with how the free practices have been going. It's tough to see exactly where you stand because I'm not putting the car on the limit, because I'm only stepping into someone else's car, and the plan is different across cars. My personal feeling is that I've been performing well and putting on a good show of myself. I'm showing what I'm capable of, which is my goal. I'm also learning a lot every time I'm running, I'm building up my knowledge bank and learning a lot for the future.

I really can't wait to race at Silverstone this weekend in F2. I know it won't be the busiest grandstands compared to the rest of the weekend, but to be able to run in an F1 car on one of my favourite tracks in the world, and the fact that it happens to be my home circuit, I'm really excited to share that experience with the fans, and hopefully I have their support.

I honestly can't wait for Silverstone in general. It's always my favourite weekend of the year, just because of the great atmosphere and vibe. The support that I've been getting has been exponentially increasing, so hopefully this year it's going to be even bigger. I just can't wait to go and try my absolute best to bring a result for the fans and myself. It's going to be a hectic weekend, there's going to be a lot going on, but it's all going to be fantastic. 🏁



Bearman relishes how much he's learning in F1 free practice outings

GALLOWAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

➔ P58 FORMULA 2 REPORT



# YOUR SAY

*The cost is the bigger factor, and when you look at the prices I'm surprised how well the ticket sales have gone*

STEVE MUNDY

## What's stopped a Silverstone sell-out?

It's been reported that Toto Wolff thinks "it's a shame" tickets for the British Grand Prix at Silverstone haven't sold out, but Max Verstappen is not to blame, adding that "we need to look at what can be done better from the promoter's side, I think the racing is exciting". Stuart Pringle from Silverstone has suggested that it's not the ticket prices or dynamic costing either.

I do think it's less to do with the racing – this year it is a lot better – but the cost is the bigger factor, and when you look at the ticket prices I'm surprised how well the ticket sales have gone. The dynamic pricing model is awful and Silverstone should be ashamed of using that. The other reason has to be the cost – earlier today (Sunday) the cheapest three-day grandstand was £549 with a further £95 for on-site parking and went up to just under £1200, but this included parking.

I haven't been to part of the GP weekend for years due to the cost, but for two people and a child you'd be looking at circa £2000 for three days including food and travel and that's hardly good value, unless that's about the only thing you do for most of the year.

**Steve Mundy**  
Gosport

## Fuelling a love of Formula 1

This year I will be at Silverstone on the 40th anniversary of my first teenage attendance at the British Grand Prix. In the decades since I have committed significant time and treasure to following the sport. I regret none of it apart, perhaps, for the Mastercard Lola F1 Team tattoo.

In the 1980s, despite all of Murray Walker's effervesce, it was not television that fuelled my love of the sport. In my memory, every race was interrupted for the running of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe or full coverage of the tea break in the County Cricket Championship. Instead it was the writers of Autosport who brought the detail of races to life and told the history of drivers and events I could never have witnessed.

Please carry on doing what you do.

**Neil Rennick**  
By email



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## Encounter with a future motorsport mogul

I enjoyed reading about David Richards' incredible achievements (Autosport, 20 June), and my mind drifted back to a cold night on a deserted Scarborough seafront when me and two friends were out spectating on the 1976 Mintex Rally.

David was navigating for Tony Pond in a Triumph Dolomite Sprint, they were having trouble with it and, as we watched from over the road, David waved us across. The front wing was pushed against the tyre and they wanted our muscle (young, fit and strong back then!) to help fix it.

David had attached a towrope to the wing and instructed us to put some tension on it while Tony belted the wing out with a lump hammer. I said: "What are you going to do?" He replied: "I'm holding the torch."

As we headed off down the road blowing on our sore hands, I said to my mates: "That bloke will go far." Never a truer word, eh!

**Peter Wareham**  
By email

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# RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

## RUSSELL TAKES SURPRISE WIN AS VERSTAPPEN AND NORRIS CLASH

*It was looking like the same old Austrian GP story,  
but then Red Bull errors and Verstappen aggression  
handed Mercedes a first victory of 2024*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport  
IMAGES**







Russell put some fizz into Mercedes' season once the leaders had clashed. It was his second F1 win





A

Hans Zimmer score and a cinematic masterpiece are often intertwined among some of the most venerated productions in the world of film. The highly revered composer has lent a sprinkling of gold dust to each, enveloping them in a sheen of electronic music-influenced orchestral soundscapes, and has won two Oscars for

'best original score' in his distinguished and distinctive career.

Zimmer opened the Austrian Grand Prix with his own energetic rendition of the national anthem *Land der Berge, Land am Strome* that broke away from the usually staid pre-race formalities. Wielding a James Trussart custom Steelcaster, his involvement ought to have been a harbinger of things to come over the 71 laps of the Red Bull Ring.

And the final 20 laps? Pure cinema. The plot lured people into believing that it was set to be a routine Max Verstappen win, before a rare Red Bull mistake and the searing pace of Lando Norris on medium tyres culminated in their coalescence at Turn 3: a convergence of narratives that changed their fortunes dramatically.

As the camera panned out from their collision, the pair battered and bruised as they limped to the pitlane, George Russell stole past them to stand aloft at the chequered flag. "You couldn't write a script like this," the oft-trotted-out cliché rings. Yet, it's exactly the one you'd pen for a Mercedes redemption arc.

### The plot takes time to develop

The scene-setting was lengthy and pedestrian. Verstappen looked set to build upon the foundations dug by his clinical pole lap, one that was

head and shoulders clear of the rest. It bore all the usual hallmarks consistent across his collection of 61 GP wins: the preservation of his pole over Norris and subsequent early investment into the one-second-plus lead needed to stave off the threat of DRS.

Then came the metronomic-yet-prodigious pace over the opening stint. Verstappen slowly tightened his grip on the outcome with a leisurely turn of the vice's handle. He couldn't dig out the same 0.4-seconds advantage per lap that he'd held in qualifying, but it was enough to carry a sub-6s lead into the opening pitstop phase.

Norris matched Verstappen by joining him in the pitlane on the 23rd lap to collect the hard tyres, although the timings were such that the McLaren driver complained that Red Bull had released Verstappen into his path and cost him time. Perhaps there was a second in it, and Norris's deficit grew to over six once both drivers had completed their service.

Those arrears continued to expand to just over eight seconds, but Verstappen then started to lose his flow. "I don't know what's happening, but suddenly the tyres are really bad," the Dutchman stated over the radio as he began to find that his hard rubber was no longer delivering the levels of grip that he expected. His gap held for a short while after, but Norris then began to start eating back into the deficit, despite reporting that his own rears were starting to move past their prime.

Hot temperatures had exacerbated the high levels of tyre degradation, to which it became apparent that the hard Pirellis were not impervious. The drivers found them increasingly difficult to manage, particularly when the carcass temperature continued to rise as the stints progressed. The overheating ensured that, when the cloud cover started to emerge, the best of the grip from the hard tyres was gone.





No smoke  
without fire: Norris  
and Verstappen go  
wheel to wheel in  
Austria



## “NORRIS STARTED TO POUND AT VERSTAPPEN’S DOOR WITH THE POWER AND INTENT OF A HEAVYWEIGHT”

Verstappen noted that “the first stint was not too bad and I had a fairly comfortable lead, the second stint was difficult; I think we stayed out a bit too long. And then there was the problem with the pitstop...”

Verstappen had stabilised slightly prior to that, as Norris started to find traffic was hampering his progress. It was becoming a struggle for both; Norris suffered a slip at Turn 3 and went off on a brief excursion into the run-off, while Verstappen reported that his C3 Pirellis were “f\*\*\*\*\*”. Apparently joined at the hip in their race strategies, Verstappen and Norris peeled into the pitlane together at the end of the 51st tour – and that’s where this motion picture takes a sinister turn.

A sticking left-rear wheelnut on Verstappen’s RB20 was the main culprit. This left Verstappen stationary for 6.5s, an aeon relative to Red Bull’s usual rapidity in the pitlane. With a tentative getaway from his box, he lost about four seconds relative to Norris and opened the door for the Briton to start chomping away at the ever-shrinking gap.

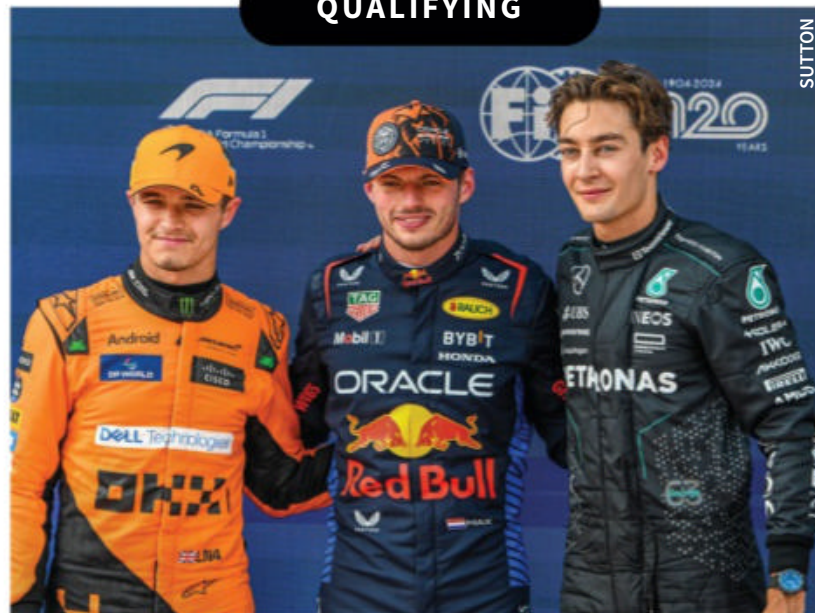
There was a divergence between the Red Bull and the McLaren here, albeit slight: Verstappen had taken a used set of the medium tyres, having not carried a second new set into the race. Norris, on the other hand, had barely worn away the box-fresh lustre from his C4 compound as he wheeled back onto the circuit.

“[Norris] got that new tyre advantage; had they gone out 6s apart, he’d have probably closed the gap,” Red Bull team principal Christian Horner reckoned. “We probably would have had enough to manage it in those final laps, with the delta being about two tenths of a second.”

In reality, Norris got a 1.8s gap down to less than a second over the next two laps, helped by Verstappen locking up at Turn 4 on his out-lap, and immediately started to pound at Verstappen’s door with the power and intent of a heavyweight boxer. At the start of lap 55, Norris made his first serious attempt into Turn 3 and gathered the draft from the Red Bull ahead, hoping to switch to the inside to plant his McLaren into the apex. Verstappen covered the middle of the road in retaliation, a move that earned Norris’s ire. He complained over the radio – perhaps with a tinge of drama in his message to appeal to the stewards – that Verstappen had “reacted to his mirrors”, and “saw me move, and then he moved”.

A fearsome tete-a-tete showed few signs of abating. Norris had the »

### QUALIFYING



If there was any indication of how much qualifying at the Red Bull Ring had evolved into a Max Verstappen benefit concert, it’s this: the Dutch driver completed four laps – two in Q2, two in Q3 – good enough for pole position. Even setting two laps in Q2, despite being overwhelmingly safe from his opening effort, seemed like nothing more than a bid to flex his advantage and deliver a parting shot to his rivals on the grid.

By Q3, it was very apparent that nobody was going to beat Verstappen. The odds were too insurmountable for Lando Norris to make a play for pole, and he closed out his lap four tenths down on the championship leader. It was as if Verstappen had punched in his 1m04.314s effort, a tenth up on his previous best, and knew it wasn’t even going to be touched by the rest of the order. The lap at the Red Bull Ring is short, so his advantage would be north of half a second on a standard-length venue.

Was it a perfect lap? Verstappen didn’t quite think so. He believed there was more in it, but didn’t want to risk everything just to extract that final drop of lap time. “I knew that if I did a solid lap, it was going to be good enough for pole,” he mused. “And that’s what I did today. That’s what matters.”

Norris had got ahead of his McLaren team-mate Oscar Piastri by fractions, but the Australian later had his lap time deleted for track limits at

**“I knew that if I did a solid lap, it was going to be good enough for pole position”**

Turn 6. Piastri lightly tickled the gravel here and McLaren was adamant that he had stayed on-side, but the FIA remained resolute that track limits had indeed been violated. He was therefore shuffled down to seventh, behind the Mercedes and Ferraris as the two manufacturer squads overlapped each other on the grid. George Russell headed that pack, from Carlos Sainz, Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc to set up a battle between the silver and red cars on Sunday.

Sergio Perez evaded his misery from 2023 to a certain degree and made it into Q3, but qualified a distant eighth, 0.888s behind his Red Bull team-mate. Nico Hulkenberg and Esteban Ocon rounded out the top 10.





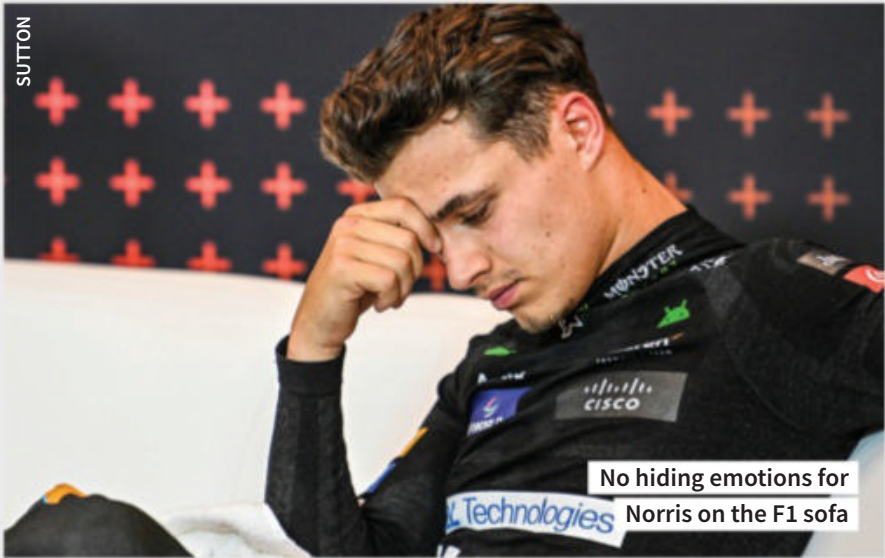
SPRINT RACE



Self-flagellation from Lando Norris is never in short supply. As the gap between Red Bull and McLaren erodes ever further in the battle for victories, Norris has been his harshest critic in his pursuit of perfection: a state he believes is the only way to beat Max Verstappen.

And there he slumped on the press conference sofa, weighed down by a mix of malaise and defeat. A chance of victory, however fleeting, had become warped into a third-place finish behind team-mate Oscar Piastri in just two corners. “I did something pretty stupid and silly,” Norris reflected after he felt he’d left the door open at Turn 4, seconds after his bold Turn 3 dive on Verstappen for the lead.

After maintaining a presence within a second of Verstappen during the opening tour of the Red Bull Ring sprint, Norris was able to sink his claws into the Red Bull



driver with DRS, looming large in his mirrors at the end of Turns 3 and 4. It took a couple of laps to scope out where to pass and, at the beginning of the fifth, Norris fired his McLaren down the inside of Turn 3 despite being some way behind. Verstappen, for his part, was suffering with battery clipping at the end of the straight and

ceded about 20km/h (12mph) at the top of the straight.

The Briton then coaxed his orange machine into throwing out its anchors just in time and looked to preserve his advantage, largely through retaining DRS into the downhill drop to Turn 4. But it didn’t quite work that way; although Norris cut across Verstappen to stop an immediate riposte, he took the usual outside line into Turn 4 and immediately allowed the Dutchman to trickle past on the inside. Norris noticed and tried to ward him off, but the damage had already been done. He described his failure to defend as “amateur”.

Piastri sensed an opportunity to capitalise on Norris’s strife and took it, as the leading duo hugged the outside kerb into Turn 5. The Australian took the later apex into

“Norris noticed and tried to ward Verstappen off, but the damage had already been done”

the fourth official corner and folded his car inside of Norris, maintaining the momentum to stick it around the outside of the higher-speed Turn 6.

Now the battle for the lead had dulled considerably, with Piastri unable to put Verstappen under the same degree of scrutiny over the following laps. The early scrum for positions subsided once the beating sun began to bake the tyres, prompting Verstappen to extend his lead as Piastri found the DRS less effective lap by lap.

Once the golden second was accrued at the front, it was game over for victory. Norris hoped to pressure Piastri for second but, with the medium tyres overheating, his use of DRS made little difference and effectively preserved the status quo at the front.

George Russell won out in the battle for fourth, after repassing Carlos Sainz to sit three seconds behind Norris. Sainz enjoyed a swashbuckling first lap to cruise around the outside of Russell at Turn 4 but could do little to preserve position seven laps later when Russell used the same corner in his retort.





speed, but Verstappen supplied the robust defence: one that started to drift back into his old habits of reacting to the movements of the driver behind. For his part, Norris was no saint: while sitting on a black-and-white flag for track limits offences, he was pinged for another in his lap 59 tilt at the lead at Turn 3 once more.

This time, Norris had got a nose ahead of Verstappen with a late-braking move down the inside. But he didn't have the stopping power behind him to cover off the excess speed with which he'd mounted his challenge, forcing a lock-up and an escape into the run-off. That, unless McLaren could do the unlikely and prove that Verstappen had forced him off, was going to encumber him with a 5s penalty. A thrilling battle had now threatened to become an ill-tempered affair.

### The quiet hero gets into position

Russell had opened his race through a brief duel with Norris on the way up to Turn 3 but, with only a foot in the game around the outside, a speculative move for second always looked folly. Instead, it proved somewhat costly as the Mercedes driver shed his momentum and allowed his team-mate Lewis Hamilton to break past for third on lap three. Hamilton's hold on that position lasted for the length of the straight between Turns 3 and 4, where Russell opened his DRS flap and reclaimed the position into the next corner.

It had been a somewhat tentative start to the race. Russell felt that his car was acting strangely on his reconnaissance laps to the grid, but a quick scan of the data suggested that all was well. "We checked everything, and everything was fine, then the pace felt strong," he reckoned. "I had Lewis attack me early in the race, but then once I got back past him, I got a bit of a gap to Carlos [Sainz]."

## "I DIDN'T THINK CHECO WAS THAT FAR UP ALONGSIDE CHARLES, BUT ALL THREE OF US MET AT THE APEX"

Hamilton had dispatched Sainz while going off the road at the first corner and, pending an investigation, was ordered to let the Spaniard through to quell any consequences from the stewards. But the Ferrari, Sainz estimated, was shy of about half a tenth to a tenth of a second to the Mercedes, particularly among the early tyre management phases on the mediums. Hamilton could not mount any kind of retaliation, but Sainz was kept just outside of 4s by Russell in the process.

Russell's engineers had elected to offset his heavier fuel load by running on medium tyres for the opening two stints, and kept that medium going as long as the hard runners did in their middle stint. It was an impressive showing to largely match Sainz's lap times throughout, even when the mediums started to wear.

Sainz, meanwhile, was coming under threat from Oscar Piastri. The McLaren driver was growing in momentum through the race after a first-lap touch with Charles Leclerc, who had steamed up the inside and



left Piastri with little else to do but touch the Ferrari driver's endplate. "I didn't get the best of starts, but saw a bit of an opening on the outside and then went nice and late on the brakes," the Australian recalled. "I couldn't really see where Checo [Sergio Perez] went on the inside, but I didn't think he was really that far up alongside Charles, but obviously all three of us kind of met at the apex. Quite fortunate for myself. I think there was a little bit of damage, but I don't think anything major."

Having also fallen behind Perez after being nudged wide at Turn 4, Piastri had the bit between his teeth and repaid the favour on the Mexican with a brave move around the outside of Turn 6. He banked the knowledge that overtaking was possible there and later used it to dispatch Hamilton when the Mercedes' tyres had started to fade. Sainz was next in his sights, and he began to scythe the great chunks out of his advantage as the race waltzed into its final act.

### The story reaches its climax

Verstappen's defence of the lead started to become more desperate as Norris continued to turn the screw. Further fury washed over Norris when a lap 63 attempt to pass, again at Turn 3, ended with Verstappen going off to preserve the lead. There were shades of the Dutchman's own move on Leclerc at the same corner in 2019 but, this time, there was no contact. "He has to give the position back," Norris contended immediately over the radio. "I was ahead at the apex."

Ultimately, it was small fry compared to events on the next lap. Norris positioned his car on the outside in a bid to swing around, grab the cutback, and try to finally clear Verstappen with DRS into the next corner. Instead, Verstappen kept listing lazily to the left as Norris stood his ground, forcing the contact that ended with Norris's endplate puncturing the championship leader's left-rear tyre immediately.

Verstappen's puncture-induced squirm knocked at Norris's right rear to pull that off the rim too, and the two descended down the hill into Turn 4 in glacial fashion. Victory was gone for both, escaping from their respective grasps at the same time as the air in their deflating tyres.

"I expect a tough battle against Max," Norris exhaled after the race. "I know what to expect. I expect aggression and pushing the limits and that kind of thing. All three times he's doing stuff which can easily cause an incident. And in a way, it was just a bit reckless – he seemed like a little bit desperate from his side."

"I just expected a tough, fair, respectful on-the-edge bit of racing and I don't feel like that's what I got him into."

Verstappen denied that he had been moving under braking, and felt that Norris's manoeuvres had been "dive-bombs" and "hoping that the other guy steers out of it and you make the corner". Norris ultimately retired, the damage to his car and loss of position too great to continue, while Verstappen made it back to the pits to rejoin in fifth. Regardless, the Red Bull driver was found to be at fault and handed a 10s penalty.

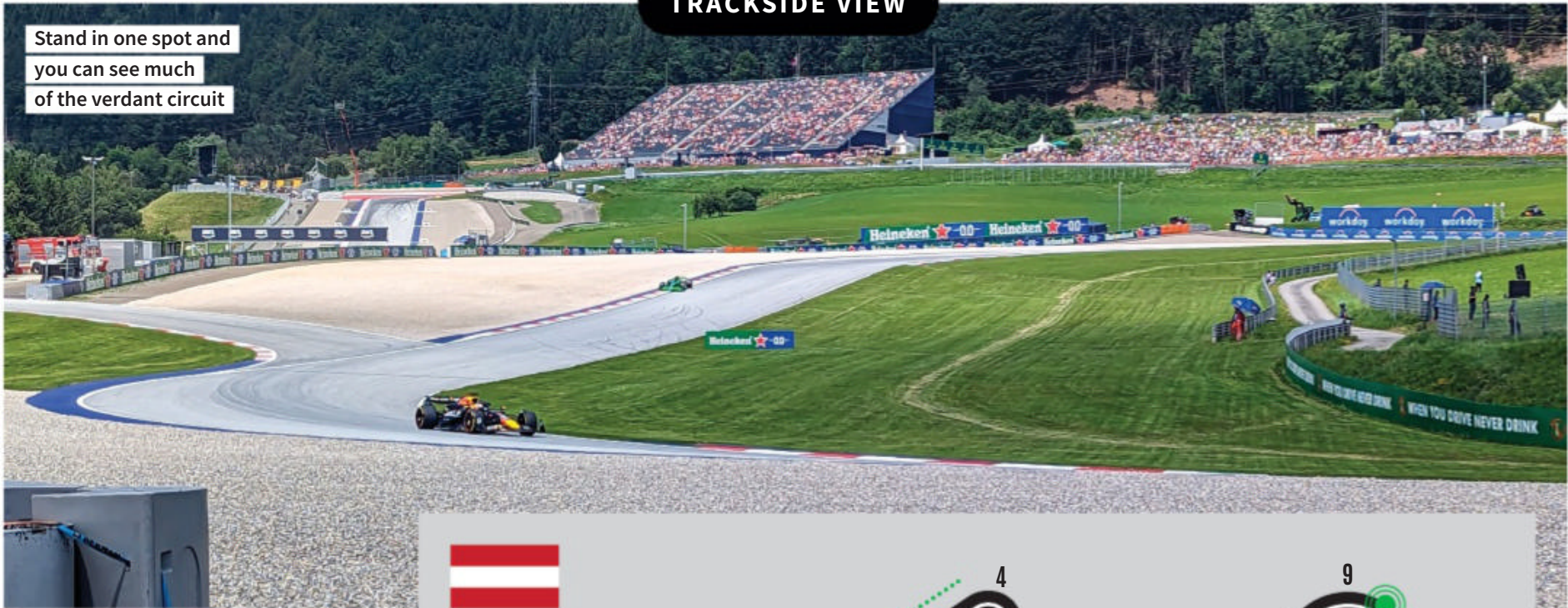
It all was so avoidable too. Red Bull did not inform Verstappen that Norris had a 5s penalty: a hubristic oversight that cost a victory. Very un-Red Bull, if you like.

Speaking to Sky after the race, McLaren team principal Andrea Stella reckoned that the "legacy" of Verstappen's previous incidents in 2021 >>





TRACKSIDE VIEW

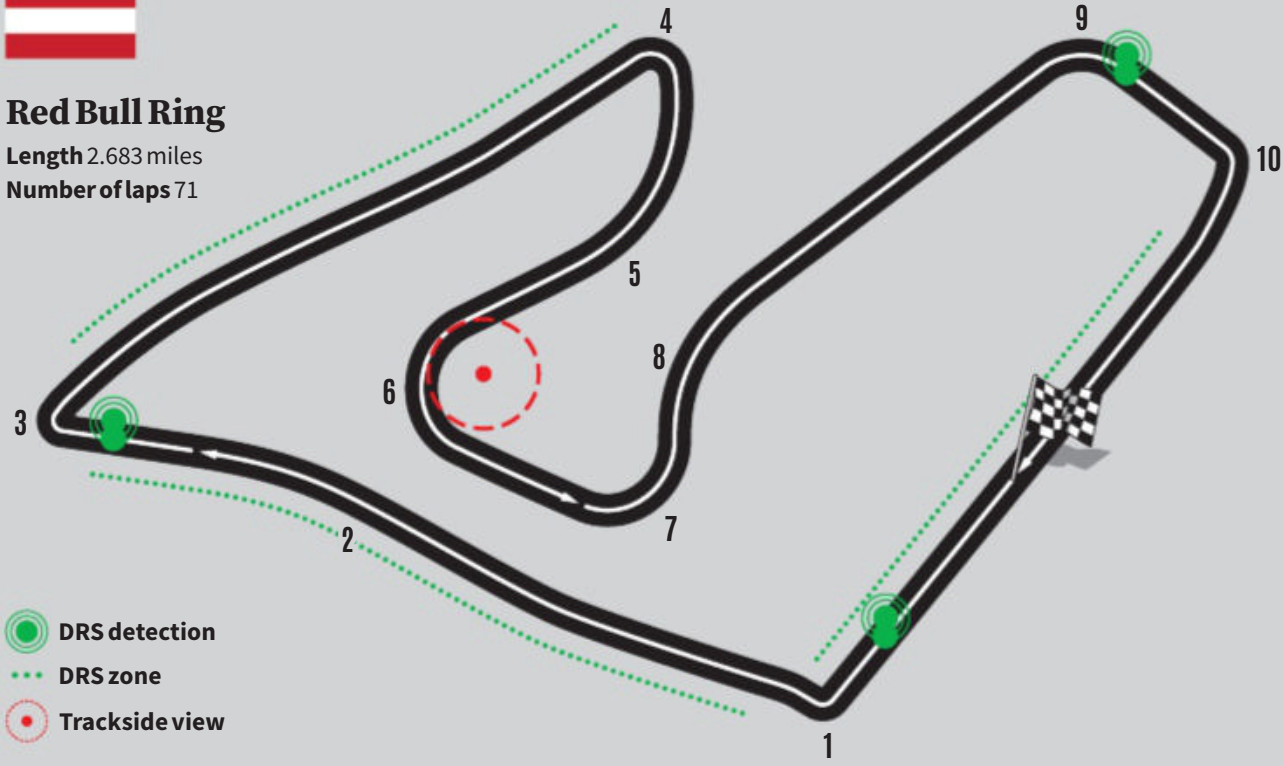


Stand in one spot and you can see much of the verdant circuit



Red Bull Ring

Length 2.683 miles  
Number of laps 71



- DRS detection
- DRS zone
- Trackside view

Compared to some of the glorified car parks in which Formula 1 finds itself over the course of a season, the Red Bull Ring is a lovely change of scene. Pick your spot somewhere among the verdancy and you can pretty much see the entire circuit, compactly enclosed among the Austrian Alps' firs, pines and spruces. It's an uphill walk to Turns 6 and 7, but we've got to work off last night's schnitzel somehow.

The Red Bull Ring is a popular venue. Even those who remember the Österreichring, which this writer certainly doesn't, largely enjoy the modern-day evocation – even without the faster and arguably more perilous long-radius corners.

As the practice session opens, we're treated to a consistent cadence of cars cascading down the hill. Even in the early stages, there are a few drivers attacking the Turn 6 exit kerb to run just millimetres from tousling the gravel trap. Wind in a bit of steering to the left, then bear right to collect a little more purchase from the service road on the exit of Turn 7 for a late apex, and then fire the car at Turn 8 and ride the kerb like a monorail conductor.

“It's an uphill walk, but we've got to work off last night's schnitzel”

Esteban Ocon kicks up a cloud of dust while riding that kerb aggressively and, to prove the earlier point, Alex Albon gets his claws into the Turn 6 exit and just about avoids the gravel to his right. But there are not many mistakes here; the lack of run-off rather corrals the drivers into complying with track limits, as does the limited practice time available



Pitlane exit and blast out of Turn 1 converge



Attacking that kerb at Turn 6 is best avoided

on a sprint weekend.

Turn 1, however, is a bit more of a mistake generator. Plus, it's downhill, which is a little easier for us to contend with in the warm weather. Here, it's a game of chicken with the sausage kerb that forms a line of defence against the run-off, and the likes of Zhou Guanyu and Logan Sargeant treat the yellow bump with respect. There's a bit more bravery from Fernando Alonso, who gives it more of a nibble on the immediate exit, and Oscar Piastri has his own bite at it moments later.

Charles Leclerc shows the

dangers of taking too much of the yellow kerb, losing grip and suffering from a minor snap. He grabs his wiggling Ferrari and cracks the reins, sending his red machine into the distance and up the hill.

Max Verstappen? He's not even got that far; he goes straight on at the near-90-degree right-hander and hasn't got it turned in before the kerb begins. A little less than a lap later, the Dutchman has come to a stop on the start/finish straight. The red flag flutters, an unwelcome contrast against the greenery...

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





Verstappen's left rear departs from its rim after the clash, but he'd recover to finish fifth

## “THE PROBLEMS HAVE COME BACK TODAY BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ADDRESSED PROPERLY IN THE PAST”

versus Hamilton in their tempestuous title scrap not being sufficiently punished bore fruit in Austria. “The problem behind it is that if you don’t address these things honestly, they will come back,” the Italian mused. “They have come back today because they were not addressed properly in the past when there were some fights with Lewis that needed to be punished in a harsher way. You learn now to race in a certain way, which we can consider fair and square.”

Russell was now in position to collect the win, although he admitted that he “nearly crashed” when team chief Toto Wolff, caught up in a whirlwind of euphoria, burst onto the radio to tell his driver “George, you can win this” while Russell was in a braking zone. “Just let me f\*\*\*\*\* drive,” came the curt riposte, and Wolff later admitted that it was a “stupid” time to deliver his rallying cry.

Russell was told three laps before the collision that a win was still on. Even when he tiptoed past the wayward and erstwhile leading pair, he knew that he still had work to do. Piastri again pressed Turn 6 into



Flailing rear tyre marks the end for Norris

SUTTON

service to move past Sainz, and was rapidly homing in on the medium tyres. “Marcus [Dudley], my engineer, said three laps before, ‘They’re fighting really hard and we can win this.’ And I said, ‘Look, we need to secure P3 first, let me drive.’ I knew Oscar was fast behind. Then when I got into the lead, I knew it was going to be a challenging last six laps.”

The debris produced by the Verstappen/Norris connection yielded a virtual safety car, which helped Russell’s cause. This allowed him to get the surplus of heat in his hard tyres down to a more manageable level: crucial, since Piastri was close to getting within two seconds of him.

With two laps to go, Russell managed to see off Piastri’s improvements with a final push to the flag, ensuring that he was 2.4s clear ahead of the final lap.

“It’s a bit of a strange one to win a race like this,” he pondered after the podium festivities, where he took the honour of drenching Zimmer in champagne. “But it’s racing. Sometimes it goes against you and I feel like we’ve probably missed out on one or two possibilities of victories. Today it went for us, so it’s how the cookie crumbles.

“I thought Oscar was going to catch me, to be honest, but I think catching is one thing, overtaking is another.

“I had Carlos behind me for 10 laps yesterday in my DRS, and I was also behind Carlos for about eight laps in his DRS, and overtaking wasn’t straightforward. I just said to myself, ‘Do what you do best, no heroics, and you’ll win this race.’”

Russell may not have won an Oscar for his starring role in a brilliant ending, but he certainly beat one to clinch his second F1 victory. And, indicative of the season, a predictable plotline was turned upon its head to deliver a result few could have foreseen. A Verstappen art-house jaunt with little conflict to speak of? No chance. This is starting to turn into an all-action thriller – and there will be more roles for Norris and Russell to play. ❧

**NEXT  
F1 REPORT**  
British Grand Prix  
11 July issue



The cookie crumbled in Russell’s favour this time

TEE



## HULKENBERG LEADS HAAS TO STRONGEST RESULT OF CAMPAIGN SO FAR

Haas scored its first double points finish since the Australian Grand Prix in March, with Nico Hulkenberg and Kevin Magnussen finishing sixth and eighth respectively in the Austrian GP, either side of Sergio Perez's Red Bull.

After Magnussen had shown strong pace in Saturday's sprint race on his way to a point-less ninth – where Hulkenberg botched a pass on Fernando Alonso – Haas continued what team boss Ayao Komatsu called “the best consistent run we've had this season”.

Magnussen made his customary positive start from 12th to run in the top 10 from the start of the GP, while Hulkenberg needed to recover past Esteban Ocon's Alpine before he could capitalise on Charles Leclerc's latest woe. Magnussen pitted on lap 10 to change his medium tyres for hards, which Hulkenberg also did one tour later. A slightly slower stop for the German and the undercut's power meant his team-mate got ahead, before they scrapped briefly and Hulkenberg got back past.

Once the first round of pitstops had shaken out, Hulkenberg had undercut Perez to run seventh, with Magnussen ninth. Perez passed Hulkenberg in the second stint but, when the same scenario played out in the third stint, the German stayed ahead with some forceful defending. Magnussen denied Daniel Ricciardo and Pierre Gasly to seal eighth.



## ANOTHER MISERABLE WEEKEND FOR LECLERC

Charles Leclerc declared himself “very happy the race is finished” after his damage-filled run to 11th in Austria capped a disastrous weekend for the Ferrari driver.

While team-mate Carlos Sainz had a smoother run, the 2022 Red Bull Ring winner endured a weekend of misfortune, with only one element of his own making. It all started to go wrong for Leclerc in SQ3, when the anti-stall system on his car “switched everything off” as he queued to leave the pits. He fired the car up again but ran out of time to start a timed lap and so ended up 10th. Leclerc made a brilliant sprint start to leap to seventh and score points after dropping Sergio Perez, but he couldn't make an impression on the leading pack ahead.

In Q3, Leclerc only had one set of new soft tyres available after burning through his other set making sure he got through Q2. But, having shown he should have been among the frontrunners with his early Q3 pace on used softs, his Turn 4 mistake on his final lap led to him trying to regain



time and going off, pushing too hard at Turns 6, 9 and 10.

Leclerc therefore started sixth in the GP, and then got sandwiched between Perez and Oscar Piastri, contact with the Australian on his outside breaking his front wing and requiring a pitstop at the end of lap one.

Ferrari insisted that Leclerc, out of sync with the field, could recover to the points. He rose to 15th, but doing “a whole stint behind Lando [while lapped by Norris and Max Verstappen ahead on used mediums] where I couldn't overtake because otherwise I would get blue flags and have to let him go again” capped his recovery, despite late passes on Alex Albon, Lance Stroll and Esteban Ocon.

# 0.798

The gap in seconds from first to 20th in Q1, the closest field spread in Q1 since the three-part qualifying format was introduced to Formula 1 in 2006.

S BLOXHAM







## TRACK LIMITS IMPROVED DESPITE PIASTRI IRE

Ahead of the Austrian Grand Prix, small gravel traps were installed at the Red Bull Ring's final two corners – the scene of problems that amounted to 1200 potential track limits violations in the 2023 main race at the venue.

The kerbs at these corners were also partially painted to match the track surface and had the track-defining white line painted over them, which reduced the overall gap from the gravel to the track to 1.5 metres since F1 cars are 2m wide. The measure can be adjusted for motorcycle racing here.

The only track limits saga prior to the closing stages of the GP was Oscar Piastri losing his best Q3 lap and third place for being too wide at the exit of Turn 6. Here, the kerb was still 1.8m wide despite additional repainting, with the FIA only explaining that “the line in Turn 6 has been moved to a reasonable limit to the gravel in regard to the kerb installation”.

Piastri being able to run wide enough to earn a sanction, which McLaren lost a protest over, and not touch the gravel to the right left him fuming, calling the situation “embarrassing” for F1.

## Gasly beats Ocon after another tough Alpine contest

Pierre Gasly scored the final point in the Austrian GP for Alpine, after prevailing in another brutal scrap with his team-mate Esteban Ocon in the middle phase of the race.

Ocon started as the lead Alpine driver after impressively making Q3, then battled Nico Hulkenberg in the early stages, where Gasly had made a good start to run 11th, up from 13th. Both Alpines then dropped back because of the aggressive undercut tactics of the Haases and Daniel Ricciardo, which left them both chasing Fernando Alonso, with Gasly directly behind Ocon.

After the Aston Martin had pitted, Gasly finally overtook his team-mate. They'd engaged in a fight at Turn 3 that had Gasly off in the run-off area. He finally overtook at Turn 4 with

a bold around-the-outside move, where Ocon gave him enough space to squeak ahead.

They pitted again shortly afterwards to move back from the hard tyres to a new set of the medium compound, on which both had started. Gasly overtook Charles Leclerc in lapped traffic behind Lando Norris, then caught up to the Kevin Magnussen/Ricciardo chase ahead. He gained the final point with Norris's retirement. Ocon was caught and passed by Leclerc just before the end, to finish 12th.

“That's now four points-scoring finishes in a row and my 400th career point in F1,” Gasly said. “In that sense, it's been a satisfying day but a race I'm sure we will review in detail in order to improve on a few things.”



### Q&A

#### DANIEL RICCIARDO RB DRIVER

**You started 11th and finished ninth, so how happy are you with the Austrian GP?**

I would say I don't remember all of the race, so I need to probably watch it again to kind of rate how happy I am, but I'm definitely more happy than sad. Obviously, Haas outscored us, but we weren't quick enough and I think also that Alpine was quicker so hard to hang on. I think



the team helped.

We had the two hard tyres, so we could pit a little bit earlier. And then I just had to watch the mirrors and try not to f\*\*\* up, basically. So, I did a clean race.

**There was a mix and match with the upgrades this weekend. Did that provide answers?**

There are some elements we have answers and we feel OK with and others less so. So there's

still a little bit of understanding to take place. But look, in seven days I think we did a good job to come here with a better package or a better understanding of it.

**SQ1 exit to nearly in Q3 – how did you adjust?**

I just missed out. I had a little bit more understanding on Saturday and quali went a lot better. Friday was a bit difficult, but then the weekend got better. I'm happy with the way we were able to recover and learn quickly.

**How do you think Helmut Marko will feel about your**

**result after his comments pre-weekend?**

I've known Helmut for such a long time and at the end of the day he doesn't care about personality. What he cares about is the stopwatch and the classification. He's a racer and that's all he really wants to see from us. I know that that can make him not think great about me to all of a sudden think great about me. I think this weekend's helped. I said it's a little bit more consistent now so just keep it going. Hopefully by the summer break he's laying on a beach somewhere saying, 'Ricciardo, he's still got it'.





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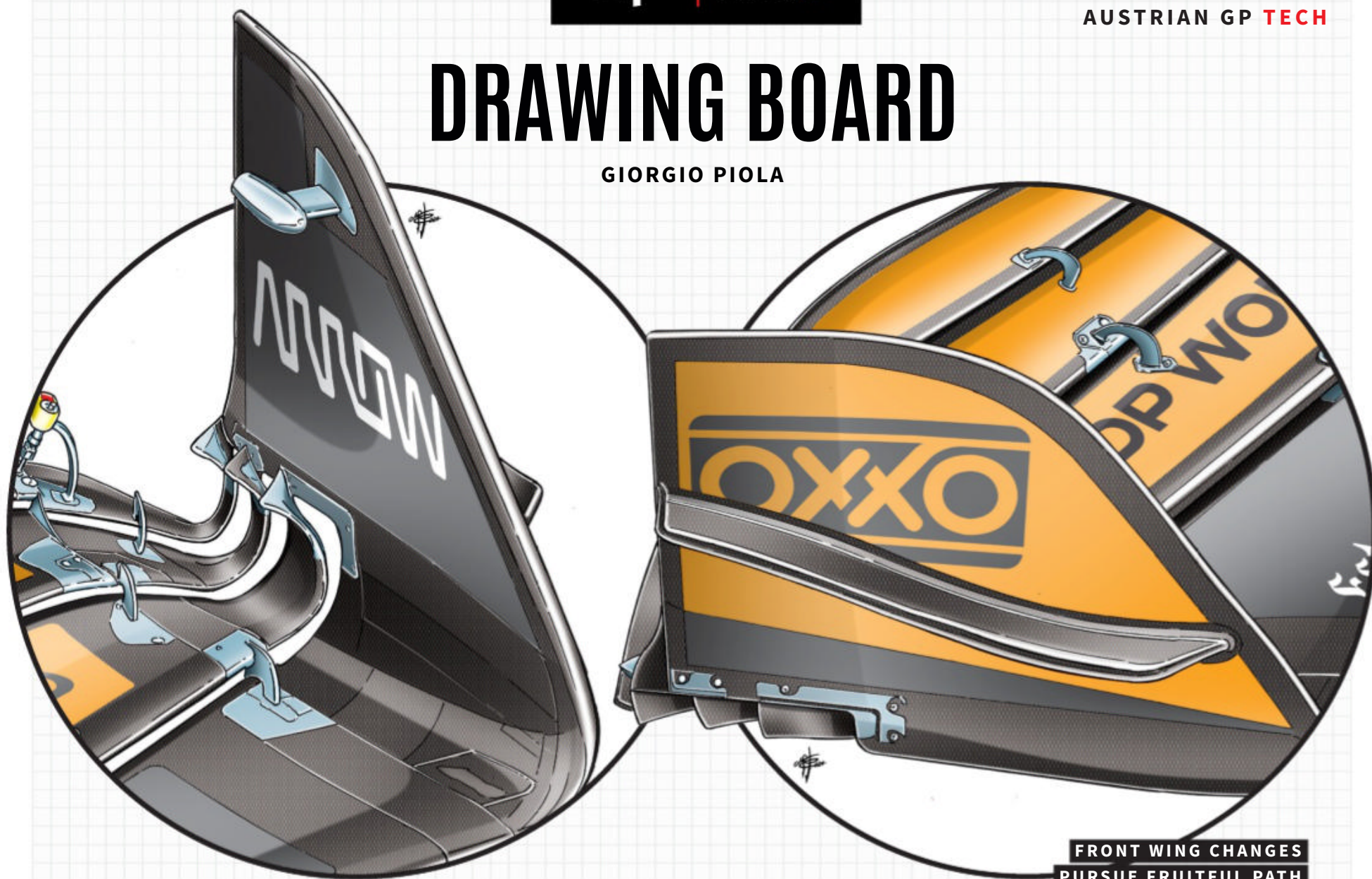
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# DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



FRONT WING CHANGES  
PURSUE FRUITFUL PATH  
INTRODUCED IN MIAMI

## McLAREN CONTINUES DEVELOPMENT PUSH

McLaren hoped to take the next step towards challenging Red Bull on a more regular basis with a new front wing, which featured a new treatment to the elements' blend into the endplate. It almost appears that the elements peel away from the endplate, with the leading edge forming a curl to produce extra vorticity, controlled

by the curvature. This yields more energised flow to be turned around the front of the tyre for outwashing, and protrudes slightly from the trailing edge of the endplate.

Because of the impact on flow behind the car, the suspension fairings were also revised to suit the new airflow patterns. "The

focus is to keep the development direction that we introduced to the trackside with the front wing we took to Miami," explained team principal Andrea Stella. "We saw that that concept worked well, so we wanted to pursue this direction further. And this is another attempt to improve the low-speed behaviour of the car. With this

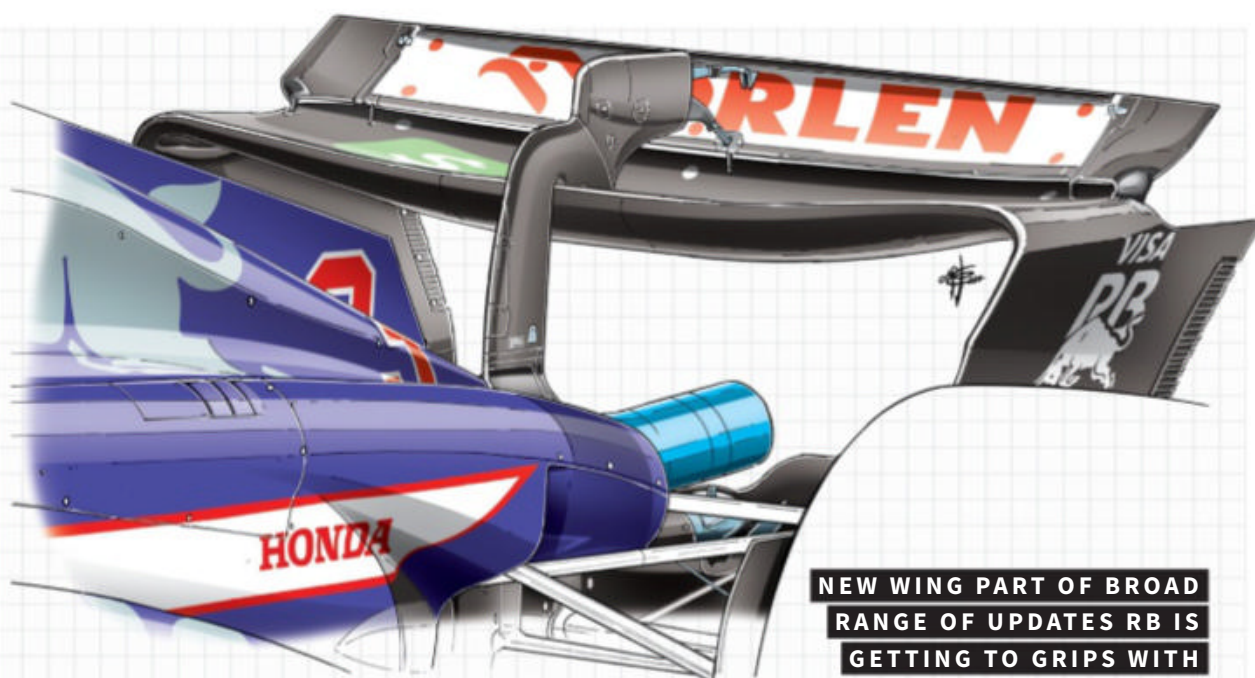
generation of cars, the geometries are very restricted and therefore it is difficult to achieve what you want in [all conditions]. The compromise we are working on is capable of delivering some low-speed benefit, but without affecting the high-speed or straight line too negatively."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**

## RB STILL LEARNING WITH NEW PACKAGE

RB sought to consolidate its sixth position in the constructors' championship and close the gap to Aston Martin in the points with its wide-ranging updates taken to Barcelona last month. The team added revised sidepods and a new engine cover to the VCARB 01, along with a new rear wing and floor, in a bid to extract more performance over the triple header.

It became apparent that, after a flat performance at the Spanish Grand Prix, RB had either failed to understand its new parts, or had inadvertently made its car slower despite the data on offer. Even with the limited time at the Austrian GP thanks to the sprint format, RB ran split specifications: Daniel Ricciardo had some of the new parts, while Yuki Tsunoda had a different handful of the Barcelona modifications. The team did not specify which



NEW WING PART OF BROAD  
RANGE OF UPDATES RB IS  
GETTING TO GRIPS WITH

specification each car was running in.

CEO Peter Bayer hoped that doing so would "provoke" some data, and it seemed to offer an uptick in performance over the weekend as Ricciardo clinched ninth in the race. "There are

some elements we have answers for and we feel OK with, and others less so," the Australian reported. "There's still a little bit of understanding to take place."

**JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE**



20 Zhou #24  
1m06.061s

19 Sargeant #2  
1m05.856s

18 Bottas #77  
1m05.847s

17 Stroll #18  
1m05.819s

16 Albon #23  
1m05.736s

15 Alonso #14  
1m05.639s

14 Tsunoda #22  
1m05.412s

13 Gasly #10  
1m05.359s

12 Magnussen #20  
1m05.347s

11 Ricciardo #3  
1m05.289s


FREE PRACTICE			SPRINT QUALIFYING			RACE QUALIFYING		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m05.685s	Q3 1	Verstappen	1m04.686s	Q3 1	Verstappen	1m04.314s
2	Piastri	1m05.961s	2	Norris	1m04.779s	2	Norris	1m04.718s
3	Leclerc	1m06.055s	3	Piastri	1m04.987s	3	Russell	1m04.840s
4	Sainz	1m06.128s	4	Russell	1m05.054s	4	Sainz	1m04.851s
5	Hamilton	1m06.254s	5	Sainz	1m05.126s	5	Hamilton	1m04.903s
6	Ocon	1m06.297s	6	Hamilton	1m05.270s	6	Leclerc	1m05.044s
7	Stroll	1m06.384s	7	Perez	1m06.008s	7	Piastri	1m05.048s
8	Russell	1m06.386s	8	Ocon	1m06.101s	8	Perez	1m05.202s
9	Tsunoda	1m06.579s	9	Gasly	1m06.624s	9	Hulkenberg	1m05.385s
10	Alonso	1m06.603s	10	Leclerc	no time	10	Ocon	1m05.883s
11	Gasly	1m06.734s	Q2 11	Magnussen	1m05.806s	Q2 11	Ricciardo	1m05.289s
12	Perez	1m06.783s	12	Stroll	1m05.847s	12	Magnussen	1m05.347s
13	Norris	1m06.880s	13	Alonso	1m05.878s	13	Gasly	1m05.359s
14	Zhou	1m06.919s	14	Tsunoda	1m05.960s	14	Tsunoda	1m05.412s
15	Bottas	1m06.925s	15	Sargeant	no time	15	Alonso	1m05.639s
16	Ricciardo	1m06.962s	Q1 16	Ricciardo	1m06.581s	Q1 16	Albon	1m05.736s
17	Hulkenberg	1m06.966s	17	Hulkenberg	1m06.583s	17	Stroll	1m05.819s
18	Albon	1m06.995s	18	Bottas	1m06.725s	18	Bottas	1m05.847s
19	Magnussen	1m07.145s	19	Albon	1m06.754s	19	Sargeant	1m05.856s
20	Sargeant	1m07.259s	20	Zhou	1m07.197s	20	Zhou	1m06.061s

WEATHER Cloudy, air 22-25C track 30-42C

WEATHER Clear, air 29-30C track 41-42C

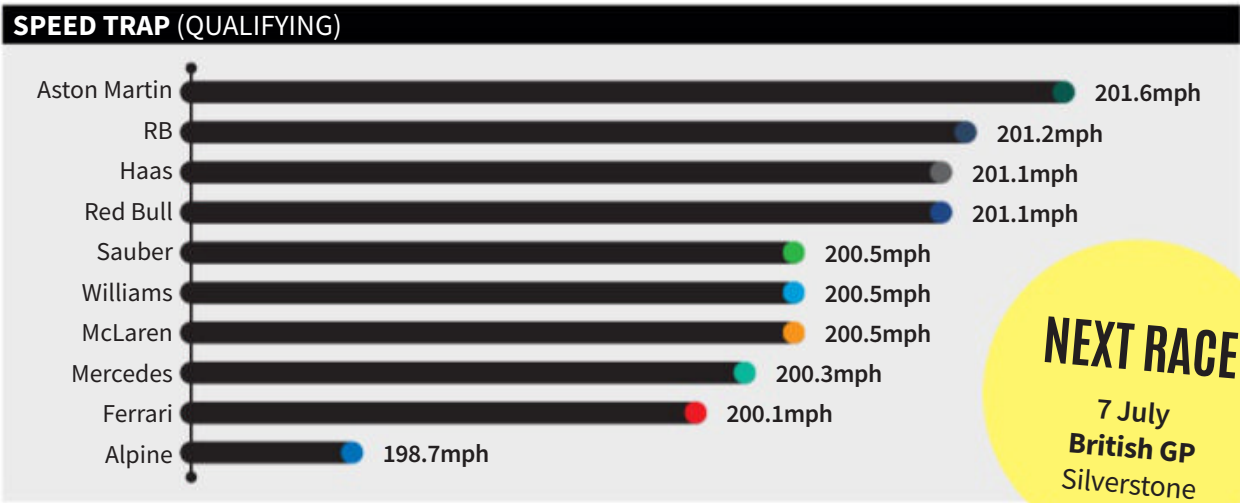
WEATHER Clear, air 32-34C track 46-50C

SPRINT RACE 23 LAPS – 61.63 MILES					
POS	DRIVER	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRE	FASTEST LAPS
1	Verstappen	26m41.389s	23	Mu	1m09.013s
2	Piastri	+4.616s		Mu	1m08.980s
3	Norris	+5.348s		Mu	1m08.935s
4	Russell	+8.354s		Mu	1m09.194s
5	Sainz	+9.989s		Mu	1m09.121s
6	Hamilton	+11.207s		Mu	1m09.265s
7	Leclerc	+13.424s		Mu	1m09.352s
8	Perez	+17.409s		Mu	1m09.420s
9	Magnussen	+24.067s		Mu	1m09.942s
10	Stroll	+30.175s		Mu	1m10.260s
11	Ocon	+30.839s		Mu	1m10.254s
12	Gasly	+31.308s		Mu	1m10.168s
13	Tsunoda	+35.452s		Mu	1m10.363s
14	Ricciardo	+39.397s		Mu	1m10.480s
15	Alonso	+43.155s		Mu	1m10.393s
16	Sargeant	+44.076s		Mu	1m10.488s
17	Albon	+44.673s		Mu	1m10.562s
18	Bottas	+46.511s		Mn	1m10.590s
19	Hulkenberg	+48.423s		Mu	1m10.512s
20	Zhou	+53.143s		Mn	1m10.613s



WEATHER Cloudy, air 29-30C track 45-48C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 138.553mph  
FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 140.119mph



SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	237	1	1
2 Norris	156	1	1
3 Leclerc	150	1	1
4 Sainz	135	1	2
5 Perez	118	2	2
6 Piastri	112	2	2
7 Russell	111	1	1
8 Hamilton	85	3	3
9 Alonso	41	5	3
10 Tsunoda	19	7	7
11 Stroll	17	6	9
12 Hulkenberg	14	6	9
13 Ricciardo	11	8	5
14 Bearman	6	7	11
15 Gasly	6	9	7
16 Magnussen	5	8	12
17 Ocon	3	10	9
18 Albon	2	9	9
19 Zhou	0	11	15
20 Bottas	0	13	10
21 Sargeant	0	14	13

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP		PTS
1 Red Bull		355
2 Ferrari		291
3 McLaren		268
4 Mercedes		196
5 Aston Martin		58
6 RB		30
7 Haas		19
8 Alpine		9
9 Williams		2
10 Sauber		0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	11	0	Perez
Hamilton	2	9	Russell
Leclerc	7	3	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	8	3	Piastri
Alonso	7	4	Stroll
Gasly	4	7	Ocon
Sargeant	0	10	Albon
Ricciardo	3	8	Tsunoda
Zhou	0	11	Bottas
Magnussen	2	8	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	Alonso	2
Leclerc	1	Hamilton	2
Norris	1	Leclerc	2
Russell	1	Verstappen	2
Sainz	1	Norris	1
POLE POSITIONS		Piastri	1
Verstappen	8	Russell	1
Leclerc	1		
Russell	1		
Norris	1		



## STARTING GRID

10 Ocon #31 1m05.883s	8 Perez #11 1m05.202s	6 Leclerc #16 1m05.044s	4 Sainz #55 1m04.851s	2 Norris #4 1m04.718s
9 Hulkenberg #27 1m05.385s	7 Piastri #81 1m05.048s	5 Hamilton #44 1m04.903s	3 Russell #63 1m04.840s	1 Verstappen #1 1m04.314s

## GP RESULTS ROUND 11/24 (71 LAPS - 190.42 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	1h24m22.798s	8	Mn, Mn, Hn
2	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1.906s	1	Mn, Hu, Mn
3	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	+4.533s		Mn, Hn, Mn
4	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+23.142s		Mn, Hn, Mn
5	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+37.253s	62	Mn, Hn, Mu, Su
6	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+54.088s		Mn, Hn, Hn
7	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+54.672s		Mn, Hn, Mu
8	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m00.355s		Mn, Hn, Hn
9	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	+1m01.169s		Mn, Hu, Hn
10	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m01.766s		Mn, Hn, Mn
11	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m07.056s		Mn, Hn, Mn, Mu, Mu
12	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m08.325s		Mn, Hn, Mn
13	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+10.234s		Mu, Mu, Hu
14	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+13.145s		Mn, Hu, Hn
15	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+15.866s		Mn, Hn, Hn
16	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+19.375s		Mn, Hn, Hn
17	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+44.882s		Hn, Mn, Hn
18	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+47.660s		Mu, Mu, Hu, Sn
19	Logan Sargeant (USA)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps/+6.309s		Mn, Mu, Hn, Mu
20	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	64 laps-damage		Mn, Hu, Mn

WEATHER Clear, air 30-32C track 44-49C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 135.402mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 142.687mph.

## FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Alonso	1m07.694s	-	70
2	Verstappen	1m07.719s	+0.025s	68
3	Norris	1m08.016s	+0.322s	53
4	Piastri	1m08.697s	+1.003s	56
5	Russell	1m09.164s	+1.470s	48
6	Sainz	1m09.282s	+1.588s	56
7	Hamilton	1m09.562s	+1.868s	61
8	Leclerc	1m09.584s	+1.890s	55
9	Gasly	1m09.609s	+1.915s	45
10	Ocon	1m09.649s	+1.955s	45
11	Perez	1m09.694s	+2.000s	56
12	Magnussen	1m10.125s	+2.431s	45
13	Stroll	1m10.143s	+2.449s	54
14	Hulkenberg	1m10.215s	+2.521s	51
15	Tsunoda	1m10.318s	+2.624s	54
16	Albon	1m10.364s	+2.670s	41
17	Sargeant	1m10.406s	+2.712s	60
18	Ricciardo	1m10.426s	+2.732s	49
19	Bottas	1m10.449s	+2.755s	48
20	Zhou	1m10.470s	+2.776s	54

## RACE BRIEFING

### SPRINT GRID PENALTY

**ALBON** required to start from the pitlane - car set-up changed under parc ferme conditions

### SPRINT RACE PENALTY

**HULKENBERG** 10-second penalty and two licence points for forcing Alonso off track

### GP GRID PENALTIES

**ZHOU** required to start from the pitlane - car set-up changed under parc ferme conditions

### GP PENALTIES

**HAMILTON** and **ALBON** 5s penalties for crossing the pit entry line. **PEREZ** 5s penalty for pitlane speeding. **ALONSO** 10s penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Zhou. **NORRIS** 5s penalty for leaving the track without justifiable reason multiple times

**VERSTAPPEN** 10s penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Norris

## LAP CHART

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Verstappen	Norris	Russell	Sainz	Hamilton	Leclerc	Piastri	Perez	Hulkenberg	Ocon	Ricciardo	Magnussen	Gasly	Tsunoda	Alonso	Albon	Stroll	Bottas	Sargeant	Zhou
G	1	4	63	55	44	16	81	11	27	31	3	20	10	22	14	23	18	77	2	24
1	1	4	63	44	55	11	81	31	27	20	10	3	14	22	23	77	18	16	24	2
2	1	4	63	44	55	11	81	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
3	1	4	63	44	55	11	81	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
4	1	4	63	44	55	11	81	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
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6	1	4	63	55	44	11	81	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
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8	1	4	63	55	44	81	11	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
9	1	4	63	55	44	81	11	27	31	20	10	3	22	14	23	18	77	24	16	2
10	1	4	63	55	44	81	11	27	31	10	22	20	14	3	23	18	77	24	16	2
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47	1	4	44	81	55	63	11	27	20	3	16	10	31	23	18	22	14	77	24	2
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69	63	81	55	44	1	27	11	20	3	10	31	16	18	23	22	77	24	14	2	
70	63	81	55	44	1	27	11	20	3	10	16	31	18	23	22	77	24	14		
71	63	81	55	44	1	27	11	20	3	10	16	31								

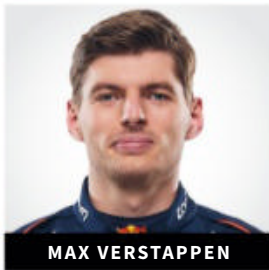


# AUSTRIAN GP DRIVER RATINGS

*Low scores for drivers who usually achieve more were a feature.  
But the race winner deservedly tops our rankings for the Red Bull Ring*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

## RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **5th**

**6** Ruthless sprint win. Dominated Q2-Q3. Nailed GP start and first stint but struggled with high deg on hard tyres. Used mediums in final stint cost pace versus Norris on fresh ones after botched pitstop, as did his Turn 4 lock-up, before (repeated) braking movement caused crash – and penalty.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **8th** — Result **7th**

**3** Overcome by Leclerc's sprint start brilliance, then significantly dropped. Poor in GP qualifying. Turn 1 contact damaged sidepod and destroyed race before Turn 4 shove with Piastri. Got Magnussen but not Hulkenberg after Haas undercut for third stint. Pitlane speeding penalty was silly.



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **5th** — Result **4th**

**4** Went off in SQ3 and damaged floor, then in Q3 couldn't match Russell in sector two. Overtaking Sainz a tad unwise in Turn 1 run-off and had to let him repass. Hit the Turn 8 kerbs so hard in second stint that he damaged floor again. Also got a penalty for a pit entry line transgression.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **3rd** — Result **1st**

**9** Capitalised on the GP-defining collision in third-best car. Led Mercedes twice in qualifying, repassed Sainz in sprint, and was better on tyres in GP after changing wing levels after sprint. Sole medium-tyre runner of leaders in second stint, and he had good pace on high-deg hards.



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **6th** — Result **11th**

**6** Messy Q3 run on new soft tyres. Being too slow earlier burned extra set. That meant starting in the pack and being pinched at GP Turn 1 with wing damage. Charged with decent pace but got bottled (a lap down) behind Norris to stop rise to points. Sprint start scintillating after SQ3 anti-stall issue.

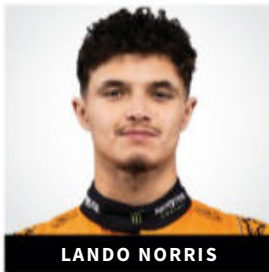


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **4th** — Result **3rd**

**8** Might have headed Russell in qualifying but felt Ferrari was weaker on soft tyres and was critically quicker in early parts of GP qualifying versus Leclerc. Behind Russell in sprint but held off Hamilton, managing brake temperatures. Passed by Piastri with four-laps-younger tyres late in GP.

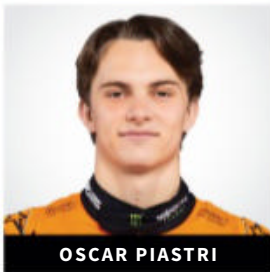
## McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **2nd** — Result **20th**

**8** Worst racecraft moment was surely letting Verstappen go to inside of Turn 4 in sprint when he'd done so well passing at Turn 3. Shown black-and-white flag in chasing Verstappen after his second stop. Hotter temps in qualifying cost. First stint in GP was slow on mediums, but better on hards.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **7th** — Result **2nd**

**7** Biggest moment was his marginal Q3 track limits penalty. That meant running in the pack in GP. In sprint, used Verstappen's Turn 4 move to lead Norris home. Battled back in GP, with neat Hamilton Turn 3 dive and glorious outside Turn 6 pass on Sainz. Closed on Russell but lacked time.

## ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **15th** — Result **18th**

**4** Beaten by Stroll in SQ2. Tsunoda outmuscled him in sprint start. Hulkenberg Turn 3 shove let Ricciardo by too. Rear downforce level change preceded Q2 exit. Early GP position wrecked by Zhou penalty – caught out by Sauber and Ricciardo braking early. Last tour fastest lap was pointless.

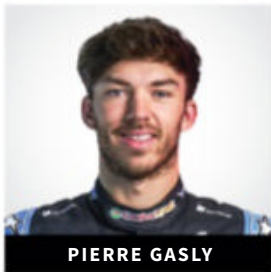


LANCE STROLL

Started **17th** — Result **13th**

**6** Lead Aston in SQ2, but missed SQ3. Passed Alpines having edged out Alonso at sprint Turn 1. Out in Q1 before lap-one GP contact with Sargeant. Jumped pit-exiting Tsunoda, unlapped himself against Russell niftily, also passed Albon with DRS at Turn 4 before recovering Leclerc overtook.

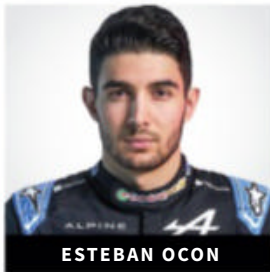
## ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **13th** — Result **10th**

**8** Great around-the-outside mid-GP Turn 4 pass on Ocon. Team-mate's SQ3 driving meant his sprint starting place was capped at ninth. Lost his best Q2 lap to track limits at Turn 6. Also had a tricky GP start, but fought past Ricciardo, then later stuck behind him in Magnussen DRS train.



ESTEBAN OCON

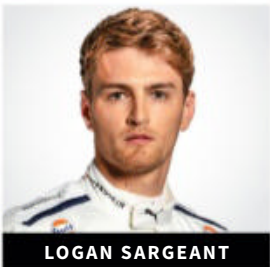
Started **10th** — Result **12th**

**7** Baffling SQ3 out-lap tactics that Alpine felt were both too slow and too fast. Was slow in sprint start, then Stroll got by. Made Q3 impressively and got Hulkenberg with GP Turn 1 dive. Then slipped back and was undercut by Ricciardo. Initial mid-race Gasly defence was savage.





WILLIAMS



LOGAN SARGEANT

Started **19th** – Result **19th**

**4** Made SQ1 progression. But then pushed too hard at Turn 6, clipping gravel and had time deleted. Hulkenberg and Ricciardo came past in sprint and Albon caught him from pitlane. Happy with Q1 effort. Damaged front wing on Stroll braking too late in GP at Turn 3 on lap one. Sloppy.



ALEX ALBON

Started **16th** – Result **15th**

**5** Suffered SQ1 exit when Sargeant progressed. Recovered sprint 17th from pitlane start with neat moves on the Saubers. Went deep at Turn 4 after passing Hamilton on last Q1 lap and missed Q2. Always felt he was in traffic in the race and earned a pitlane-entry-line-crossing penalty.

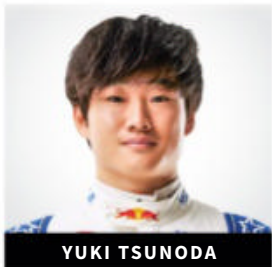
RB



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **11th** — Result **9th**

**7** SQ1 exit caps score – Ricciardo was adjusting to RB aero spec changes. Fell behind Hulkenberg early in sprint but got Sargeant with DRS run to Turn 4. Lost out on outside lines twice at GP start, but showed great pace undercutting Alpines in second stint. Resisted Alonso and held off Gasly late on.

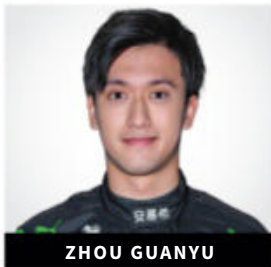


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **14th** – Result **14th**

**2** Damaged floor with SQ1 Turn 8 kerbstrike before dramatic Turn 9 spin. Messed up second Q2 run, following disgraceful Q1 ableist team radio slur. Got same added downforce tweaks as Ricciardo after sprint, where his tenacity in passing Alonso was great, but couldn't capitalise in GP.

SAUBER



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **20th** – Result **17th**

**4** Last in SQ1 after wrecking his first lap hitting Turn 9 gravel and coming close to Gasly in final corners of his second run. Poor pace in sprint. Last in Q1 too and started in pitlane for GP due to changing set-up. Ran long on hard tyres, punted by Alonso and found tyres still overheating despite the changes.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **18th** – Result **16th**

**6** Little he could have done better given Sauber's poor one-lap and race pace – other than SQ1 Turn 6 track limits violation. Albon passed him in sprint with GP pace better after Sauber changed downforce settings to reduce sliding. Subjected to two stints on the worst race tyre, the hard.

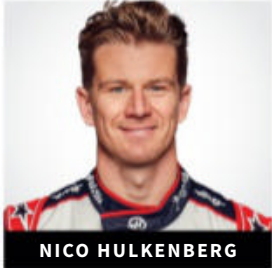
HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **12th** — Result **8th**

**8** Escaped SQ1 but couldn't reach SQ3. Outdragged Alpines out of Turns 1 and 4 at sprint start, then showed strong pace. Gained when Hulkenberg and Ricciardo slid wide behind ailing Leclerc at Turn 3 at GP start. Edged by Hulkenberg and Perez (twice) in battle, but held off Ricciardo without DRS.

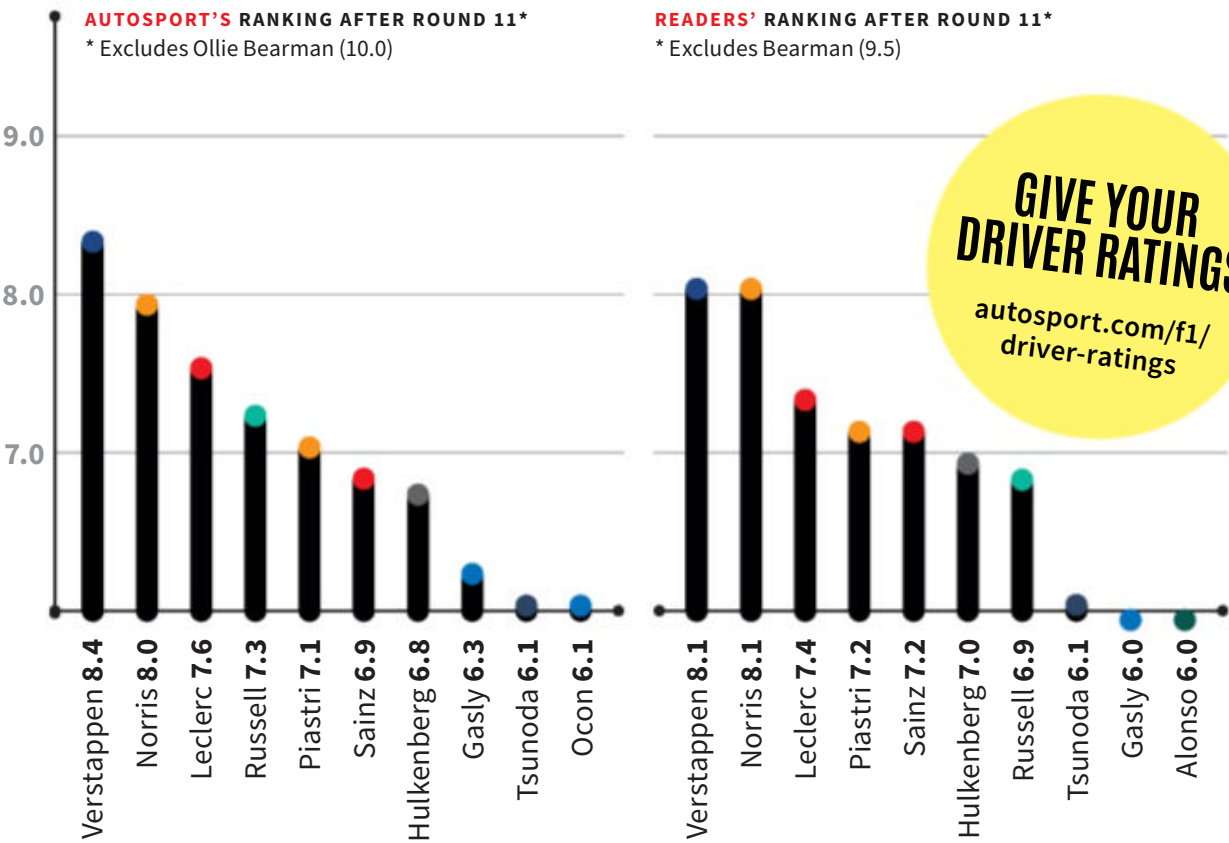


NICO HULKENBERG

Started **9th** — Result **6th**

**7** SQ1 exit and penalised in the sprint for forcing Alonso off. But excellent sprint start. GP was strong – repassed Ocon immediately, passed Magnussen after sluggish first stop, then twice undercut Perez and smartly braked to get Turn 4 DRS in their last-lap battle.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS







# F1 returns home but with a difference

*The grand prix circus – and Silverstone – has experienced some changes since last year's race. We speak to the three home heroes ahead of the 2024 British GP*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS & JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

## TIMETABLE

### FRIDAY 5 JULY

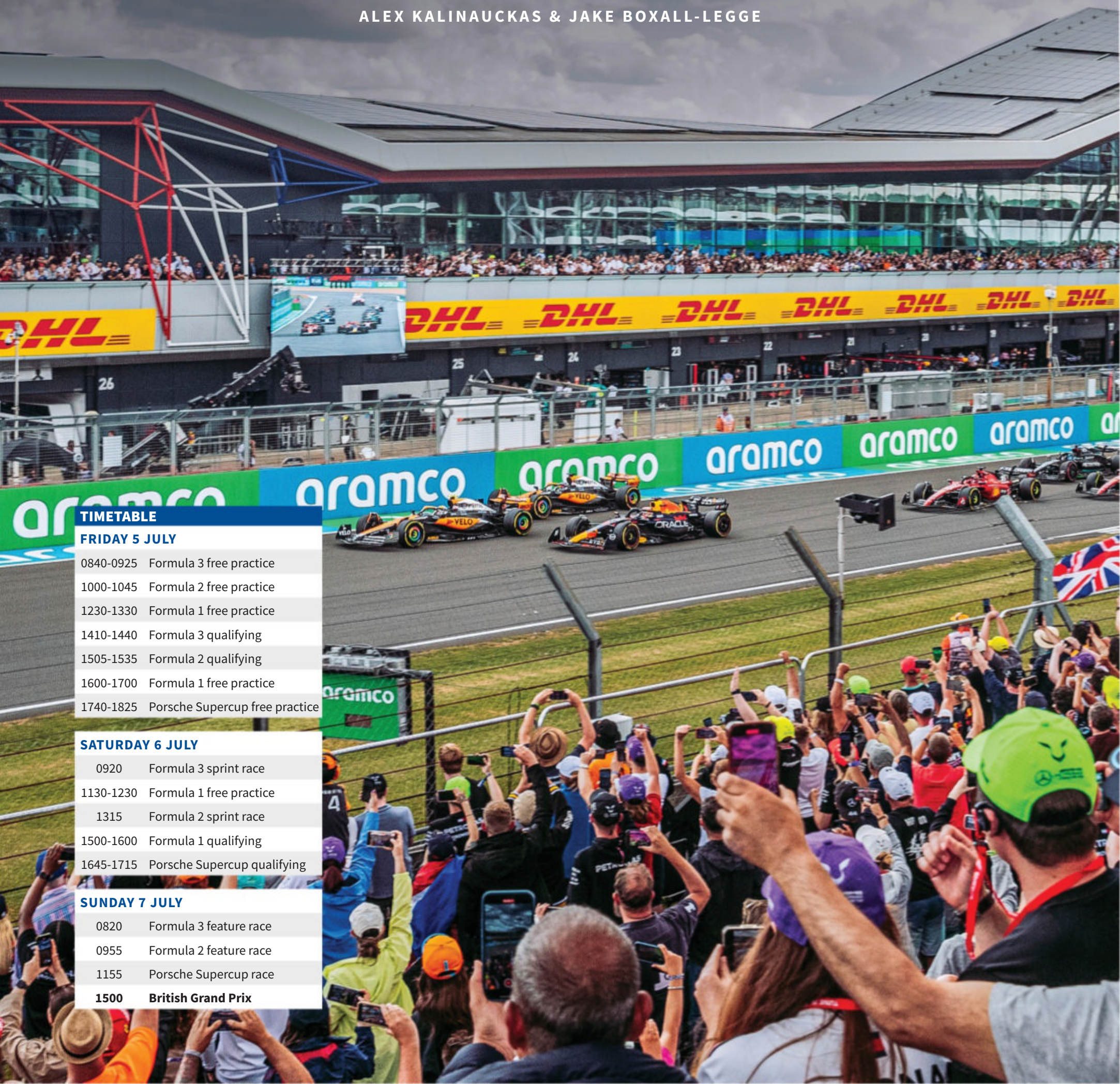
0840-0925	Formula 3 free practice
1000-1045	Formula 2 free practice
1230-1330	Formula 1 free practice
1410-1440	Formula 3 qualifying
1505-1535	Formula 2 qualifying
1600-1700	Formula 1 free practice
1740-1825	Porsche Supercup free practice

### SATURDAY 6 JULY

0920	Formula 3 sprint race
1130-1230	Formula 1 free practice
1315	Formula 2 sprint race
1500-1600	Formula 1 qualifying
1645-1715	Porsche Supercup qualifying

### SUNDAY 7 JULY

0820	Formula 3 feature race
0955	Formula 2 feature race
1155	Porsche Supercup race
1500	<b>British Grand Prix</b>





S

ummer has arrived – finally. And just in time for this weekend’s British Grand Prix at Silverstone. Although, judging by the long-term forecasts, the usual heady mix of seasons will blow through the former airfield track. Come rain or shine, however, Formula 1 fans making the annual pilgrimage to Silverstone – plus those watching at home – should be hopeful of another good race following the 2022 thriller here and Lando Norris’s starring drive behind winner Max Verstappen last year.

Norris’s near-win (his third in four races) in the recent Spanish GP showcased McLaren’s fine form on an aerodynamically challenging track at Barcelona. This should raise hopes of another close fight between the team and Verstappen around Silverstone’s high-speed blast, though perhaps not quite as close as in Austria! Norris sits second in the drivers’ standings and isn’t ruling out a 2024 title tilt. In this preview, we hear from the 24-year-old about his best F1 season to date and



analyse exactly where he has got even better (see page 34).

Again, Norris joins Mercedes pair George Russell and Lewis Hamilton in providing the interest for the home fans this weekend, although this will be the final time Hamilton lines up at Silverstone representing the Brackley squad. Mercedes’ 2024 story is a familiar one from the past few years. Its W15 isn’t at championship-challenging level, although the team is hopeful that a breakthrough found in a new front-wing concept can get it challenging for more wins. We hear from both Russell (p36) and Hamilton (p38) about their 2024 achievements to this point, and ask whether Mercedes can go better than the pair of third places (both for Hamilton) it has taken here in the past two years.

For those heading to Silverstone this week, there are set to be differences compared to 2023. That year, a bumper crowd of 480,000 took in the action, but this year the race promoter claims it has capped numbers between 465,000 and 470,000. It is understood that this has been done this to try to improve the customer experience, with queues and concession stands hopefully less crowded than at previous British GP events.

The track has courted controversy in recent weeks with comments by Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle to Autosport regarding how his organisation feels Red Bull’s domination of F1 has played a part in making it harder to sell all available tickets this time around. Autosport understands that Norris’s Miami win helped boost Silverstone sales, but the promoter is still working to shift the final tickets at the time of writing, as Pringle says it had to do “historically”.

At the same time, Silverstone has faced renewed criticism over its ticket prices – and the dynamic pricing element – which has led to a backlash from spectators. Hamilton has also called for the track to “watch” ticket prices he says are “too high” amid the cost-of-living crisis. Silverstone says this is also a factor in its slower ticket sales in 2024, while also at play is how the post-COVID bounce for people wanting to attend events after lockdown appears to be falling back towards normality.

“Things may be changing now,” Pringle said, “and I do recognise that we had several years of a British driver dominating the championship, and we didn’t mind that so much as a British promoter! But it’s certainly been a lot harder with Red Bull dominating. Also, as a promoter, you have to get your ticket pricing strategy correct. You could make these things go quicker if you reduce price. But we have got expensive bills to pay, not least the promoter fee, so it’s about hitting a strategy and making sure it works, which we’re pretty comfortable with.”

Those on site will be able to enjoy performances from Stormzy, Kings of Leon, Pete Tong and Rudimental, with Silverstone also adding a comedy tent to its live off-track offering for 2024. **AK**





BRITISH GP  
PREVIEW



SUTTON

After finishing second last year at Silverstone, Norris acknowledges the fans...



...whose massed voices had roared their approval when he took an early lead

SUTTON



Breakthrough win in Miami a vindication and marker of further intent

MAUGER



Close second in Spain augurs well for Silverstone

MAUGER



# Lando Norris

Age **24**

Silverstone GP starts **6**

Best Silverstone GP finish **2nd**

2024 championship pos **2nd** (156 points)

**Y**ou can still hear the roar; so many voices screaming in unison. McLaren's Lando Norris had just taken the lead of the 2023 British Grand Prix and the Silverstone crowd was in raptures.

His first Formula 1 victory wasn't to come that day – Max Verstappen and Red Bull were just too strong. But, following on from his Miami triumph and near-victory at F1's only visit to a track with high-speed corners so far in 2024 (Barcelona), there's a tantalising possibility of Norris becoming the first British winner at Silverstone since Lewis Hamilton in 2021.

"We're closer now than we were [at Silverstone in 2023]," Norris reflects. "So, you'd hope it's that little step better. Now there's just more teams in general who are quick, so I think we have to take that into account. But Barcelona will be a good preview of what we're able to do at Silverstone."

Second in Spain was Norris's fourth runner-up finish of the season – and the third time he'd finished under four seconds behind Verstappen. Since McLaren massively upgraded the MCL38 for May's Miami event, it and Norris have been the world champ's most consistent rivals. And that pressure showed in Austria.

Before then, however, McLaren's season had started off poorly, with Norris only among the minor points finishers in the opening rounds in the Middle East as the Woking team initially didn't kick on from its fine end to 2023, still struggling with long-corner performance and a lack of DRS efficiency. Things were much better, though, in Australia in March and especially China in April, where Norris shone in wet sprint qualifying and with his tyre-whispering drive to hold off Red Bull's Sergio Perez in the main race.

How, then, does Norris assess his season to this point? "I think it's been very good," he replies. "I got my first win. We've been very close a number of times, we've just been consistently one of the best teams. We were not at the beginning. It was clear in Bahrain [the opening round] that we were quite a long way off. I believed we would improve, but probably not at the rate we did."

"But I said at the beginning of the year, 'I don't think Red Bull are gonna dominate again, I think we can win races, I think Ferrari are gonna win races'. And all of that has been the truth. I didn't expect us to catch up that kind of gap that we had to Ferrari and Red Bull that we had at the beginning of the year as quickly as we did. But that's in a good way. So yeah, happy. Happy with what I've done, happy with how the team has done, especially. As always, there's still things I want to improve on and do better."

Norris is specifically referencing his qualifying form so far

**"You want to make them happy, to give something back to the people there to support you"**



this season. He's doubled his career F1 pole position tally with his effort in Spain, but hasn't had total supremacy over (admittedly highly rated) team-mate Oscar Piastri. Indeed, Norris was beaten in the critical sessions against the clock by the Australian at Imola and in Monaco.

Norris feels that he wants "to attack more and simply it's the wrong thing to do" with the MCL38 in qualifying, because even pressing slightly too hard on its brakes just adds too much tyre stress and so costs grip and time. "Consciously affecting that and choosing where to place that level of aggression is not easy to do", he says. But what's intriguing is how again Norris is producing an unerring display of self-criticism. There are many in the F1 paddock who feel he's too hard on himself in how he absorbs defeats and low moments, plus expands on them so openly in the media. But, given how he's currently on track for his best F1 championship finish and hasn't ruled out challenging for the 2024 world title, despite Verstappen's massive lead, it clearly works for Norris. And he refuses to change.

In any case, Norris's penchant for self-criticism is matched in his self-belief and desire to succeed for his fans and McLaren team – especially on home ground this weekend.

"For me that's all my joy," he concludes. "If I go and win a race and there's literally no one there, then I'm like, 'I don't want to just hold a trophy for the sake of it, I want to share it with the people that I work with.' That's what makes it mean something and makes it exciting. And that's exactly the same feeling for the fans."

"COVID, for example, when you win a race and you stand there and it's just silent, it takes away that atmosphere and that feeling of meaning something. Because you want to prove your point, you want to make them happy, you want to give something back to the people who are there to support you. So now, when we've been doing better, I feel like them cheering makes more of a difference. Because you can reward them in some way. And that's the perfect thing." **AK**





Russell shone last year at Silverstone in opening stint on soft rubber

HONE



It's a busy weekend for a home hero, but fans' enthusiasm gives a massive energy lift

SUTTON



Caught up in dramatic incident at the start in 2022, then showed class in immediate aftermath

SUTTON



Pole position in Canada followed up by first podium of 2024 – but could more have been on offer?

VINET



# George Russell

Age **26**

Silverstone GP starts **6**

Best Silverstone GP finish **5th**

2024 championship pos **7th** (111 points)

**I**f Lewis Hamilton has struggled to get the best out of the Mercedes W15, even in its slightly less rapid early form, then George Russell has managed to hit the high notes more often than not. After all, the younger Briton leads the qualifying battle (9-2) and perhaps has shown more willingness to work with the car, even in the more trying races this season.

Now that Mercedes is on the up, Russell reckons that the growing confidence in the car should stand him in good stead for his home grand prix. After all, Silverstone's array of high and medium-speed corners requires full commitment from a driver; with a well-balanced car underneath them, it can be a much more promising prospect.

"You need confidence from your car to be quick at Silverstone," Russell says. "It's the fastest circuit of the year with the biggest changes of direction through Maggotts and Becketts, and you need that confidence being built during the race weekend, you need to get into that rhythm, and definitely W15 is the most confidence I've had from the three Mercedes cars I've driven by a long, long way, so I'm expecting it to be a real good feeling through Silverstone."

The high-water mark of Russell's 2024 thus far, aside from his shock Austrian win last weekend? Probably Montreal, all told, after pole from Max Verstappen (albeit with exactly the same time, to three decimal places) led to a third-place finish, his first podium visit of the season. A solid result, but more could have been on offer had Russell not experienced a slip or two twixt cup and lip; the Norfolk native tried to match Verstappen for pace but ended up exploring more of the run-off than ideal over the 70-lap affair. But Russell sensed a big result was possible and did everything in his power to go after it – even if he ended up overdoing it.

Russell might not have the Silverstone credentials that his illustrious team-mate possesses – he's only finished a British Grand Prix in the points once during his F1 career. That's more down to the cars he's driven, however, and being pulled into Zhou Guanyu's upside-down crash in the 2022 edition of the race. Nonetheless, he's won there in the junior categories, and his F1 results (or lack thereof) haven't dulled his enthusiasm for his home event.

"I remember queuing up in the assembly area, which was just outside of the BRDC building," he says of his 2014 BRDC F4 title-winning campaign, "winning two of the three races there. One of the races was really challenging and rain was coming

**"You're knackered on the Monday morning, but during the weekend you just sort of ride that wave"**



SBLOXHAM

down and we were all on slicks, everyone slipping and sliding everywhere. That was really special, my first victory at such an iconic track, and an F4 car on the grand prix layout – the track felt ginormous. It felt like the lap went on forever, and the track was so wide in one of these tiny cars and the racing was so good.

"There's a little bit more going on through the course of the weekend because as a Brit you just sort of feed on those emotions and the adrenalin that those fans give you. You don't even recognise that you're doing more and it's things that I enjoy doing – seeing the fans, you get the energy from them.

"You're pretty knackered on the Monday morning, but during the weekend you just sort of ride that wave and it's such an awesome experience. Staying at Silverstone in a motorhome sort of reminds me of my karting days when I used to travel with my parents in the motorhome..."

Given Russell's fine performances this season (leaving aside his crash in the dying laps of the Australian GP), a first British GP podium should be on the cards if his W15 is able to continue its steady progress towards the front. His driving has evolved too, as the notion of further F1 wins dangles before him like the proverbial carrot on a stick. For him, it's never felt closer, and he has taken himself closer to the limit in pursuit of more glory. That's led to a slightly higher error rate over the past couple of years, Russell suggesting that "in 2022 I didn't make a single mistake in the whole season, but I wasn't pushing myself the way I'm pushing myself now".

He admits that approaching races with the idea of taking more risks to clinch that win isn't something he's predisposed to; he preferred the more balanced risk-reward trade-off he drove with during his junior-series title wins. He's Alain Prost-like, perhaps, in that regard; banking the points and building a championship might suit his skillset more. That's not the position he finds himself in just yet; his no-holds-barred, dogged determination to chalk up another race victory will have to suffice. **JBL**





BRITISH GP  
PREVIEW



MAUGER

Third place at Silverstone  
in 2023 after hard battle  
with Norris ahead



Treasure the moment,  
Lewis – last British GP  
victory was in 2021

FIAPOOL



Fan favourite will want to put  
on a show in final British GP  
outing for Mercedes...

SUTTON



...and victory is not completely  
out of the question following  
improvements to the W15

FERRARO



# Lewis Hamilton

Age **39**

Silverstone GP starts **18**

Silverstone GP wins **8**

2024 championship pos **8th** (85 points)

**I**t's hard to describe Lewis Hamilton's start to 2024, although 'inauspicious' might cover it best. With a highest finish of sixth after the first eight races of the season it was, in some quarters, termed as the highly decorated Briton's worst start to a Formula 1 season. One that even surpassed the nadir of 2009's opening rounds.

But the tide is turning, as Mercedes has started to get on terms with the demands of its W15 package. A decision to dispense with the previous philosophy exhibited by the W13 and W14 was lauded, given the team's dramatic downturn in fortunes, but there were still very clear weaknesses in the new car that had to be addressed, particularly with mid-corner balance and stability.

Now that the team seems to be – tentatively – in the ascendancy once again, Hamilton has benefited and has been imbued with a greater level of confidence as the Silver Arrows take a step forward. He might be leaving for Ferrari at the end of the year, but he still harbours a desire to leave the team on a high. It would be befitting of his seven titles, won either at Mercedes or with Mercedes power at McLaren, for the good times to start rolling again.

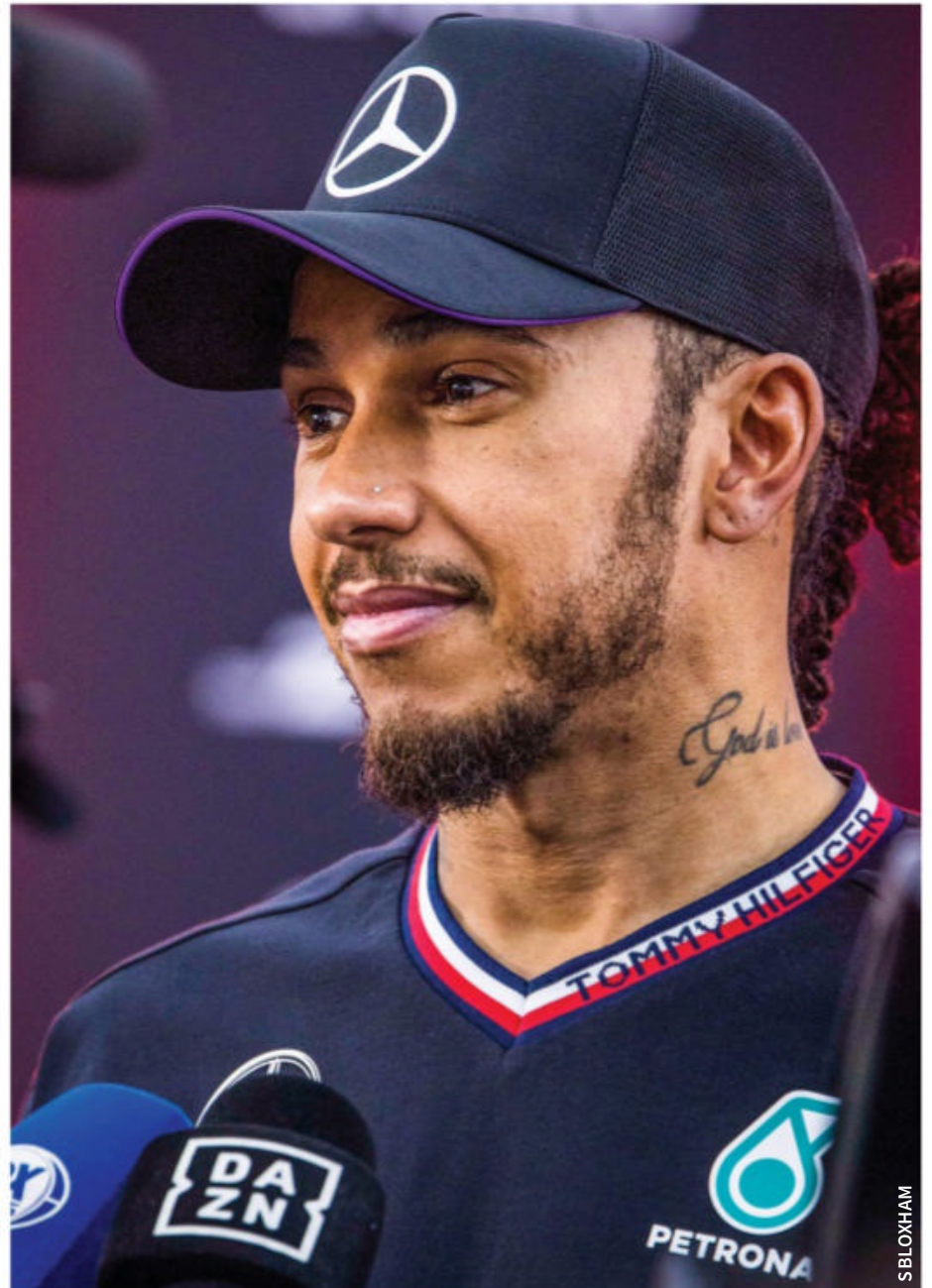
"The biggest improvement I think coming into this year has been ride quality and being able to get the car lower, which is what others have been able to do," explains Hamilton in his assessment of the W15. "And then stability on entry of corners. The car is far more predictable than it ever was, particularly the last couple of years. And particularly this year, it's a lot more stable, so we can be more committed into the corners."

Hamilton's record at his home grand prix is stellar: the last time he failed to finish on the podium was in 2013, the start of his journey with the works Mercedes team. Since then, he's won seven times at Silverstone, been second on two occasions (one being 2020's 70th Anniversary GP in the COVID-enforced double), and twice finished third. Finishing on the podium has to be considered the bare minimum and, now that the W15 seems to be in much better shape, it looks like a more reasonable ambition compared to where the team was at the start of the year.

"I have to say, I think the car will definitely feel a lot better this year, the direction that the car is migrating to, better characteristics through the range," says Hamilton of his chances ahead of the British GP. "We're much better compared to Red Bull, and soon we'll hopefully be closer to the front end."

Could a victory be in the offing? It's unlikely, especially as

**"The car is far more predictable and a lot more stable, so we can be more committed into the corners"**



Red Bull seems to be strong even in races where the car isn't thriving at its absolute peak, and McLaren has grown in strength dramatically over the past 18 months. But Mercedes had, by most accounts, the quickest car in Canada last month, and continued development has started to push it towards the front. Qualifying remains a weakness, as that mid-corner balance places it in a precarious position in an all-or-nothing lap, and the cars seem to come into their own a bit more in race trim.

However, a win is not impossible, as George Russell showed last weekend. If there's a chance that Mercedes finds stability across Silverstone's plethora of long-radius corners, with a view towards contending for pole, then it has the drivers to make the magic happen. Hamilton knows what it takes to win the British GP, rain or shine. Remember 2008 in the pouring rain? Perfection. Or 2020 with a cut tyre? Pure theatre. Or 2021, post-Max Verstappen crash? Not even a penalty could stop him in his tracks.

It's all going to hinge on how Mercedes keeps pace in the development stakes and how it sets up for the demands of Silverstone. Its performance at Barcelona suggests that it should be in the mix, although maybe not quite on terms with Verstappen and Norris. The dynamic might be similar to last year, then, where Hamilton jumped a few cars in the stops to get onto Norris's gearbox with soft tyres. Although the pressure he meted out on Norris didn't offer an upgrade to second, Hamilton should get that opportunity again if he plays his cards right.

"I mean, it's an incredible event," Hamilton adds. "If you take it from a bird's eye view, the whole event is full; all the space is used up. So many fans come and have a great weekend." And, after the season he's had so far, he'll want to put on a show.

And it might be the last time – for a couple of years, at least – that Silverstone is decked out primarily in Mercedes colours. When Hamilton makes his long-awaited Ferrari move, expect it to evoke Monza's tifosi fervour as fans trade their black-and-white clobber for scarlet... **JBL**



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## BRITISH GP PREVIEW

ROUND 12/24

PIT + Paddock

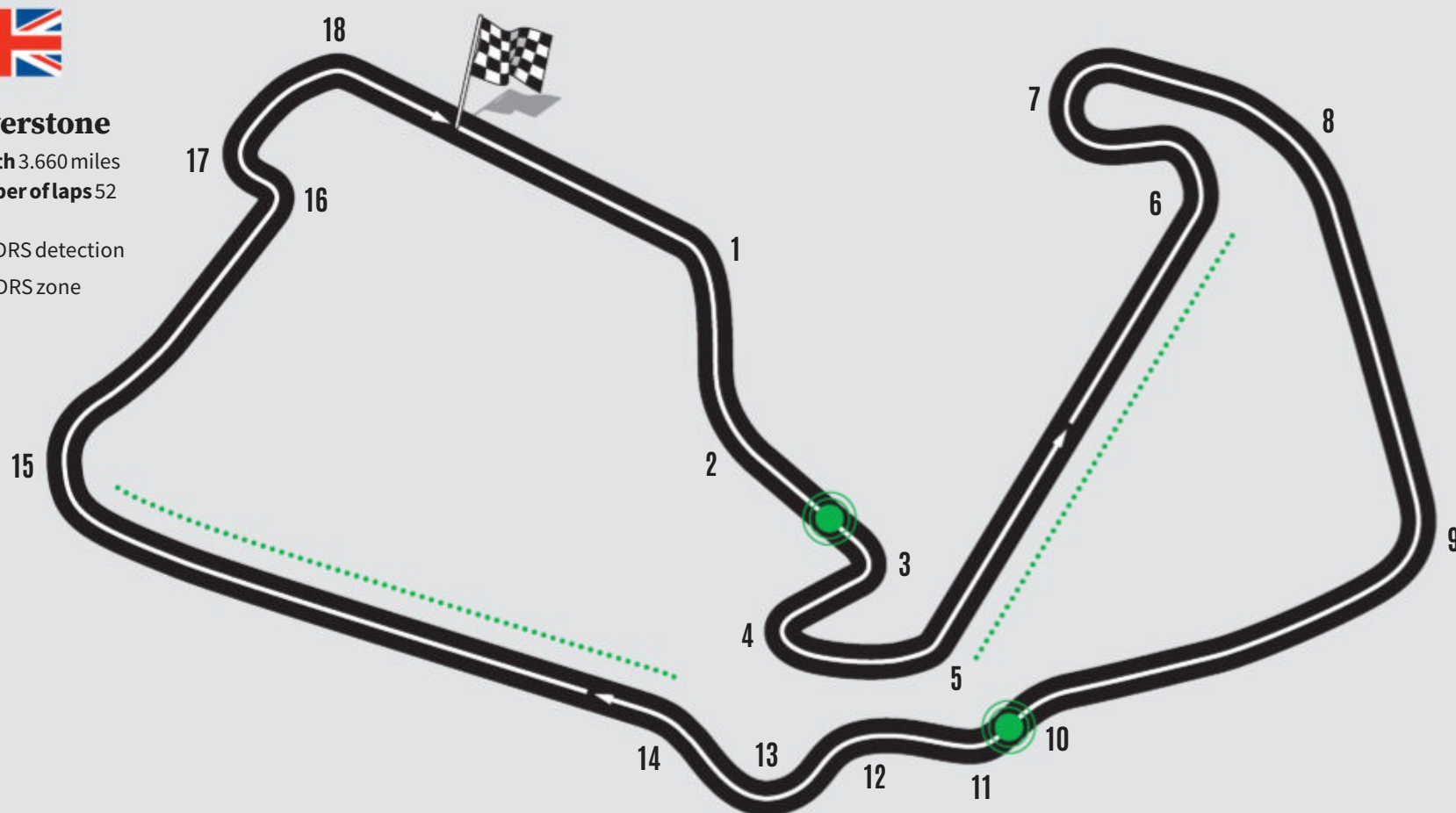
### F1 BRITISH GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



#### Silverstone

Length 3.660 miles  
Number of laps 52

- DRS detection
- DRS zone



#### UK START TIMES

Friday 5 July

FP1 1230 FP2 1600

Saturday 6 July

FP3 1130

QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 7 July

RACE 1500

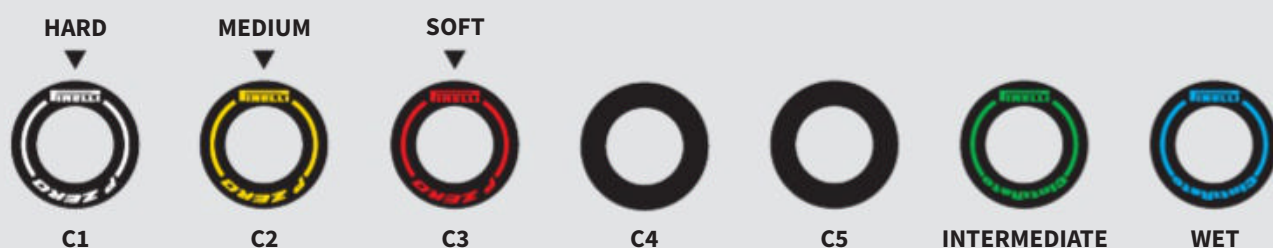
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#### TYRE ALLOCATION



#### CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

##### Drivers

1	Verstappen	237
2	Norris	156
3	Leclerc	150
4	Sainz	135
5	Perez	118

##### Constructors

1	Red Bull	355
2	Ferrari	291
3	McLaren	268
4	Mercedes	196
5	Aston Martin	58



Can Norris win at home?

#### SILVERSTONE STATS

##### Previous winners

2023	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2022	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari
2021	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2020	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2019	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2018	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes

##### 2023 POLE POSITION

Max Verstappen  
1m26.720s

##### POLE LAP RECORD

Lewis Hamilton  
1m24.303s (2020)

##### RACE LAP RECORD

Max Verstappen  
1m27.097s (2020)

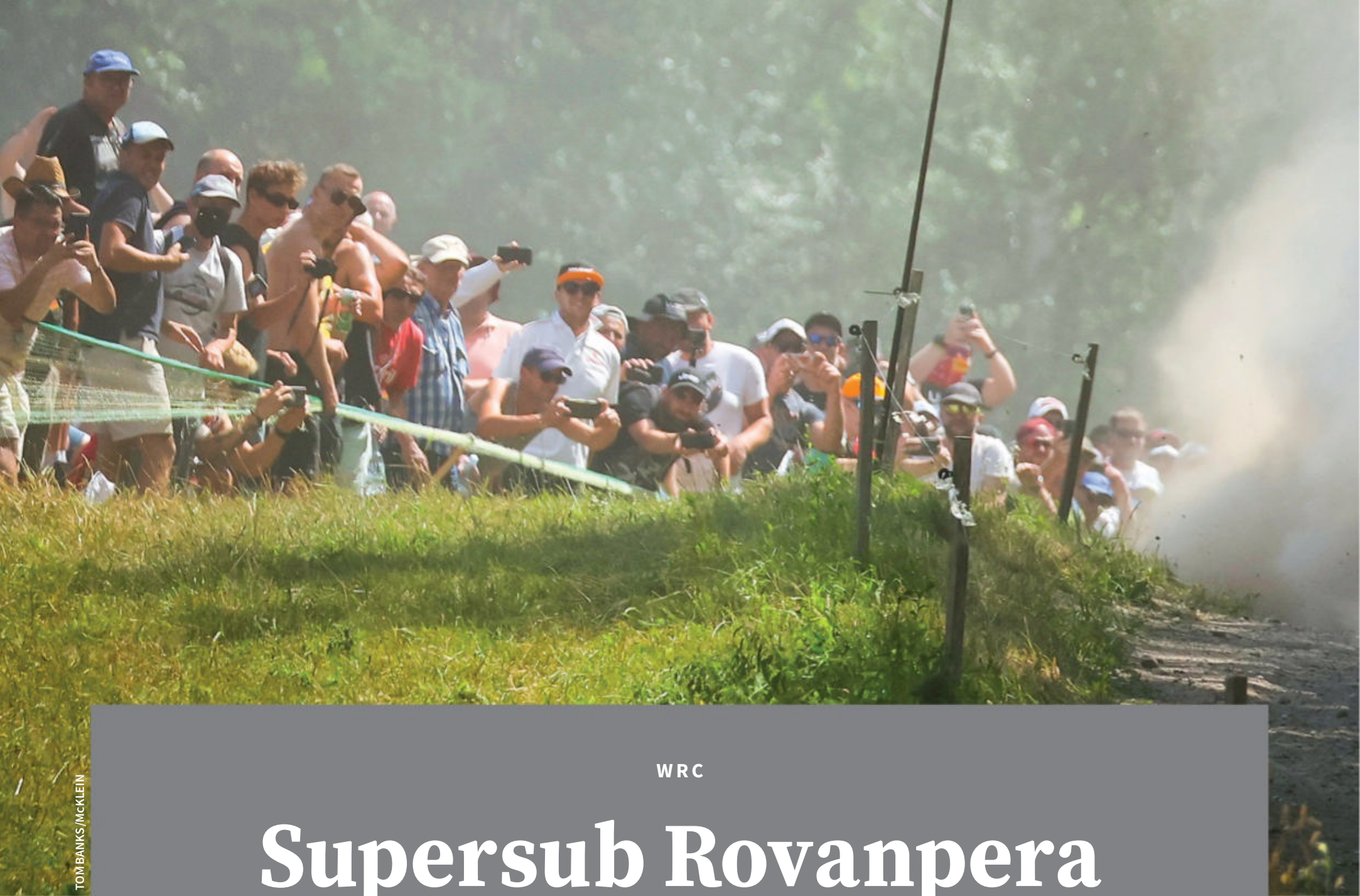


Jody Scheckter opposite-locks his  
McLaren in 1973, pre-pile-up...

##### Silverstone podiums

Lewis Hamilton	14
Michael Schumacher	7
Kimi Raikkonen	7
Alain Prost	6
Fernando Alonso	6
Rubens Barrichello	6
Nigel Mansell	5
Mark Webber	5
Sebastian Vettel	5
Mika Hakkinen	5





TOM BANKS/MCKLEIN

WRC

# Supersub Rovannerproves a point in Poland

*A late call-up and limited preparation couldn't prevent Toyota's youngest star from taking his 13th WRC victory*

TOM HOWARD

**K**alle Rovanner has rewritten the World Rally Championship record books in becoming the youngest event winner, world champion and back-to-back title winner, and now he's won a rally he wasn't even supposed to contest. Is there anything the flying Finn can't do in a rally car? It's a valid question, because Rovanner and co-driver Jonne Halttunen defied the odds to take victory in Poland after receiving a last-minute call up to act as the perfect supersub for Toyota in its hour of need.

"I wasn't really expecting much and of course every time you put the helmet on you try to do your best," admitted Rovanner. "You always have a chance and have to count on yourself, but I knew it would be difficult. You need to keep going and try all the time."

Toyota's need was to replace eight-time world champion Sebastien Ogier and navigator Vincent Landais after the pairing were ruled out of the event following a road traffic accident during Tuesday's recce. Ogier and Landais were taken to hospital for checks along with the driver and passenger of the car involved in the collision, all of whom avoided serious injuries.

Rovanner was changing the spark plugs on a jet ski, while Halttunen was getting a tattoo in Estonia when their phones began to ring. It triggered a mad dash to Poland involving a private jet to compete without undergoing a pre-event test or meticulously studying onboard videos.

To borrow a timely football analogy, it was maybe rallying's equivalent of the Denmark national team of 1992, who were relaxing on the beach when they were called to replace Yugoslavia for that year's UEFA European Championship – a tournament they would famously go on to win. While Rovanner is far from the underdog status Denmark held in 1992, he had largely written off his victory chances after undergoing a rushed recce of the stages completed just hours before the rally start following special dispensation from the FIA.

"I think having a clean rally would be the first target otherwise we are of no help to the team," predicted Rovanner before the start. "The most difficult thing will be to have the pace without learning the stages on a fast rally like this. It's not going to be easy with only pacenotes."

Toyota team principal Jari-Matti Latvala assured him "there was no expectation to fight for the win" given the lack of preparation, and a top-five result was the target. But an already tired Rovanner (from watching the NHL Stanley Cup final the day before the call) battled a lack of prep and fatigue to somehow work his magic.

This wizardry played out in searing heat on Poland's high-speed gravel roads that would normally suit Rovanner, but the event was effectively an all-new version of a rally that had been away from the calendar since 2017. Back then it made the headlines for crowd trouble, prompting its cull from the WRC. Sadly, despite efforts





Rovanpera let fly despite a severe lack of preparation for a Rally Poland he hadn't planned for

from organisers to implement a series of stringent safety measures in accordance with a detailed safety plan, prepared and approved months in advance, a minority of thousands of spectators blighted its one-off return to the WRC. Crowd controlling issues were a major talking point on Friday, and officials were forced to cancel stages three (Wieliczki) and seven (Olecko), while stage six (Wieliczki 2) was briefly red-flagged due to spectator safety issues.

A number of people were hiding in the forests while the safety cars passed through, before then emerging in dangerous locations. “I was hoping that people would have learned a bit about the WRC rules,” said FIA safety delegate Michele Mouton. “From the very first day, we could see that they hadn’t. I told myself that nothing had changed since 2017. Safety was the number one priority, so we had to do something. With the onboard cameras and the work carried out by Nicolas Klinger [deputy FIA safety delegate], we’re more efficient. We had to stop or cancel three stages before the spectators began to understand that we weren’t going to give up.”

Crowd issues aside, the other major storyline on Friday was the sudden exit of rally favourite Ott Tanak on stage two. After winning Thursday night’s superspecial, misfortune struck the Estonian, who was forced to retire when a deer jumped into the road and was collected at 117mph, destroying the front of his Hyundai. “It was on a straight,” related Tanak. “We have checked that from the moment the head of the deer came out of the bush and the impact was 0.26 seconds, it was very short. There was no time to panic and really no time to react as well.”

The day belonged to another Hyundai driver, Andreas Mikkelsen, who took victory on the stage where Tanak came to a halt. Making the most of his road position, the 2016 Rally Poland winner, on his gravel rally debut in a Rally1 car, scored a first stage

**“From the moment the head of the deer came out of the bush and the impact was 0.26 seconds”**



JANUS REE / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

“What am I doing here?”  
Rovanpera should have been playing with his jet ski

win since 2019 Rally GB. Another triumph followed in stage four as Mikkelsen extended his rally lead.

That advantage was lost briefly to Rovanpera in stage five before a nominal time awarded in stage six, where Mikkelsen was the only Rally1 competitor disadvantaged by the red flag, helped him back into a lead that stood at 1.8s at the end of Friday.

“I think everything is happening much slower on gravel than on Tarmac, so I think pretty much for everyone it’s easier to adapt to a gravel car,” reckoned Mikkelsen, who had struggled in his previous outings on asphalt in Monte Carlo and Croatia. First pass was good but second pass we were way too careful on the long stage and not taking advantage of what this equipment can do on rough roads. I’m used to the Rally2 tyres where you have to be careful not to knock them off the rim.”

After predictably struggling on the first pass of the stages, Rovanpera was frustrated by not being able to fight on stage four, and offered an insight into the tiredness battle he was fighting following the short nights of stage information cramming: “It’s quite funny; last night I was watching an [onboard] video on the laptop and I fell asleep on the laptop. With this road position, we should be 10 seconds faster.”

It was perhaps fortunate for his rivals that he wasn’t faster; Rovanpera ended Friday as Mikkelsen’s nearest rival after going faster in the second pass now he “knew what was coming”. >>





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**“Everything is difficult and that makes it easy because you have to concentrate on everything”**

In terms of the championship fight, the opening day went to Elfyn Evans. After starting second on the road, the Toyota driver sat in third place, two seconds behind Mikkelsen. “Overall, I have good predictability in the car at least and you never find perfection in this game, but it is consistent and it gives me confidence,” said Evans after recent struggles in Portugal and Sardinia.

But more importantly, Evans was among a chorus of those demanding for something to resolve the crowd issues, adding: “Let’s say this was already a concern and it seems like it’s still reality, but definitely something needs to be done for tomorrow.”

Hyundai’s championship leader Thierry Neuville took the brunt of the damage from road sweeping, losing 22s in stage two. By the end of the day, during which he was also hampered by a handbrake issue, he was seventh and trailing the leader by 29.8s, behind an impressive Gregoire Munster (M-Sport Ford) and ahead of Takamoto Katsuta, who struggled for speed and confidence on his Poland debut. “All in all, there was not much more we could have done,” summed up Neuville. “It’s frustrating when you see those one-shot drivers coming and easily go faster than you, but it is what it is.”

But the surprise of Friday was Rally1 debutant Martins Sesks, who fell into Neuville’s “one-shot” driver category. The Latvian enjoyed what M-Sport team principal Richard Millener labelled as “one of the strongest debuts in a while” to haul a non-hybrid







Mikkelsen led at the end  
of the first leg on his  
Rally1 gravel debut

version of the Ford Puma, featuring 130bhp less than his rivals, to fifth, 7.7s from the lead. Sesks was only 0.2s behind M-Sport's lead hybrid-powered driver Adrien Fourmaux, who was "living his life one stage at a time", according to the Frenchman, after picking *The Fast and the Furious* as his movie of choice for his latest comical stage-end one-liners.

"It's incredible," said Sesks, whose stunned reaction to missing out on a stage two win by 0.3s lit up social media. "Everything is difficult in the car and that is what makes it easy because it's all difficult and you have to concentrate on everything."

Sesks' pace raised the question of the need for hybrid, but the 100kW unit was always going to have a lesser impact on Poland's high-speed stages.

Saturday provided a huge sigh of relief when event organisers redeployed police to the forestry areas that had been identified as crowd trouble black spots. Aside from a 25-minute stoppage on stage nine, the day ran smoothly, with all seven stages completed.

It was a day where Roanperera was able to once again show his once-in-a-generation talent. He incredibly won six of the seven stages despite his lack of preparation, and ended the morning loop 0.4s ahead of Evans, while Mikkelsen's challenge to keep pace with the Toyota duo began to falter.

It wasn't easy for Roanperera, who was fighting a mixture of frustration and fear to keep pace with rivals. "It is not enough I need to be much quicker, but I'm happy that we are at the end of the loop," he sighed. "But with this little preparation it is so f\*\*\*\*\* scary, I don't like it at all."

To add further gloss to this performance, Toyota opted for a predominantly soft tyre package for the afternoon against Mikkelsen, who had three hards – a move Roanperera described >>



Sesks impressed in a  
non-hybrid Ford Puma

MATT JELONEK/MCKLEIN

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as a “bad decision” as his rubber started to give up. Even so, Rovannerpa ended the day with a stage win that prompted a “hats off” acknowledgement from Mikkelsen. The reigning champion was on course for a memorable win with a performance that had surpassed Toyota’s expectations.

“World champions have something more than the others and they are capable of stretching themselves more,” admired a mesmerised Latvala. “We have seen it with Sebastien Loeb and with Sebastien Ogier and now with Kalle, as I never expected he would be that strong here without the preparation.”

Rovanpera took a 9.4s lead over Mikkelsen into the final day after drama struck a luckless Evans, who suffered a right-rear

## “We have seen it with Loeb and Ogier and now with Kalle. I never expected he’d be that strong”

tyre delamination on stage 13, pushing him 16.1s adrift and into third for 13 Saturday points, against the 15 and 18 taken by Mikkelsen and Rovannerpa respectively.

The other talking point from Saturday surrounded Tanak, who rejoined after repairs that were completed in the morning’s early hours after Hyundai had flown in a replacement part. Once Tanak had run the morning stages as road sweeper, Hyundai tactically retired the car to prepare for a Super Sunday points attack. It was a decision Neuville felt hampered his progress. The Belgian was left to rue a stage 15 error that caused him to miss out on two points, while Sesks impressively hung onto fifth by 0.1s.

“Each car you can have in front cleaning the road is an advantage, especially in a championship fight where every single point really counts – I think it was a mistake, but this is what it is,” grumbled Neuville. Team principal Cyril Abiteboul added: “We wanted to give a bit of relief to Thierry by having an extra car doing a bit of cleaning in the morning when it mattered. But in the afternoon, obviously the benefits are lower, and it was very clear that nothing would be happening that would really help Ott in the championship.”

Tanak did return on Sunday to showcase the blistering speed he could have delivered, winning the first two stages despite opening the road. The first was a simply stunning effort that prompted Fourmaux to say that the 2019 world champion was “on another level”. The pace was enough to salvage 11 points



Neuville questioned his team’s tactics on Tanak’s rally return

from a maximum 12 on Sunday – a decent return having completed only eight stages.

At the front Rovannerpa was not yet thinking of victory, revealing that the final four stages were the worst in terms of his rushed preparation. But in true Rovannerpa style there was no need to worry and he won the penultimate stage, before easing his way to one of the finest victories of his career by 28.3s.

“For sure, it doesn’t feel so different now because we have been working all of the time and it’s just the result of the hard work, but later on I will realise [what he has achieved],” he stated. “I’m just quite tired at the moment.”

Team-mate Evans joined him on the podium in second for a Toyota 1-2, but only after a puncture robbed him of any points from the final Power Stage, and cost a further point by dropping him from third to fourth in the Sunday standings. Evans did, however, score a total of 17 points to close the gap to championship leader Neuville to 15. The Hyundai man took five by winning the Power Stage to claim fourth ahead of the impressive Sesks.

Fourmaux’s strong rally was rewarded by a third podium of the season in what Millener hailed as his driver’s best performance. This third-place finish came after a puncture on stage 16 caused by clipping a bank resulted in Mikkelsen sliding to sixth, ahead of Munster and the Toyota of Katsuta.

But when looking back at Rally Poland, the overriding story was that you should never write off Rovannerpa. 🌟



Fourmaux claimed a third podium of the season for M-Sport

**NEXT  
REPORT**  
Rally Latvia  
25 July issue



PAJARI BEATS FRUSTRATED SOLBERG IN WRC2



MATT JELONEK/MCKLEIN

Sami Pajari outlined why Toyota will hand him an opportunity in a GR Yaris Rally1 car in Finland in August by claiming a dominant victory to boost his WRC2 title hopes. The Finn and co-driver Enni Mäkelä backed up a triumph in Sardinia with an impressive drive to victory by 22 seconds from Oliver Solberg and Elliott Edmondson on Poland’s high-speed gravel stages.

Pajari stormed into the lead on Friday, with his main challenge coming from local hero Kajetan Kajetanowicz before the Pole ran off the road in stage 11, causing significant damage to the Skoda Fabia’s rear suspension.

This handed Pajari a 32s buffer, which the Toyota GR Yaris Rally2 driver managed to the finish to move to second in the championship, three points behind Yohan Rossel, who was absent.

“It’s a really amazing feeling,” said Pajari, who finished ninth in the overall standings. “It’s something that we are aiming for, but it’s never so easy. The competition is so tough so there are no easy wins. This was also completely flat-out from the beginning. There were relatively small gaps so I couldn’t relax even though I was in the lead almost all the time.”

Solberg struggled with the balance of his Toksport Skoda throughout the weekend, which left the Swede frustratedly sitting as low as ninth on Friday. After that, the 22-year-old took more risk to mount a fightback into the podium places.

A puncture for Robert Virves on the penultimate stage helped Solberg into second, while the Estonian Skoda driver leapfrogged Georg Linnamae (Toyota) and Pierre-Louis Loubet (Skoda) on the final test to snatch third by 0.6s.

“With what went on during Friday, we did well to get back to second and it is important for the championship,” said Solberg, who sits third in the standings. “But I’m still very disappointed with the feeling in the car and the confidence all weekend. It was not what I expected at all.”

RESULTS WRC ROUND 7/13, RALLY POLAND (27-30 JUNE)

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Kalle Rovanperä (FIN) Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	2h33m07.6s
2	Elfyn Evans (GBR) Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+28.3s
3	Adrien Fourmaux (FRA) Alexandre Coria (FRA)	M-Sport Ford World Rally Team / Ford Puma Rally1	+42.7s
4	Thierry Neuville (BEL) Martijn Wydaeghe (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+1m10.8s
5	Martins Sesks (LVA) Renars Francis (LVA)	M-Sport Ford World Rally Team / Ford Puma Rally1	+1m47.0s
6	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR) Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+2m16.6s
7	Gregoire Munster (LUX) Louis Louka (BEL)	M-Sport Ford World Rally Team / Ford Puma Rally1	+2m18.0s
8	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN) Aaron Johnston (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+2m26.7s
9	Sami Pajari (FIN) Enni Mäkelä (FIN)	Printsport / Toyota GR Yaris	+7m50.7s
10	Oliver Solberg (SWE) Elliott Edmondson (GBR)	Toksport WRT / Skoda Fabia RS Rally2	+8m12.7s

OTHERS

40	Ott Tänak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+1h39m47.0s
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STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Mikolajki Arena 1 (1.55 miles)	Tanak 1m42.5s	Tanak	Neuville +1.0s
SS2 Stanczyki 1 (18.27 miles)	Mikkelsen 14m54.7s	Mikkelsen	Sesks +2.2s
SS3 Wieliczki 1 (8.02 miles)	Neuville 5m56.0s	Mikkelsen	Sesks +2.2s
SS4 Olecko 1 (8.20 miles)	Mikkelsen 7m27.5s	Mikkelsen	Sesks +7.4s
SS5 Stanczyki 2 (18.27 miles)	Rovanperä 14m32.5s	Rovanperä	Mikkelsen +0.2s
SS6 Wieliczki 2 (8.02 miles)	Neuville 5m49.3s	Mikkelsen	Evans +2.0s
SS7 Olecko 2 (8.20 miles)	Fourmaux 7m16.7s	Mikkelsen	Evans +1.6s
SS8 Mikolajki Arena 2 (1.55 miles)	Katsuta and Rovanperä 1m43.4s	Mikkelsen	Rovanperä +1.8s
SS9 Swietajno 1 (11.50 miles)	Rovanperä 9m21.9s	Mikkelsen	Rovanperä +0.5s
SS10 Goldap 1 (12.37 miles)	Rovanperä 9m33.9s	Rovanperä	Evans +1.4s
SS11 Czarne 1 (13.92 miles)	Mikkelsen 10m53.8s	Rovanperä	Evans +0.1s
SS12 Mikolajki Arena 3 (1.55 miles)	Rovanperä 1m40.8s	Rovanperä	Evans +0.4s
SS13 Swietajno 2 (11.50 miles)	Rovanperä 9m17.5s	Rovanperä	Mikkelsen +2.8s
SS14 Goldap 2 (12.37 miles)	Rovanperä 9m25.2s	Rovanperä	Mikkelsen +5.2s
SS15 Czarne 2 (13.92 miles)	Rovanperä 10m43.0s	Rovanperä	Mikkelsen +9.4s
SS16 Gmina Mragowo 1 (12.92 miles)	Tanak 10m43.5s	Rovanperä	Evans +17.4s
SS17 Mikolajki 1 (6.96 miles)	Tanak 5m37.0s	Rovanperä	Evans +18.1s
SS18 Gmina Mragowo 2 (12.92 miles)	Rovanperä 10m28.8s	Rovanperä	Evans +20.6s
SS19 Mikolajki 2 (Power Stage) (6.96 miles)	Neuville 5m27.6s	Rovanperä	Evans +28.3s



JANUS REE / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

DRIVERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Neuville 136; 2 Evans 121; 3 Tanak 115; 4 Sebastien Ogier 92; 5 Fourmaux 91; 6 Rovanperä 63; 7 Katsuta 58; 8 Mikkelsen 29; 9 Dani Sordo 27; 10 Esapekka Lappi 23.

WRC2 1 Yohan Rossel

71; 2 Pajari 68; 3 Solberg 61.

MANUFACTURERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 311; 2 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 301; 3 M-Sport Ford World Rally Team 156.



# Da Costa's American dream as Cassidy suffers nightmare

*An agonising spin thwarted Jaguar's points leader from wrapping up the title, while Porsche's on-form ace doubled up in Portland to boost his own bid*

STEFAN MACKLEY

**I** was one lap away from winning the championship this weekend." Mistakes have been few and far between for Nick Cassidy this term on his quest for a maiden Formula E title, but a critical error within sight of that first crown has blown the championship battle wide open. Instead of walking away with his hands on the trophy, the Kiwi went scoreless at the Portland E-Prix double-header, and a 25-point lead prior to the event has been whittled down to just 12 ahead of the season finale in London later this month.

The late catastrophe for Cassidy and Jaguar in the USA opened the door for Porsche and Antonio Felix da Costa, and this potent combination scored a remarkable double that has propelled both into the championship mix with two races left.

Cassidy started 10th for the opening contest at the Portland International Raceway, the same position from which he took victory 12 months ago, and he bided his time in the early laps, conserving energy on the fringes of the points via a strategy that has become his trademark this season. He only moved to the front for the first time at the start of lap 12 in a typically frenetic Formula E race where positions changed on an almost corner-by-corner basis. Five laps later, after taking his second Attack Mode activation, Cassidy remained among the leading contenders and with the most energy in reserve. With nine tours remaining of the scheduled 27-lap contest, Cassidy moved to the front again, and only relinquished the lead briefly on lap 22 to da Costa before reasserting his dominance.

A third win of the season looked even more likely when Cassidy's Jaguar team-mate, Mitch Evans, moved into second on lap 24 on the run into Turn 1, drawing alongside da Costa on the outside into the braking zone before pulling ahead on the exit of the tight right-left chicane. Crucially, Evans had been handed a five-second penalty for a collision earlier in the race with Jake Hughes along the back straight. The McLaren driver had suffered a right-rear puncture in the contact with Evans's front wing, and

Hughes was sent off the road at the next corner, resulting in the stewards becoming involved.

Even though Evans was out of contention for outright victory, Jaguar issued a radio call to both its drivers saying they were free to race – a decision that arguably put unnecessary pressure on Cassidy at the head of the field. Aware of his team-mate's penalty, Cassidy still took defensive lines at various points so as not to lose track position and come under threat from da Costa, who was piling pressure on the Jaguars from third. Although Evans was eventually given the radio message to maintain position on the back straight during the penultimate lap, Cassidy ahead had received no such call and ran slightly deep into the fast left of Turn 10 that had caught several drivers out over the

**“Sometimes you’ve got to take responsibility, put your hand up and say you’ve screwed up”**

weekend. After bouncing over the kerb on the following right, Cassidy's Jaguar took to the grass on the exit before spinning away any hopes of victory.

“Sometimes you’ve got to take a lot of responsibility and put your hand up and say you’ve screwed up,” shrugged Cassidy. “Today that’s the day for me. I guess a few chain of events led to that but ultimately that’s the case.”

With Cassidy dropping out of the points and eventually classified 19th, Evans was left leading and was the first to take the chequered flag. But the time penalty demoted him to eighth in the classification and he was left to rage at the stewards' decision. “It’s a disgrace, to be honest,” said Evans, who had taken his second pole position of the season. “The penalty is just >>

Hop-a-long Cassidy:  
a spin on the grass cost  
the points leader



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES

BAGNALL





Double victory means Antonio Felix da Costa is in the Formula E title hunt ahead of London



completely out of order. Look, I feel like if I misjudged it, or if it was me changing lane and causing the puncture, then fair enough, that's on me. I just think it was a really unfortunate set of circumstances."

The following day Jaguar submitted a right to review the decision by the stewards, but this was dismissed and the British car maker had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

There to pick up the pieces was da Costa, who had entered the penultimate round of the season as the in-form driver, with two wins from the past three races, although he arrived under a cloud after the appeal into his Misano disqualification back in April for a car breach had been rejected. With Saturday's victory in his pocket, da Costa started second for the sequel and, after leading at several points, found himself back in second on lap 18 when a safety car was deployed to retrieve debris scattered around the circuit from various incidents.

When racing resumed with seven laps remaining – the race distance extended by one lap due to the brief safety car intervention – da Costa made his move on leader Robin Frijns, immediately sweeping into the lead on the approach to Turn 1. While he was never headed thereafter, da Costa still had to contend with the attention of the Envision Jaguar of Frijns over the final two laps, not helped by a damaged front wing after contact with Edoardo Mortara on lap 15. The collision at Turn 10 at the end of the back straight not only caused damage to da Costa's car but handed Mortara a left-rear puncture that sent him off the track and eventually into retirement.

It was a disappointing end to the weekend for Mortara, whose Mahindra had finished an impressive fourth in the opening race after making it through to the duels for the fifth time this season. The incident was noted by the stewards and investigated briefly post-race before a verdict of no further action was given, ensuring da Costa secured a hat-trick of wins on the bounce that has propelled him to 33 points away from Cassidy with a maximum of 58 still available.

"We're navigating through these races really well, the car is quick and we're doing it in a smart way, but I'm having fun doing these races," smiled da Costa, who matched his own record of three wins a row from 2019-20. "Impressive run of races, I'm not going to deny it, and considering where we started the season [with three non-scores], if you told me four or five months ago that I would have won four races this year I would not have believed you."

Frijns was left to take his second runner-up finish of the weekend, the Dutchman scoring his first podium results since the Diriyah round in January and on this occasion repassing Evans on the penultimate lap.

Evans had been running fifth under the safety car but, with



Da Costa heads the pack in Portland

STALEY

one Attack Mode still to take, the Kiwi had ground to recover over the final laps. He initially reached second at Turn 1 four laps from home, but the need to conserve energy meant the position with Frijns was reversed.

Just off the podium was the second Porsche of Pascal Wehrlein, who had entered the Oregon event as Cassidy's closest rival in the championship. But the German failed to capitalise on his rival's error in race one when debris from the Evans/Hughes collision became lodged under his car and affected its performance, and he was only able to salvage 10th.

## "If you had told me four months ago I would have won four races I wouldn't have believed you"

It looked like Wehrlein might be left even lower down the order in the sequel after damaging his front wing on the rear of Mortara's Mahindra into Turn 7, which then became lodged under his car. The damaged bodywork eventually broke free on the back straight, where it was collected by Sam Bird's McLaren, sending the Briton off track at high speed and eventually into retirement. Despite a performance deficit in the closing laps as the pace increased, Wehrlein was able to hold on to finish in a vital points position while Cassidy suffered his own front wing drama.

After slipping back into the pack for his customary early race energy saving, Cassidy was climbing back through the order when a concertina effect ahead into Turn 1 meant both he and reigning champion Jake Dennis damaged their front wings on lap 13.

They both pitted for repairs but were now off the back of the pack, before they were handed a lifeline with the deployment of the safety car. Despite having considerably more energy than those ahead, the increased pace of the race after the safety car meant Cassidy was never able to capitalise on his advantage and could only climb to 13th, while Dennis salvaged 10th after taking sixth the day before at the Andretti team's home race.

On a weekend when Cassidy could and should have clinched the title, he heads to London in a title battle now finely poised. Just 12 points separate him from Evans and Wehrlein, while Jaguar sits only 33 points clear of Porsche in the teams' contest.

Of his Portland nightmare, Cassidy reflected: "That's motorsport and that's the position I'm in. I'm not giving up." ❄



Robin Frijns took a brace of runner-up finishes

STALEY



## VERGNE'S NEW RECORD

Jean-Eric Vergne set a new outright Formula E record for the most pole positions after defeating Antonio Felix da Costa to the top spot ahead of Sunday's race. The DS Penske driver has taken 17 poles from his 128 starts in the championship spanning 10 years. The Frenchman slipped to fifth in the second race, but had taken his third podium of the season the previous day.

## BUEMI'S RECOVERY

Sebastien Buemi recovered from a drive-through penalty in the second race to finish ninth. The Envision driver was forced to pit for the penalty on lap nine after his car was found to have tyre pressures below the minimum requirement, before the mid-race safety car allowed him to fight for points. Buemi had also taken a drive-through in the opening race after his team changed the car's e-motor, but without a caution period he could only salvage 20th.

## DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR MULLER

Nico Muller secured back-to-back points finishes in a strong showing at Portland, propelling Abt back above ERT in the teams' championship. The German claimed fifth in the opening race, in which he led for one lap after starting seventh. He lined up 13th for the sequel but managed to climb into the points before finishing sixth, after leading for five laps.

## COLLET MAKES DEBUT

Nissan reserve and simulator driver Caio Collet was called into action and made his Formula E debut when regular driver Oliver Rowland was forced to miss the Portland event due to illness. The Indy NXT driver (below) managed to outqualify team-mate Sacha Fenestraz for the opening race and started 13th before finishing 18th. He fared slightly better in the sequel with 16th at the chequered flag.



GALLOWAY

### RESULTS FORMULA E ROUND 9/10, PORTLAND (USA), 29-30 JUNE RACE 1 (27 LAPS – 53.538 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	<b>Antonio Felix da Costa</b> (PRT)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	34m00.097s
2	<b>Robin Frijns</b> (NLD)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+0.415s
3	<b>Jean-Eric Vergne</b> (FRA)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	+1.440s
4	<b>Edoardo Mortara</b> (CHE)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M10Electro	+1.701s
5	<b>Nico Muller</b> (CHE)	Abt / Mahindra M10Electro	+2.086s
6	<b>Jake Dennis</b> (GBR)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+2.634s
7	<b>Sam Bird</b> (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+2.858s
8	<b>Mitch Evans</b> (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+4.507s*
9	<b>Stoffel Vandoorne</b> (BEL)	DS Penske / DS E-TENSE FE23	+5.183s
10	<b>Pascal Wehrlein</b> (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+5.653s
11	<b>Lucas di Grassi</b> (BRA)	Abt / Mahindra M10Electro	+6.325s
12	<b>Nyck de Vries</b> (NLD)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M10Electro	+6.477s
13	<b>Norman Nato</b> (FRA)	Andretti / Porsche 99X Electric Gen3	+6.487s
14	<b>Sergio Sette Camara</b> (BRA)	ERT / ERT X24	+6.857s
15	<b>Sacha Fenestraz</b> (FRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+8.686s
16	<b>Jehan Daruvala</b> (IND)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	+14.031s**
17	<b>Dan Ticktum</b> (GBR)	ERT / ERT X24	+14.186s***
18	<b>Caio Collet</b> (BRA)	Nissan / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	+15.005s
19	<b>Nick Cassidy</b> (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+15.445s
20	<b>Sebastien Buemi</b> (CHE)	Envision Racing / Jaguar I-Type 6	+58.409s
21	<b>Jake Hughes</b> (GBR)	McLaren / Nissan e-4ORCE 04	-1 lap
R	<b>Maximilian Guenther</b> (DEU)	Maserati / Maserati Tipo Folgore	22 laps-accident damage

\* includes five-second penalty for causing a collision with Hughes, \*\* includes 5s penalty for causing a collision with Guenther, \*\*\* includes 5s penalty for not respecting race director notes

**Winner's average speed** 94.474mph. **Fastest lap** Hughes 1m11.327s, 100.043mph.

#### RACE 2 (27 LAPS – 53.538 MILES)

**1 da Costa** 36m21.519s; **2 Frijns** +0.332s; **3 Evans** +3.194s; **4 Wehrlein** +3.262s; **5 Vergne** +3.683s; **6 Muller** +3.785s; **7 Nato** +4.887s; **8 Guenther** +5.692s; **9 Buemi** +6.250s; **10 Dennis** +6.840s; **11 Vandoorne** +7.490s; **12 Daruvala** +7.928s; **13 Cassidy** +8.078s; **14 Sette Camara** +10.044s; **15 Ticktum** +10.111s; **16 Collet** +11.290s; **17 di Grassi** +12.575s\*; **18 Fenestraz** +20.628s\*\*; **R Mortara** 24 laps-accident damage; **R Bird** 20 laps-accident damage; **R de Vries** 20 laps-battery; **R Hughes** 12 laps-accident damage.

\* includes 5s penalty for forcing another car off track, \*\* includes 5s penalty for forcing Hughes off track

**Winner's average speed** 88.349mph. **Fastest lap** Frijns 1m10.650s, 101.002mph.

**QUALIFYING** **1 Vergne** 1m08.779s; **2 da Costa** 1m08.804s; **3 Bird** 1m08.990s; **4 Frijns** 1m09.081s; **5 Hughes** 1m08.833s; **6 Cassidy** 1m09.016s; **7 Wehrlein** 1m09.123s; **8 de Vries** 1m09.330s; **9 Daruvala** 1m09.758s; **10 Vandoorne** 1m09.857s; **11 Evans** 1m09.821s; **12 Mortara** 1m09.885s; **13 Muller** 1m09.836s; **14 Fenestraz** 1m09.906s; **15 Ticktum** 1m09.869s; **16 Sette Camara** 1m09.979s; **17 Buemi** 1m09.913s; **18 Dennis** 1m09.983s; **19 di Grassi** 1m09.998s; **20 Nato** 1m10.015s; **21 Guenther** 1m10.005s; **22 Collet** 1m10.061s.



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#### DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Cassidy** 167; **2 Evans** 155; **3 Wehrlein** 155; **4 da Costa** 134; **5 Oliver Rowland** 131; **6 Vergne** 129; **7 Dennis** 122; **8 Guenther** 73; **9 Frijns** 60; **10 Vandoorne** 55.

#### TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Jaguar Racing** 322; **2 Porsche** 289; **3 DS Penske** 184; **4 Andretti** 168; **5 Nissan** 157; **6 McLaren** 95; **7 Envision Racing** 88; **8 Maserati** 81; **9 Abt** 38; **10 Mahindra Racing** 25; **11 ERT** 23.

#### MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

**1 Porsche** 407; **2 Jaguar** 388; **3 Stellantis** 247; **4 Nissan** 242; **5 Mahindra** 63; **6 ERT** 23.





Comtoyau  
squad's fortuitous  
win the first for an  
Aston Martin in Spa  
24H since 1948



# Aston Martin profits from Ferrari heartbreak

*Ferrari appeared set for victory in the Spa 24 centenary, until a bizarre delay snatched it away*

GARY WATKINS

Three years ago Alessandro Pier Guidi sealed a dramatic Spa 24 Hours victory with 10 minutes to go with an around-the-outside manoeuvre at Blanchimont. This time the Italian's heroics had long since set Ferrari on course for the win in the blue-riband round of the GT World Challenge Europe before some more last-hour drama. This time it ripped the win from Ferrari's grasp and handed it straight to Aston Martin.

Pier Guidi and team-mates Davide Rigon and Alessio Rovera looked pretty much home and dry in the centenary running of the Spa endurance classic with just under an hour to go when he came into the pits for his final stop. His misfortune was to find the narrow entry from the Bus Stop to the start of the Formula 1 pits blocked. More than 50 seconds went west as the factory AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3 sat stationary while the immobile Lamborghini ahead of him was pulled clear.

A deserved win was gone, the victory laurels going instead to the Comtoyou Racing Aston Martin Vantage GT3 shared by Nicki Thiim, Marco Sorensen and Mattia Drudi.

"It's really difficult to say something: it's what happened, that's racing," said Pier Guidi. "We couldn't do anything. The team did an amazing job: we had a quick car and we stayed out of trouble in difficult conditions. But we didn't win the race."

The Aston drivers expressed sympathy for Ferrari as they celebrated a first victory for the British marque at the Spa enduro since 1948 when a 2-Litre Sports triumphed in the hands of St John Horsfall and Leslie Johnson. More significant than the 76 years since then are the 20 editions of the race in the seasons that followed the marque's return to sportscar racing in 2005 with the DBR9 GT1 developed by Prodrive, still the marque's GT partner today. A close second in 2006 with the DBR9 was its previous best finish.

"I feel sorry for those guys and there are no words that can help them," said Thiim, a class winner at Le Mans with Aston and an outright winner at the Nurburgring 24 Hours driving a Mercedes. "But finally! This means a lot to me. This is the last one on my bucket list."

Thiim conceded that the new and improved evo version of the Vantage GT3 introduced for this year wasn't going to beat the Ferrari in a straight fight over the final dry hours of an incident-packed race in which it rained pretty much all the way through the night and went some of the way to explaining why there were no fewer than 17 safety cars over the 24 hours.

"We have a long history of racing against Ferrari and know what they are capable of," continued Thiim, referencing their battles in GTE Pro in the World Endurance Championship. "But at the end we didn't have the pace to keep up with them."

Aston's longtime Danish duo reckoned it was a pretty strong performance from the Belgian Comtoyou squad, which also took the first tranche of points on offer at six hours, after its switch from Audi to Aston for this season. "No one can be perfect in a race like that, but we definitely had some pretty good calls," reckoned Sorensen. >>



DREW GIBSON

Thiim (left, with Drudi and Sorensen) happy to complete his bucket list



DREW GIBSON





Rowe BMW of Farfus/  
Harper/Hesse fell  
to sixth place

PARRAVANI/WWW.XYNAMIC.COM

“There were some times in the night when we lost time, valuable seconds, but it wouldn’t have made any difference at the end.”

Sorensen had been battling for the lead as the 4.35-mile Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps finally dried up in the closing hours, not with the Ferrari but the Rowe BMW M4 GT3 shared by Augusto Farfus, Dan Harper and Max Hesse. The Ferrari was just behind in third place in the 20th hour. The complexion of the race changed in its favour thanks to Pier Guidi.

AF brought him in a lap early to try to shake something out of the situation. Pier Guidi got the hammer down and swept past the German and the British car as they exited the pits at the top of Raidillon. Thiim then made it past Harper at the Bruxelles hairpin three laps later but was unable to do anything about the Ferrari, which slowly edged away into a lead that stood at a little more than three seconds at the next round of stops.

“The team told me we were quicker and to push to try to get the undercut, because with the degradation of the tyre you are slower at the end of the stint than the beginning,” Pier Guidi explained. “I pushed at the first corner and through the out-lap and it was enough to catch them at the pit exit. We had a little bit more pace, but only in clean air. I don’t think it would have been easy to overtake. Doing this kind of undercut was the only chance.”

Pier Guidi was 12s up on the Aston at the fateful moment of the race. He didn’t need to pit that lap; he could have waited. But there was no communication from race control to say that the pitlane was blocked by the Grassers Racing Team’s Silver Cup class Huracan GT3 EVO2. The car had some kind of electronic glitch and had already blocked the pitlane over the course of the morning, as well as stopping a couple of times out on track. “Maybe they could have managed the situation better,” said Pier Guidi of the race organisation.

Despite the loss of time, Pier Guidi still made it back to second position, ending up 33.6s down on the Aston at the 1630 finish. His charge took him past David Pittard in the Walkenhorst Aston team’s Pro Cup car and then the Rutronik Porsche 911 GT3-R with Julien



#51 Ferrari’s pace and  
(almost) trouble-free run  
should have brought victory...

Andlauer at the wheel, which still needed to make its final stop for fuel. That put him third behind the Rowe BMW, which had to come into the pits with two minutes to go after what should have been its final pitstop was brought forward by a slow puncture. Hesse drove through the pits to reset his stint time to avoid exceeding the 61-minute maximum, erroneously it would seem, because a short FCY in the final hour pushed that up to 68 minutes.

Pittard, who shared Walkenhorst’s lead entry with Henrique Chaves and Ross Gunn, crossed the line in third position, but he knew that the Aston was going to miss out on a second piece of Spa silverware. He had clashed with the pumped-up Pier Guidi as the Ferrari swept past on the outside at Les Combes and was handed a 10s penalty for an incident judged to have been his fault to be added to his race time.

This Aston might have been up with the Comtoyou machine but for an early incident when the car was hit from behind and the



Fortune didn’t favour  
super-fast GRT Lambo of  
Perera/Mapelli/Pepper

SRO/JEP





## “We’re only quick when it was really wet, when there was a lot of standing water”

diffuser damaged. The issue was remedied during its mandatory five-minute technical pitstop, which is in the regulations to allow for a change of brakes, but the car’s system of airjacks had also been damaged, which resulted in vital seconds being lost in the pits during its final stops.

The penalty dropped the car to fourth behind the best of the BMWs. Not the Rowe car that fell all the way to sixth, but the WRT example shared by Dries Vanthoor, Sheldon van der Linde and Charles Weerts. They reckoned third was about as good as it was going to get given what they described as a lack of pace with the M4 when the track was dry even after a 10kg weight break under the Balance of Performance. “We’re only quick when it was really wet, when there was a lot of standing water,” explained Weerts. “Somehow our car isn’t affected so much by aquaplaning, but we weren’t so competitive in the dry or mixed conditions.”

This WRT crew still believed that they had the maximum points on offer at the 12-hour mark of the race. Van der Linde was ahead and pitted as the clock struck 0430. It was a rare mistake by home heroes WRT, which is usually so sure-footed at Spa. The rules demand that the car cross the line on track rather than in the pits.

The Rowe crew’s comments echoed those from the WRT camp, though its lead car also had to deal with a minor issue that caused the steering to go light at what Harper called “random times”.

“At the end of the race we didn’t have the pace to match the Ferrari and the Aston,” said the Brit, who was penalised in the night for inadvertently running a red light at the end of the pitlane. “In the



...so there was no hiding  
Rovera, Pier Guidi and Rigon’s  
disappointment in second place

SCIARRA/FOTOSPEEDY

full wet we were quick and we took some gambles on the tyres that paid off, which allowed us to come back after the penalty.”

The quickest car in terms of one-lap dry pace was the Lamborghini, or in particular GRT’s Pro Cup entry shared by Franck Perera, Marco Mapelli and Jordan Pepper. Perera, who came out on top in Friday’s Superpole session for the fastest 20 cars in the aggregate Thursday session, held fastest race lap until it dried up. Mapelli then bettered it.

This car’s race was compromised first by a refuelling rig issue that lost it time at its opening two stops. It couldn’t take a full dump of fuel and dropped off the lead lap. GRT got it back during the night, but a pitcall under green shortly before it undertook its technical stop put it out of sequence with the frontrunners. Only in the last knockings did the Lambo get back into the top six in real terms, and by then it was too late to mount a challenge. The Rowe BMW’s late stop allowed Perera, Mapelli and Pepper to claim fifth, but it was still a case of what might have been for a marque that has consistently underachieved at Spa.

“The Lamborghini was a bloody quick car today,” said team boss Gottfried Grassner. “We were unlucky from the first moment. We were completely out of sequence, but we managed it well and came back. For sure we had the potential win, but lots of people can say that.”

Pier Guidi, Rigon and Rovera were most definitely among their number. ❧

**P56 FORMER WINNERS’ STRUGGLES, PLUS RESULTS**



## MERCEDES AND PORSCHE STRUGGLE ON HOME GROUND



#92 SSR Herberth car of Jaminet/Campbell/Makowiecki was top Porsche in eighth place

GRUPPEC GMBH

Mercedes, a two-time winner of the Spa enduro in the GT3 era and always a consistent frontrunner, could finish no better than seventh with the GetSpeed team's #777 entry that took Gold Cup class honours with Mikael Grenier, Philip Ellis, Dominik Baumann and Al Faisal Al Zubair. It was a disappointing result for a manufacturer that looked to be in the game with the best two of its Pro Cup class entries.

The #48 Winward Racing Merc in which Lucas Auer qualified second and led early on endured a topsy-turvy race before retiring in the 13th hour. Auer, who shared the car with Maro Engel and Daniel Morad, was five seconds up the road when he sustained a puncture late in his opening stint. It set the tone for the rest of the race. The car dropped as low as 44th place when the rest of the field

was able to pit under yellow-flag conditions. The car came back into the top 10, only to fall back again after an early switch back to slicks in the night didn't pay off and another puncture. It all came to an end bang on 0500 when Auer was hit at La Source.

GetSpeed's factory car shared by Jules Gounon, Luca Stolz and Fabian Schiller was a contender, but it went out late in hour 16. An issue with the front-left hub resulted in the withdrawal of a car that was fifth at halfway and very much in the game, although its sister crew won the Silver Cup with Britons James Kell and Aaron Walker joined by Anthony Bartone and Yannick Mettler.

Porsche, another multiple winner at Spa before and during GT3 times, got two cars home in the top 10. The SSR Herberth 992-shape 911 GT3-R of Matt Campbell,

Mathieu Jaminet and Frederic Makowiecki beat the Rutronik entry of Julien Andlauer, Sven Muller and Patric Niederhauser to eighth position.

Audi rounded out the top 10 with victory in the Bronze Cup with the Attempto R8 LMS GT3 Evo II shared by Max Hofer, Dylan Pereira, Aleksei Nesov and Andrey Mukovoz. The class rules allowed the team to get bronze-rated Mukovoz through his driving time early, then relied on the other three pilots for the rest of the race. It ran in the top six and might have finished there had not contact with Hofer at the wheel on Sunday morning bent the steering and blunted the car's challenge. He was trying to put the AF Corse Ferrari that finished second in class in the hands of Andrea Bertolini, Tommaso Mosca, Jef Machiels and Louis Machiels a lap down at the time.

Second in Bronze Cup would have gone to the Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini of Patrick Kujala, Casper Stevenson, Mattia Michelotto and Gabriel Rindone but for a late puncture. The Huracan was ahead of the class winner on pitstop sequence at the time, but the team wasn't kidding itself that it could have beaten the Audi. It reckoned the car wasn't quite right following a rebuild necessitated when Rindone damaged a corner on the drive between the circuit and scrutineering earlier in the week and was more than happy with third. It means the team has now taken home silverware from Spa in four different classes.

Pro-Am honours fittingly went to the Riley Motorsports Merc which George Kurtz, boss of race sponsor CrowdStrike, shared with Nicky Catsburg, Colin Braun and Ian James.



James, Braun, Kurtz and Catsburg celebrate Pro-Am victory

MERCEDES-BENZ GROUP AG



RESULTS SPA 24 HOURS GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP ROUND 2/5, SPA (BEL), 29-30 JUNE (478 LAPS – 2080.296 MILES)			
POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Nicki <b>Thiim</b> (DNK) Mattia <b>Drudi</b> (ITA) Marco <b>Sorensen</b> (DNK)	Comtoyou Racing / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	24h01m16.868s
2	Alessio <b>Rovera</b> (ITA) Alessandro <b>Pier Guidi</b> (ITA) Davide <b>Rigon</b> (ITA)	AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	+33.604s
3	Sheldon <b>van der Linde</b> (ZAF) Dries <b>Vanthoor</b> (BEL) Charles <b>Weerts</b> (BEL)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	+38.831s
4	David <b>Pittard</b> (GBR) Henrique <b>Chaves</b> Jr (PRT) Ross <b>Gunn</b> (GBR)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	+47.815s
5	Franck <b>Perera</b> (FRA) Jordan <b>Pepper</b> (ZAF) Marco <b>Mapelli</b> (ITA)	GRT Grasser Racing Team / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	+1m14.750s
6	Augusto <b>Farfus</b> (BRA) Dan <b>Harper</b> (GBR) Max <b>Hesse</b> (DEU)	Rowe Racing / BMW M4 GT3	+1m26.872s
7	Dominik <b>Baumann</b> (AUT) Mikael <b>Grenier</b> (CAN) Philip <b>Ellis</b> (GBR) Faisal <b>Al Zubair</b> (OMN)	Al Manar Racing by GetSpeed / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	+1m45.090s
8	Matt <b>Campbell</b> (AUS) Mathieu <b>Jaminet</b> (FRA) Frederic <b>Makowiecki</b> (FRA)	SSR Herberth / Porsche 911 GT3-R	+1m45.904s
9	Julien <b>Andlauer</b> (FRA) Patric <b>Niederhauser</b> (CHE) Sven <b>Muller</b> (DEU)	Rutronik Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-1lap
10	Max <b>Hofer</b> (AUT) Dylan <b>Pereira</b> (LUX) Alexey <b>Nesov</b> (RUS) Andrey <b>Mukovoz</b> (RUS)	Tresor Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-1lap
11	Benjamin <b>Goethe</b> (DNK) Tom <b>Gamble</b> (GBR) Dean <b>Macdonald</b> (GBR)	Garage 59 / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-1lap
12	Ricardo <b>Feller</b> (CHE) Christopher <b>Haase</b> (DEU) Alex <b>Arkin Aka</b> (DEU)	Tresor Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-1lap
13	Louis <b>Machiels</b> (BEL) Jef <b>Machiels</b> (BEL) Andrea <b>Bertolini</b> (ITA) Tommaso <b>Mosca</b> (ITA)	AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	-1lap
14	Casper <b>Stevenson</b> (GBR) Patrick <b>Kujala</b> (FIN) Mattia <b>Michelotto</b> (ITA) Gabriel <b>Rindone</b> (ITA)	Barwell Motorsport / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	-1lap
15	Jim <b>Pla</b> (FRA) Gilles <b>Magnus</b> (BEL) Ugo <b>de Wilde</b> (BEL) Paul <b>Evrard</b> (FRA)	Sainteloc Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-2laps
16	Chris <b>Froggatt</b> (GBR) Jonathan <b>Hui</b> (CHN) Eddie <b>Cheever</b> (ITA) Lilou <b>Wadoux</b> (FRA)	Sky Tempesta Racing / Ferrari 296 GT3	-2laps
17	Arjun <b>Maini</b> (IND) Jusuf <b>Owega</b> (DEU) Michele <b>Beretta</b> (ITA)	Haupt Racing Team / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-2laps
18	Maximilian <b>Gotz</b> (DEU) Thomas <b>Drouet</b> (FRA) Ulysse <b>de Pauw</b> (BEL)	Boutsen VDS / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-2laps
19	Frederic <b>Vervisch</b> (BEL) Christopher <b>Mies</b> (DEU) Dennis <b>Olsen</b> (NOR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	-3laps
20	John <b>de Wilde</b> (BEL) Kobe <b>Pauwels</b> (BEL) Job <b>van Uitert</b> (NLD) Dante <b>Rappange</b> (NLD)	Comtoyou Racing / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	-3laps
21	Rob <b>Bell</b> (GBR) Ollie <b>Millroy</b> (GBR) Fran <b>Rueda</b> (ESP) Mark <b>Radcliffe</b> (GBR)	Optimum Motorsport / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-3laps
22	Alessio <b>Picariello</b> (BEL) Alexander <b>Fach</b> (CHE) Martin <b>Rump</b> (EST) Antares <b>Au</b> (CHN)	Lionspeed GP x Herberth / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-3laps
23	Ben <b>Barnicoat</b> (GBR) Ruben <b>del Sarte</b> (GBR) Sam <b>Neary</b> (GBR) Shaun <b>Balfe</b> (GBR)	Optimum Motorsport / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-3laps
24	Maxime <b>Martin</b> (BEL) Raffaele <b>Marciello</b> (ITA) Valentino <b>Rossi</b> (ITA)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	-3laps
25	Yannick <b>Mettler</b> (CHE) James <b>Kell</b> (GBR) Aaron <b>Walker</b> (GBR) Anthony <b>Bartone</b> (USA)	GetSpeed Performance / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-4laps
26	Jaxon <b>Evans</b> (NZL) Joel <b>Eriksson</b> (SWE) Thomas <b>Preining</b> (AUT)	Phantom Global Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-5laps
27	Marius <b>Nakken</b> (NOR) Jop <b>Rappange</b> (NLD) Axel <b>Blom</b> (FIN) Theo <b>Nouet</b> (FRA)	Dinamic GT / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-5laps
28	Colin <b>Caresani</b> (NLD) Tanart <b>Sathienthirakul</b> (THA) Daan <b>Pijl</b> (NLD)	Winward Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-5laps
29	Ian <b>James</b> (GBR) Colin <b>Braun</b> (USA) Nicky <b>Catsburg</b> (NLD) George <b>Kurtz</b> (USA)	CrowdStrike Racing by Riley / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-6laps
30	Glenn <b>van Berlo</b> (NLD) Lorenzo <b>Ferrari</b> (ITA) Leonardo <b>Moncini</b> (ITA) Lorenzo <b>Patrese</b> (ITA)	Tresor Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-6laps
31	Ezequiel <b>Perez Companc</b> (ARG) Alain <b>Valente</b> (CHE) Patrick <b>Assenheimer</b> (DEU) Karol <b>Basz</b> (POL)	Madpanda Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-7laps
32	Sam <b>Dejonghe</b> (BEL) Matisse <b>Lismont</b> (BEL) Xavier <b>Maassen</b> (NLD) Charles <b>Clark</b> (GBR)	Comtoyou Racing / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	-8laps
33	Darren <b>Leung</b> (GBR) Pedro <b>Ebrahim</b> (BRA) Toby <b>Sowery</b> (GBR) Connor <b>De Phillippi</b> (USA)	Century Motorsport / BMW M4 GT3	-8laps
34	Alban <b>Varutti</b> (FRA) Gilles <b>Stadsbader</b> (BEL) Marcus <b>Paverud</b> (NOR) Ivan <b>Klymenko</b> (UKR)	Sainteloc Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	-16laps
35	Sandy <b>Mitchell</b> (GBR) Antoine <b>Doquin</b> (FRA) Ricky <b>Collard</b> (GBR) Till <b>Bechtolsheimer</b> (GBR)	Barwell Motorsport / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	-18laps
36	Indy <b>Dontje</b> (NLD) David <b>Pun</b> (CHN) Kevin <b>Tse</b> (CHN) Rio <b>Ma</b> (CHN)	Uno Racing Team with Landgraf / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-21laps
37	Hugo <b>Cook</b> (GBR) Haytham <b>Qarajouli</b> (KWT) Baptiste <b>Moulin</b> (BEL) Mateo <b>Llarena</b> (GTM)	GRT Grasser Racing Team / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	-22laps
38	Mark <b>Sansom</b> (GBR) Chris <b>Salkeld</b> (GBR) Nicolai <b>Kjaergaard</b> (DNK) James <b>Baldwin</b> (GBR)	Garage 59 / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-24laps
39	Marvin <b>Kirchhofer</b> (DEU) Louis <b>Prette</b> Jr (MCO) Adam <b>Smalley</b> (GBR) Miguel <b>Ramos</b> (PRT)	Garage 59 / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-27laps
40	Cesar <b>Gazeau</b> (FRA) Roeë <b>Meyuhas</b> (ISR) Sebastien <b>Baud</b> (FRA) Aurelien <b>Panis</b> (FRA)	Boutsen VDS / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-30laps
41	Josh <b>Caygill</b> (GBR) Chris <b>Buncombe</b> (GBR) Jann <b>Mardenborough</b> (GBR) Alex <b>Buncombe</b> (GBR)	Team RJN / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	-33laps
42	Martin <b>Kodric</b> (HRV) Lewis <b>Williamson</b> (GBR) Frank <b>Bird</b> (GBR) Isa Al <b>Khalifa</b> (BHR)	2 Seas Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	-48laps
43	Niccolo <b>Schiro</b> (ITA) David <b>Fumanelli</b> (ITA) Daniele <b>Di Amato</b> (ITA) Nicolo <b>Rosi</b> (CHE)	Kessel Racing / Ferrari 296 GT3	-112laps
44	Maxime <b>Robin</b> (FRA) Romain <b>Leroux</b> (FRA) Lorcan <b>Hanafin</b> (GBR)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	-115laps
45	Ben <b>Tuck</b> (GBR) John <b>Hartshorne</b> (GBR) Chandler <b>Hull</b> (USA) Matt <b>Bell</b> (GBR)	Kessel Racing / Ferrari 296 GT3	-131laps
R	Klaus <b>Bachler</b> (AUT) Alex <b>Malykhin</b> (BLR) Joel <b>Sturm</b> (DEU)	Pure Rxcing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	306laps-accident
R	Jens <b>Klingmann</b> (DEU) Sam <b>De Haan</b> (GBR) Calan <b>Williams</b> (AUS) Ahmad <b>Al Harthy</b> (OMN)	OQ by Oman Racing / BMW M4 GT3	294laps-engine
R	Luca <b>Stolz</b> (DEU) Jules <b>Gounon</b> (FRA) Fabian <b>Schiller</b> (DEU)	Mercedes-AMG Team GetSpeed / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	283laps-hub
R	Daniel <b>Juncadella</b> (ESP) Frederik <b>Vesti</b> (DNK) Ralf <b>Aron</b> (EST)	Mercedes-AMG Team GruppeM Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	276laps-accident damage
R	Simon <b>Gachet</b> (FRA) Dennis <b>Lind</b> (DNK) Jan <b>Heylen</b> (BEL)	Haas RT / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	273laps-gearbox
R	Vincent <b>Abril</b> (FRA) Thomas <b>Neubauer</b> (FRA) David <b>Vidales</b> (ESP)	AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	236laps-accident
R	Ben <b>Green</b> (GBR) Mex <b>Jansen</b> (NLD) Bijoy <b>Garg</b> (USA) Timothy <b>Creswick</b> (GBR)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	231laps-accident
R	Lucas <b>Auer</b> (AUT) Maro <b>Engel</b> (DEU) Daniel <b>Morad</b> (CAN)	Mercedes-AMG Team Mann-Filter / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	222laps-accident damage
R	Steven <b>Palette</b> (FRA) Romain <b>Carton</b> (FRA) Adam <b>Eteki</b> (FRA) Arthur <b>Rougier</b> (FRA)	CSA Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	174laps-accident damage
R	Morris <b>Schuring</b> (NLD) Robert <b>Renauer</b> (DEU) Alfred <b>Renauer</b> (DEU) Ralf <b>Bohn</b> (DEU)	Herberth Motorsport / Porsche 911 GT3-R	121laps-accident damage/suspension
R	Mirko <b>Bortolotti</b> (ITA) Matteo <b>Cairolì</b> (ITA) Andrea <b>Caldarelli</b> (ITA)	Iron Lynx / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	120laps-accident damage/withdrawn
R	Martin <b>Konrad</b> (AUT) Jefri <b>Ibrahim</b> (MYS) Jordan <b>Love</b> (AUS) Alexander <b>Sims</b> (GBR)	Triple Eight JMR / Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo	114laps-accident
R	Ayhancan <b>Guven</b> (TUR) Dorian <b>Boccolacci</b> (FRA) Laurin <b>Heinrich</b> (DEU)	Schumacher CLRT / Porsche 911 GT3-R	89laps-accident
R	Laurens <b>Vanthoor</b> (BEL) Kevin <b>Estre</b> (FRA) Patrick <b>Pilet</b> (FRA)	HubAuto Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	88laps-suspension
R	Esteban <b>Muth</b> (BEL) Sebastian <b>Ogaard</b> (DNK) Erwan <b>Bastard</b> (FRA) Nicolas <b>Baert</b> (BEL)	Comtoyou Racing / Aston Martin VantageAMR GT3 Evo	79laps-accident
R	Felipe <b>Fernandez Laser</b> (DEU) David <b>Perel</b> (ZAF) Fabrizio <b>Crestani</b> (ITA) Christian <b>Hook</b> (DEU)	Rinaldi Racing / Ferrari 296 GT3	78laps-accident
R	Kerong <b>Li</b> (USA) Brendon <b>Leitch</b> (NZL) Earl <b>Bamber</b> (NZL) Adrian Henry <b>D’Silva</b> (MYS)	EBM / Porsche 911 GT3-R	76laps-accident
R	Christopher <b>Zochling</b> (AUT) Marvin <b>Dienst</b> (DEU) Guilherme <b>Oliveira</b> (PRT) Philipp <b>Sager</b> (AUT)	Dinamic GT / Porsche 911 GT3-R	74laps-clutch
R	Brad <b>Schumacher</b> (AUS) Olivier <b>Bertels</b> (BEL) Armand <b>Fumal</b> (BEL) Julius <b>Adomavicius</b> (LTU)	Haas RT / Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II	73laps-accident damage
R	Marco <b>Wittmann</b> (DEU) Philipp <b>Eng</b> (AUT) Nick <b>Yelloly</b> (GBR)	Rowe Racing / BMW M4 GT3	71laps-cooling system
R	Dustin <b>Blattner</b> (DEU) Dennis <b>Marschall</b> (DEU) Loek <b>Hartog</b> (NLD) Zacharie <b>Robichon</b> (CAN)	Rutronik Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	18laps-accident damage

In each car, first-named driver started race. **Winners’ average speed** 86.601mph. **Fastest lap** Mapelli 2m16.105s, 115.113mph

**SUPERPOLE 1** Perera 2m13.718s; 2 Auer 2m13.754s; 3 Rovera 2m13.968s; 4 Patrese 2m14.006s; 5 Gounon 2m14.039s; 6 Abril 2m14.139s; 7 Magnus 2m14.206s; 8 Gotz 2m14.261s; 9 Kirchhofer 2m14.346s; 10 Maini 2m14.491s; 11 Chaves 2m14.505s; 12 Grenier 2m14.707s; 13 Hesse 2m14.866s; 14 Drudi 2m14.538s; 15 Wittmann 2m15.089s; 16 Preining 2m15.557s; 17 Gachet 2m15.739s; 18 Jaminet 2m14.432s; 19 Boccolacci 2m15.986s; 20 Caldarelli 2m15.308s.





**FORMULA 2**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
**29-30 JUNE**  
**ROUND 7/14**

Just when it looked as though Ollie Bearman had kickstarted his Formula 2 campaign with victory in the reversed-grid sprint race at the Austrian Grand Prix, the latest disaster struck in the feature event on Sunday. Instead, it was reigning Formula 3 champion Gabriel Bortoleto who ended the weekend on top with his maiden F2 win.

Prema Racing driver Bearman has endured a miserable sophomore campaign since earning acclaim for his performance on his Formula 1 debut with Ferrari in Saudi Arabia. The Briton started second to Kush Maini on Saturday, and took full advantage of a poor getaway for the Invicta Racing car to take the lead into Turn 1 and deliver a commanding performance without any real challenge.

Pepe Marti was the other driver to jump Maini early on after a tight squeeze with the Indian and Taylor Barnard at Turn 3 on the opening lap. While Maini dropped to an eventual seventh, Red Bull Junior Marti's Campos Racing machine went on to finish 1.8 seconds adrift of Bearman in second place. Championship leader Paul Aron came through to third, but the Hitech GP racer had to be on his toes in defending the place from the Invicta car of Bortoleto before continuing his streak of finishing on the podium at each round of the season.

Behind them, the battle for fifth between MP Motorsport pair Franco Colapinto and Dennis Hauger blew up on the final lap at Turn 3. Contact between the pair forced Colapinto to spin lightly into the barriers.

Sunday's feature race had action from the start of the formation lap, with



polesitter Hauger among four drivers to stall on the grid along with Maini, Jak Crawford and Zak O'Sullivan, while the same thing happened to Zane Maloney at the start of the race.

With Hauger starting from the pits, AIX Racing's Joshua Durksen became the *de facto* polesitter, with Bortoleto enjoying a clear view to Turn 1 from third. While the Paraguayan led the early stages, the Brazilian found his way to the front on lap four with a textbook move into Turn 4, aided by DRS.

Maloney's disasters continued when he came to a halt on the run to Turn 4 on lap six, causing the race to be interrupted by the virtual safety car. Drivers are not permitted to complete their mandatory pitstop under the VSC, unless they are already in the pits when it is signalled. Marti had already entered the pitlane from sixth place to get off the supersoft tyres onto the softs. For the rest of the race it was unclear whether the pitstop was legal, and it was only after the finish that the officials found that,

while the margin had been "incredibly close", he had not yet reached the first safety car line, and he was penalised 30s.

For now, Marti enjoyed a 5s net lead over Bortoleto following their stops, but the McLaren junior was flying, and went past Marti at half-distance. Colapinto led on the alternate strategy with Bearman second, before engine problems forced the Prema car to the pits and retirement.

Colapinto pitted with eight laps remaining and, while Campos pair Marti and Isack Hadjar entertained with a very public team orders dispute over who would be allowed to attack Bortoleto, Argentinian Williams F1 protege Colapinto tore through from eighth position and snatched second from Hadjar on the final lap of the race.

Marti's penalty converted his fourth place to 15th, while fifth finisher Aron copped a 5s penalty for his defensive moves early on against Hadjar. That gifted fourth to Enzo Fittipaldi, who just dipped under the 5s deficit to Aron on the final lap.

**SAM HALL**



# Browning not frowning as he retakes control

**FORMULA 3**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
**29-30 JUNE**  
**ROUND 6/10**

Luke Browning regained the lead of the Formula 3 standings thanks to a superb second win of the season in the feature race at the Austrian Grand Prix round.

While Hitech GP's Williams F1 junior has been superb in the Sunday races, it's his form in the reversed-grid sprints that has prevented him stretching a lead in the title race. And Browning's grand total of three points on Saturdays was not added to at the Red Bull Ring either... This time he finished one place outside the scorers in 11th, although this was tempered by the fact that, of those in the top four in the championship, it was only Gabriele Mini who got points, in sixth place.

Browning's Hitech team-mate Martinius Stenshorne started from pole for the sprint, but it was ART Grand Prix pair Christian Mansell and Nikola Tsolov in front at the end of the opening lap, with the Bulgarian Alpine F1 protege going around the outside of McLaren-backed Stenshorne at Turn 4.

The battle between Mansell and Tsolov was superb, the pair swapping the lead on numerous occasions with Stenshorne right behind. The Australian was in front five laps from the finish when Sebastian Montoya, fighting for fourth with Alex Dunne, smashed into the barriers on the approach to Turn 4.



Mansell reacted to a beep in his ear and slowed before the safety car was confirmed, instantly dropping to third.

There was time for just one lap of action once the race went green, with Tsolov leading home Stenshorne, Mansell, Dunne, Laurens van Hoepen and Mini.

Browning took a controlled lights-to-flag win from pole on Sunday, while the touring car-style battles raged in his mirrors. Arvid Lindblad, who suffered a puncture in the sprint race, made it an all-British front row and got away ahead of Prema Racing team-mates Dino Beganovic and Mini. They soon passed Red Bull Junior Lindblad, who then lost further time when he was shovelled off the track by Dunne, the Irishman earning a time penalty for his troubles.

But it was in the closing stages that the excitement peaked. Beganovic, who had spun at Turn 1 on the opening lap on Saturday, was still heading Mini in the race for second when they were joined by Mansell, who had scythed

his way through from 11th on the grid.

Using DRS, the trio traded places almost corner by corner, with Alpine protege Mini finally securing it when he repassed Ferrari junior Beganovic at Turn 6 on the final lap. Mansell missed out on silverware, but described the race as the best of his life. Their fight gifted Browning a 1.7s advantage at the finish, and nearly brought Oliver Goethe (Campos Racing) and Dunne (MP) into play. They finished right behind, albeit Dunne's penalty dropped him to 10th in the final order.

That also proved beneficial for Leonardo Fornaroli. The Trident driver entered the weekend atop the standings only for a disastrous qualifying, in which he was 24th, to give him a lot of work in the races. Fornaroli was 12th on Saturday, before the penalties for Dunne and Stenshorne (for track limits) lifted him to ninth on Sunday behind Tsolov, Lindblad and van Hoepen.

**SAM HALL**



## WEEKEND WINNERS

**FORMULA 2**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
**Race 1** Ollie Bearman  
Prema Racing  
**Race 2** Gabriel Bortoleto  
Invicta Racing

**FORMULA 3**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
**Race 1** Nikola Tsolov  
ART Grand Prix  
**Race 2** Luke Browning  
Hitech GP



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HANSEN/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Logano pips Smith (71) and Reddick at finish

**NASCAR CUP**  
**NASHVILLE (USA)**  
**30 JUNE**  
**ROUND 19/36**

What looked like a battle of tyre strategies last Sunday at Nashville Superspeedway turned into a wild race into who could stretch their fuel to the finish, with Joey Logano emerging the surprise winner.

It appeared that Denny Hamlin, who took four tyres on his final pitstop, and Ross Chastain, who took just two, were set to decide the outcome of Sunday's race until a caution came out with one of the originally scheduled 300 laps remaining. That sent the race into the first of what would be a record

five overtimes covering 31 additional laps. The extra distance proved too much for several drivers, who were already close on fuel.

Logano's Team Penske Ford inherited the lead to start the third overtime when Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr were forced to pit for fuel. He appeared to be in position to claim the win in the fourth overtime, but a caution came out just before he took the white flag. Knowing that if he pitted, he would lose, Logano and crew chief Paul Wolfe decided to remain on the track and continue to gamble.

Logano got a good restart to start the fifth overtime and, despite his fuel light coming on during the final lap, he was able to fend off rookie Zane Smith by 0.068 seconds to claim his first win of the 2024

season. It was a risky strategy, but Logano had been struggling to make the playoffs on points, so it paid a handsome reward. He now joins Penske teammates Ryan Blaney and Austin Cindric in the 16-driver playoff field.

"It's been a stressful few weeks trying to get into the playoffs, and being able to win here is huge for our season," said Logano. "We had it won off of [Turn] 4 [on the fourth overtime] and then the caution came out, and I was like, 'Oh, my God', but you can't pit. You've kind of got to go for it. Boy, it was close."

With cars dropping out due to lack of fuel or caught up in wrecks, Tyler Reddick finished third, ahead of Ryan Preece, Chris Buescher and Ryan Blaney.

**JIM UTTER**

## Ten Voorde goes clear of the fights

**PORSCHE SUPERCUP**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
**30 JUNE**  
**ROUND 3/8**

In a reversal of what was to come later, the Austrian Grand Prix's Porsche Supercup support race featured a consummate drive to victory from the series' Dutch talisman as wars broke out behind him.

Larry ten Voorde had to give best to CLRT team-mate Marvin Klein in qualifying. But, when the Frenchman locked up into Turn 3 and ran wide, ten Voorde slipped past. Klein's efforts to get back ahead brought

Harry King into play, before he squeezed Klein too much at the Turn 8 kink. After contact, the Lechner Racing machine went sideways and King somehow controlled it, but Klein and he were now down to fifth and sixth by the end of the opening lap.

Keagan Masters had moved into second place and the South African put ten Voorde under pressure early on, but the pace of the Ombra Racing car fell away and ten Voorde powered into the distance. King, meanwhile, got past Klein on the second lap, then demoted Theo Oeverhaus and Lirim Zendeli to move into third.

Klein followed King up the order, and on the 11th lap of 18 they caught Masters. King made his move at Turn 3, where Masters' lock-up ran him wide and allowed Klein through too. There was more minor contact between King and Klein with four laps remaining before they settled in that order, four seconds adrift of ten Voorde at the flag.

Oeverhaus finished fourth, but a 5s track-limits penalty dropped him to seventh and promoted Masters to fourth, ahead of Kas Haverkort and Alessandro Ghiretti.



PORSCHEAG/HOCH ZWEI

### WEEKEND WINNERS

**NASCAR CUP**  
**NASHVILLE (USA)**  
Joey Logano  
Team Penske  
(Ford Mustang)

**PORSCHE SUPERCUP**  
**RED BULL RING (AUT)**  
Larry ten Voorde  
CLRT

**GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES**  
**SPA (BEL)**  
**Races 1 & 2** Josh Rattican/Tom Lebbon  
Elite Motorsport  
(McLaren Artura GT4)

**BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS**  
**VELO CITTA (BRA)**  
**Race 1** Gaetano di Mauro  
Cavaleiro Sports  
(Chevrolet Cruze)  
**Race 2** Julio Campos  
Pole Motorsport  
(Chevrolet Cruze)



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# Bagnaia strives for perfection – and gets close

**MOTOGP**  
**ASSEN (NLD)**  
**30 JUNE**  
**ROUND 8/20**

Perfection is a near-unattainable concept that athletes constantly strive for throughout their careers. And Francesco Bagnaia's Dutch Grand Prix masterclass is about as close to it as anyone could hope for. After topping both Friday practice sessions for the first time in his MotoGP career, the Italian went on to take pole position with a new all-time lap record for the Assen circuit, before leading every lap of the sprint and grand prix to register his second successive double victory.

It was a statement weekend after weeks of media discussion about the dynamics within Ducati following its decision to promote Marc Marquez to its factory team in 2025. It is known that the Bagnaia/Valentino Rossi camp is not happy with Ducati's actions, so what better way to prove to the world that you really don't care about who is in the garage next door than by showing why you're the rider Ducati committed to before the season got under way?

"Unbeatable" was how Jorge Martin described Bagnaia in the 26-lap grand prix, the double world champion converting pole to the holeshot in both races at Assen. After winning the sprint by 2.4s over Martin, Bagnaia took the GP chequered flag 3.676 seconds ahead of the championship leader, who had "no excuses" for offering no challenge to his chief title rival.

After just two laps, Bagnaia's lead over Martin stood at 0.9s. The Pramac Ducati



Bagnaia could not be stopped at Assen

rider did get it down to 0.6s two tours later, but that was as close as he got. Despite riding around the Assen circuit faster than ever, Martin struggled with his bike on the changes of direction on the fast, flowing venue.

By the start of lap six, Bagnaia's lead was up to a second for the first time and continued to steadily grow. Commanding leads are something Bagnaia has blown in the past but, since crashing out of the last lap of the sprint at Barcelona in May while heading the pack, the world champion hasn't put a foot wrong. That continued as the Dutch GP reached its conclusion, Bagnaia now just 10 points away in a championship race where the pendulum has clearly swung back in his favour.

A grid penalty for Martin for the

grand prix after being found to have impeded Raul Fernandez in qualifying dropped him to fifth from second for the start. On the first lap, he recovered to his original qualifying position. He mused that perhaps, without the penalty, he could have been in a position to try a move on Bagnaia to disrupt his rhythm in the early stages. But ultimately, it made little difference.

A better qualifying could well have made Enea Bastianini a factor. The five-time grand prix winner started his Ducati from 10th on the grid and worked his way up to third to celebrate his recently signed KTM deal with his fourth Sunday rostrum of the year.

Marc Marquez finished fourth on the road, but was later slapped with a 16s penalty for breaching the minimum front tyre pressure rules. The Gresini Ducati



Martin very much had to settle for best of the rest



**RESULTS** **MOTOGP ROUND 8/20, ASSEN (NLD), 30 JUNE (26 LAPS – 73.379 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	<b>Francesco Bagnaia</b> (ITA)	Ducati	40m07.214s
2	<b>Jorge Martin</b> (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+3.676s
3	<b>Enea Bastianini</b> (ITA)	Ducati	+7.073s
4	<b>Fabio Di Giannantonio</b> (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+8.299s
5	<b>Maverick Vinales</b> (ESP)	Aprilia	+8.258s
6	<b>Brad Binder</b> (ZAF)	KTM	+16.005s
7	<b>Alex Marquez</b> (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+21.095s
8	<b>Raul Fernandez</b> (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+22.368s
9	<b>Franco Morbidelli</b> (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+23.413s
10	<b>Marc Marquez</b> (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+23.868s
11	<b>Jack Miller</b> (AUS)	KTM	+24.004s
12	<b>Fabio Quartararo</b> (FRA)	Yamaha	+24.057s
13	<b>Johann Zarco</b> (FRA)	LCR Honda	+42.767s
14	<b>Augusto Fernandez</b> (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+42.871s
15	<b>Miguel Oliveira</b> (PRT)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+44.429s
16	<b>Takaaki Nakagami</b> (JPN)	LCR Honda	+46.246s
17	<b>Luca Marini</b> (ITA)	Honda	+1m10.937s
R	<b>Pedro Acosta</b> (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	25 laps-accident
R	<b>Joan Mir</b> (ESP)	Honda	6 laps-accident
R	<b>Marco Bezzecchi</b> (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	5 laps-accident
R	<b>Alex Rins</b> (ESP)	Yamaha	0 laps-accident
NS	<b>Lorenzo Savadori</b> (ITA)	Aprilia	injury
NS	<b>Aleix Espargaro</b> (ESP)	Aprilia	injury

**WEEKEND WINNERS**

**MOTO2**

Ai Ogura (below)  
HT Helmets-MSI  
(Boscoscuro)

**MOTO3**

Ivan Ortola  
HT Helmets-MSI  
(KTM)



Rins was hurt  
in GP fall

rider's fate was a cruel one. He dipped underneath the minimum by 0.01 bar for just a single lap, and this happened after he was punted wide in contact with Bastianini on the 21st tour at Turn 1.

Earlier in the race, Marquez waved through Fabio Di Giannantonio – who inherited fourth – in order to get his tyre pressure back up, needing to be within the tolerance for 15 laps of the 26. He argued the mitigating circumstance that led to his infringement, and the stewards agreed that it's something that will be looked into in the future. But the result of the 2024 Dutch GP has Marquez in 10th.

In the battle of the 'Japanese Cup', Fabio Quartararo took top honours for Yamaha in 12th ahead of the leading Honda of Johann Zarco (LCR). Yamaha took a new engine to Assen aimed at improving turning while maintaining the increased power it found with its initial 2024 motor. While it didn't deliver a huge step forward, it was further proof from Yamaha that it is leaving no stone unturned in its quest to get back to winning ways. Honda, by contrast, isn't set to debut anything major on its troubled RC213V until possibly September.

At the time of writing, Yamaha's Alex Rins is in doubt for this weekend's German GP after a Turn 1 highside left him with fractures in his hand and foot. Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro also left Assen injured, with fractures forcing him to sit out Sunday's grand prix following a fast spill at the end of the sprint.

**LEWIS DUNCAN**

**Winner's average speed** 109.738mph. **Fastest lap** Bagnaia 1m31.866s, 110.597mph.

**QUALIFYING 2** 1 Bagnaia 1m30.540s; 2 Martin 1m30.621s; 3 Vinales 1m30.951s; 4 A Marquez 1m30.979s; 5 Espargaro 1m31.077s; 6 Di Giannantonio 1m31.274s; 7 M Marquez 1m31.378s; 8 Morbidelli 1m31.405s; 9 Binder 1m31.479s; 10 Acosta 1m31.482s; 11 Bastianini 1m31.628s; 12 R Fernandez 1m31.928s.

**QUALIFYING 1** Acosta 1m31.372s; Di Giannantonio 1m31.390s; 13 Quartararo 1m31.620s; 14 Miller 1m31.903s; 15 Bezzecchi 1m31.997s; 16 Rins 1m32.108s; 17 Oliveira 1m32.123s; 18 Savadori 1m32.243s; 19 Zarco 1m32.260s; 20 Mir 1m32.497s; 21 Marini 1m32.627s; 22 A Fernandez 1m32.669s; 23 Nakagami 1m33.030s.

**SPRINT RACE** (13 LAPS – 36.689 MILES)

1 Bagnaia 19m58.090s; 2 Martin +2.355s; 3 Vinales +4.103s; 4 Bastianini +6.377s; 5 Di Giannantonio +8.869s; 6 Binder +9.727s; 7 Quartararo +10.828s; 8 A Marquez +13.196s; 9 Morbidelli +13.560s; 10 Acosta +15.972s; 11 Bezzecchi +16.036s; 12 Oliveira +16.082s; 13 Miller +18.739s; 14 Mir +21.791s; 15 A Fernandez +22.450s; 16 Zarco +23.690s; 17 R Fernandez +24.430s; 18 Nakagami +29.568s; 19 Rins +1m23.553s; R Espargaro 12 laps-accident; R Savadori 4 laps-accident; R Marini 4 laps-technical; R M Marquez 1 lap-accident.

**Winner's average speed** 110.243mph. **Fastest lap** Bagnaia 1m31.698s, 110.800mph.

**RIDERS'**

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Martin 200;  
2 Bagnaia 190;  
3 M Marquez 142;  
4 Bastianini 136;  
5 Vinales 118;  
6 Acosta 101;  
7 Binder 99;  
8 Di Giannantonio 92;  
9 Espargaro 82;  
10 A Marquez 62.

**CONSTRUCTORS'**  
**CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Ducati 278;  
2 Aprilia 156;  
3 KTM 154;  
4 Yamaha 43;  
5 Honda 22.



Bagnaia scaled the  
heights after race too

**NEXT  
REPORT**  
German GP  
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Robinson lays down marker at Santa Pod

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## Hill stars again at Super Touring Power

Current BTCC leader scores more wins in retro tin-tops



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**Oulton Park** dropped as **British GT** opener



Jeff-Hall victorious as **Ginetta** visits **Anglesey**





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Cheshire GT round is moving to late May Bank Holiday next year

# Oulton Park replaced by Donington Park as British GT opener for 2025

## BRITISH GT

The opening British GT Championship round will move from Oulton Park to Donington Park next year in a bid to avoid the chaos that marred this year's Easter Monday curtain-raiser.

The Donington event, a two-hour race, will take place on 6 April, two weeks ahead of Easter, with the Oulton fixture run to the 60-minute double-header format moving back to 26 May, the late Spring Bank Holiday. Aside from the pandemic-disrupted 2021 season, Oulton has hosted the opening round each year from 2017.

Series boss Stephane Ratel explained the calendar reshuffle has been driven by an attempt to avoid the bad weather that

caused problems this year and a desire not to host the season-opener on what he described as "the most challenging circuit on the calendar".

"Oulton Park was very difficult this year," he said. "We had push-back from the teams and, thanks to our good collaboration with Jonathan Palmer [whose MotorSport Vision operation runs both tracks], we will start with a circuit that will be easier for the first race.

"Of course, it might rain in May for Oulton but, if it does, at least it will not be the first race of the season for everyone. The drivers will be more used to their cars."

The shift around in the calendar has been welcomed by the teams. Chris Needell, commercial director of the

Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini squad that won both Oulton races this year, said: "Oulton was carnage and the teams wanted to avoid that in the future.

"We all love Oulton and want to go back there, but there was a request from the teams to try to find a solution. We talked about maybe separating out the GT3 and GT4 cars, but going back there when the weather should be better and at least a bit warmer, which will help tyre temperatures, is positive."

Tim Mullen, sporting manager of Greystone GT, offered a similar opinion. "Everyone thinks this is a positive move," he explained. "Our feedback after Oulton this year was that it would make sense to move the race back a bit in the calendar."

Both of the hour-long races at Oulton in April were interrupted by lengthy Full Course Yellow virtual safety cars, which have been introduced into British GT for the first time this year. There were just 23 minutes of green-flag running in the second encounter, which finished under caution.

As well as becoming the opening round – which will feature a two-hour duration rather than three hours – Donington will also return to its traditional position as the venue of the season finale after its second event and Brands Hatch swapped places for this year. The seven-weekend campaign will again take in Spa on the week ahead of the Spa 24 Hours.

GARY WATKINS



Only a third of race two this year was under green flags



# Cleland, Watts plan Super Touring entries

## SUPER TOURING POWER

Former British Touring Car stars John Cleland and Patrick Watts are planning to race at the Super Touring Power event in 2025.

Ex-Mazda and Peugeot works driver Watts and 1995 champion Cleland attended the second running of the tin-top celebration at Brands Hatch last weekend, where they appeared on the Autosport live stage. They now intend to prepare the Super Tourers they own to contest next year's edition, which has not yet been confirmed but is likely.



P76 SUPER TOURING POWER REPORT

GARY HAWKINS

Cleland will race the 1997 Vauxhall Vectra he has campaigned sporadically, while Watts plans to drive his 1998 Peugeot 406. "We wanted to bring the Vectra this year but had too many work commitments," said Cleland, now 71. "We're ready to go. I think we'd be on the podium. "It's amazing the cars that have turned out and the people that have made the effort. It shows how much passion people

still have for Super Touring – and knowledge: I was told things about me I hadn't remembered!" Given the cost and sophistication of the machines – only seven cars started the fourth and final Super Touring race from the 18 entries due to mechanical maladies and on-track incidents – Watts believes focusing on the one-off event could help more cars come out. "This is the biggest Super Tourer get-together in the

UK and it'll grow," said the 68-year-old. "I think there are a lot of French and German Super Tourers that could come. The cars are great to drive – they do everything you want them to do." Jake Hill (above), who won all four 2023 Super Touring races, topped the first two contests on the Grand Prix track last weekend in an ex-Laurent Aiello 1999 Nissan Primera. **KEVIN TURNER**

# Ex-Menu BMW set for race return

## SUPER TOURING POWER

Historic racing brothers Jon and Rob Payne are targeting a track return for their ex-Alain Menu 1992 BMW 318is. The Prodrive-built car made its first UK public appearance since 1993 when it was displayed at Brands Hatch's Super Touring Power event last weekend. It was used by future British Touring Car champion Menu for his first full-time tin-top programme, including a podium at Snetterton. Privateer David Pinkney drove the car in 1993 before it went to Europe to be used on hillclimbs.

The Payne brothers found the car a decade ago, still carrying Pinkney's distinctive pink-and-white colours under later paintwork. They have since conducted a full restoration and aimed to demonstrate – and possibly race – the car at Brands but were thwarted by trouble with its ageing ECU. "A newer ECU means I've got to do another wiring loom," said Jon Payne, "but hopefully it'll be a matter of weeks rather than months. "You've got to use these things – they're no good gathering dust. In reality, it's a '92 car. Super Tourers



Menu's first tin-top campaign was in a BMW 318is in 1992

MOTORSPIRIT IMAGES

back in the day pretty much went a second faster every year and so we've got basically the slowest Super Tourer! All you want to do is be able to take it out and go racing, isn't it?" **MARK PAULSON**

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Car and driver were reunited at Thruxton



STEVE JONES

## Ward competes in his old Lola Formula Ford again after 40 years

### HISTORICS

Gary Ward was reunited with the Formula Ford Lola T644E he raced with SDC sponsorship 40 years ago when he tackled the inaugural Heroes of FF1600 Sprint Cup races at Thruxton last month.

“When owner Andrew Crighton researched chassis 23’s history and discovered it was mine, he offered me the opportunity to race it here,” said Ward, 60, who also restored the car to his customary immaculate standard.

Having not driven it prior to qualifying, a last-minute ride-height change limited lappery, but the handling was more to his liking by race two, in which he finished

14th, with a best lap quicker than three drivers ahead of him.

Ward, who graduated to F3 with a Ralt RT30/85 in 1986, was already committed to the Thruxton Historic event’s Jochen Rindt Trophy races with his ex-Didier Theys RT3/83. However, its VW Spiess engine expired in qualifying.

It is likely that Ward, who prepares and drives Patrick Morgan’s sensational collection of F1 chassis, Indycars and sports prototypes under his ADM banner, will change to his spare Judd VW engine for future Classic F3 outings since components are more readily available.

MARCUS PYE

### STANFORD’S SWITCH

Sometime Pre-’66 and Pre-’93 Touring Car champion Roger Stanford made his front-wheel-drive debut on his return to racing at Brands Hatch last weekend, following a two-year layoff. Stanford was injured when his Lotus Cortina was pitched into a roll on Clay Hill at Oulton Park. He has a new Cortina in build for 2025, but made a first appearance in his ex-British Touring Car Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch at Brands, scoring a podium in the third Super Tourers race.

### BIRLEY BACK IN BMW

Local star Rod Birley gave Frank Cundell’s Production Saloon BMW M3 E30 its first race starts in 30 years at Brands Hatch last weekend. Birley had previously shared the car in the Willhire 25-hour race at Snetterton. Returning to the Grand Prix circuit for the first time since his heavy accident in May, Birley raced what is effectively a Group N car in the Group A race before later being reclassified and finishing 10th among the Pre-’93 set.

### MORE GB4 FOR BLAKELEY

Formula 1 Esports champion Lucas Blakeley will make a return to real-life competition by tackling the next two GB4 events, starting with Snetterton next weekend. He took a podium at Donington Park last year when he contested two GB4 rounds and will again drive for the KMR Sport squad. “My goals are pretty simple, I want to pick up from where I was and continue improving lap by lap, and to be as competitive as possible,” said Blakeley.

### O’NEILL STARS IN MAZDAS

Former British Touring Car racer Paul O’Neill made a winning debut appearance in the Miata Trophy at Donington Park last weekend. O’Neill (below) was a guest entry for the championship based around the Mk3 version of the Mazda MX-5 and was instantly on the pace, setting the fastest time in the Superpole qualifying session before finishing a close second to Aidan Hills in the opener and then winning race two.



GARY HAWKINS

## Edgar to join Zandvoort British F4 grid

### BRITISH F4

Jess Edgar has become the second F1 Academy driver to reveal plans to join the British Formula 4 grid with Chris Dittmann Racing for the British series’ maiden overseas event at Zandvoort next weekend.

After Carrie Schreiner joined the squad for last month’s previous round at Silverstone, as well as the

upcoming Dutch event, F1 Academy race winner Edgar is now doing likewise to help build seat time ahead of the all-female series’ own trip to Zandvoort next month.

“I’m pleased to announce that I will be racing at Zandvoort with Chris Dittmann Racing as it’s my favourite track, so I’m super-excited to be competing there twice this year,” said Edgar, who is currently eighth in the

F1 Academy standings with Rodin Motorsport. “Entering British F4 is a great opportunity for me to have more seat time so I can be as prepared for my 2024 campaign in F1 Academy.”

CDR team boss Chris Dittmann added: “The focus for Jess is to be prepared for her F1 Academy races like Carrie, so we’ll help build her knowledge throughout the weekend.”



# Robinson is a record-breaker at Santa Pod

## DRAG RACING

The British Drag Racing Championship's six-round Pro Modified series reached its halfway point at Santa Pod Raceway's Summer Nationals last weekend. The early-season points leader, Estonia's Andres Arnover, had decamped to the continent to pursue the FIA European title leaving Bobby Wallace, Andy Robinson and Jean Dulamon as the prime title contenders.

Robinson was eager to improve on a dismal 2023 season. A month ago, the eight-time champion had marginally lifted the British-best terminal speed mark to 249.07mph. Here, he opened his Summer Nationals account straight out of the trailer with a British-best elapsed time of 5.8207s, only for the time to be dealt a rare rejection when the mid-track incremental timings cast doubt on the final figure. Robinson's second qualifying shot launched well but turned wayward, slowing to a 7.5s ET, but his third set pole position at 5.912s, with a finish line



246.87mph good for the event's top speed.

Defending champion Wallace slipped off-pace during qualifying, with a best of 6.242s, and was pipped by Dulamon. Sunday's semi-finals found all three in contention. Wallace returned to a semblance of form at 5.984s/240.28mph to beat Dulamon's 6.214s. The odd-numbered field allowed Robinson a bye run into the final but he could only manage a 6.322s at 240.18mph to hand Wallace the final-round choice of lane.

Luckily for Robinson, lane choice proved

irrelevant. At the green light, Wallace was slower to launch, and his competent 6.092s proved no match for his opponent as Robinson sped away to victory. In a striking coincidence, Robinson's 5.8200s, at 245.13mph, virtually matched his disqualified opening qualifier. Now there was no question: the time stood. Robinson's 17th MSA/Motorsport UK race win leaves his supercharged 1969 Camaro once again Britain's quickest as well as fastest Pro Mod.

ROBIN JACKSON

# Buckmore Park launches new driver academy



## KARTING

A new driver development academy is being launched by Buckmore Park kart circuit as part of commemorations of 60 years since its former owner John Surtees won the Formula 1 title.

It is intended that the scheme will help uncover

a future champion, and 15 young drivers will be selected to participate in an initial intensive week-long programme in August. They will benefit from guidance from a range of experts including F1 test driver Oliver Turvey and Dean Fouache, former performance coach to Jenson Button.

“As this will mark 60 years since my father became Formula 1 world champion, we wanted to try and kickstart other successful careers in elite motorsport, something he was incredibly passionate about doing,” said Leonora Martell-Surtees, Buckmore co-owner and daughter of Surtees.



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R Racing driver was in fine form  
as series made first Anglesey  
visit for 17 years last weekend



## Jeff-Hall grabs Ginetta Junior points lead with G Fest hat-trick

### GINETTA JUNIOR

Rookie talent Ethan Jeff-Hall has moved into the Ginetta Junior points lead after scoring three wins during Ginetta's G Fest event at Anglesey last weekend.

On the category's first visit to the Welsh circuit in 17 years, Jeff-Hall set the tone in race one with a comfortable lights-to-flag victory. Behind, a close scrap for second between Marcus Saeter, Henry Joslyn and Charlie Hart eventually went Saeter's way.

Saeter dropped to fourth initially in race two, but quickly fought back to second and set his sights on polesitter Jeff-Hall. The Norwegian racer successfully made a move on lap seven of 10 to secure his second victory of the season.

Jeff-Hall was back to dominating proceedings on Sunday. In dry conditions,

after persistent rain the previous day, he converted a second double pole of the weekend into two dominant race wins.

Saeter and Chase Fernandez squabbled over second early on in race three before Saeter edged clear, while last-lap contact between Fernandez and Archie Clark at Rocket allowed James Shotton through for a maiden podium. Fernandez ran second throughout the finale, with Joslyn third after an early battle with Isaac Phelps.

James Nicholas started all four GT Academy races from pole, however various trials and tribulations opened the door for Mike Taylor to secure a quartet of wins. Only a false start penalty denied McKenzie Douglass a clean sweep in the GT Championship, meanwhile, with title rival Luke Garlick inheriting that win.

**SIMON PAICE**

### HILLCLIMB TIN TOPS TO STAR

The opening round of the British Hillclimb Championship's Tin Top – Top 10 Challenge will take place at Harewood this Sunday. A fine entry is headed by the monstrously powerful Subaru Legacy of Damien Bradley and Steven Darley, which delivers as much as 900bhp. Ranged against them will be quick Porsches, more Subarus, Mitsubishi Lancers and two Skoda Fabia R5 rally cars from Roger Moran and Eynon Price. The spectacular SBR Chrono V8 of Simon Bainbridge will also be in the mix.

### MALVERN'S DEBUT POLES

GT driver Scott Malvern scored a double pole on his historic racing debut at the Snetterton Classic last weekend and narrowly missed out on a Jack Sears Trophy podium – finishing just behind Ben Colburn's Mini – in the Ford Lotus Cortina he shared with Nick Jarvis. "That was a lot of fun," said Malvern, who also drove a Ford Capri alongside Jarvis. "If I'd had one more lap then I'd have got him but I'm still delighted to be able to jump into these beautiful cars and put in a performance like that."

### PICKETT PICKS CHEVRON

Former MGB and Historic Formula Ford racer Daniel Pickett has traded up to the ex-Jamie Boot Chevron B16. Pickett has entrusted the car to Dan Eagling for preparation and is tackling Masters and Historic Sports Car Club races in the Vin Malkie-built continuation car. Pickett shared the B16 with Eagling in the Guards Trophy at Donington Park last month, running as high as second before being halted by an oil leak.

### GOODWOOD'S 2025 DATES

On the eve of this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed (below) next weekend, the date for the 2025 edition has been announced. It is scheduled to run between 10-13 July, again the week after the British Grand Prix. Dates for Goodwood's other major events have also been revealed. The Members' Meeting is pencilled in for 12-13 April, while the Revival is set for 12-14 September, a week later than 2024.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

## C1 24 Hours to return to Silverstone

### BRSCC

The Citroen C1 24 Hours will return to Silverstone next year after this season's planned Anglesey event was cancelled.

A lack of entries led to the C1 Racing Club and British Racing & Sports Car Club axing the Welsh event, but the contest will now return to Northamptonshire after a year away on 2-4 May 2025.

"I was 100% determined to keep the race on the calendar

– after I competed in the early races, it continued to be a passion to do 24-hour races," said C1 boss Robin Welsh. "It was my reason for taking over the series, while the three-hour races are to give teams more of a racing season."

Adam Willis, part of last year's winning Alpha Trojon team, is delighted it is back. "I was disappointed it was called off this year, but also that it wasn't at Silverstone," he said. "Silverstone gives us better

prestige, better teams and better drivers coming from GTs and touring cars, etc."

Welsh was quick to praise Silverstone and the BRSCC for getting the date set. "Emax Motorsport boss Glen Finn said to me this was like our Olympics, it's an achievement to finish and it takes a lot to win," Welsh said. "If the BRSCC's Paul McErlean hadn't managed to work his magic, then it wouldn't be happening."

**PETER SCHERER**





## Aiello watches on as Hill grabs more Super Touring Power Primera success

### BRANDS HATCH MSVR SUPER TOURING POWER 29-30 JUNE

With 1999 British Touring Car champion Laurent Aiello watching on, Jake Hill took the Frenchman's title-winning Nissan Primera to a pair of Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit wins at the second edition of Super Touring Power last weekend.

The current BTCC points leader qualified the Primera on pole by 2.9 seconds from period great Steve Soper, at the wheel of a 1997 BMW 320i, going 0.6s faster than his best at last year's event in the process. The pair then entertained an appreciative crowd, trading the lead of Saturday's first race on multiple occasions. Their tussle allowed Richard Wheeler to close in, his ex-David Leslie sister Primera having

climbed from sixth on the grid, passing Anthony Reid's 1998 example in the process. Wheeler sniffed an opportunity on the last lap but contact exiting Druids pitched Soper's E36 hard into the barriers before bouncing back into Wheeler's path. Both cars sustained heavy damage and, having taken to the grass in avoidance, Reid's was another casualty, pulling up with engine failure as red flags flew. All three were sidelined for the rest of the weekend.

"Me and Steve have raced against each other for a long, long time, and I just wanted to have fun with him," enthused Hill, battling mixed emotions. "I'm racing with Steve Soper and he's in a BMW! I'm just gutted it ended that way."

Between Saturday's contests, Aiello visited the John Danby Racing garage to meet Hill and try out the seat of his old

steed for the first time in 25 years. He then cheered on from the commentary tower as Hill extended his winning streak in the car to six races, having gone unbeaten at last year's event. The Kent man was briefly headed by Jason Hughes (Vauxhall Vectra) – second in the opener – mid-race, before upping his pace and pulling clear. Danny Harrison (Honda Integra) completed the podium as a brakeless Alex Morgan (Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch) slipped back.

Hill's and Harrison's cars were withdrawn from Sunday's Indy circuit action and, with Hughes hitting strife, Morgan won from Colin Sowter (Peugeot 406) and Roger Stanford (Astra). Trackrod failure pitched Morgan out of the finale, handing Sowter the lead for a one-lap dash after the resulting safety car. AJ Owen (Ford Mondeo) jumped Stanford at the restart, then snatched an emotional victory after a drag race to the line having run wide when he dived ahead into Clearways.

Despite the cars' age, there was much less attrition in Pre-'66 Touring Cars where local man Bill Sollis was a Sunday double winner. Rain made for tricky conditions in the opener, Mini men Sollis and Tom Bell immediately jumping Lotus Cortina duo Tim Abbott and Ian Thompson. Bell found the drying line sooner and briefly led before Sollis hit back, with Thompson also usurping Bell later. Thompson's absence, and Bell vacating his Mini for Joe Ferguson, gave Sollis a strong hand for the sequel. Incredibly, Ferguson climbed



Carrera Cup star Rainford  
heads Pre-'83 pack in Capri





Hill bagged two more Super Tourer wins but Soper (r) threatened in opener

from the rear to second within four laps, but was denied further progress as “the tyres were shot by the time I got to Bill”.

Ferguson had taken Pre-’66 honours a day earlier when they shared the track with Pre-’83 Touring Cars. Miglia champion Aaron Smith added more Mini success in the GP circuit sequel, at the wheel of the KAD ‘works’ car.

Overall victories in those encounters were snared by Porsche Carrera Cup GB star Charles Rainford in the Lovell brothers’ Faberge Ford Capri, despite “still trying to drive it too much like a Cup car”. Overnight tweaks to both driver approach and car helped Rainford complete his hat-trick but steering failure in the finale prevented a clean sweep. Holding off Jonathan Corker’s Datsun 510, Stephen Primett’s Ford Escort inherited victory after leading the chase earlier in the day.

Classic Thunder success was split between Kevin Clarke’s BMW M3 E46 and the supercharged Honda Civic of Josh Lawton, who took one apiece on each layout. Clarke won the opener as pursuing Alex Sidwell put his Holden Commodore V8 Supercar in the Surtees gravel. Lawton, meanwhile, climbed to seventh from 32nd after his best qualifying lap was deleted. Sampling slicks and with his boost turned up slightly this weekend, Lawton took command of race two within four laps.

Lawton triumphed again on Sunday in a race red-flagged when Nick Vaughan’s Audi A3 – second and fourth on Saturday >>



**A VICTORIOUS VITESSE** Nigel Garrett turned in some high-speed laps in his ex-Andy Rouse 1984 title-winning Rover Vitesse SD1. Also raced by Pete Hall then Tim Harvey, who took a class crown in 1987, before Derek Hayes converted it to Modified Saloon specification, it won the 2005 Classic Thunder title with Garrett before he returned it to Group A spec. “It could race tomorrow,” said Garrett, who reckons the car is perfectly balanced but lacks power compared with later machinery.



**BMW BACK** Former Nurburgring VLN regulars Jody Halse and Simon Glenn plan to enter their ex-Hans Stuck/Jonathan Palmer 1983 Group A BMW 635 CSi in big European races after its first outing for five years. Stuck and Palmer contested British Saloon Car rounds in the 3.4-litre straight-six-powered car, Stuck taking pole at Donington Park. Halse’s Climax Motorsport outfit restored it in 2004. “I spent 10 fun years racing it around Europe,” said Halse. “We want to do things like the 1000Km at the ‘Ring.”



**BARTRUM’S GOODE DEBUT** Former British Touring Car team boss Dave Bartrum gave his ex-Graham Goode Ford Sierra RS500 its first laps on track following an extensive rebuild. The Motorbase founder first tried to buy the car, affectionately known as Clifford after the Listerine dragon that is airbrushed onto it, in 1990 and finally convinced Goode to part with it 32 years later. “I loved the car,” said Bartrum. “Graham Goode’s cars were beautiful, well presented, absolutely stunning.”



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– and Sidwell went off at Druids. Clarke seized the finale's lead before a moment on cold tyres dropped Lawton back, his recovery to third behind Mike Cutt (M3 E36) hampered by an overheating engine.

Malcolm Harding's Escort Mk2 swept to a quartet of Blue Oval Saloon Series victories, Saturday's coming behind the leading pair of Group A cars. Alongside only Pre-'03 Touring Cars on Sunday, Harding kept Olly Allen's Fiesta Mk6 at arm's length. TCR UK pacesetter Adam Shepherd took victory on his Pre-'03 debut weekend, climbing from 36th to sixth overall in race two before getting flicked across Allen's bows into the barriers exiting Graham Hill Bend on Sunday's opening lap. Champion Gary Prebble's Civic was otherwise untroubled.

Reigning champion Stuart Waite took a clean sweep of Pre-'93 victories but was pushed hard by Will Davison's similar

BMW M3 E36 in particular, as a gaggle of Beemers were bottled up behind Group A cars that pulled away on the straights but were slower through corners.

TVR Tuscan dominated in Bernie's V8s and Historic Outlaws. Stephen Hyde led the opener until swamped after slowing for yellow flags, before Matt Holben stole victory from Dan Birch's grasp with an outside pass at Stirling's on the final tour. Birch returned the favour with his own last-lap demotion of Holben in the sequel.

Clubmans produced a double victor in Clive Wood and his Mallock Mk23. Steve Collier (Vision V89) and Jarred Lester (Mallock Mk35) split the minor podium placings as Michelle Hayward's entertaining drives were thwarted by overheating and oil pressure problems aboard her Phantom P82TR.

**MARK PAULSON**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### SUPER TOURERS

**Races 1 & 2** Jake Hill (Nissan Primera GT)

**Race 3** Alex Morgan (Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch)

**Race 4** AJ Owen (Ford Mondeo)

### PRE-'66 TOURING CARS

**Races 1 & 2** Bill Sollis (Austin Mini Cooper S)

### PRE-'66 & PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

**Races 1 & 2** Charles Rainford (Ford Capri Mk3)

### PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

**Race 1** Charles Rainford (Ford Capri Mk3)

**Race 2** Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)

### CLASSIC & HISTORIC THUNDER

**Races 1 & 4** Kevin Clarke (BMW M3 E46)

**Races 2 & 3** Josh Lawton (Honda Civic EG)

### PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/BOSS

**Races 1 & 2** Malcolm Harding (Ford Escort Mk2)

### BERNIE'S V8s & HISTORIC OUTLAWS

**Race 1** Matt Holben (TVR Tuscan)

**Race 2** Dan Birch (TVR Tuscan)

### CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES

**Races 1 & 2** Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23)

### GROUP A, PRE-'93 & PRE-'03 TOURING CARS/BOSS

**Race 1** Dan Brown (Ford Sierra RS500)

**Race 2** Paul Mensley (Ford Sierra RS500)

### GROUP A & PRE-'93 TOURING CARS

**Race 1** Paul Mensley (Ford Sierra RS500)

**Race 2** Dan Brown (Ford Sierra RS500)

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

# Group A races add to the retro tin-top action

Super Touring in the 1990s may be among the most fondly remembered eras of British Touring Cars, but there are many fans of the Group A period that preceded it, too.

Alongside the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's Pre-'93 category, a field of Group A cars were invited to contest non-championship races, while more took part in high-speed demonstration runs. Tony Hart's ex-Michael Bleekemolen Renault 21 – which also contested multiple Willhire 24-hour races at Snetterton in Group N spec – was among the most unusual, while Hart also fielded a Renault 5 GT Turbo in Sunday's races for David Clark. Patrick Watts's MG Metro Turbo and Paul Linfoot's ex-Steve Soper Ford Sierra RS500 remain crowd favourites. Undoubtedly the loudest was Jason Minshaw's ex-Roland Ratzenberger BMW M3 E30.

The races were dominated by RS500s, particularly after the M3 of Toby Partridge/Steve Soper withdrew. David Tomlin beat Dan Brown to pole, with fancied runner Paul Mensley only fifth as red flags flew just when



he'd found himself some clear track. Brown led away and built his advantage as Mensley moved forward, but Mensley's self-built car had just taken the lead when an early halt was called, gifting Brown victory on countback. Mensley hit back in the second Grand Prix circuit contest, then added an Indy success on Sunday. He was heading for another in the finale before a spin on worn rubber let Brown in to level the score at two apiece.

"Paul's had the legs, I'm not going to lie," admitted Brown. "But it's racing – you never know what's going to happen. There's nothing like an RS500!"

Motorbase Performance founder Dave Bartrum finished the weekend with a podium in his Dick Johnson tribute car after being hampered by a split turbo pipe and sensor problem on Saturday.

**MARK PAULSON**



# Davison roars back to win after Griffith gremlins

**SNETTERTON**

**MSVR SNETTERTON CLASSIC**

**29-30 JUNE**

John Davison made up for the disappointment of dropping out of the Snetterton Classic's RAC Pall Mall Cup enduro on the fourth lap with a commanding win in the following day's Historic Racing Drivers Club Allstars race.

Davison's TVR Griffith was fitted with a new differential and he made a phenomenal start, spying gaps on the inside to propel himself from 10th to second in two corners, then taking advantage of Mike Whitaker's Griffith outbraking itself at the chicane to grab the lead. He then pulled away to enjoy an 11-second victory.

Whitaker was second, securely in front of Jake Giddings's Lotus Cortina. James Colburn (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GT) won the concurrent Classic Alfa Challenge; he was fifth overall after a long tussle with brother Ben's Lenham GT. Ambrogio Perfetti had put his Alfa 2000GTV on pole, but that was in the wet and he found his car was less suited to dry conditions, finishing ninth.

Giddings took a leaf out of Davison's book for the Jack Sears Trophy, leapfrogging Ben Colburn's Mini and a struggling Lotus Cortina driven by Nick Jarvis at the start, then powering away to win by almost 26s from Davison in a Ford Mustang. Giddings split the race equally with co-driver Paul Streather, which gained them an advantage over Davison and Colburn, who stopped



With new differential fitted, Davison soared to Allstars glory

later. Colburn was third, despite an extra pitstop to secure a loose bonnet.

There was more shuffling at the front of the Woodcote & Stirling Moss Trophy encounter. In the early stages, it was very close between Shane Brereton's Cooper Monaco, Dafyd Richards in a Lotus 11 and a Cooper Monaco T49 driven by Ollie Crosthwaite and Nick Finburgh. Early leader Andrew Guy Smith's Cooper Monaco was the eventual winner after Brereton retired with a leaking radiator and Richards' later pitstop didn't pay off.

The Rover SD1 was the car to have for the lively Gerry Marshall Trophy, filling all three podium spots. Winner Jack Moody shot off from second on the grid and never looked back, and his gamble on a late pitstop led to a quiet pitlane and another quick getaway.

The father-son duo of Mike Whitaker Jr

and Sr took second and third, the latter sharing with Nigel Greensall. Greensall briefly move ahead of Whitaker Jr in the closing laps, but his Rover started losing gears and he finished stuck in fifth. Behind, Guy Connew was fourth in a fearsome Jaguar XJS. He had run as high as second, before a brief off at Coram and a slow stop dropped him back.

A Bugatti T35 once driven by Elisabeth Junek in the 1927 German Grand Prix was the clear winner of the Pre-War Sports Car race. Jonathan Bailey was not the outright quickest driver, but he was consistently fast enough to hold off the challenge of first Oliver and Tim Llewellyn's Bentley and then Vijay Mallya and Patrick Blakeney-Edwards's Frazer Nash.

Bailey had the benefit of a good start, unlike former Force India Formula 1 boss Mallya, who dropped down the order in



Bailey's Bugatti heads the Pre-War field away



## WEEKEND WINNERS

**HRDC ALLSTARS & CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE**

John Davison (TVR Griffith)

**HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY**Jake Giddings/Paul Streather  
(Ford Lotus Cortina, below)**MRL WOODCOTE & STIRLING MOSS TROPHIES**

Andrew Guy Smith (Cooper Monaco)

**HRDC GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY**

Jack Moody (Rover SD1)

**MRL PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS**

Jonathan Bailey (Bugatti T35C)

**MRL RAC PALL MALL CUP**Jeremy Cottingham/Harvey Stanley  
(Shelby Daytona Cobra)**MRL PRE '63 GT**

Matt Walton/Nigel Greensall (Jaguar E-type)

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

the opening laps. When Blakeney-Edwards took over the car, he set about reclaiming lost places and ended up second, but Bailey was just too far ahead. Clive Morley's Bentley was third, with the Llewellyns fifth, having lost ground during the pitstops. The Frazer Nash of Clive Fidgeon and Eddie Williams was in between in fourth.

A rather depleted RAC Pall Mall Cup endurance ended up as a tense sprint between eventual winners Jeremy Cottingham and Harvey Stanley in their Daytona Cobra and the Lotus Elan of Shaun Lynn and Christoff Cowens. Cottingham started with a huge lead, even after a couple of safety car periods for spilt oil. However, Lynn set some fiercely quick laps and took advantage of 10s of track-limits penalties for Cottingham to grab the lead on paper, if not on track. Cottingham retaliated by going faster still and hung on to the win. Their laps were 4s quicker than those of the third-placed Elan driven by Andrew and Jonathan Pace, while only two other cars finished.

Matt Walton and Nigel Greensall (Jaguar E-type) were briefly threatened for the lead of the Pre '63 GT race by the similar car of Howard Spooner, but the Walton/Greensall Jaguar was quicker, regularly by over a second per lap.

**RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER**

**ALFETTA'S BOW** The Classic Alfa Challenge race was this Alfetta's first on-track outing. It began its life as a production road car before being retired to a shed. Its previous owner began converting it to track specification for his wife, but she decided she didn't like it and Brett Syndercombe bought it. The Alfetta's compact body, light weight and small wheels mean that it is ideally suited to wet tracks, although wet qualifying followed by a dry race did not play quite to its strengths as it finished 18th.



**UNUSUAL ELAN** This car is not the original Costin-modified one-off from 1962, raced by Stirling Moss, but a modern recreation. From the front, it's a straightforward Lotus Elan, but at the back it sports an aerodynamic rear window and distinctive arches. Owner Ian McDonald describes it as a tricky car, more fragile Lotus than Costin. After Moss had enough of the original, it was sold and shipped to Angola during its brief motorsport boom in the 1960s and 1970s, before civil war put an end to it.



**JOLLY GTV6 RECREATION** This Alfa GTV6, in 1980s Jolly Club colours, is often assumed to have been raced by ex-Formula 1 driver Lella Lombardi, but owner Paul Clayson admits it is a tribute rather than the real thing. It was built specifically for the 72nd Goodwood Members' Meeting, the first of the modern series, where it was shared by Nicolas Minassian. Clayson, Minassian and the Alfa have met again at later Members' Meetings, and Clayson has continued to race it in the Gerry Marshall Trophy.





# THE SCRUFFY SPIDER

## TERRORISING BIGGER RIVALS FOR 100 YEARS

*It is a century old, patinated to the point of dishevelment and remains one of the most successful of all the Shelsley Specials. Basil Davenport's GN Spider is a glorious part of British hillclimbing history*

**PAUL LAWRENCE**

PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL LAWRENCE**

**T**hrough the 1920s, Basil Davenport terrorised bigger and more expensive cars in his GN Spider special and, 100 years later, current owner Jim Edwards is continuing that tradition.

Having accepted the challenge of rebuilding Spider's Frazer Nash V-twin engine for previous owner David Leigh, Edwards was the obvious candidate to take over Spider when Leigh decided to sell it around four years ago.

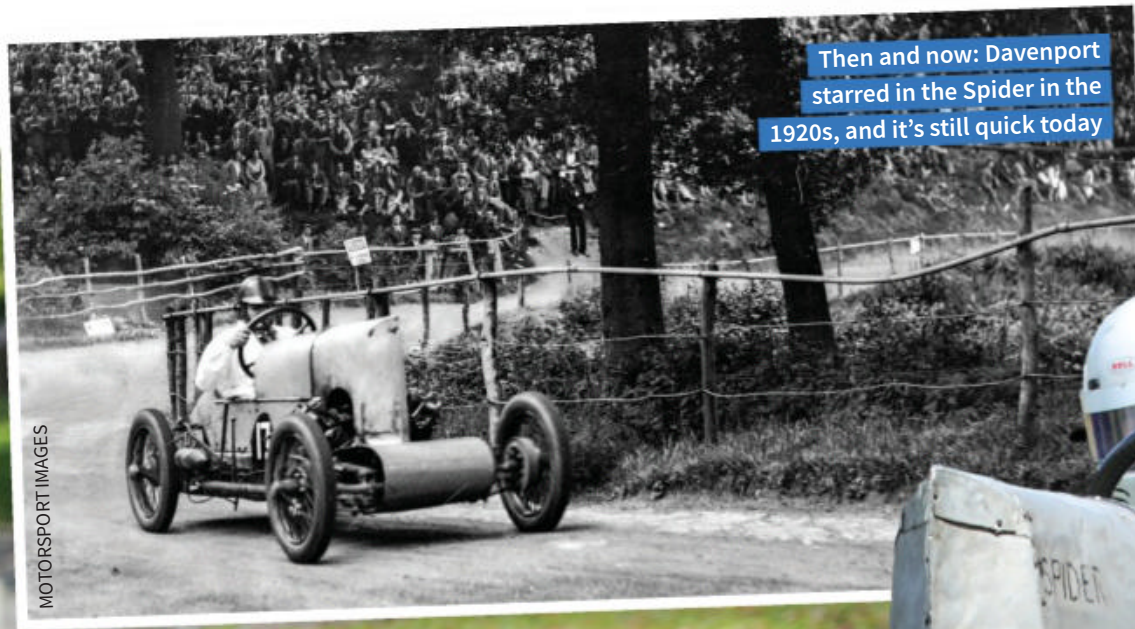
Based in an old mill building in Middlewich in Cheshire, Edwards is something of a throwback to another time. He is a gifted and intuitive engineer who has built an enviable reputation for his work on pre-war cars and engines and is the ideal enthusiast to be the latest custodian of this outstanding piece of speed event history. The car is still road legal and Edwards has been known to startle a few locals with a quick test run up Middlewich's high street.

Back in 1923, Davenport had a singular focus: he wanted to be the fastest man up the 1000-yard Shelsley Walsh hillclimb, beating more powerful and more expensive cars in the process. Spider is the machine he used to attempt that. It is based on a Narrow GN cyclecar chassis and was first built with an 1100cc GN engine. It has little in the way of front brakes and just a handbrake is used to slow it down.

Edwards explains: "He didn't put a foot brake on it because, for one thing, there's no room in the footwell as the body is so narrow. At Shelsley with the gradient, you don't really need brakes at all. You're only braking for Bottom Ess, so that's all done on the handbrake and that takes a bit of getting used to."

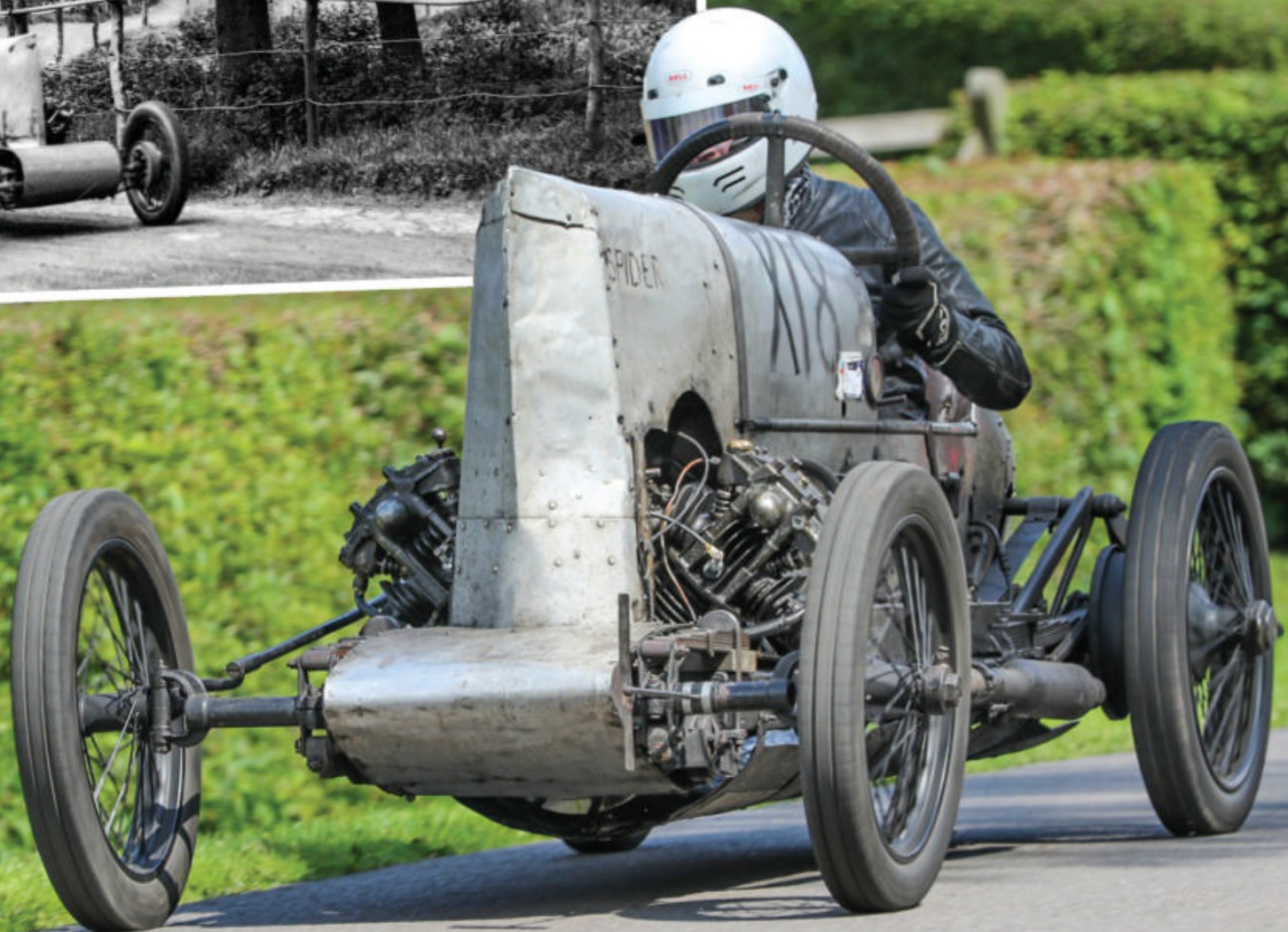
"Basil started with a two-valve 1100cc GN engine and he ran that for a year or two but it wasn't quick enough. He was good friends with Archie Frazer-Nash and went back and said he needed more





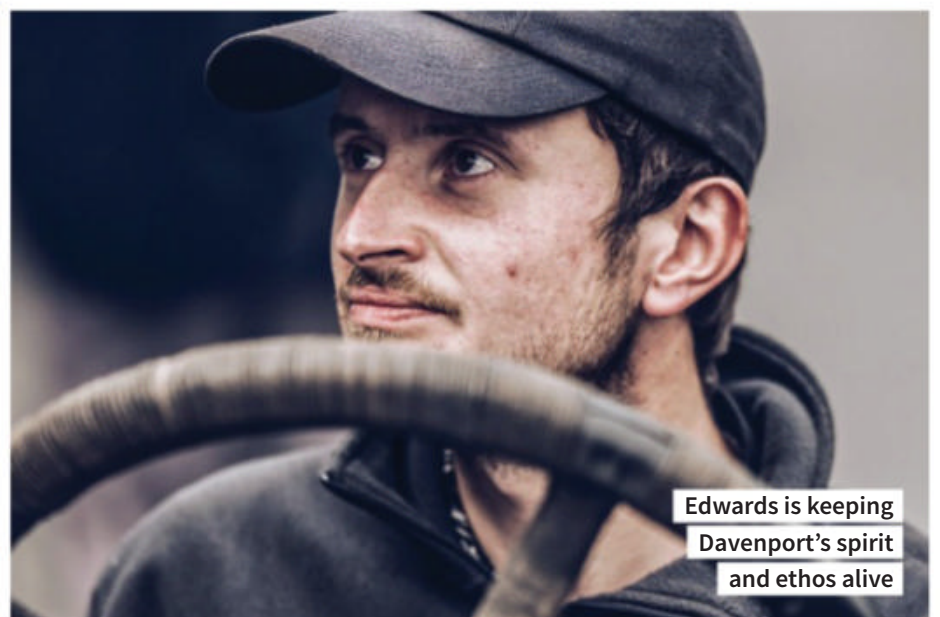
Then and now: Davenport starred in the Spider in the 1920s, and it's still quick today

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



The Spider broke Shelsley records in Davenport's hands against far larger rival cars

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Edwards is keeping Davenport's spirit and ethos alive

power because he was going after the Shelsley record." The answer was sitting on a shelf in the Frazer Nash workshop: the engine, freshly removed from a Brooklands special called 'Mowgli'.

"I think it was the first four-valve overhead-cam engine they made with chain drive," says Edwards. "Mowgli was a car that was built for high speeds at Brooklands and had three different capacities. It ended up being a 1500cc and that's how Basil bought the engine."

In 1926, Davenport was the first driver to break 50 seconds for the Shelsley climb and then pared it down to 46.2s across four years, but never got below 40s as Hans Stuck rewrote the record at 42.8s for Daimler in 1930. Into the 1930s, Raymond Mays and ERA became dominant and Spider could not match the pace. However, 70 years later, Leigh finally took Spider to the top in less than 40s.

"Because Basil was doing sprint events, he was revving it a lot higher, up to 5000rpm rather than 3500, as it did at Brooklands,

and he just blew it up," explains Edwards. "That's when he started the process of developing it and turning it into his engine rather than Mowgli's. In the early days he was rebuilding it after every meeting just because it was so highly strung and on the ragged edge."

Davenport purposely didn't clean it. For his own amusement, he liked to turn up with this scruffy special and beat everyone. "You'd have all these highly polished factory racers and stuff, and then he would be right up there in the running for fastest time of the day," smiles Edwards. "In the 1920s, he was towing it to Shelsley and back behind his road-going GN. So you can imagine how filthy it would have got and I'm sort of upholding that."

As Davenport turned his attention to his next project, Spider II, the original was dismantled in 1930 and put into store. Much later, with the encouragement of his mechanic Ron Sant, Davenport >>



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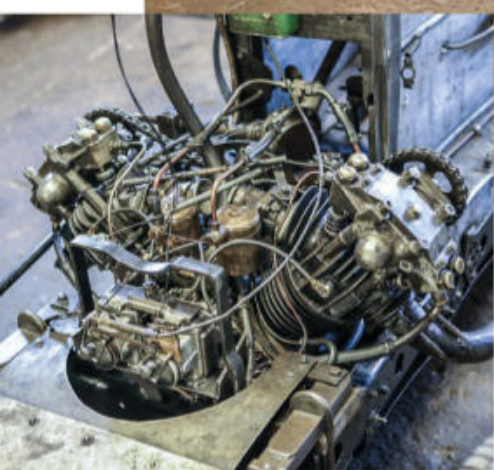
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The dishevelled look is deliberate and masks a rapid machine



*“Because it’s so sort of wacky, no one wanted to touch it. But I was younger and brave enough to do it”*

put it back together and owned it until his death in 1979. Sant took over the car before Leigh campaigned it for the better part of two decades.

Leigh drove Spider superbly, notably at Shelsley, but when the engine needed attention he happened across Edwards – who was gaining a name for working on the vee-twin engines in Morgan three-wheelers. Leigh entrusted the rebuild to the young engineer.

“I met a friend of a friend and he said, ‘I think I’ve got a job for you,’” Edwards recalls. “Do you fancy rebuilding the engine on Spider?’ That’s where my friendship with David started, through rebuilding the engine for him because he was struggling to find someone to do it. Because it’s so sort of wacky, no one wanted to touch it. But I was younger and brave enough to do it.”

Edwards started the work in 2019 and it took the best part of a year to rebuild. There were a lot of things wrong with it and he just used his common sense and innate engineering nous to improve it. One of the problems was the oil wasn’t getting to the crank properly so everything was getting hot.

Edwards completed the work, and Leigh ran it again, before Edwards ended up buying Spider in 2020. “Since then I’ve been inside the engine again, just to check a few things and improve things a little bit more,” he continues. “It’s now just maintenance really. You do get quite involved in it. It’s so nice to work on something like this; apart from materials, there aren’t any modern bits to it at all. It still uses the homemade carburettors that Basil made. It hasn’t changed really.”

In period, Davenport flattened the springs and lowered and then lightened the chassis. “The car is just full of holes but there’s not a great deal of modification to the chassis,” says Edwards. “The front axle’s a bit wider. It’s very original, which is remarkable, and it handles fantastically. He didn’t do a lot to the chassis, which is a good advert for the GN chassis.

“It’s not meant to be a museum piece and it’s a scruffy old thing. If you machine something for it, you don’t make it look too good. You machine it properly and then rough it up a bit so that it blends in with the rest of the car!”

Spider also retains a lot of its original parts: “You can just tell that many of the parts came out of the factory, like the hoop that carries the steering box to convert it into a central steering, and the steering arms and stuff, I’m sure it all came out of the GN factory. It’s got an

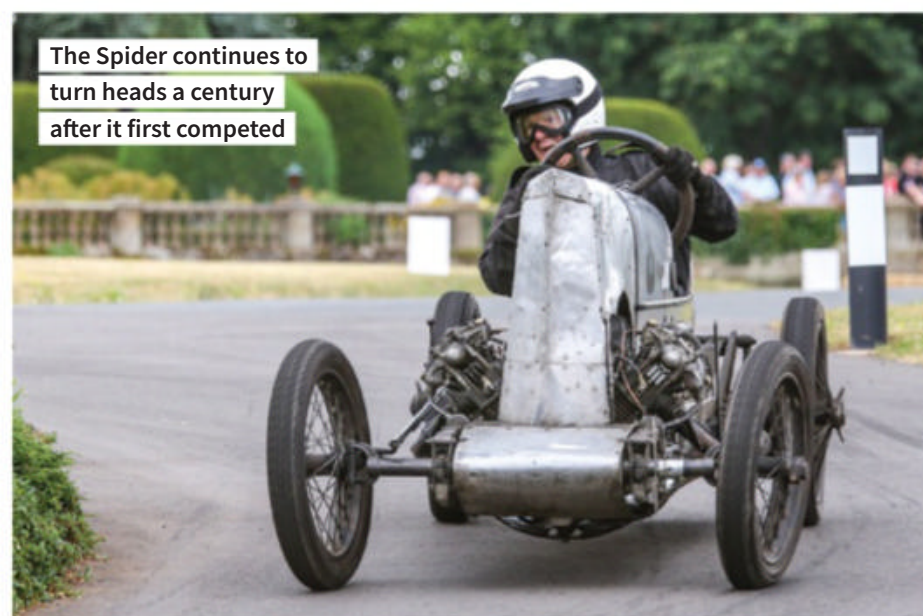
aluminium steering box, which is rare.

“A big change that I made was the tyres. David ran it on very grippy motorcycle tyres, which I didn’t like it as it felt like there was too much grip. But he posted some good times on those.

“You didn’t know when it was going to break away so I put it on tyres with less grip, and it’s a lot more fluid and controllable. I’m a couple of seconds away from David’s best time, which I think I can probably achieve even with less grip, probably a bit more sideways. It’s just going to take me a bit of practice but Shelsley is a great hill because it’s simple in a way and really suits the car. It’s just about keeping your foot in.”

However, the handbrake arrangements do present a problem as the driver can’t change down and brake at the same time. That makes somewhere like Prescott quite a busy hill, but Shelsley is easier and Edwards says the car feels much more at home there.

“The real pleasure is when you take it to a race meeting and lots of people can watch it and you get comments like, ‘I saw this in the 1960s’, or similar,” Edwards concludes. “There’s a lot of that with this car, it’s so distinctive. You just keep maintaining and you fix what breaks, but fix it in a sympathetic way that no one can tell you’ve replaced something. I think when David was selling it, he had to make sure it was going to the right person: somebody who understood it and understood what it’s all about.”



The Spider continues to turn heads a century after it first competed



# FINISHING STRAIGHT

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

**British Grand Prix**  
F1 World Championship  
Round 12/24  
Silverstone, UK  
7 July

**Formula 2**  
Round 8/14  
Silverstone, UK  
6-7 July

**Formula 3**  
Round 7/10  
Silverstone, UK  
6-7 July

**Porsche Supercup**  
Round 4/8  
Silverstone, UK  
7 July

**IndyCar**  
Round 9/15  
Mid-Ohio, USA  
7 July

**Indy NXT**  
Round 7/12  
Mid-Ohio, USA  
7 July

**European Le Mans Series**  
Round 3/6  
Imola, Italy  
7 July

**DTM**  
Round 4/8

Norising, Germany  
6-7 July

**Australian Supercars**  
Round 6/12  
Townsville, Australia  
6-7 July

**NASCAR Cup Series**  
Round 20/36  
Chicago, USA  
7 July

**World Rallycross**  
Round 1/5  
Holjes, Sweden  
6-7 July

**MotoGP**  
Round 9/20  
Sachsenring, Germany  
6-7 July

### UK MOTORSPORT

**Oulton Park BARC**  
6 July  
BEC, Britcar Trophy, CNC Heads, Heroes of FF1600  
▶ **Livestream** via [barc.net](#)

**Donington Park MSVR**  
6 July  
Equipe ('70s/BCV8s, F2 Atlantic, GTS, Libre, MG Cup)

**Thruxton BARC**  
6-7 July  
British Trucks, Hyundai Coupe Cup, JSCC, MGOC, Mini Challenge Clubsport, Pickups, Track Action

[youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom](https://youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom)



**Damon Hill on Norris and Russell**  
In the latest of James Allen's *JA on F1 Podcast* series, 1996 Formula 1 world champion Damon Hill talks about the two drivers most likely to become Britain's next title winner: Lando Norris and George Russell. Hill explains how getting that breakthrough win, as Norris did in Miami, can open up the next level of performance to become a championship challenger. Hill also looks ahead to the British GP this weekend, even though he will be taking on a gruelling stage of the Tour de France to raise money and awareness for the Neuro UK charity.



▶ **Livestream** [barc.net](#)

**Anglesey 750MC**  
6-7 July  
116 Trophy, 116 Sprint/120 Coupe Cup, Armed Forces Challenge, Bikesports, Clio Sport, Ma7das, Sports 1000, Type R Trophy  
▶ **Livestream** [alphalive.co.uk](#)

**Knockhill KMSC**  
6-7 July  
C1 Cup, Classic Sports &

Saloons, Legends, Mini Cooper Cup, Modsports, ST Cup, Superkarts, Super Lap Scotland

**Mondello Park MPSC**  
6-7 July  
Fiesta STs, Fiesta Zetecs, Formula BOSS, Formula Sheane/FF1600, Formula Vee, Junior Mini Challenge, Legends, Monoposto, SEAT Supercup/ITCC, Strykers, Superkarts  
▶ **Livestream** [iccr.ie/live](#)

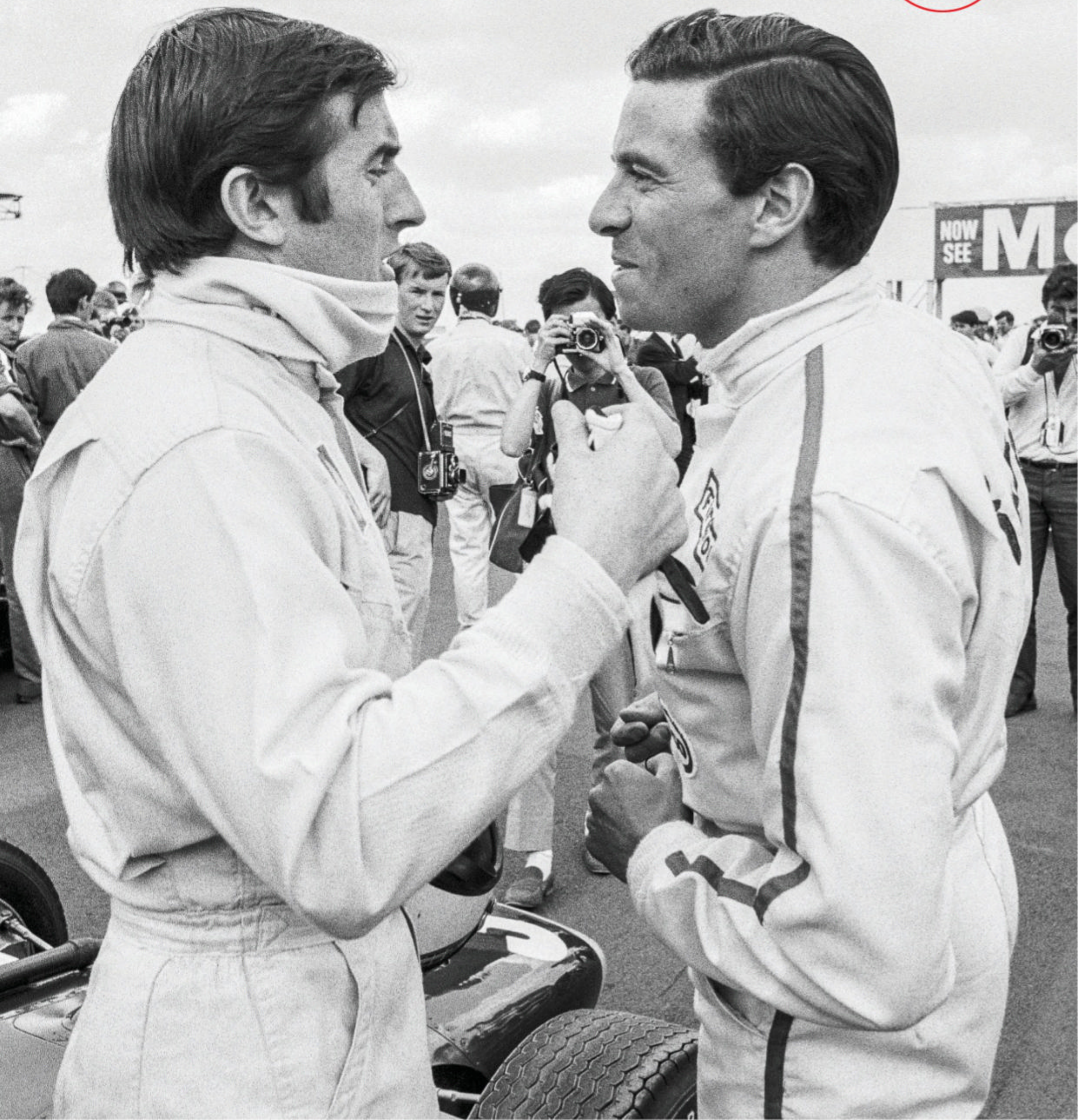
**Donington Park VSCC**  
7 July  
Front-engined GP Cars, Handicap, Pre-1935 GP Cars, Pre-'25, Pre-war Le Mans, Pre-war Sportscars, VSCC Specials

**Harewood**  
6-7 July  
British Hillclimb Championship  
Round 6/14



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Fellow Scots Jackie Stewart and Jim Clark enjoy a moment of camaraderie on the Silverstone grid ahead of the start of the 1967 British Grand Prix, round six of 11. Polesitter

Clark, who qualified 0.7 seconds ahead of Lotus team-mate Graham Hill, led the initial stages, was demoted by Hill, then retook the top spot when the Englishman suffered a rear-suspension problem,

later followed by an engine failure. Luckily for Clark, the Cosworth V8 in his Lotus 49 behaved itself for long enough for him to take the second of the four wins he'd score that season. Stewart, meanwhile, made a strong

start from 12th on the grid, running well inside the top 10 before his BRM P83's transmission broke.

For more great photographs, visit [motorsportimages.com](https://motorsportimages.com)





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Williams driver Juan Pablo Montoya had already pulled off an impressive overtaking manoeuvre at Spa's Bus Stop chicane on the Ferrari of Michael Schumacher during

the thrilling, incident-packed 2004 Belgian Grand Prix – a move he had initially not even considered possible following changes to the layout – but when he tried the same ploy on Jarno Trulli's Renault, things didn't go quite

to plan and the two collided, the Colombian opining in his Autosport column that "no one was really to blame". Both were able to rejoin, although the drop-off in pace that polesitter and early leader Trulli's

car had suffered after the first pitstop – "I had no rear grip at all" – meant he could finish no higher than ninth, and Montoya had to retire while running in third due to suspension damage caused by a right-rear puncture.









PHOTO4

# Porsche 996 GT3-RS

It takes something truly special for long-time Porsche factory ace Marc Lieb to overlook the 911 GT3-RSR as his favourite car. He now co-owns the ex-GruppeM chassis in which he and Mike Rockenfeller dominated the FIA GT Championship's GT2 class in 2005, and in which he took his first of four Le Mans 24 Hours class wins that year, when he and Rockenfeller were joined in their Alex Job Racing RSR by 57-year-old gentleman driver Leo Hindery.

Yet Lieb, now managing the sports communication of Porsche, has very good reason for selecting the previous GT3-RS model from the same 996 family. Winning the Spa 24 Hours outright in 2003, despite being entered in the secondary N-GT category against the faster GT1 machinery, is one of motorsport's great shocks.

"In the dry, we were four or six seconds slower," Lieb remembers as Autosport joins him in Porsche's vast hospitality unit at the Le Mans 24 Hours. "But in the rain, we were one or two seconds faster. The car was easy to handle and so driveable in the wet. We had good fuel consumption and it was key for that race. We made sure to stretch every stint as far as possible."

The rear-engined Freisinger Motorsport 911 that Lieb shared with Stephane Ortelli and Romain Dumas had a traction advantage over the bigger



PHOTO4

cars in the wet, its narrower Dunlop tyres meant it was hindered less by aquaplaning, and excellent fuel economy was accentuated by Ortelli repeatedly cutting the engine to coast downhill from Les Combes under a lengthy safety car. Lieb describes his first win in a 24-hour contest, in which they finished eight laps clear, as "a perfect race" that cemented his love for the GT3-RS in which he and Ortelli also claimed that year's FIA GT class title.

"It's a special memory, that's why I like this car a lot," adds Lieb, who won on his FIA GT debut in the car at Brno the previous year. "The 996 RSR was a car with an H-pattern gearbox, you had to work very hard to make it happen. It was more old-school. How many drivers nowadays can heel-and-toe? I'm glad that I got a little bit of time in that era as well."

JAMES NEWBOLD



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

# BRITISH GP SPECIAL

CAN LANDO BEAT MAX ON HOME GROUND?

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES

HONE



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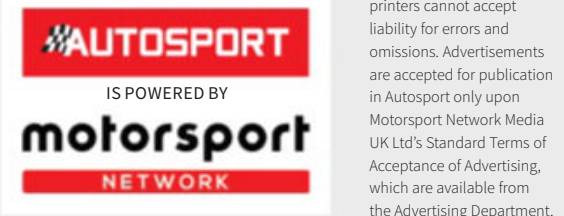
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