

F1 2024 McLaren takes title lead!

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19 SEPTEMBER 2024

AUTOSPORT

AZERBAIJAN GP

Piastri's McLaren payback

F1's newest star beats Monza king Leclerc in brilliant Baku

CONSTRUCTORS' POINTS

McLaren **476**

Red Bull **456**

Ferrari **425**



'I ignored my engineer and sent it'

OSCAR PIASTRI

'I thought I'd put it in the wall a couple of times'

CHARLES LECLERC



PLUS

Palou becomes three-time IndyCar champion

Porsche moves closer to WEC crown with win



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New star stamps his authority as McLaren moves ahead

If anyone had still been in any doubt that Oscar Piastri is the real deal, they must surely have revised their view following last weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix. As Jake Boxall-Legge shows in our report on page 16, the Australian defied a team instruction in Baku – demonstrating a steely focus sometimes absent with other frontrunners – and then held off a circuit master to take one of the finest Formula 1 victories we've seen in recent seasons.

McLaren's policy of running two 'number one' drivers will surely give the team more headaches in future, particularly in 2025 if it maintains its current level of competitiveness. But that's a nice problem to have and will give fans plenty of entertainment.

McLaren has now taken the lead in the constructors' championship and must be regarded as the favourite. But Lando Norris's misfortune in qualifying, notwithstanding a fine race performance, means that Max Verstappen's drivers' table points lead is looking pretty secure. The Dutchman will surely have better days at the office over the coming months. That raises the strong chance that the two F1 titles will go to different teams this year, so we take a look at the 11 times that has happened in the series' history on p12.

Porsche took a big step towards ending Toyota's run of titles in the World Endurance Championship at Fuji last weekend. Gary Watkins was there to see Kevin Estre, Laurens Vanthoor and Andre Lotterer take their second victory of the year (p32) and the inaugural LMGT3 crown being clinched a round early (p38).



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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PIT + PADDOCK



Hyundai reveals Le Mans Hypercar plan with its premium Genesis marque

WEC/IMSA

Hyundai will compete at the pinnacle of sportscar racing with a new LMDh car under its premium Genesis brand. That it is developing a hybrid prototype was finally confirmed last week in a perfunctory statement on social media, but where and when has not been confirmed. But it appears increasingly certain that the car will come on stream in both the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship concurrently in 2026.

The statement last Thursday from Hyundai Motorsport, headlined 'Genesis to enter endurance racing', was short and

sweet. "The LMDh programme will add a new pillar to Hyundai Motorsport's portfolio," it read. "Since its establishment in 2012, Hyundai Motorsport has been competing in WRC and TCR with Hyundai. Genesis, the premium brand of the Hyundai Motor Group, will add endurance racing to the disciplines of its motorsport activities."

There was some elaboration on the publication of the news on the official websites of both the WEC and IMSA. "Genesis is actively exploring programmes to strengthen its high-performance image, and after a thorough evaluation of various options, LMDh emerged as the most strategic choice for us at this time," it read. "We have carefully analysed LMDh and found it to be a natural fit for our motorsport ambitions and a valuable platform to drive the development of future mobility technologies for road cars. Endurance racing presents an unparalleled opportunity to showcase Genesis' cutting-edge technology, design philosophy and performance-driven character in a highly competitive arena."

Everything is pointing to an entry by the South Korean manufacturer into both arenas for which an LMDh is eligible in 2026, which means it will be at the Le Mans 24 Hours in year one. The project is known to be well under way with a chassis

developed by French constructor ORECA around the same monocoque and suspension, known as a spine, used for the Acura ARX-06 and the Alpine A424. The engine will be developed at the Hyundai Motorsport headquarters in Germany that have been responsible for the manufacturer's World Rally Championship programmes since 2012 and development of its TCR customer tin-top racers.

The Genesis LMDh is expected to be run in the WEC by Hyundai Motorsport in partnership with an existing team in the same way as Toyota brought in ORECA to bolster its Cologne-based operation when it joined the WEC's LMP1 class in 2012. Multiple teams are known to be in contact with Hyundai about the WEC programme. They include single-seater powerhouse DAMS, which ran factory-backed programmes for Panoz and Cadillac in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and Cool Racing, TDS and IDEC Sport, all regulars in LMP2 in the European Le Mans Series and at Le Mans. The likelihood is that Hyundai Motorsport will have an involvement in the 2025 ELMS with the team it chooses as a partner as the German operation gears up for its WEC entry.

Chip Ganassi Racing, which will end its involvement with Cadillac at the conclusion of this year's WEC and IMSA campaigns, is



Bortoleto and Colapinto in mix with Bottas for Sauber

FORMULA 1

The Sauber Formula 1 team is set for a choice between youth and experience as incumbent Valtteri Bottas and McLaren youngster Gabriel Bortoleto vie for its remaining 2025 seat, while Williams is keen to see its impressive rookie Franco Colapinto in the frame.

Bortoleto, the reigning FIA F3 champion who leads the F2 points with two rounds remaining, has emerged as the frontrunner should Sauber decide to partner Nico Hulkenberg with a youngster rather than another experienced hand. The 19-year-old Brazilian's name first emerged as a Sauber option several weeks ago and, on the back of an impressive F2 feature race victory in Monza, sources have suggested that the team's management has become more serious about Bortoleto taking the seat as Hulkenberg's team-mate.

New Audi CTO and COO Mattia Binotto said recently that the squad needed to pick between youth and experience as it morphs into the Audi works programme from 2026. "It's definitely something that we need to judge: are we going for experience or something else?" he questioned.

Securing McLaren junior Bortoleto would require Sauber to reach an agreement with its competitor to either release him or loan him out. Rumours that McLaren has already agreed to release him from his contract or sanctioned a loan are understood to be wide of the mark.

But Sauber could choose continuity and experience by retaining Bottas, with team representative Alessandro Alunni Bravi admitting last weekend in



Bortoleto leads F2 points as a rookie

Baku that its current driver remains near the "top of the list", with a decision in the hands of Binotto. "Valtteri is a strong driver for our team, but there are other opportunities," said Alunni Bravi. "We are just looking at all the pros and cons, and Mattia will take a decision based not only on 2025, but also the medium-long-term strategy for the Audi F1 project."

One emerging left-field contender for the seat is Colapinto, who has impressed on his first two F1 race outings at Williams after replacing Logan Sargeant, and scored his first points in Sunday's Azerbaijan GP.

With Williams fielding Alex Albon and current Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz in 2025 and beyond, Colapinto looks set for a spell on the sidelines after his 2024 cameo ends, but team boss James Vowles could yet try to secure him the Sauber seat. "In two races he showed the world he's deserving of a place in Formula 1," Vowles told Autosport. "I have always been a firm believer that you have to let good drivers race, so we'll see if we can find a way of working with Audi."

JONATHAN NOBLE & OLEG KARPOV

P16 BAKU ACTION



Has Colapinto put his hand up for the seat?



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Tarquini expected to take leading role

also known to have been in contact with Hyundai. It appears to be favourite to run the Genesis LMDh in IMSA.

Touring car legend and ex-Formula 1 driver Gabriele Tarquini has been linked to a senior management role with the LMDh programme at Hyundai, for which he won the 2018 WTCR title with the Italian BRC team. Sporting director or similar is likely to be his title.

Talk of "another pillar" in Hyundai's short statement could be interpreted as a hint at a continuation in the WRC. Hyundai Motorsport team principal Cyril Abiteboul insisted last week that the one-year contract extension announced for Thierry Neuville does not signal an exit from the series at the end of the current rules cycle at the conclusion of next season.

Abiteboul has made it clear that his organisation has the capacity to undertake two major programmes at once. He has called for rules stability in the WRC and stated that it is the goal of Hyundai to be involved at the pinnacle of rallying for many years to come.

GARY WATKINS

Honda and Alpine in F1 cost cap breaches

FORMULA 1

Both Honda and Alpine have been found to be in procedural breach of Formula 1's power unit cost cap by the FIA, although it has been made clear that neither overspent.

In announcing the results of its cost-cap evaluation for teams and engine manufacturers for 2023, the FIA stated that F1's 10 teams had all fully complied with the spending restrictions over the course of last year. But while all four manufacturers had complied with the spending limits, an FIA statement explained that Alpine and Honda "have both been found to be in procedural breach, [though] neither have exceeded the Cost Cap level. Both Alpine Racing SAS and HRC have acted at all times in good faith and are currently cooperating with the

CCA to finalise the matter. Considering the nature of the breach, the complexities of the new Financial Regulations for PU Manufacturers and the challenges associated with their first year of implementation it is the CCA's intention to propose to these two PU Manufacturers to settle their respective breaches by means of an Accepted Breach Agreement."

This is the first year that the power unit manufacturers have had to comply with a cost cap. The regulations for 2023 set a spending limit of \$140.4million for the 23-race campaign, with the rules allowing for a calculation of spending for 24 events because the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix was cancelled at the last minute. There are also other administrative obligations that manufacturers have to fulfil,



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Alpine: breach but no overspend

and the procedural breaches could be related to the timing of supplying the necessary paperwork to the FIA.

Penalties for procedural breaches are purely financial, unless the FIA determines that there are mitigating factors that justify no further action,

or sufficient aggravating factors that determine a sporting penalty should be given instead. Aston Martin and Williams both fell foul of procedural breaches in their submissions for 2021 and were eventually fined after accepting an ABA.

JONATHAN NOBLE

FIA president seeks to address officials shortfall

FORMULA 1

The FIA has announced the introduction of a new Officials Department to start a production line of trained race officials.

The governing body is looking to have a wider pool of qualified race stewards to adequately cover F1's overseas races

on an expanded 24-race calendar. The department will cover all levels of officials from the start of the 2025 season and will support the recruitment of officiating talent at a regional level.

"It is so important to have it", said FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem at last weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix. "If you

look at our officials and race directors: we have an issue and the issue is that we don't have [enough] race directors. I said it in one of my tweets: 'You cannot order them on Amazon or Google.' No, you have to train them. We have departments for many things, but we don't have a department for one thing, which is like a spinal cord for us, which is the stewarding and race direction. So now we have a proper department. Then there are a lot of good people, young people, women and men, who want to be involved in the sport, but you need to guide them, you need to train them, you need also to reach out to them."

Ben Sulayem conceded it was 'dangerous' for F1 to rely on having one race director at a grand prix. "You cannot rely on one," he continued. "God forbid something happens to him. Let's say, you have one or two spares. How long will it take to fly them here if something happens? We have to be able to meet the level of demand and have to have a pathway that's good."

ERWIN JAEGLI



TEE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Ben Sulayem didn't need Amazon to find a McLaren driver

Longer rally on cards in move to vary formats

WRC

The World Rally Championship is set to feature new event formats for selected rounds for 2025, with at least one event to run “quite a bit longer”.

The championship has for some time been investigating changes to the length of its events, with Rally Italy Sardinia trialling a condensed 48-hour concept this year. This followed a raft of proposals in February from the FIA’s newly created working group designed to address the future of rallying.

The list included a push for event organisers to have more flexibility when determining routes for WRC rounds instead of being prescribed to a set format, although they will continue to finish on Sundays. It is hoped that a variety in event lengths will add extra character to rallies. It is unclear which events will operate different lengths next season, but it is understood that Safari Rally Kenya has expressed a wish to run a longer format.



Proper endurance: here's
Waldegard winning 1977
Safari in his Ford Escort

“There will be a couple of events next year that will run slightly different formats,” said WRC event director Simon Larkin. “I already know there’s going to be one event that’s going to run quite a bit longer next year, which is great, and a couple of others that will run slightly modified. For me it’s good.”

“We have always said we don’t want there to be different brands of events. We don’t

want there to be something called a WRC sprint. We don’t want there to be something called a WRC Endurance.

“We’re constantly told by a lot of our multi-millionaire drivers things are too complicated. We don’t need to make it more complicated.”

The WRC announced its expanded 14-round 2025 calendar in July.

TOM HOWARD



Katsuta dropped for Chile

WRC

Toyota has replaced Takamoto Katsuta with protege Sami Pajari for the next round of the World Rally Championship in Chile next week.

The move is part of a decision to hand Finnish duo Pajari and co-driver Enni Mäkelä a further two WRC Rally1 outings in Chile and the following Central European Rally after impressing to finish fourth on their top-flight debut in Finland last month.

The 22-year-old Pajari will join Kalle Rovanperä, Sébastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans in Chile, while Katsuta and

co-driver Aaron Johnston are set to rejoin the Toyota squad for next month’s Central European Rally and the season finale in Japan in November.

The decision arrives after a difficult run of rallies for Katsuta (left) that has included crashes in Finland, and the Acropolis Rally earlier this month.

“I and Aaron will not drive Rally Chile,” said four-time Japanese F3 race winner Katsuta. “We will have a short break from competition after an intense summer that maybe didn’t go as planned, can help me reset and come back stronger for CER and Rally Japan.”

TOM HOWARD

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Ferrari seeks rule clarification after losing in appeal court

WEC

Ferrari is hopeful of a clarification of the rules governing race restarts in the World Endurance Championship. The Italian manufacturer has lost its appeal against its failed protest of the results of the Spa 6 Hours in May, but the FIA International Court of Appeal has called for the consequences of its ruling to be investigated.

The results of the Spa race stand after the ICA's ruling was published last week, confirming victory for the Jota Porsche 963 LMDh driven by Will Stevens and Callum Ilott. But its text stated that the court "orders the relevant sporting authority [meaning the FIA] to draw, as appropriate, the consequences of this ruling".

There has been no further comment from the FIA or the WEC organisation, but Ferrari believes that there will be a clarification of the rules that allowed the timeframe of the Belgian WEC round to be extended beyond the original finish time. The need for extensive barrier repairs meant the race could not be restarted before the scheduled 1900 finish after a fifth-hour red flag. The stewards ruled that it should resume for its full duration, starting 10 minutes after that.

Ferrari has argued that the WEC sporting rules are not clear, and is not alone in that opinion. It has always

argued that its appeal of its failed protest of the stewards' bulletin extending the race time was at least partly motivated to achieve a clarification of the rules.

"The appeal and the ruling has opened the way for a clarification, which is needed," said Batti Pregliasco, team manager of the factory Ferrari Hypercar squad. "What they are saying is that there is a grey area, that it is not clear.

"We need to clarify what we can call a bug in the regulations or some poor wording that caused the interpretation on our side, and not only on our side. I think we can have a clarification in the rules for next year in the sporting regulations or perhaps from the Endurance Committee. That is very important because whether the race can restart or not can affect a lot in terms of strategy."

The ICA, which heard Ferrari's appeal on 3 September, rejected it on multiple grounds. The initial protest was made more than one hour – the limit laid down in the FIA's International Sporting Code – after the stewards issued the bulletin and was therefore out of time. It was also rejected because its submissions were based on arguing that the relevant bulletin from the stewards breached the regulations when such decisions cannot be challenged.

GARY WATKINS

Porsche set for line-up tweaks

WEC/IMSA

Porsche will revise its LMDh driver line-up across its World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship programmes for 2025. It has confirmed that there will be changes and promised an announcement prior to the WEC finale in Bahrain in November.

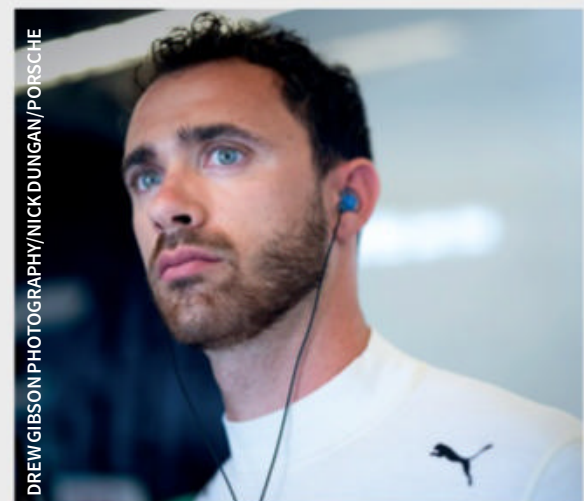
"There will be changes and we are close to an announcement, which will be before the end of the season," said Porsche LMDh programme manager Urs Kuratle. "The line-ups will not be the same as this year, but we are not 100% there yet, only 99%."

Asked whether there could be a reshuffle of drivers between the four Porsche Penske Motorsport 963 LMDh machines that race in the two championships, Kuratle answered: "That is part of the missing 1%." PPM boss Jonathan Diuguid added that the line-ups "will not be dramatically different".

What Porsche has planned for its two-car assaults with PPM isn't clear. It does, however, appear increasingly certain that factory driver Julien Andlauer (below) will be promoted from the customer Proton Competition WEC squad with which he is racing a 963 this year. A berth in IMSA replacing Dane Cameron appears most likely for the Frenchman.

It is understood that Porsche has evaluated downsizing its WEC line-up to run two drivers in each car in the six-hour races in the same way as Cadillac has done this year. That is on the proviso that there is no shift in the rules for next year, as looks likely, to mandate three-driver line-ups. Should it decide on that course of action, it would then bring in drivers from its IMSA programme for the longer WEC races, the Le Mans 24 Hours included.

GARY WATKINS



DREW GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY/NICK DUNGAN/PORSCHE



NASCAR Ex-Formula 1 superstar and IndyCar champion Juan Pablo Montoya made his first NASCAR Cup Series start in 10 years at Watkins Glen last Sunday. The 48-year-old Colombian was at the wheel of a 23XI Racing Toyota at the venue where he scored his second and last Cup victory, in 2010. Montoya, winner of the 2019 IMSA SportsCar DPi title, finished 32nd, after suffering with rear-tyre blistering late in the race. **Photograph by Hansen/Motorsport Images**

Alpine ensemble remains unclear

WEC

Jules Gounon is set to make another appearance for the Alpine World Endurance Championship squad at the Bahrain finale. But whether that means the French manufacturer's official reserve is in line for a full-time seat in one of the Signatech-run A424 LMDhs for next season is far from clear.

Gounon, who is in his fourth season as a Mercedes AMG GT3 factory driver, replaced Paul-Loup Chatin in the #35 Alpine for last weekend's Fuji round. It was billed as a move agreed at the beginning of the season to allow him to build his prototype experience. Under the plan he will also race in the Bahrain 8 Hours in November in place of Charles Milesi, who has been Alpine's star performer as it has emerged as a genuine contender over the past two races.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Alpine motorsport boss Bruno Famin would not be drawn on Gounon's inclusion for the WEC curtain-closer or for next year. He answered, "One thing after the other", when questioned on both subjects.

Gounon has a further year left on his contract with Mercedes, but did not rule out dovetailing that with the WEC.

Alpine's Mick Schumacher, meanwhile, is still insisting that Formula 1 remains his priority even as the doors close on a possible return. The only vacant seat for 2025 is now at Sauber (see page 5).

GARY WATKINS

POST-RACE PENALTY DENIES SLATER HAT-TRICK

FORMULA 4

Only a post-race penalty after the weekend finale denied Freddie Slater a hat-trick of Euro 4 wins at the Red Bull Ring last weekend, but the 16-year-old Briton has moved into the lead of the three-round series.

Amid some rain and on slick tyres, Slater mastered the slippery Austrian track and a final-lap restart to lead home Latvian Tomass Stolcermanis and Anglo-Japanese Alpine F1 junior Kean Nakamura-Berta in a 1-2-3 for Prema Racing.

In the wet second race, Slater was penalised five seconds for his move for the lead that pushed Stolcermanis off the track, but his 11-second winning margin easily negated that. He headed home Van Amersfoort Racing pair Gustav Jonsson and Hiyu Yamakoshi.

Yamakoshi inherited the honours in race three after Slater's penalty, when he was adjudged to be at fault for an incident at Turn 4 that forced Jonsson into the gravel. That dropped him to third behind team-mate Rashid Al Dhaheri.

Hitech entered its British F4 stars Deagen Fairclough and Reza Seewooruthun plus car racing debutant Thomas Bearman, brother of Ollie. Seewooruthun scored their best result, with an eighth.



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BAHRAIN F1 TEST DATES

The Bahrain International Circuit will host Formula 1 pre-season testing for the fifth year in succession next year, despite the shift in the race calendar meaning the campaign kicks off in Australia. The three days of running will take place on 26-28 February.

LARSON FOR INDY AGAIN

NASCAR superstar Kyle Larson will make his second attempt at the Indianapolis 500 next May, once again with Arrow McLaren, the team has confirmed. Larson starred this year by qualifying fifth for his IndyCar debut, but finished 18th after a pitlane speeding penalty. Once again the deal comes in conjunction with his NASCAR team Hendrick Motorsports.

BARRICHELLO'S EFO WIN

Fernando Barrichello, younger son of Rubens, took his first Euroformula Open win at a wet Red Bull Ring last weekend in a reversed-grid race. Other victors were series leader Brad Benavides and Michael Shin. GB3 racer Ed Pearson joined the eight-car grid, with a best result of second.

GEDLICH ADDS ENDUROS

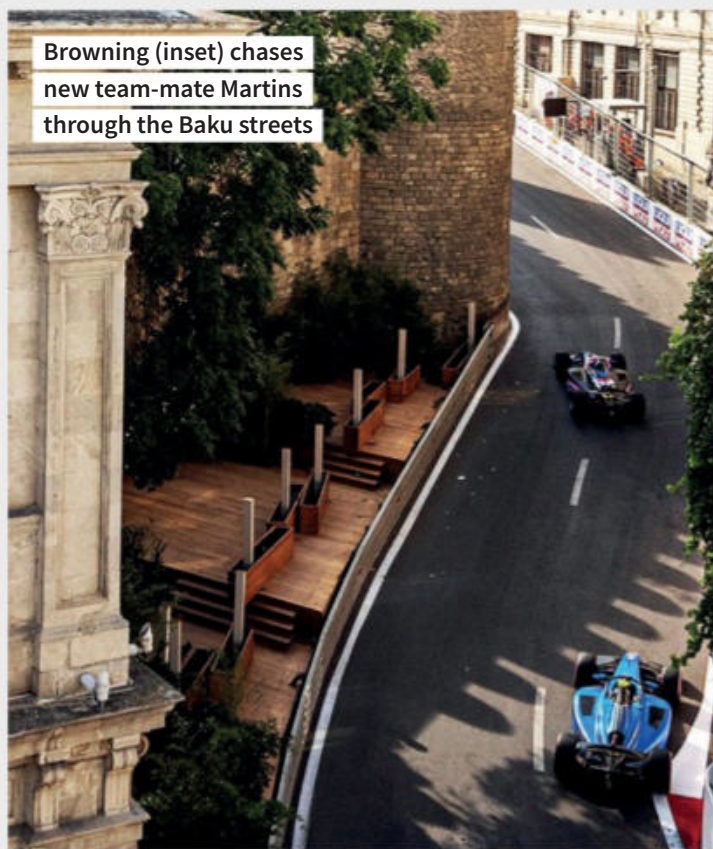
German promoter Gedlich Racing, organiser of the pan-Iberian Winter Series that takes place through January to March, has added two six-hour endurance races to its portfolio for 2025. The 6 Hours of Portimao takes place on the weekend of 31 January-2 February, with the 6 Hours of Barcelona-Catalunya featuring on the final weekend of the seven-event season on 14-16 March. The races will cater for the usual GT and GT4 Winter Series classes down to BMW M240i Racing cup machinery.

MORE BTCC FOR ZELOS

Mini Challenge talisman Dan Zelos has earned a second shot in the British Touring Car Championship, following his encouraging debut with the Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai squad last time out at Donington Park. Zelos (below), who stepped in to replace Ronan Pearson, will be on track at Silverstone this weekend, although the team has yet to confirm who will be in the car for next month's Brands Hatch finale.



Browning (inset) chases new team-mate Martins through the Baku streets



WILLIAMS RACING

DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY/ART

Browning handed his F2 debut...

FORMULA 2

Formula 3 star Luke Browning made his F2 debut in Baku last weekend after being given a late call-up to replace Zak O'Sullivan at ART Grand Prix.

O'Sullivan, winner of two races in his rookie F2 campaign, announced early last week that he was pulling out due to what he described as funding issues. This opened the door to Browning, his successor as Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award winner and who has long faced budget difficulties himself. The 22-year-old, like O'Sullivan a protege of the Williams F1 team, will also contest the final two rounds in Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

In Azerbaijan, Browning brought up the

rear of a close-knit trio of F3 graduates making their F2 debuts, setting the 11th fastest time behind Gabriele Mini (eighth) and Christian Mansell (10th). This left him just one place outside the reversed-grid top 10 for the sprint race – while Mansell and Mini both led, Browning got up to ninth at the start before finishing 11th.

In the feature race, Browning remained in the DRS 'train' comprising most of the top half of the field for much of the distance, and finished in seventh place – the best of the debutants.

While Browning has been run by Hitech GP for the past three seasons, including the GB3 title in 2022 and Macau GP F3 victory last year, F2 insiders believe ART is keen to have him on board for 2025.

...as Lindblad prepares for step up

FORMULA 2

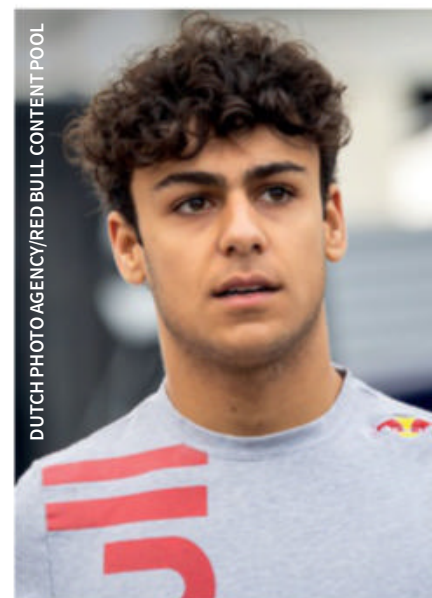
Another British star of Formula 3, Red Bull Junior Arvid Lindblad, is also to step up to Formula 2 – but it won't be until next season.

The 17-year-old Surrey talent of Indo-Swedish descent took four wins this year in his rookie F3 season on his way to fourth in the standings with Prema Racing, but will make the switch to Campos Racing for his step up. The Spanish squad is this year running

Lindblad's Red Bull stablemates: title contender Isack Hadjar and Pepe Marti.

"I look forward to joining the long list of drivers that have raced for the team in the past and be a part of its heritage and the legacy of [the late] Mr Adrian Campos," said Lindblad. "The team seems very passionate, hungry and motivated to win."

Team boss Adrian Campos Jr added: "Arvid has immense talent, and we have very important goals ahead."



DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

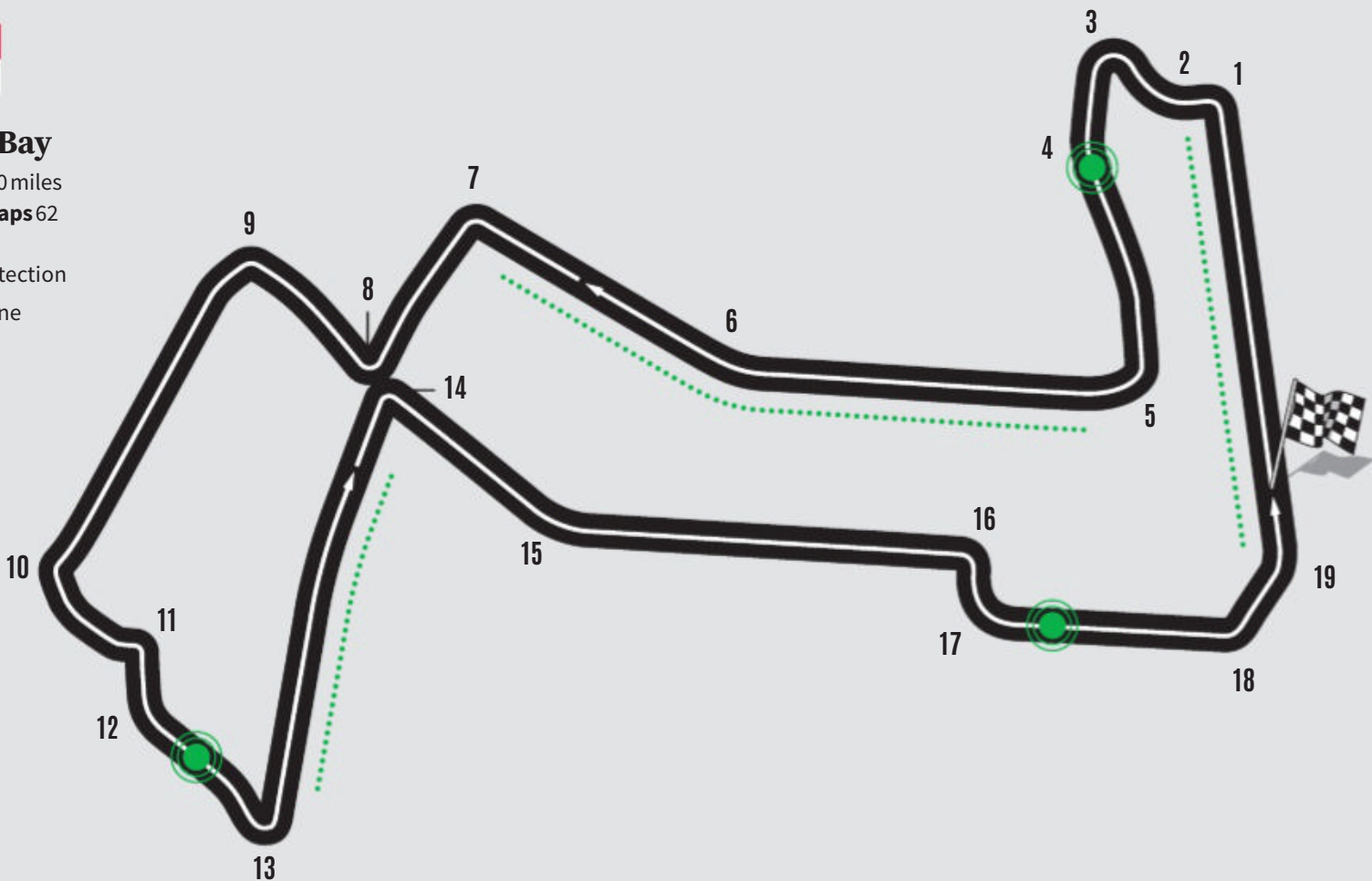
F1 SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Marina Bay

Length 3.070 miles
Number of laps 62

- DRS detection
- DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 20 September

FP1 1030 FP2 1400

Saturday 21 September

FP3 1030

QUALIFYING 1400

Sunday 22 September

RACE 1300

CATCH THE RACE LIVE

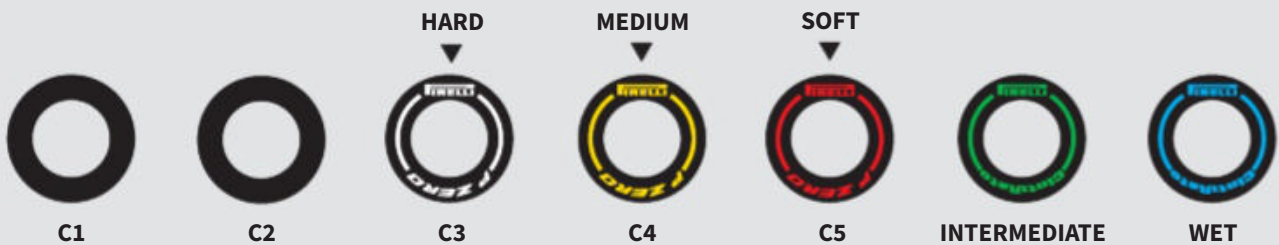
SKY SPORTS F1

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

TV Highlights

CHANNEL 4 1730

TYRE ALLOCATION



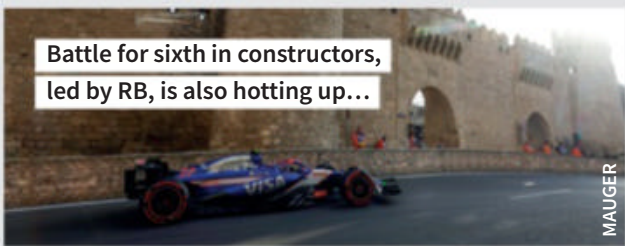
CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

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5	Sainz	184

Constructors

1	McLaren	476
2	Red Bull	456
3	Ferrari	425
4	Mercedes	309
5	Aston Martin	82



Battle for sixth in constructors, led by RB, is also hotting up...

MAUGER

MARINA BAY STATS

Previous winners

2023	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari
2022	Sergio Perez	Red Bull
2019	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2018	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2017	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2016	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2015	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2014	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull

2023 POLE POSITION

Carlos Sainz
1m30.984s

POLE LAP RECORD

Carlos Sainz
1m30.984s (2023)

RACE LAP RECORD

Lewis Hamilton
1m35.867s (2023)



Alonso's second most famous Singapore victory came in 2010

Marina Bay podiums

Sebastian Vettel	8
Lewis Hamilton	7
Fernando Alonso	5
Daniel Ricciardo	4
Nico Rosberg	2
Carlos Sainz	2
Jenson Button	2
Charles Leclerc	2
Max Verstappen	2
Kimi Raikkonen	2

CONSTRUCTORS'
POINTSMcLaren **476**Red Bull **456**Ferrari **425**SPLITTING F1'S
TWO BIG TITLES

McLaren has just taken the lead of the Formula 1 constructors' championship, but Lando Norris is still a long way behind Red Bull's Max Verstappen in the drivers' contest. There's a real chance the two big F1 prizes could go to different teams in 2024, so we thought it time to look back at the 11 occasions it's happened before...

KEVIN TURNER



1958

Drivers' champion **Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari)**
Constructors' champion **Vanwall**

Stirling Moss and Tony Brooks won six of the 10 rounds to give Vanwall the inaugural F1 constructors' title. Despite Moss adding an extra victory with a Rob Walker-run Cooper in Vanwall's absence, Ferrari driver Mike Hawthorn's consistency – he was second five times – meant he took the drivers' crown by one point with a single success.



1973

Drivers' champion **Jackie Stewart (Tyrrell)**
Constructors' champion **Lotus**

Mastering the tricky Tyrrell 006 – arguably the third-fastest car by season's end – Jackie Stewart took five wins to secure a brilliant third crown. He was helped by Lotus pair Emerson Fittipaldi and Ronnie Peterson taking points off each other despite seven wins between them, as the Lotus 72 took its third and final constructors' title.



1976

Drivers' champion **James Hunt (McLaren)**
Constructors' champion **Ferrari**

Nothing was going to stop Ferrari's Niki Lauda from securing a second consecutive world title in 1976 until his near-fatal crash at the German GP. Closest challenger James Hunt came on strong and took the title by a point when Lauda withdrew from the Fuji finale, but McLaren team-mate Jochen Mass had fallen short of Ferrari's Clay Regazzoni.



1981

Drivers' champion **Nelson Piquet (Brabham)**
Constructors' champion **Williams**

Brabham's Nelson Piquet won the 1981 drivers' crown as rival Carlos Reutemann suffered a bizarre fall from pole in the Caesars Palace finale. That race was won by Reutemann's Williams team-mate Alan Jones. He finished just three points behind Reutemann, whereas Hector Rebaque scored just 11 for Brabham, leaving it on 61 compared to Williams's 95.



1982

Drivers' champion **Keke Rosberg (Williams)**
Constructors' champion **Ferrari**

Turbo pioneer Renault had the fastest car, with 10 poles, but reliability was appalling. Ferrari had perhaps the best car but lost Gilles Villeneuve and Didier Pironi to accidents. Patrick Tambay and Mario Andretti did enough to give Ferrari the constructors' laurels ahead of McLaren, but Williams's Keke Rosberg snared drivers' success with reliable DFV power.



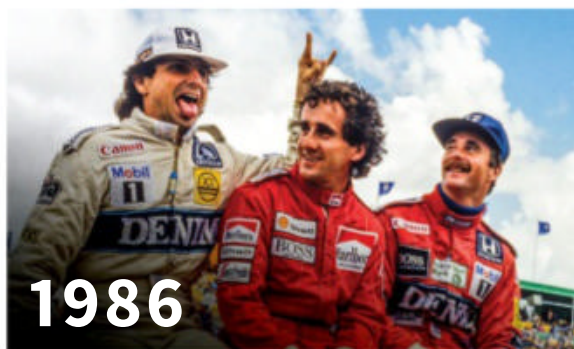
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1983

Drivers' champion **Nelson Piquet (Brabham)**
Constructors' champion **Ferrari**

While Renault's Alain Prost and Brabham's Nelson Piquet battled for the drivers' crown, Ferrari pairing Rene Arnoux and Patrick Tambay racked up podiums. Renault was undone by a fall in competitiveness, while Riccardo Patrese suffered appalling reliability and only scored twice for Brabham. Piquet snatched the drivers' title while Brabham was only third constructor.



1986

Drivers' champion **Alain Prost (McLaren)**
Constructors' champion **Williams**

New Williams signing Nelson Piquet was shocked to find team-mate Nigel Mansell a tough nut to crack as they battled for supremacy with the dominant FW11. Mansell won the intra-Williams duel, but his infamous Adelaide showdown tyre blowout handed the race and title to McLaren's Alain Prost after an outstanding campaign by the Frenchman.



1994

Drivers' champion
Michael Schumacher (Benetton)
Constructors' champion **Williams**

Williams was struck down by the banning of the gizmos it had perfected and the death of Ayrton Senna at the San Marino GP. Benetton's Michael Schumacher took his first title after a clash with Damon Hill at Adelaide, but the stronger results of the cast of support drivers at Williams meant it beat Benetton in the constructors' contest.



1999

Drivers' champion **Mika Hakkinen (McLaren)**
Constructors' champion **Ferrari**

McLaren took 11 poles and didn't have to contend with Michael Schumacher after the German's leg-breaking crash at Silverstone, but calamities kept both titles close. McLaren's Mika Hakkinen put it all together at Suzuka to defeat Eddie Irvine by two points, but the combined efforts of Irvine, Schuey and Mika Salo were *just* enough for Ferrari to beat McLaren.



2008

Drivers' champion **Lewis Hamilton (McLaren)**
Constructors' champion **Ferrari**

Just as in 2007, Ferrari and McLaren had an epic fight, except Fernando Alonso was replaced by Heikki Kovalainen alongside Lewis Hamilton at McLaren. Felipe Massa and Kimi Raikkonen scored eight victories and 172 points for Ferrari to defeat McLaren's tallies of six and 151. But Hamilton did McLaren's heavy lifting to take the drivers' crown by a point.



2021

Drivers' champion **Max Verstappen (Red Bull)**
Constructors' champion **Mercedes**

Thanks to an apparently minor aero rules tweak, Red Bull gained a small upper hand on the hitherto dominant Mercedes team. Red Bull lost the constructors' title because Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas outscored Sergio Perez, while the controversial finish to the Abu Dhabi GP finale helped Max Verstappen defeat Lewis Hamilton in an ill-tempered drivers' contest.

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Bearman makes himself at home

The Ferrari junior's attitude has done him a lot of credit during his stand-in role at the Haas squad for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The day before Autosport sidles into the back of the Haas garage at last weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix, Ollie Bearman has already made a point of getting to know all his mechanics. On Thursday, he'd gone around the whole squad and said hello – a new bundle of energy after the American team had got used to the laid-back unruffledness of two seasoned pros in the forms of Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg during the past two seasons.

On Friday – allowed a lie-in thanks to Formula 1's later schedule starting after the early F2 free practice sessions he'd otherwise be contesting for Prema Racing – Bearman is ready to drive Magnussen's VF-24. We watch as he gets his helmet strapped on, takes in last words from his personal support team (Enzo Mucci and Jamie Smith) and climbs aboard. Experienced F1 race engineer Mark Slade runs him through switch and systems settings on the steering wheel, then it's off for the first of three runs – two medium-tyre stints either side of a softs run.

In this FP1 session, he'll finish 11th and ahead of Hulkenberg, who endures a DRS problem without which there would have been a 0.4-second gap – to the veteran's advantage. We can clearly hear more driver coaching going on from Magnussen's engineering crew. And the main takeaway from listening in to Bearman's radio for the heavily disrupted opening session is

“Komatsu feels overall that Bearman's weekend was ‘not perfect, but pretty impressive’”

how silent he is on the radio. Only his report that “I have quite bad graining” on a long run late in the session betrays a hint of bother.

“That's typical for rookies – they're just absorbing so much,” explains Ed Brand, driver performance engineer (for both Haas cars) and team strategy engineer.

Autosport decamps to Baku's chandelier-heavy hotel conference room media centre for FP2, but Haas insiders later report that this silent sponge approach from Bearman carries on in the second Friday session. There, he finishes 10th – this time two spots but just 0.072s behind Hulkenberg.

Come Saturday, the paddock has woken up to surprisingly leaden skies. After we have squeezed our way past the many urban furniture obstacles this track is crammed against, we're watching trackside for FP3. But we barely get a chance

to assess Bearman's approach to the Turn 4 tricky right-hander thanks to his weekend's lowest moment. Having “braked so late into Turn 1 even compared to much more competitive cars, like [Charles] Leclerc”, according to Haas team boss Ayao Komatsu, Bearman is far too hot into the left-hander on his first push lap. He runs out of room to avoid smashing his left-front corner against the barrier. The team has warned him the track condition is “really poor”.

The slow start to FP3 (thanks to its early drizzle) and Esteban Ocon's first red-flag-causing stoppage all means Bearman doesn't add to his two-lap total.

Bearman's mechanics face a fast rebuild ahead of qualifying. But, having thanked the crew that has got his car back to normal, he then gives them a better reward. He outqualifies Hulkenberg – at a track the German driver detests – and comes within 0.128s of making Q3, albeit knocked out in 11th in Q2.

“He underperformed by three tenths – clear mistake [going deep at Turn 11 by the castle, and having to catch a snap of oversteer at Turn 12 too],” says hard-taskmaster Komatsu.

Bearman's own annoyance comes across when he's spotted slapping his steering wheel in frustration on his return to the pits. But Haas has been impressed with how he has got back into the groove around the Q1 yellow flags, and how, says Komatsu, “the time he did on that used soft [in Q2 run one] is same time as what Nico could do on new soft.”

Afterwards, Bearman shares a handshake with Hulkenberg in the media mixed zone. Despite being temporary team-mates, and with Hulkenberg heading to Sauber/Audi for 2025, at least a little bond is said to have formed between the pair. It was with Hulkenberg whom Bearman checked that his later-than-dawn rising was OK for F1 drivers, and they apparently also shared plenty of jokes in a Baku fanzone visit on Saturday.

Head to page 24 to find out how Bearman got on in a fairly wild Baku race, following which we head down the rapidly deconstructing paddock to visit Haas one last time on Sunday evening. Here, we find Komatsu, who says he's left feeling overall that Bearman's weekend was “not perfect, but pretty impressive”.

Speaking to other Haas team members across the weekend, it's clear that Bearman has made an even greater impression off track. His quick learning and quiet, self-deprecating attitude have hit the right notes for a team that hasn't enjoyed the sort of lofty glory of Ferrari, the squad where Bearman remains a junior. It is understood that Maranello will be paying the Briton's wages next year, while Haas is also benefiting from his media-training slickness gleaned in its Academy. But it's his attitude overall that seems to have gone down so well, so far, at Haas. ‘One of us already’ is the vibe. 🍷

RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

PIASTRI TAKES COMMAND IN BRILLIANT BAKU BATTLE

The McLaren driver's decision to ignore his race engineer's advice and seize the initiative with a bold move on Leclerc won him the Azerbaijan GP

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES



Piastri's
defensive tactics,
plus the Ferrari's
higher downforce,
secured his lead

Polesitter
Leclerc springs
into immediate
lead following
lights-out...



R

ace engineer Tom Stallard provided Oscar Piastri with some sage advice at the start of his stint on hard tyres, based on the findings of his discarded medium-compound Pirellis. Piastri, who had been stuck in Charles Leclerc's wake among the opening quintet of tours around the streets of Baku, was about to find himself behind once again when the Ferrari driver called in a lap

later than the Australian's 15th-lap service.

"The first stint, you damaged the tyres attacking Leclerc," Stallard informed his young charge. "Let's be smart here."

Let's leave it to Piastri to pick up the story of his lap 20 overtaking move on the polesitting Monegasque: "It's what won me the race. I felt a bit sorry for my race engineer because I basically tried to do that in the first stint and completely cooked my tyres. So my engineer came on the radio and said, 'Let's not do that again', basically. And I completely ignored him the next lap and sent it down the inside.

"I think at that point, I felt like trying to stay back and wait for Charles's tyres to degrade was never going to happen. I thought it was just going to secure us P2."

If anything, Piastri has played it down a little bit here – Stallard asked him to be considered with his passing, and the calculations playing out within the confines of his blue-and-neon-yellow helmet suggested that he'd been granted a prime opportunity. The resulting pass, one that skirted the wafer-thin line between long shot and divebomb, was certainly bold – but not reckless by any measure.



Although Piastri had perhaps been guilty of being greedy with his medium tyres in the opening laps, in an effort to find a way past Leclerc, an opportunity never really presented itself. Getting close with DRS proved to be tricky, despite the Ferrari's higher downforce level, and effectively led the McLaren driver down the garden path with little hope of mounting an assault later into the stint.

He was forced into lock-step behind Leclerc, and instead had to play the game to keep a fast-starting Sergio Perez behind. Perez, who seems to channel the spirit of all past motorsporting greats whenever he arrives in Azerbaijan, presented a rare sight among the frontrunners given the travails of his 2024 season. And, when his Red Bull pitted at the end of lap 13, it wasn't going to be too long before Leclerc and Piastri needed to respond to avoid being undercut.

But McLaren had a card to play in order to stall Perez's progress. Enter Lando Norris, whose championship battle with Max Verstappen had very much taken a back seat; the hampering of the Briton's qualifying lap by a yellow flag had consigned him to the ignominy of a Q1 exit. The bitterness of the pill was only sweetened slightly by Pierre Gasly's disqualification from the grid order and Lewis Hamilton's pitlane start.

Starting 15th, Norris opened his race on the hard tyre, expecting to go deep into the race and bank on enough of a delta opening further back to ease the cost of a pitstop. When Perez pitted, he inconveniently (from his point of view, at least) emerged on the road behind Norris.

Much has been made of McLaren's 'Papaya Rules' statutes of engagement. As Andrea Stella climbed down from Mount Woking, carrying two luminous orange tablets, he decreed that 'thou shalt not cause unnecessary faff for your team-mate' and 'thou shalt help thy team-mate unquestioningly, lest thine data say otherwise'. Despite the encumbrances of a title fight, Norris played ball. Engineer Will Joseph told him to do his best to back Perez up, and the Briton dutifully put his battle with the similarly long-stinting Alex Albon on hold to assist.

It earned Piastri just enough leeway to come out of the pits ahead of Perez. Norris was swiftly overtaken into Turn 1 at the start of lap 16 of 51, but he'd played his part – and Stella was keen to give him his flowers.

"Without Lando's help, Perez could have pitted [and gone] ahead of Oscar, and the race could have unfolded in a completely different way," Stella reckoned afterwards. "I think 50% of Oscar's victory today is shared with Lando."

His efforts ensured Piastri had 1.1 seconds in hand on exiting the

QUALIFYING

“We barely changed the car from FP1 to now,” Charles Leclerc revealed after his charge to a fourth – or fifth, if you count sprint races – successive pole position in Azerbaijan. There was the small matter of his FP1 shunt, and a few ‘hotfixes’ to shake off his Ferrari’s accident in FP2, but basic set-up decisions effectively carried through Friday and into Saturday’s battle for grid position.

By Q3, the Monegasque was firmly in the zone. The 1m41.610s lap with which he’d opened his account for the final part of qualifying was good enough for pole, but he subsequently raised the bar among the final runs to a 1m41.365s, keeping Oscar Piastri’s McLaren and Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz in check. His consistency was impressive in a qualifying defined by a fluctuating tyre window, as the changing temperature around the Baku city course, winds and rising grip of the track surface contributed to the variability in sessions. And, as Lando Norris found to his detriment, yellow flags can also do their bit.

The Briton had come close to finishing his Q1 lap when he encountered a yellow flag for the slow-moving Esteban Ocon; the Frenchman had moved off line on the exit of Turn 16 after clipping the wall at Turn 4 and trundled around on effectively three wheels to get his Alpine back to the pitlane. It was a brief flicker of the yellow flag in response, but one that was enough to stop Norris in his tracks.

Sergio Perez, who usually excels in Azerbaijan, outqualified Max Verstappen for the first time this season having felt a rare burst of confidence in Red Bull’s machinery this weekend. The Milton Keynes squad had atoned for a bruising Monza and looked particularly strong in the second sector, although the Mexican felt there was more in it as he collected the fourth fastest time ahead of George Russell. The Mercedes driver escaped sanctions for improving during a yellow flag, when Sainz went off ahead at Turn 2, to split the Red Bulls.

Franco Colapinto outqualified Alex Albon for ninth as Williams found form, although Albon’s final run was nixed when the cooling fan was left in his airbox, prompting him to stop on the pit exit to remove it. The chequered flag meant he missed a final lap by seconds, and had to settle for 10th.

“Sergio Perez, who usually excels here, outqualified Max Verstappen for the first time this season”

“I FELT LIKE TRYING TO WAIT FOR CHARLES’S TYRES TO DEGRADE WAS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN”

pitlane – Perez quickly closing that to 0.7s to assume top billing in the McLaren’s mirrors ahead. But here’s the thing: Piastri, after burning his medium tyres out attempting to put Leclerc under pressure in the opening laps, was 6s behind the Ferrari by the time he’d stopped. When Leclerc took his own mandatory tyre stop a lap later to trade his mediums for the hards, the gap was less than 1.5s.

Whither that missing 4.5s? It perhaps didn’t help that Leclerc’s in-lap was 0.3s slower than his rival’s effort the lap before. Then there was a half-second difference in the pitlane in Piastri’s favour. But it seemed that Piastri simply gunned it on his out-lap to make up the rest of the arrears – the 2.8s difference on their first tours on new tyres rather shows the magnitude of Piastri’s hurry to catch up.

Leclerc was at a loss to explain this, stating that his assumption was that “the undercut would be a very difficult thing to do, just because we thought that the warm-up on the hard would be extremely difficult”. He suggested that it might have been more worthwhile to pit a lap sooner – on the same lap as Piastri – to preserve the gap.

Ferrari team principal Fred Vasseur reckoned that the team could have taken more liberties on the out-lap too, however, having expected that a more delicate approach to the tyres was needed to get them to the end. “I think we lost probably a little bit in the in-lap that we can consider that would have been better to pit one lap before, but it’s a different story because it was the plan to make the gap and to pit the lap after,” the Frenchman mused. “We were a bit shy on the out-lap. It’s in the out-lap that we lost the most compared to Piastri. And he caught up because we were convinced that we have to do a slow introduction and to avoid to push too much in the out-laps.”

Once Piastri had cleared the interloping Albon, the Williams driver yet to pit, he attempted to force the issue with Leclerc, who was settling in for the long haul on his new white-walled tyres. Despite Stallard’s message ringing in his ears, Piastri decided it was less productive to wait. The Ferrari had clean air, and the Melburnian did >>





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not fancy living through a repeat of Monza – nor did he fancy the prospect of Leclerc scarpering down the Neftchilar Avenue straight and leaving him susceptible to Perez’s DRS-fuelled advances.

Piastrri had to push to keep up through the Old Town section of the course, weaving through the castle walls and ensuring he was close enough on the exit of Turn 16 to make his play. Once at Turn 1, he hit the brakes earlier than Leclerc and let the DRS overspeed do the work, delicately feathering the throttle on the corner exit to ensure he could come up for air ahead of the Ferrari.

From there, it was about managing the lead, indulging in a tow-breaking line on their next trip to the 2.2-kilometre (1.4-mile) straight to disrupt Leclerc’s run. The difficulty now was absorbing that pressure for the next 30 laps. Any errors, and Perez was right there to take advantage, too. The Red Bull driver attempted to put Leclerc under scrutiny, but it was hard to make any real inroads given the Ferrari was snatching DRS from Piastrri.

The problem for Leclerc was that, although Piastrri had managed to cannon his way past despite being three tenths behind ahead of the braking zone, his higher-downforce Ferrari could not perform a similar trick. “In all the straights they were flying,” Leclerc rued. “And that’s probably where I lost the race.”

There were a few other mechanisms at play, as Piastrri got his defensive tactics right and Leclerc admitted that he perhaps didn’t fight hard enough to preserve the lead. He figured that he could sit in the McLaren’s tow, charge his batteries, and later make another attempt to recapture his position at the front of the breakaway pack.

“When Oscar overtook me into Turn 1, I was not too worried,” Leclerc reflected. “I just wanted to stay within the DRS, keep my tyres, and attempt an overtake later on. However, this opportunity never really arose again, just because we were too slow in the straights.”

That’s not to say there weren’t opportunities but, among all of the half-chances and small glimpses into Turn 1 that Leclerc was afforded, Piastrri saw him coming and ducked to the inside line. Leclerc was



Following Piastri's brilliantly brazen lunge, Leclerc initially thought he'd be able fight back...



MAUGER

“I THINK THE GUYS PROBABLY NEED TO PUT ANOTHER REAR CORNER ON MY CAR AFTER THE RACE!”

forced to attempt to crowbar open a switchback move on the exit of Turn 1, but never found the purchase required to pull it off.

The start of the 29th lap offered one such attempt. Leclerc took a good exit out of Turn 16 and sat about 0.6s behind at the start of the long stretch to Turn 1. Yet his line was occupied by a well-placed McLaren, forcing a retreat and to recoup battery power for another attempt. Another chance came and went at the opening of lap 33, but again Piastri's defence proved too stout to overcome.

As Leclerc had mentioned, the draggier wing wasn't helping. By the time he was close enough to make a move on Piastri, he'd run out of straight; he'd subsequently come into the opening corners fighting, but the car ahead was resolute. And, crucially, Leclerc couldn't keep doing this forever. “After 10, 15 laps, I thought that everything was coming together and that maybe towards the end, we will be in a better place,” he expanded. “But with the dirty air, I think 20 laps towards the end, my tyres were completely gone...”

Piastri was doing a lot more than simply throwing a few defensive shapes and hoping Leclerc would tire – and tyre – himself out, because his buffer was nothing without careful management of the gap through the first two sectors. Nailing the first two corners was key to ensuring that Leclerc couldn't mount an attack into Turn 3 at the end of the second DRS zone. He also admitted to taking a few liberties in the Old Town – Icherisheher, as it's known locally – to nullify Leclerc's advantage through the tighter corners.

“The key was hanging on in sector two,” Piastri said. “Taking a lot of risk through the castle section is what I was trying to do because I needed to try and make the gap from Turn 7 through the rest of the lap. And I had a couple of close calls through the castle and Turn 15 as well. I think the guys probably need to put another rear corner on my car after the race! But that was where I was really trying to be fast and obviously get a good exit out of the last corner.”

In the meantime, Perez was keeping a steady hand on the tiller, letting the front pair knock lumps out of their tyres and putting himself in a position to capitalise if the opportunity arose. On occasion, he'd close to within DRS range and see if he could make their lives more difficult. On others, he'd drop back and monitor their weaknesses.

As this was playing out, Carlos Sainz was closing in on the leading triumvirate. With free air, he could start to chip away at it without paying too much of a tyre toll. It seemed like a simple plan: surprise Perez when he was out of DRS, and then go after the leaders and attempt to upgrade his projected position on the podium.

With six laps remaining, Leclerc had run out of steam. His pace had >>

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TRACKSIDE VIEW



Steering clear of the kerb
(this is the RB of Tsunoda) is
popular approach to Turn 6...

A purple-shrouded fence keeps the still-open public areas from coalescing with those working at the circuit within the confines of the Baku City Circuit. The fences split the pavements neatly in half, although it means navigating the kerbside foliage and bollards to reach Turns 5 and 6 – the chicane that precedes the constricted run into Baku’s Old Town. Once we’ve slalomed trees, marshals and lamp posts, we’re there just in time to anticipate the thunderous noise of 20 eager cars a few hundred metres back. And thus, they trickle through at a steady cadence one by one –

“Without the correction, he’d have been trading paint with the barrier”

there’s scant room for two through the left-right.

There’s a clear line through Turn 6 here, and that’s to avoid the kerb. There are a few drivers getting close to it, notably the Mercedes duo, but it seems most are trying to take a wider entry, drop the throttle, and use the torque to balance the rear and turn it into the corner. If a driver tries to take the kerb, there’s a very real risk that the angle and momentum

might carry them into the wall.

When a red flag emerges, it offers the opportunity to reposition and watch from elsewhere. Turn 4 isn’t too far away, and it’s a chance to see how the drivers cope with a corner entry with a little more speed. Immediately, we get a return: Lewis Hamilton gathers a snap of understeer and has to correct, taking another bite of steering lock to get it turned in. Without the correction, he’d have

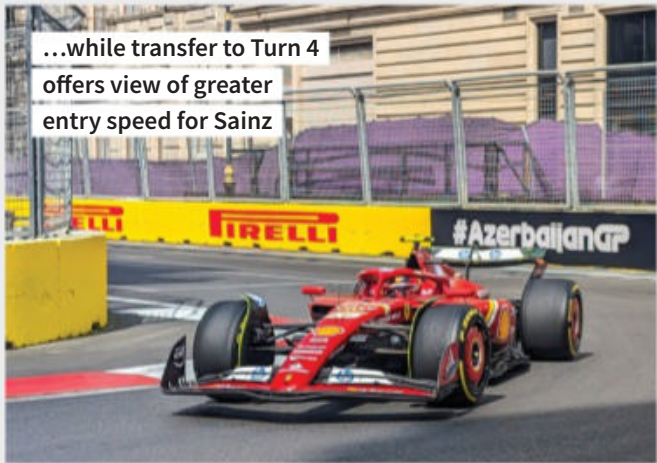
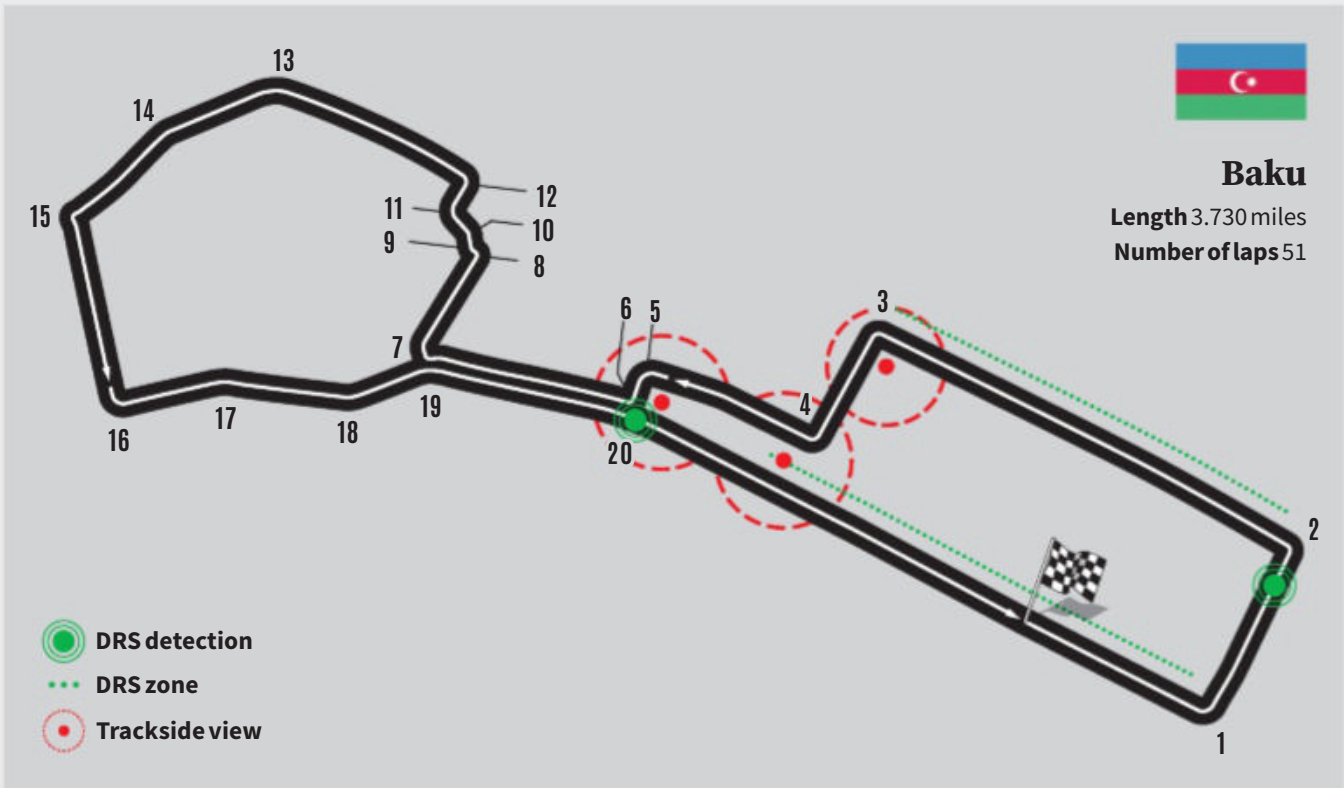
been trading paint with the barrier, but he’s managed to atone for it. In our notes, “Colapinto brave” is jotted down to almost foreshadow events later. And the arrival of a red flag for Charles Leclerc leads us to a quick step over to Turn 3.

Last year, we’d come to this corner and watched Yuki Tsunoda smear Pirelli rubber along the concrete wall with a distinct wall-brush, but the Pirelli hoardings are clean this year.

There’s nary a hint of a lock-up for the time we’re stood here, drivers choosing not to push the DRS overspeed as early as FP1. What we’ve been completely oblivious to is that Colapinto has crashed behind us; evidently, the Argentinian got too brave with Turn 4 but was quiet in doing so. Another red flag? You bet. At least there’s a chance to listen to the Aston Martin medical car squeal its tyres as it belts through the corner with great gusto.

We finish at Turn 2 – again, exit wall surprisingly unblemished by tyre or taken liberties. Rather than the corner itself, we look at the exit and observe how planted the cars are. A Sauber wiggles under acceleration, pumps on its DRS, and gets on its merry way. Lando Norris’s McLaren, even struggling with the low-grip track surface, doesn’t look as wayward...

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



...while transfer to Turn 4
offers view of greater
entry speed for Sainz



Stroll maintains Pirelli
hoardings' streak-free
status at Turn 3

ALL PICS: JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



long since plateaued, and the increasingly half-hearted approaches for the lead had become fewer and further between; Perez had got back into DRS range at a fortunate time, just as Leclerc had dropped out of it. Hopes of reclaiming the lead had now dwindled. Now, it was simply about defending second – or even third, as Sainz was now in the frame.

The now-ragged hards on Leclerc's car – his rear tyres particularly in strife at this juncture – were scarcely enough to keep Perez at bay. Piastri had now extended his gap at the front to almost 2s by the start of the 48th lap, and this kept growing because he'd been able to use the clean air at the front to preserve his ageing rubber.

Perez got his hooks into Leclerc at the end of the next lap. Having watched Piastri ward him off time and again with the inside line into Turn 1, Leclerc chose that line to defend with and held onto the place by the skin of his teeth. The Red Bull bombed past at the braking zone, but could do little about Leclerc's later stomp on the brakes that allowed him to hold the place.

Sainz had now arrived and his Ferrari slipped past Perez, following his team-mate's path through the Turn 1 exit and taking advantage of Perez having to take the wider line through the corner. Next, Sainz took a look at Leclerc – but his team-mate claimed the inside line for Turn 2 and this time left the second Ferrari out of position.

Perez got the better exit and tried to draw alongside, as Sainz directed his steering away from the wall. Here, Perez did not budge, resulting in contact and their respective one-way trips into the inside wall. A virtual safety car neutralised the race, cementing Piastri's victory, Leclerc's second place – and the ire between Sainz and Perez.

"I did my normal racing line," Sainz asserted. "I didn't do any

"I UNDERSTAND WHAT CARLOS WAS TRYING TO DO TO FOLLOW CHARLES'S TOW - BUT I WAS THERE..."

strange manoeuvres or anything. And for some reason that I still don't understand, we collided. I think he had plenty of space to the left; I didn't do any strange movement, but I guess that's racing."

Perez took a different opinion, stating that Sainz had probably not realised that he was alongside: "It's just a shame, because when we exited Turn 2 there was a metre between the cars, and then within a metre or two, we ended up making contact. I understand what Carlos was trying to do to follow Charles's tow – but I was there..."

George Russell was the key beneficiary of the incident, what had seemed a nailed-on run to fifth now upgraded to a podium position. The Mercedes driver noted that his early-stint pace on the medium tyres was poor, but had regrouped admirably on the hards to ensure he could recoup the position he'd lost to Verstappen at the start.

Regardless, the incident did not take the shine off Piastri's win – rather, it was already signed and sealed before Perez and Sainz jostled for the same portion of track. For all of his junior successes, Piastri ranked it as "probably the best win of my career", such was the assertiveness of his move on Leclerc and the subsequent siege that his lead was able to withstand.

It was a day when the drivers' title battle was overshadowed by a simply thrilling on-track affair, even if Norris ultimately took points off a distinctly off-colour Verstappen. Yet, it was a colossal step for McLaren in the constructors' standings. Piastri's win and Norris's rally to fourth ensured that the team moved to the top of the teams' table for the first time in over a decade.

McLaren would be fools to think that the constructors' battle is over – and, indeed, Stella does not believe the car is good enough to "create boring races". He knows that it simply takes one more Red Bull rally to reclaim its place at the zenith of the standings. Ferrari, for its part, is also only 51 points behind – and, with Singapore coming up, the Prancing Horse has a prime opportunity to stick a hoof into the action. This 2024 contest is certainly shaping up to be something special. 🐾



**NEXT
F1 REPORT**

Singapore Grand Prix
26 September
issue

BEARMAN AND HAMILTON JUMP 'FLUSTERED' HULKENBERG

Briton's most experienced Formula 1 driver led home its newest in the 2024 Azerbaijan Grand Prix, with Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton also heading Ollie Bearman past a late calamity for Nico Hulkenberg in the other Haas.

Hamilton had started from the pitlane after Mercedes changed his engine following his disappointing qualifying performance. He climbed to 14th before pitting, and then Bearman pitted and came out ahead after struggling on the pace Haas had set him based on its pre-race expectations of tyre graining. That had meant Haas ordered the chasing Hulkenberg to be let through while they ran 11th and 12th before the pitstops.

As Hulkenberg raced clear following the pitstops, Bearman led Hamilton steadily up the order. Hamilton got past the Haas with a Turn 1 attack on lap 41 of 51, during which Bearman defended stoutly from the Mercedes.

They were now running 12th and 13th, behind Franco Colapinto's Williams. Hulkenberg looked set in 10th, but then he clipped the Turn 15 approach wall on lap 48 and, fearing he had a puncture, he conceded a place to Colapinto. Then, when passing the scene of the Perez/Sainz shunt, Hulkenberg hit debris with the same tyre and was so "flustered", said Haas team boss Ayao Komatsu, that he failed to react well enough to a green flag marker board, so Hamilton and Bearman shot past to take ninth and 10th.



ROMNEY

Norris salvages fourth after qualifying misfortune

Lando Norris "would have been happy with eighth" in Baku given his qualifying disaster, but instead took fourth through a combination of his charging drive and the late Sergio Perez/Carlos Sainz crash.

Norris's hopes of getting near the front of the grid were undone with three corners left on his final Q1 run. Approaching the blind, high-speed Turn 18 left, Norris came upon Esteban Ocon's crash-damaged Alpine crabbing badly far to his left. A marshal – ultimately supported by the FIA – decided the situation warranted a yellow flag and not the white one showing elsewhere as Ocon crawled back to the pits. Norris braked correctly, heeding the Baku drivers' briefing warning to urgently obey flag orders at this part of the track.

His Q1 17th became a 15th-place starting spot around the grid shuffling, from which Norris set off on the contra strategy. With the hard tyres he rose to run sixth – his early passes eventually ending when he got stuck behind Alex Albon's Williams on the same strategy. They carried on

pounding around waiting for a pitstop gap to open ahead of Fernando Alonso's Aston Martin, heading the 'Class B' pack in ninth. When Albon stopped on lap 31, Norris upped his pace. This meant he overcut Albon, who hadn't cleared Alonso (or Nico Hulkenberg and Franco Colapinto, who he nevertheless repassed).

Norris came out 15.1 seconds behind title rival Max Verstappen with 14 laps to run and he ate that up with an average advantage of 1.5s per lap, his McLaren now running fresh medium tyres to the Red Bull's ageing hards. He got ahead for sixth, which became fourth thanks to the Sainz-Perez crash a short while later, with a DRS-assisted pass into Turn 1 on lap 49. Norris also sealed the fastest lap of the race during this charge, after which Verstappen pitted again for a three-lap stint on softs and finished in fifth. This all meant Norris cut Verstappen's points lead by three.

"The car was flying, which almost made me more annoyed about yesterday and how silly that yellow flag was," Norris said.

2022 Miami GP

The last time Red Bull did not lead the Formula 1 constructors' championship was when Ferrari headed it after the inaugural Miami GP nearly two and a half years ago.



ETHERINGTON

Q&A

**FERNANDO ALONSO
ASTON MARTIN DRIVER**

Are you pleased with how it worked out?

Definitely, quite happy. Obviously, on a normal weekend, only ninth and 10th is available for the midfield teams. And today, thanks to some action in front of us, sixth was available, and we were there to take it. Opportunistic Sunday for us, a lot of points. So happy for the team.

You did a long second stint on the hard tyres...

Yeah, we were flexible today, one or two stops still working for us. We followed more or less the

trend, and whatever the people around us were doing, we copy and mirror the strategy. We were able to maintain the position with Franco [Colapinto], Alex [Albon] and Nico [Hulkenberg] at one point. So yeah, tough race. Obviously, no time to relax, but in a way, well executed, good pitstops, good strategy, good tyre deg.

Were you calculating based on Albon's alternative strategy?

There's not much to calculate when you are in the middle of the race, we're pushing the maximum. I think his strategy



was compromised a little bit in the way that he had to overtake Franco and Nico. Fighting hard [like that] is the bad thing to introduce the tyres. That was probably my safety net. They were fast this weekend, and they were two against one, as Alex said yesterday. One was enough today.

Did the low-downforce set-up work out?

Yeah, I think we had more deg than we anticipated, but the top speed was definitely a help today. Some moments that they were

close behind, I saw in the straight they were not even catching with the DRS, so I was a little bit more relaxed than other races.

Do you think Williams was quicker this weekend?

I think Williams and Haas generally they've been quicker the last three events. Kevin [Magnussen] in Monza was outstandingly quick and fast; even with a 10-second penalty he finished in front of us. There are a couple of races that we fall behind, and we want to revert this, and we want to become the fifth-fastest team as soon as possible.



TSUNODA OUT AGAIN AFTER STROLL CLASH

Yuki Tsunoda suffered his second successive retirement, this time from the lingering effects of a first-lap clash with Lance Stroll at Turn 4.

Stroll had attempted to put a move on Tsunoda into the previous corner, but the RB driver successfully held the outside line and got better traction into Turn 4. In response, Stroll backed off and went for a lunge down the inside, just as Tsunoda was turning in, and the Aston Martin punched a hole in the RB's sidepod.

Although Tsunoda continued to circulate, he ultimately retired after just 14 laps; Stroll retired 31 laps later with a brake issue. Naturally, both drivers blamed each other: Tsunoda accused Stroll of taking a "nothing-to-lose approach", while the Canadian reckoned his rival hadn't seen him coming and closed the door.

Williams overtakes Alpine as Albon and Colapinto score

Alex Albon didn't think his alternative strategy of starting on the hard-compound tyre was any quicker than the conventional medium-tyre start, despite running as high as second in Azerbaijan.

Albon's qualifying effort was hampered by a cooling fan being left on the car in Q3 and he started ninth. The Anglo-Thai's start on the hard tyres carried him to the end of the 31st lap, prior to which he'd briefly interloped in the lead battle between Charles Leclerc and Oscar Piastri, and subsequently started to hold off the similarly long-stinting Lando Norris as the pack behind began to close in.

Once he'd stopped, Albon was waved past team-mate Franco Colapinto and subsequently put a move on Nico

Hulkenberg to consolidate his place in the top 10, eventually finishing seventh.

"I was hoping they would pull away a little bit quicker," Albon said of the frontrunners, who he reckoned made his life harder as their dirty air start to hurt the Williams's tyres.

Colapinto retained his eighth place at the start and freed up Albon with his pitstop, later engaging in a battle with Hulkenberg. Initially, Colapinto lost position and dropped out of the points, but Hulkenberg's Turn 15 wall hit helped the Argentinian reclaim the position, which became eighth to ensure he scored his first F1 points. Williams has now overtaken Alpine in the constructors' championship for eighth overall, separated by three points.





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DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

RED BULL CONTINUES SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

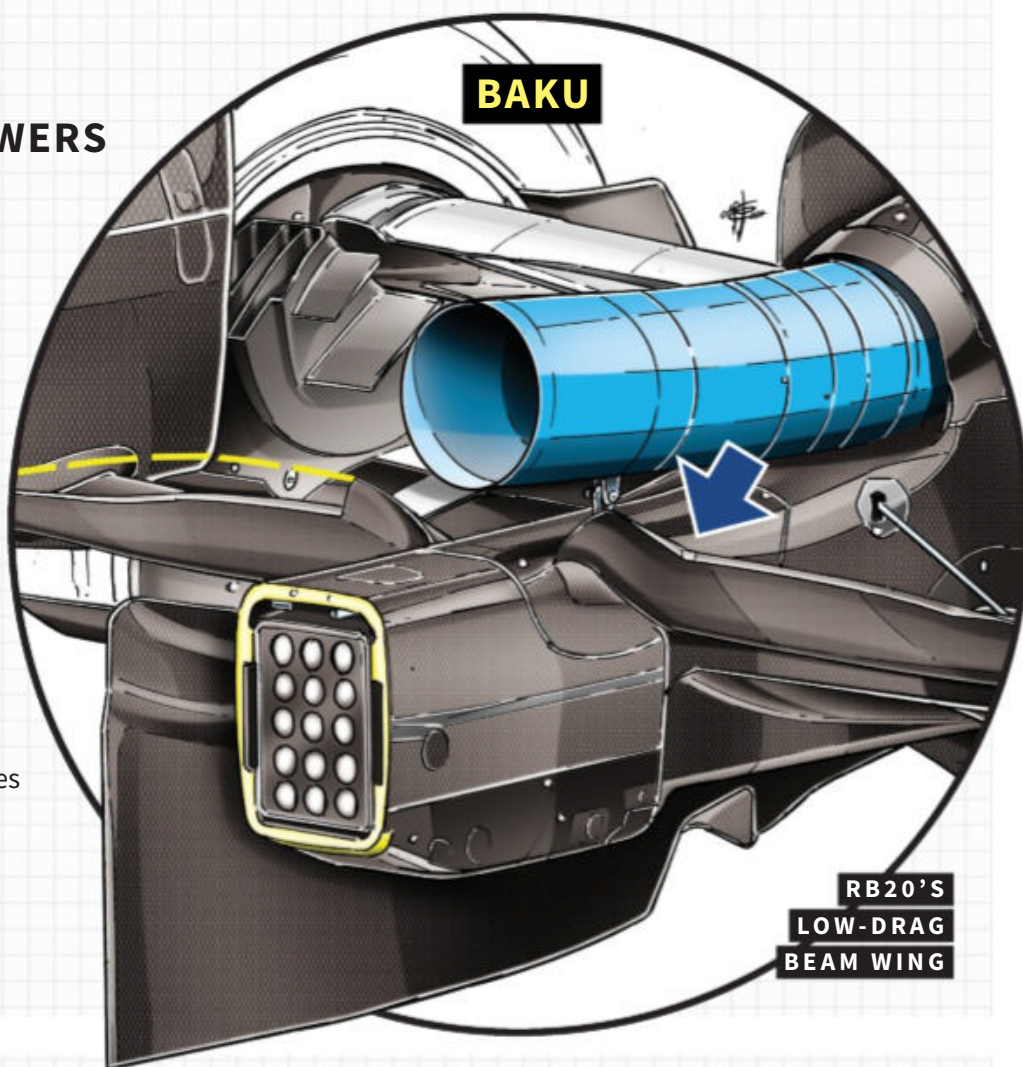
Red Bull was one of the few teams to take an upgrade package to the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, aiming to arrest its slide in recent rounds, particularly after its horror-show Monza weekend. This included a new floor, which was a reworking of the previous specification to improve the RB20's outright performance.

Chief engineer Paul Monaghan stated that the update was “subtle”, but hoped that it would nonetheless offer a good step in performance. The pre-event technical notes explained that this includes “changes applied to improve the pressure gradients along the floor to improve the flow locally and downstream in all conditions”.

The team also used its low-downforce beam wing, featuring a cut-out to the trailing edge to reduce chord length. The RB20s nonetheless occupied the bottom half of the speed trap, straightline performance in the final sector not proving to be Red Bull's strong point.

Sergio Perez noted that the comparison over the weekend between himself and Max Verstappen showed that the car was still too sensitive, with only small set-up differences between them. “I think we’ve done a good step, but we need another two steps like this,” Perez stated after the race.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



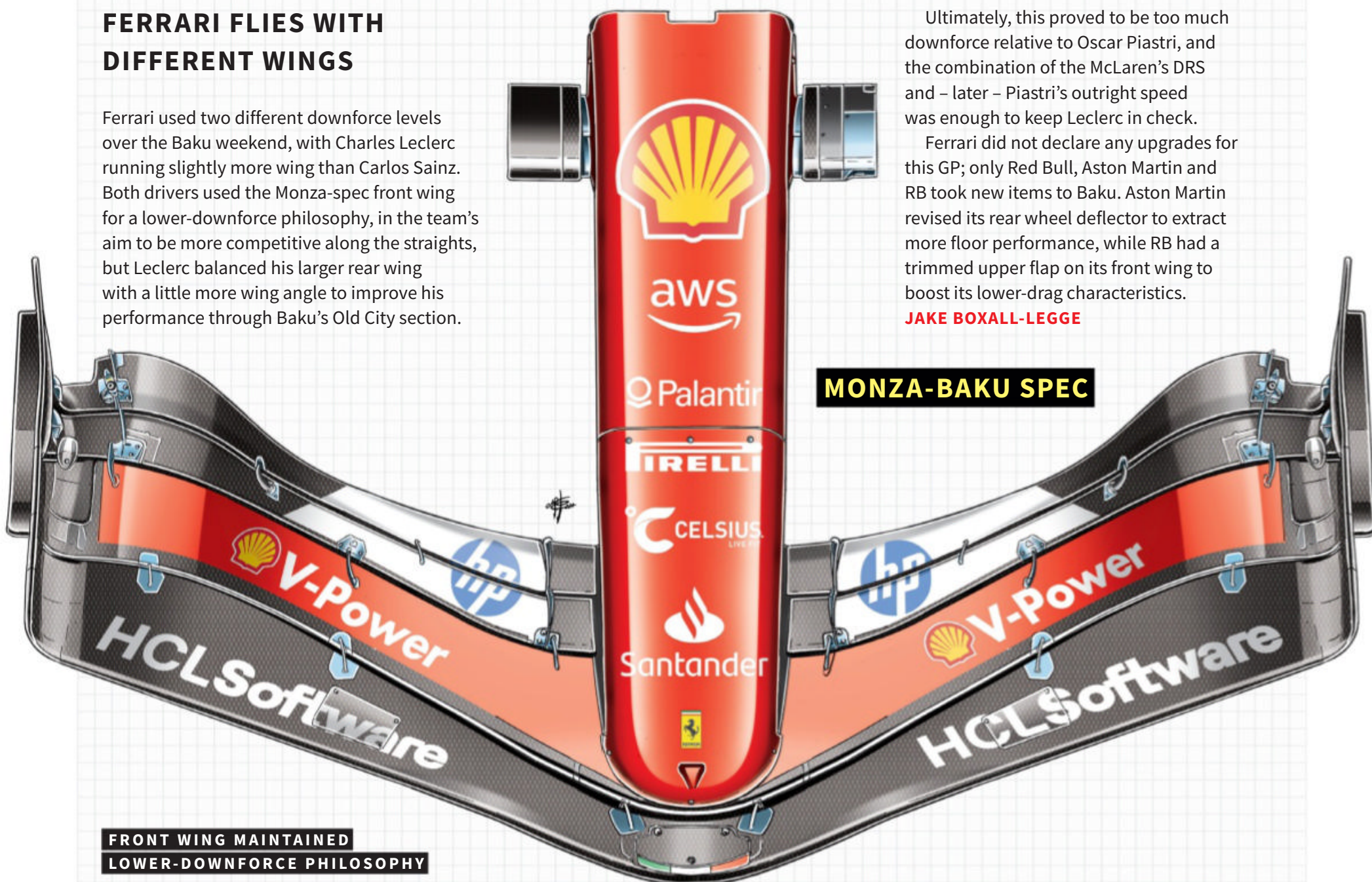
FERRARI FLIES WITH DIFFERENT WINGS


Ferrari used two different downforce levels over the Baku weekend, with Charles Leclerc running slightly more wing than Carlos Sainz. Both drivers used the Monza-spec front wing for a lower-downforce philosophy, in the team's aim to be more competitive along the straights, but Leclerc balanced his larger rear wing with a little more wing angle to improve his performance through Baku's Old City section.

Ultimately, this proved to be too much downforce relative to Oscar Piastri, and the combination of the McLaren's DRS and – later – Piastri's outright speed was enough to keep Leclerc in check.

Ferrari did not declare any upgrades for this GP; only Red Bull, Aston Martin and RB took new items to Baku. Aston Martin revised its rear wheel deflector to extract more floor performance, while RB had a trimmed upper flap on its front wing to boost its lower-drag characteristics.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE






19

Hamilton #44


1m42.289s



17

Zhou #24


1m44.246s



15

Norris #4


1m43.609s



13

Stroll #18


1m43.404s



11

Tsunoda #22


1m43.035s



20

Ocon #31


1m44.504s



18

Gasly #10


times disallowed



16

Bottas #77

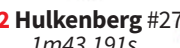
1m43.618s



14

Ricciardo #3

1m43.547s



12

Hulkenberg #27

1m43.191s

FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m45.546s	1	Leclerc	1m43.484s	1	Russell	1m42.514s
2	Hamilton	1m45.859s	2	Perez	1m43.490s	2	Leclerc	1m42.527s
3	Perez	1m45.922s	3	Hamilton	1m43.550s	3	Norris	1m42.737s
4	Norris	1m46.027s	4	Sainz	1m43.950s	4	Piastri	1m42.749s
5	Sainz	1m46.173s	5	Piastri	1m43.983s	5	Verstappen	1m42.862s
6	Piastri	1m46.282s	6	Verstappen	1m44.029s	6	Sainz	1m42.968s
7	Alonso	1m46.452s	7	Stroll	1m44.093s	7	Perez	1m43.024s
8	Russell	1m46.516s	8	Hulkenberg	1m44.475s	8	Albon	1m43.194s
9	Leclerc	1m46.608s	9	Russell	1m44.536s	9	Colapinto	1m43.238s
10	Ricciardo	1m46.687s	10	Bearman	1m44.547s	10	Hamilton	1m43.301s
11	Bearman	1m46.973s	11	Tsunoda	1m44.645s	11	Alonso	1m43.474s
12	Hulkenberg	1m47.135s	12	Alonso	1m44.683s	12	Tsunoda	1m43.503s
13	Stroll	1m47.184s	13	Albon	1m44.737s	13	Stroll	1m43.571s
14	Bottas	1m47.640s	14	Colapinto	1m44.749s	14	Ricciardo	1m43.870s
15	Tsunoda	1m47.708s	15	Bottas	1m44.785s	15	Gasly	1m43.876s
16	Colapinto	1m47.901s	16	Ricciardo	1m45.056s	16	Hulkenberg	1m44.164s
17	Albon	1m47.955s	17	Norris	1m45.156s	17	Bottas	1m44.187s
18	Gasly	1m48.712s	18	Gasly	1m45.391s	18	Zhou	1m44.869s
19	Zhou	1m49.052s	19	Ocon	1m45.810s	19	Ocon	no time
20	Ocon	no time	20	Zhou	1m45.947s	20	Bearman	no time

WEATHER

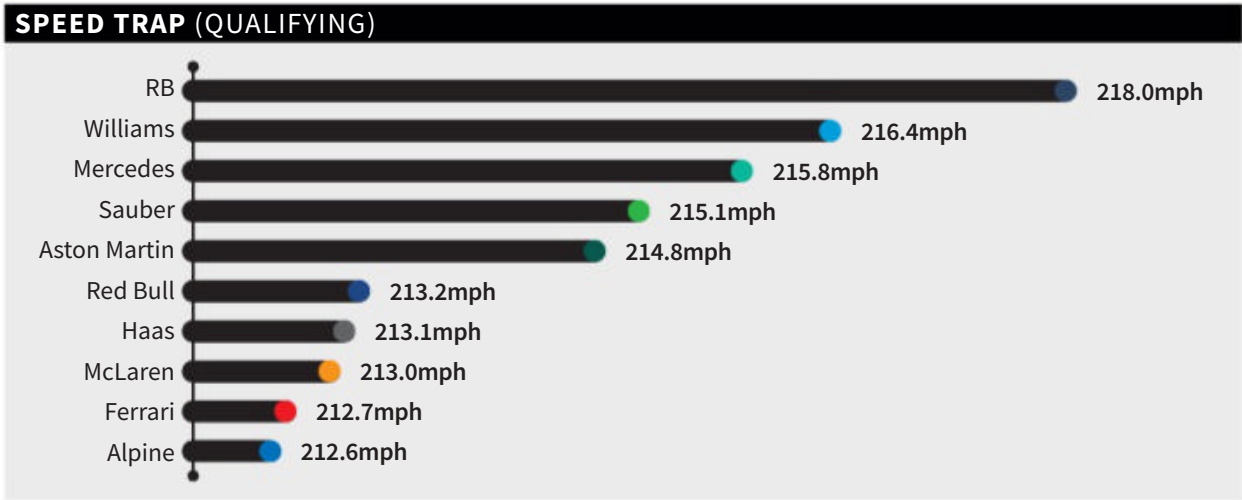
Clear, air 32-33C track 41-45C

WEATHER

Clear, air 28-29C track 32-33C

WEATHER

Cloudy, air 28-29C track 33-37C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m42.775s	1	Verstappen	1m42.042s	1	Leclerc	1m41.365s
2	Albon	1m42.899s	2	Leclerc	1m42.056s	2	Piastri	1m41.686s
3	Piastri	1m43.033s	3	Perez	1m42.263s	3	Sainz	1m41.805s
4	Gasly	1m43.088s	4	Russell	1m42.329s	4	Perez	1m41.813s
5	Hamilton	1m43.089s	5	Alonso	1m42.426s	5	Russell	1m41.874s
6	Verstappen	1m43.097s	6	Colapinto	1m42.473s	6	Verstappen	1m42.023s
7	Hulkenberg	1m43.101s	7	Sainz	1m42.503s	7	Hamilton	1m42.289s
8	Colapinto	1m43.138s	8	Piastri	1m42.598s	8	Alonso	1m42.369s
9	Russell	1m43.139s	9	Hamilton	1m42.765s	9	Colapinto	1m42.530s
10	Perez	1m43.213s	10	Albon	1m42.840s	10	Albon	1m42.859s
11	Tsunoda	1m43.337s	11	Bearman	1m42.968s	<div><div>WEATHER</div><div>Clear, air 28-30C track 34-37C</div></div>		
12	Sainz	1m43.357s	12	Tsunoda	1m43.035s			
13	Stroll	1m43.370s	13	Gasly	1m43.179s			
14	Bearman	1m43.471s	14	Hulkenberg	1m43.191s			
15	Alonso	1m43.472s	15	Stroll	1m43.404s			
16	Ricciardo	1m43.547s						
17	Norris	1m43.609s						
18	Bottas	1m43.618s						
19	Zhou	1m44.246s						
20	Ocon	1m44.504s						

NEXT RACE

22 September

Singapore GP

Marina Bay

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	313	1	1
2 Norris	254	1	1
3 Leclerc	235	1	1
4 Piastri	222	1	2
5 Sainz	184	1	2
6 Hamilton	166	1	2
7 Russell	143	1	1
8 Perez	143	2	2
9 Alonso	58	5	3
10 Stroll	24	6	8
11 Hulkenberg	22	6	6
12 Tsunoda	22	7	7
13 Albon	12	7	9
14 Ricciardo	12	8	5
15 Gasly	8	9	7
16 Bearman	7	7	11
17 Magnussen	6	8	12
18 Ocon	5	9	9
19 Colapinto	4	8	9
20 Zhou	0	11	14
21 Sargeant	0	11	12
22 Bottas	0	13	10

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP		PTS
1 McLaren		476
2 Red Bull		456
3 Ferrari		425
4 Mercedes		309
5 Aston Martin		82
6 RB		34
7 Haas		29
8 Williams		16
9 Alpine		13
10 Sauber		0

QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	16	1	Perez
Hamilton	4	13	Russell
Leclerc	11	5	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	13	4	Piastri
Alonso	12	5	Stroll
Gasly	7	8	Ocon
Albon	1	0	Colapinto
Sargeant	0	13	Albon
Ricciardo	5	11	Tsunoda
Zhou	1	15	Bottas
Hulkenberg	0	1	Bearman
Magnussen	2	12	Hulkenberg

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

WINS		POLE POSITIONS	
Verstappen	7	Verstappen	8
Hamilton	2	Norris	4
Leclerc	2	Leclerc	3
Norris	2	Russell	2
Piastri	2		
Russell	1		
Sainz	1		

STARTING GRID

	9 Albon #23 1m42.859s		7 Alonso #14 1m42.369s		3 Sainz #55 1m41.805s		1 Leclerc #16 1m41.365s
10 Bearman #50 1m42.968s		8 Colapinto #43 1m42.530s		6 Verstappen #1 1m42.023s			

RESULTS ROUND 17/24 (51 LAPS – 190.17 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	1h32m58.007s	32	Mn, Hn
2	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+10.910s	18	Mn, Hn
3	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+31.328s		Mn, Hn
4	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+36.143s		Hn, Mn
5	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+1m17.098s		Mn, Hn, Su
6	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m25.468s		Mu, Hu
7	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m27.396s		Hn, Mn
8	Franco Colapinto (ARG)	Williams-Mercedes	+1m29.541s		Mn, Hn
9	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+1m32.401s		Mn, Hu
10	Ollie Bearman (GBR)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m33.127s		Mn, Hn
11	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m33.465s		Mn, Hn
12	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+1m57.189s		Hn, Sn
13	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	+2m26.907s		Hu, Sn
14	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	+2m28.841s		Hu, Mu
15	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+21.344s		Hu, Sn
16	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+25.395s		Mu, Hu
17	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	49 laps/accident		Mn, Hn
18	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	49 laps/accident	1	Mn, Hn
19	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	45 laps/brakes		Mu, Hu, Hu
R	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	14 laps-accident damage		Mu, Hu

WEATHER Clear, air 27-28C track 40-45C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 122.734mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 127.579mph.

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Norris	1m45.255s	-	42
2	Russell	1m46.628s	+1.373s	45
3	Verstappen	1m46.798s	+1.543s	42
4	Sainz	1m46.866s	+1.611s	46
5	Albon	1m46.947s	+1.692s	43
6	Perez	1m47.013s	+1.758s	46
7	Bearman	1m47.048s	+1.793s	47
8	Alonso	1m47.057s	+1.802s	48
9	Piastri	1m47.060s	+1.805s	47
10	Leclerc	1m47.067s	+1.812s	44
11	Hamilton	1m47.236s	+1.981s	48
12	Colapinto	1m47.274s	+2.019s	44
13	Zhou	1m47.644s	+2.389s	43
14	Hulkenberg	1m47.691s	+2.436s	42
15	Gasly	1m48.018s	+2.763s	47
16	Stroll	1m48.148s	+2.893s	31
17	Ricciardo	1m48.380s	+3.125s	39
18	Bottas	1m48.418s	+3.163s	41
19	Ocon	1m48.831s	+3.576s	35
20	Tsunoda	1m50.887s	+5.632s	8

RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

ZHOU required to start from the back – additional power unit elements used
GASLY disqualified from qualifying for exceeding instantaneous fuel mass flow limit
HAMILTON required to start from pitlane – additional power unit elements used and car modified while under parc ferme conditions
OCON required to start from pitlane – additional power unit elements used and car modified while under parc ferme conditions

4

Leclerc has started the Azerbaijan GP from pole four times but has yet to win

TYRES

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



LAP CHART

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Leclerc	Piastri	Sainz	Perez	Russell	Verstappen	Alonso	Colapinto	Albon	Bearman	Tsunoda	Hulkenberg	Stroll	Ricciardo	Norris	Bottas	Zhou	Gasly	Hamilton	Ocon
G	16	81	55	11	63	1	14	43	23	50	22	27	18	3	4	77	24	10	44	31
1	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	22	4	27	3	10	77	44	24	31	18
2	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	22	4	27	3	10	44	77	24	31	18
3	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	4	27	3	22	10	44	77	24	31	18
4	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	4	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
5	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	4	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
6	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	4	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
7	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	50	4	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
8	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	4	50	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
9	16	81	11	55	1	63	14	43	23	4	50	27	3	10	44	22	77	24	31	18
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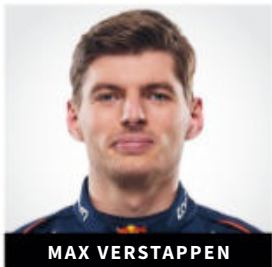
KEY: 1 Classification 1 Lap number 51 VSC lap
G Starting grid 18 Lapped 18 Pit entry
44 Overtaken 77 Overtaken Retirement

AZERBAIJAN GP DRIVER RATINGS

It's a top-scoring bonanza in Baku for Piastri and Colapinto, while Bearman just misses out – and it's wooden-spoon time for Hulkenberg

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

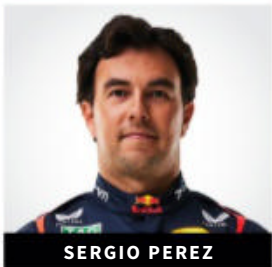
RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started 6th — Result 5th

4 Rued set-up adjustments after Friday and, given Perez showed where RB20 could be taken to in qualifying and was in victory contention while Verstappen struggled in the pack, he can't score higher here than a four. Did do well to incisively pass Russell on lap one.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started 4th - Result 17th/DNF

7 Had miles of room to his left in shunt with Sainz, who had passed Perez in aftermath of Leclerc's firm Turn 1 defence. Otherwise was pretty impressive given how much Verstappen struggled. Still, might have qualified second but for 0.2s shipped in sector two on last run in Q3.

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started 19th — Result 9th

5 "Race of misery", said Toto Wolff, after Mercedes had changed Hamilton's engine and suspension pre-race. Got by Saubers quickly from pitlane, then Tsunoda, but bottled up behind Bearman for ages. Eventually muscled past, then jumped Hulkenberg in aftermath of crash chaos.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started 5th — Result 3rd

8 Verstappen avenged their 2023 sprint race touch at Turn 2 on lap one and from there Russell struggled plenty on medium tyres. With pace transformed on hards, he reeled in Verstappen in second stint, fought his way back past impressively at Turn 1, and gained most from late crash.

FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started 1st — Result 2nd

9 Superb pole. Nailed start and dropped Piastri with great medium tyre grip and feel. But slow in-lap and out-lap caution bedding in hard tyres cost time to the McLaren. Then, his only mistake was assuming he'd repass Piastri when spotting the Aussie's dive and not fighting harder.

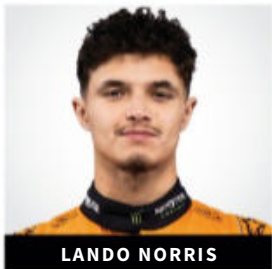


CARLOS SAINZ

Started 3rd - Result 18th/DNF

6 Pleased to qualify third, but still faced 0.44s gap to pole. At start, was unfortunate that his better launch got him on outside of Piastri, and that eventually allowed Perez to battle past. Caught the leaders late, then in crash with Perez the stewards felt he did slightly move off his line.

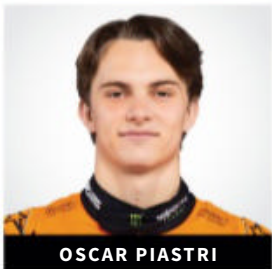
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started 15th — Result 4th

9 Blameless in Q1 exit given time-wise he was ahead of Piastri at that stage. Started on contra-strategy and rose up order from 15th. Attacked decisively early on, but got stuck behind Albon. Lifted pace when released, then in second stint charged down Verstappen and got fastest lap bonus.



OSCAR PIASTRI

Started 2nd — Result 1st

10 At start, just held off Sainz, then dropped back from pressuring Leclerc as medium tyres wore. Pounced perfectly from far back early in second stint on hards, then judged epic defence precisely – especially nailing Turns 1 and 2, and taking risks to escape Leclerc in sector two.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started 7th — Result 6th

8 Qualifying crescendo paid back handsomely as best laps of session got him through Q2 and nabbed eighth in Q3. Boosted by Hamilton's pitlane start, he held position from the off and from there had "a lonely race" as he fell back from lead pack through first stint.



LANCE STROLL

Started 13th - Result 19th/DNF

4 Was dumped out in 15th in Q2, where Alonso reached Q3. On lap one in the race, his attack on Tsunoda backfired after he'd rocketed off the line and he sustained a puncture. That condemned him to a two-stopper at the back before retiring with a worsening brake issue.

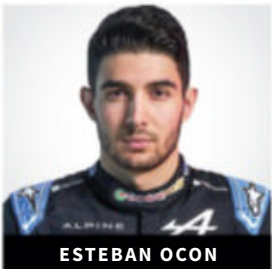
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started 18th - Result 12th

7 Pleased to initially qualify 13th given car's traction struggles, but was disqualified from that session after engine found to have exceeded fuel mass flow on final run in Q2. Was left out until penultimate lap, after starting on hard tyres, hoping for safety car that never came.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started 20th - Result 15th

5 Mitigating circumstances around Q1 wallstrike. Car suffered MGU-H and fuel pump failures in FP1 and FP3, and so lacked preparation for qualifying. Started from pitlane after taking more engine components pre-race and ran very long on an unrewarded contra strategy.

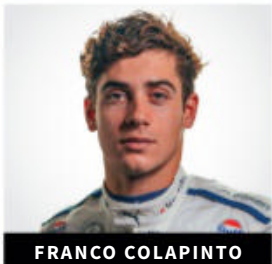


WILLIAMS



Started 9th — Result 7th

9 Unlucky with late Q3 fan incident, and cost of delay was no final run. Maintained ninth-place starting spot while running contra strategy of starting on hard tyres, on which he rose to third. Unflappable as various frontrunners then came past, and he defied Norris nicely.



Started 8th — Result 8th

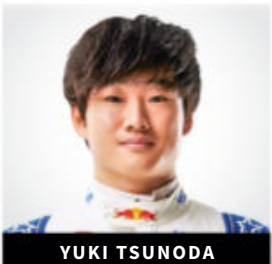
10 Williams felt Alonso was beatable with perfect Q3 final lap but, given his inexperience, doesn't cost a maximum score here. After holding eighth on medium tyres early on, he did well. Hulkenberg passed with easy DRS blast, but he jumped on the German's later mistake well.

RB



Started 14th - Result 13th

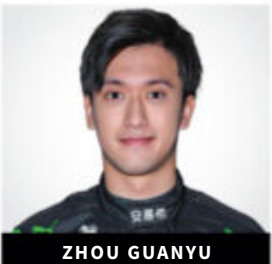
4 Left to rue sliding slightly deep at Turn 4 on final Q1 lap as he ended up 0.075s short. Pleased with early race pace on hard-tyres contra strategy, but then severe graining arrived and he just couldn't shake it like others could. Had big lap time swings as he rose and then fell before pitting late too.



Started 11th — Result R

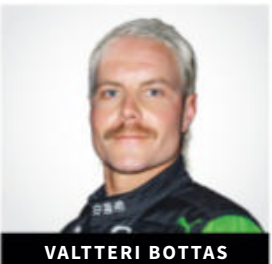
6 Made Q2 when team-mate didn't. That was about as good as it got given how his race turned out. Was holding 11th place starting spot when he collided with Stroll at Turn 4, before he faded and then retired with gaping sidepod hole costing too much aero performance.

SAUBER



Started 17th-Result 14th

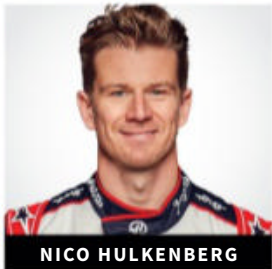
7 Knowing he had engine-change penalty grid drop, spent FP3 working on tow tactics to try to help Bottas gain in Q1, which he then enacted before qualifying 19th. In the race, chased Bottas early on contra strategy and managed his tyres well. Avoided getting lapped, unlike his team-mate.



Started 16th -Result 16th

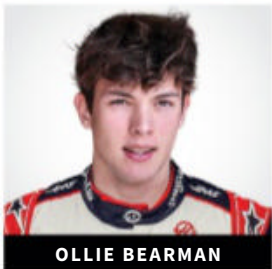
5 Qualified 18th even with tow help from Zhou. Got shuffled back by Gasly at start, then pretty much straight away hit graining with the medium tyres. Sauber was forced to pit him earlier than it wanted, which meant his pace through his long stint on hards also swung erratically.

HAAS



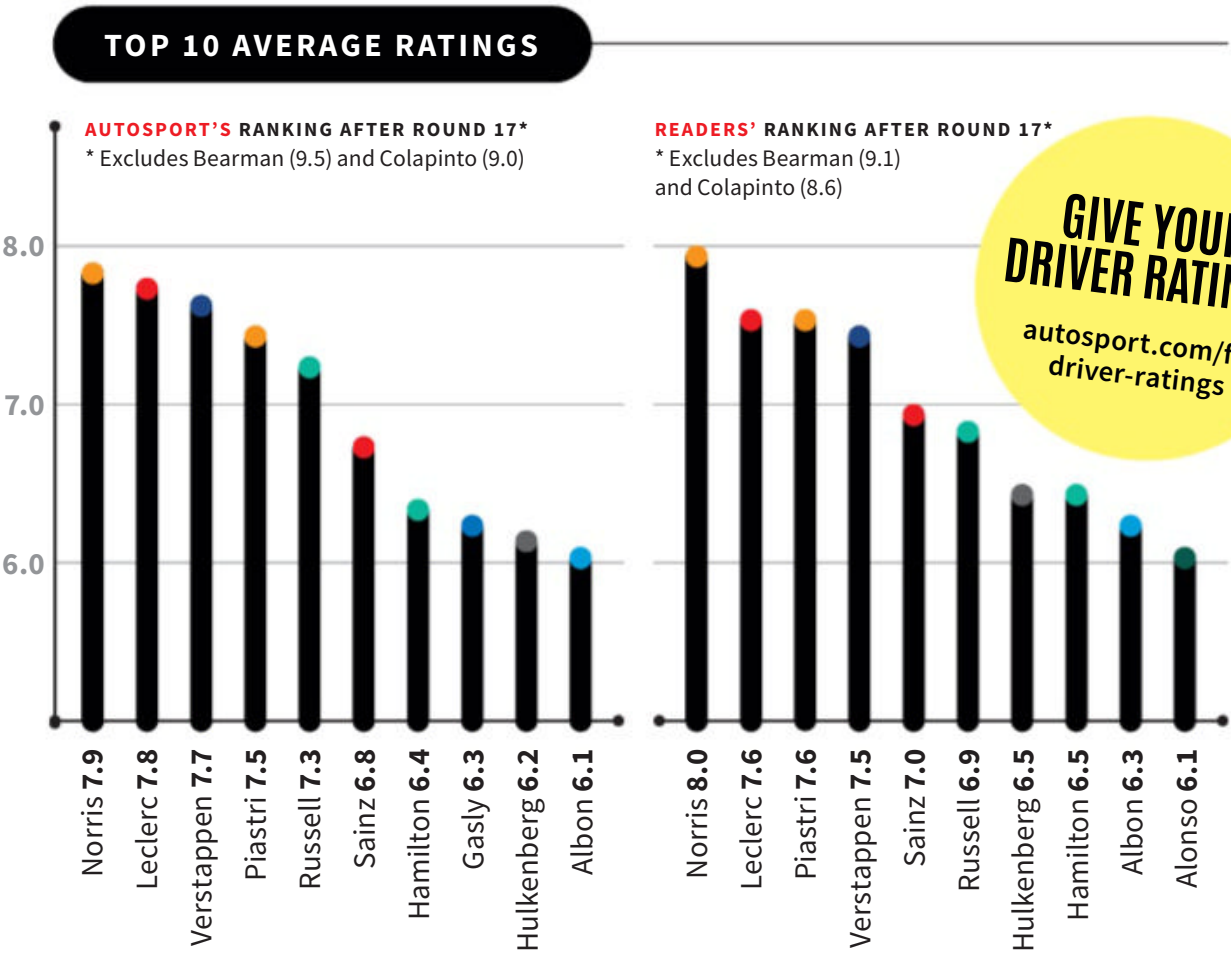
Started 12th - Result 11th

2 A shock to see him outqualified by Bearman. Rose ahead of late stoppers, then couldn't keep Albon behind. Clipping Turn 15 approach wall was a major mistake that allowed Colapinto through, then not reacting to green flag after crash meant Hamilton and Bearman mugged him.



Started 10th -Result 10th

9 Bounced back well from FP3 crash. Late Q2 slides *just* cost maximum – in play given he shaded vastly more experienced team-mate. Held place at start before Norris came by. Defied Hamilton for ages in second stint, battled him brilliantly, and smartly followed him past Hulkenberg.



Perfect Porsche moves towards title

Points leaders Laurens Vanthoor, Andre Lotterer and Kevin Estre kept it clean in an incident-strewn Fuji 6 Hours

GARY WATKINS

Porsche knew it would be in the mix at Fuji. The Japanese circuit did, after all, provide the breakthrough race for its 963 LMDh in 2023. The German manufacturer was far from convinced that it was going to win the penultimate round of the 2024 World Endurance Championship, but points leaders Laurens Vanthoor, Andre Lotterer and Kevin Estre executed a near-perfect race last Sunday to claim victory and leave the circuit with one hand on the Hypercar drivers' title.

Execute was what the crew of the #6 Porsche did over six incident-packed hours round the 2.84-mile Fuji Speedway – there were three safety cars and a further two Full Course Yellows – and what its rivals failed to do. That included their pursuers for the drivers' crown and Porsche's in the manufacturers' battle, Toyota and Ferrari, as well some upstarts in the fight at the front of the field. The Hypercar grid was closer than ever in Japan – 14 cars, at least one from all eight manufacturers, qualified within a second – and BMW, Cadillac and Alpine were all genuine contenders here. But none of them managed to string together the kind of clean race necessary to deprive Vanthoor and co of a second victory of the season, the first crew to do so.

Estre crossed the line at the end of the Fuji 6 Hours 16.6 seconds clear of the #15 BMW M Hybrid V8 LMDh shared by Marco Wittmann, Raffaele Marciello and Dries Vanthoor, brother of Laurens. The WRT trio had a more or less clean race but, when push came to shove, the BMW didn't quite have the pace to give the lead Porsche Penske Motorsport entry a run for its money over the final exchanges.

The race was reset by a third safety car in the penultimate hour. The Porsche and the BMW were nose to tail when the race went green for final 90 or so minutes. But Estre was able to edge away: he was 3s clear of the younger Vanthoor inside 10 laps, and the better part of nine by the time he made his final pitstop.

"Dries had good pace and I had to push all the way," said Estre. "But I think we had the better car and a bit more in our tyres than them. We were confident that we'd have a good car here, but we didn't expect to win and now have such a big gap in the championship."

There were a couple of moments of jeopardy for Estre in the closing stages. The Frenchman had an off at Turn 1, the Porsche taking to the asphalt run-off. He joked that his team-mates didn't believe his explanation. "There was quite a lot of condensation from the air-conditioning and my foot slipped off the pedal,"



Lotterer, Estre and Vanthoor have tightened their grip on drivers' crown

he recounted. "It was quite a hot moment."

Another followed before the race was out. Ryo Hirakawa aboard the #8 Toyota GR010 HYBRID Le Mans Hypercar had pitted with an hour to go and came out of the pits almost a full lap behind the race leader. Estre and the Japanese driver had differing views of what happened next. "I was concentrating on my tyre prep and the #6 car pushed me off," said Hirakawa. Estre reckoned that the Toyota didn't "make life easy" for him and actually repassed him in the twiddly final sector, despite receiving blue flags prior to the contact at the penultimate corner. The stewards agreed with Estre and



With the WEC grid closer than ever, Porsche had not expected to win in Japan



“There was a lot of condensation from the air-conditioning and my foot slipped off the pedal”

Bamber in the Cadillac V-Series.R LMDh late in the third hour that broke a rear rim and forced an early handover to Vanthoor.

The BMW, in which Wittmann had run second to Bamber in the pole-winning Caddy through to the first round of pitstops, had stopped for fuel and tyres during the Virtual Safety Car that led into the proper thing early in hour two, unlike the winning Porsche and the Cadillac ahead of it. Any advantage that might have given it – and it would probably have been marginal given that there was another safety car to come – was undone by Marciello’s enforced early stop.

Fuji was a highly tactical race, one in which the manufacturers were prepared to mix it up to try to gain an advantage. Toyota and Ferrari, whose best-placed crews arrived in Japan tied 12 points behind the drivers of the #6 Porsche, felt they had no choice if they were to get anything out of the weekend. Neither the GR010 nor the 499P LMH were competitive.

Ferrari had a disastrous start to the race that effectively removed two of its three cars from contention. Robert Kubica locked up in the #83 AF Corse-run customer car at Turn 1 on the second lap, tagging >>

handed the local man a drive-through penalty.

As strong as the BMW was at Fuji on the way to a first WEC podium, building on the impressive showing last time out at Austin earlier in the month, it didn’t have anything for the Porsche when push came to shove. “Fighting Kevin at the end was always going to be difficult,” said Vanthoor Jr. “On pure pace in free air, it was close, but they did have a bit of an upper hand. But on tyre deg they were really good.”

The BMW might have been in a better position to take the fight to the Porsche at the end but for a problem much earlier in the race that forced a strategy rethink. Marciello had a coming together with Earl



A victory opportunity lost for polesitting Caddy

“The only thing to do was play with stint lengths and have new tyres when others were on used tyres”

the back of Frederic Makowiecki in the #5 Porsche, and triggering a multi-car incident that resulted in the first safety car. The Porsche nudged Antonio Giovinazzi in the #51 Ferrari into a half-spin, the Italian doing likewise to the #35 Alpine A424 LMDh with Ferdinand Habsburg driving.

Ferrari’s challenge was effectively down to one car at a stroke. Kubica pitted for new front and rear bodywork and would also be penalised 30s for causing the accident, while the #51 factory car also needed a new nose and tail. The floor was also damaged, which blunted its performance thereafter, and the impact most likely triggered its retirement in the final hour with a hybrid problem.

If there was any good news for Ferrari it was that its championship-contending crew, Miguel Molina, Nicklas Nielsen and Antonio Fuoco in #50, came through the melee without incident. Ferrari opted for a creative strategy during the protracted second-hour caution caused by a loose advertising hoarding at Turn 3. Nielsen was given a set of fresh Michelins when he stopped under the yellows.

Thanks to the #15 BMW’s broken rim, the tactic allowed Nielsen to emerge in the lead after his next stop. He was then able to make life



Second-lap lock-up by Kubica triggered multi-car accident...

difficult for Lotterer for a while – “I had to take a bit of a risk to pass him,” said the German – but that was as good as it got for Ferrari. The time gained disappeared with the safety car in hour five. The true competitiveness of the Ferrari under the Fuji Balance of Performance – or rather lack of it – was highlighted as Fuoco plummeted down the order to an eventual ninth.

Ferdinando Cannizzo, Ferrari’s sportscar racing technical director, took some kind of solace from the factory AF Corse team’s strategy calls with #50. “Lacking pace, the only thing we could do was play with stint lengths and have new tyres when the others were on used tyres,” he explained. “The strategy can work when the race is green, but when the last safety car packed everyone up, the situation was different. It was impossible to defend position.”

Toyota also pushed the boat out on strategy over the second half of the race in the knowledge that it couldn’t stay with the frontrunners on pace after receiving another double BoP hit – less power and more weight – for Japan.

Nyck de Vries, who had taken over from Mike Conway, did a stint and a half on the same four tyres before Kamui Kobayashi got in for



Third-place Alpine of Lapierre/Schumacher/Vaxivière passes Stevens/Illott/Nato Jota Porsche



...which effectively reduced Ferrari's challenge to one car, which could only manage ninth

the run to the flag. Not only would the Japanese driver have two fresh sets of tyres, but the #7 car had effectively taken the splash of fuel it would have needed late on had it stayed on a conventional strategy. The car looked on course for a podium until the second safety car reset the race and wiped out any potential gain.

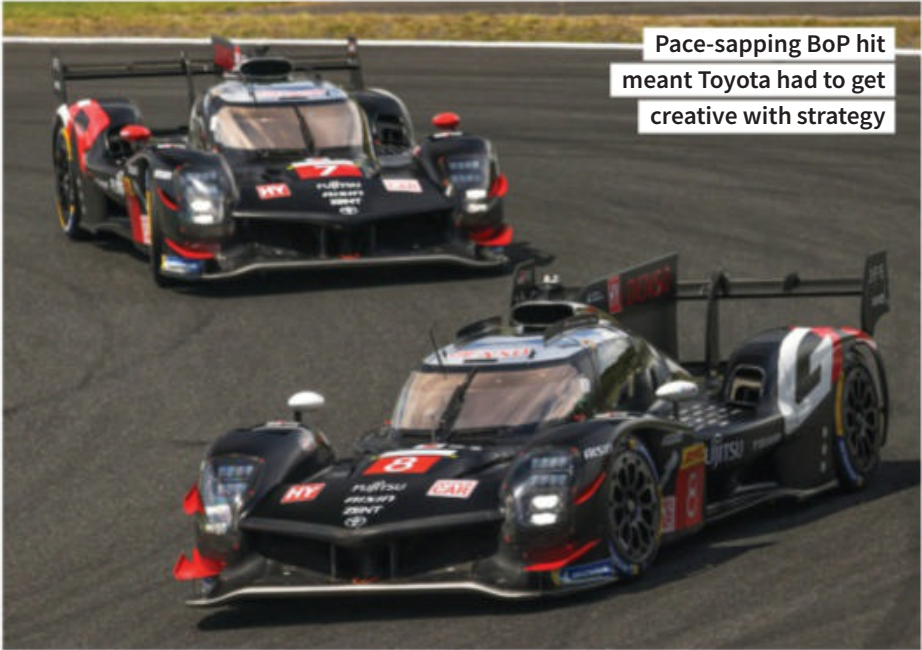
Toyota's championship challengers still might have salvaged a smattering of points from the day until Kobayashi made a hopeful move to regain the place he'd just lost to Matt Campbell in the #5 Porsche at Turn 3 as they battled over seventh. He hit the back of the German machine, the spinning cars making contact for a second time on the asphalt run-off. Extensive damage resulted in the retirement of both cars, though on the Toyota only after the differential was found to be damaged on the completion of the bodywork and suspension repairs.

Toyota opted for the reverse strategy on the #8 GR010 that Hirakawa shared with Sebastien Buemi and Brendon Hartley. It went long on the fuel to avoid the splash, a tactic that was also undone by the safety car. Hirakawa was running fourth when he was penalised for the incident with Estre.

There were no complaints in the Toyota camp that Kobayashi received a suspended drive-through penalty for the clash with Campbell. "It was our mistake: clearly we were too far behind," conceded Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director David Flourey, who was more forthright in his opinions on the penalty that dropped Hirakawa to 10th.

"Once again we can question the decisions that were taken against us," he said. The drive-through was awarded because the Toyota pilot was deemed to have ignored blue flags, but Flourey explained that drivers are only required to cede position on seeing the flags after two sectors of the circuit. He pointed out that Hirakawa was first shown the blues at Turn 8, halfway through sector two, and was behind by the end of sector three.

And on Toyota's strategy calls, he said: "After two or two and a half hours we realised that if we didn't try something we didn't stand a chance. In terms of lap time we were clearly slower than our main competitors. We split the strategies between the two cars in the hope that one would have the lucky ticket, but the safety car



Pace-sapping BoP hit meant Toyota had to get creative with strategy

came at a bad time for both of them."

This was another opportunity lost for Cadillac, which had claimed the pole with Alex Lynn aboard the solo Ganassi-run factory car. The Brit had had to abort his first flier in the Hyperpole session but was always confident that he could pull another quick one out of the bag. And he did just that. Bamber converted pole into the race lead and held the top spot until the car, now with Lynn at the wheel, was leapfrogged by Vanthoor during the first pit cycle. When the New Zealander got back in he was battling with Marciello for third when he sustained a front-right puncture in their Turn 1 incident.

Two and a half or so hours later Bamber was duking it out with Mick Schumacher in the #36 Alpine that went on to take the final podium spot when he lost it in the quick 100R right-hander and nosed into the barrier. He made it back to the pits, but there was no repairing the extensively damaged car. Fuji was a race Cadillac could have won, and the perfunctory post-race comments from the drivers explained little but probably revealed a lot about the mood in the camp. The V-Series.R was almost certainly the fastest race car on Sunday.

Alpine was in the mix with the Caddy, the Porsche and the BMW >>

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#15 BMW didn't quite have the legs to challenge for victory in final stages of the race

in terms of pace. It continued to build on the progress shown last time out at Austin, though it was the slower of the two cars that took the first silverware for the A424. Schumacher swept through into the podium positions in the final hour in the car he shared with Nicolas Lapierre and Matthieu Vaxiviere, moving up from ninth with an hour to go. On fresher tyres in the final stages, he had the legs of Fuoco in the #50 Ferrari and both Jota customer Porsches that ended up fifth and sixth, #12 ahead of #38.

The silverware should probably have gone to the sister Alpine in which Charles Milesi had qualified sixth. The car he shared with Jules Gounon (in for Paul-Loup Chatin at Fuji) and Habsburg looked good for third despite the first-named's involvement in the lap-two snafu. It was an impressive display from Alpine and the Signatech factory team. Not only did Milesi set fastest lap, but he was second only to Bamber on a 50-lap quickest average.

The car ended up an unrepresentative seventh after Milesi was handed a drive-through for a contact at the final corner with Charlie Eastwood in the #81 LMGT3 TF Sport Chevrolet Corvette. The Frenchman reckoned the penalty was "a bit harsh", insisting that the Chevy was "going left-right, left-right" and then "moved at the last minute".

Schumacher conceded after the race that he was a bit worried



#93 Peugeot looked a podium threat at the close in hands of Mikkell Jensen

“Maybe we didn't have the most competitive car, but we made the most of it with our strategy”

about a flying Mikkell Jensen in the #93 Peugeot 9X8 2024 LMH at the end. The Dane finished only 3.5s behind him after making similar progress to the German in the final laps, fourth place easily representing the French manufacturer's best finish with the revised car introduced at Imola in April. The sister Peugeot started by Loic Duval had run in the top 10 early doors, but it was the car that Jensen shared with Jean-Eric Vergne and Nico Muller that had the pace at the end.

Like Schumacher, Jensen had the tyres under him at the most important stage of the race, a deliberate tactic on the part of the Peugeot Sport team. “We knew it would come down to the end of the race,” said technical director Olivier Jansonnie. “We had saved new tyres for the final stint, and it worked. Maybe we didn't have the most competitive car, but we made the most of it with our strategy.”

The #94 car ended up eighth behind the two Jota Porsches and the penalised Alpine. Neither of the British team's customer 963s had made it through to Hyperpole for the fastest 10 cars in first qualifying, and nor did they have the pace of the factory entries in the race. The call not to change tyres on either car at their final pitstops in the name of track position didn't quite pay dividends.

Victory for Vanthoor, Lotterer and Estre means they go to the season finale in Bahrain in November 35 points ahead of the #50 Ferrari and 37 ahead of the #7 Toyota. With just 39 points up for grabs in the eight-hour race, Ferrari and Toyota have conceded the drivers' title.

“For me it is game over, but I'm not saying we are giving up,” said Cannizzo. “We will try to work miracles.” He was talking about the drivers' and manufacturers' championships, whereas Toyota is still in the hunt in the latter, lying just 10 points behind Porsche. But Floury was prepared to admit that Toyota's unbroken run of WEC drivers' titles in the Hypercar era is about to come to an end. 🏆

➔ P38 LMGT3 REPORT

Ferrari takes first win as Porsche crew secures crown



It was the Davide Rigon-led AF Corse squad's day thanks to a smart strategy, but Manthey PureRxing trio Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alex Malykhin were crowned

GARY WATKINS

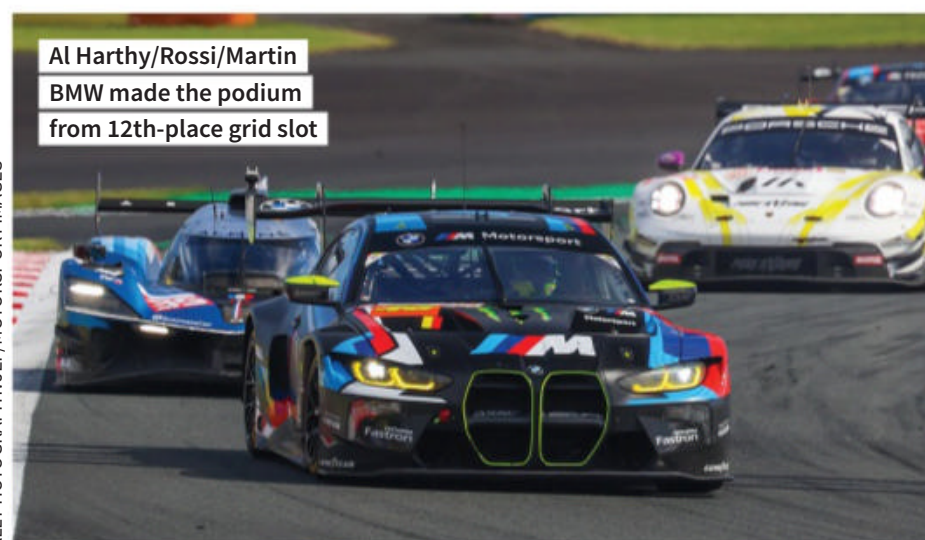
Ferrari scored a first victory of the season in LMGT3 at Fuji with the #54 AF Corse entry driven by Thomas Flohr, Francesco Castellacci and Davide Rigon. The Manthey PureRxing Porsche 911 GT3-R shared by Alex Malykhin, Joel Sturm and Klaus Bachler, meanwhile, took second to claim the class title with a round to go. Both owed much to creative tyre strategies and the penultimate-hour safety car. There were quicker cars in class on Sunday.

The Ferrari 296 GT3 came through to take the win in Rigon's hands over the final post-safety car portion of the race. The factory driver had the tyres under him after AF opted to leave bronze-rated Flohr out on the same set of Goodyears for two hours after he took over from Castellacci at the first round of pitstops.

The early championship win for the PureRxing crew resulted from the opposite strategy: Malykhin was given four new Goodyears during the first safety car and kept in the car for two hours and 22 minutes, way beyond the one hour 45 minimum drive time for the bronze.

Manthey's strategy meant the Porsche was sitting pretty at the head of the leaderboard when the final caution was called. Sturm brought the car into the pits under the Virtual Safety Car and Bachler was able to leave still in the lead on a fresh set of tyres. What he wasn't able to do, however, was to hang on out front for the remainder of the race in a car that was carrying 40kg of success ballast. That explained why Malykhin could qualify only 14th.

The Austrian lost out first to Nicolas Costa in the #59 United Autosports McLaren 720S Evo and then Rigon before the final round



Al Harthy/Rossi/Martin
BMW made the podium
from 12th-place grid slot



Van Rompuy/Andrade/
Eastwood Corvette
fast but unlucky



“We made it onto the podium with the slowest car today. But we had a perfect race”

of stops. The Porsche jumped the Ferrari in the pits courtesy of not taking tyres, but was quickly back behind the flying Italian car, which now had two new Goodyears on the left-hand side thanks to its early strategy. The margin of victory at the finish was less than four seconds.

The McLaren, in Gregoire Saucy's hands, had led but, on the same rubber that Costa had been given, the Swiss was powerless to defend the top position. Rigon swept through to take the lead he would hold to the end. Bachler made it up to second as Saucy spiralled down the order to an eventual eighth on his well-used rubber in the car co-driven by James Cottingham.

“The team told me this morning that I had to do a double stint,” explained Flohr, now a four-time class winner at Fuji in the WEC. “I wasn't that convinced, but at the end it was the right strategy – tyre management was key today.”

The Porsche's other drivers offered similar sentiments to Flohr. “Our team did a brilliant job on strategy today,” said Sturm. “In the end it was the key point to bring us up the order from P14. After qualifying I was thinking we could finish maybe P7 or perhaps P5, but clinching the title today was not in my mind. We had a bit of luck but it was great team work.”

Maxime Martin propelled the WRT BMW M4 GT3 he shared with Ahmad Al Harthy and Valentino Rossi up to third in the final stages from almost as lowly a qualifying position as the Porsche – Al Harthy ended up 12th. “We made it onto the podium with the slowest car today,” was team boss Vincent Vosse's take on proceedings. “But we had a perfect race and all the drivers did an amazing job.”

As fast as Martin was, and he was only just over 3s behind the Porsche at the finish, the driver on a mission at the end was Charlie



Eastwood in the best of the TF Sport Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.Rs. He flew after he was spun out of fourth in class by Alpine Hypercar driver Charles Milesi late in the penultimate hour. The Briton, who shared the car with Tom van Rompuy and Rui Andrade, was just 9s down on the Ferrari at the chequered flag. The time lost to the spin was 20s, so it was definitely a case of what might be for a crew that hasn't been blessed with the best of luck this season.

Van Rompuy had led the early going in the Chevy after the #55 AF Ferrari qualified on the class pole by Francois Heriau went backwards at the start and headed straight for the pits. The anti-lock braking system had failed and couldn't be fixed, the Frenchman, Simon Mann and Alessio Rovera ending up a dogged sixth despite the problem.

Joining the #81 TF Corvette among the early frontrunners were the #59 McLaren, the Iron Dames Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2 shared by Sarah Bovy, Rahel Frey and Michelle Gattling, and Austin winners Ian James, Daniel Mancinelli and Alex Riberas in the Heart of Racing Aston Martin Vantage GT3. They all lost out on strategy when the yellows flew for the final time, the Iron Lynx-run Lambo ending up fifth and the Aston ninth. ❧

[➔ P41 FUJI 6 HOURS RESULTS](#)



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RESULTS

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 7/8, FUJI (JPN), 15 SEPTEMBER (213 LAPS – 603.922 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	6h00m32.196s
2	Marco Wittmann (DEU) Dries Vanthoor (BEL) Raffaele Marciello (ITA)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	+16.601s
3	Mick Schumacher (DEU) Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	+42.321s
4	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA) Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Nico Muller (CHE)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	+45.846s
5	Will Stevens (GBR) Callum Ilott (GBR) Norman Nato (FRA)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+49.689s
6	Phil Hanson (GBR) Jenson Button (GBR) Oliver Rasmussen (DNK)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+51.916s
7	Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT) Jules Gounon (FRA) Charles Milesi (FRA)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	+54.316s
8	Loic Duval (FRA) Paul di Resta (GBR) Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	+54.324s
9	Miguel Molina (ESP) Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Nicklas Nielsen (DNK)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	+57.874s
10	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	+58.879s
11	Neel Jani (CHE) Harry Tincknell (GBR) Julien Andlauer (FRA)	Proton Competition / Porsche 963	Hypercar	-1 lap
12	Robert Kubica (POL) Robert Shwartzman (ISR) Yifei Ye (CHN)	AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	-2 laps
13	Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE) Davide Rigon (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
14	Alex Malykhin (BLR) Joel Sturm (DEU) Klaus Bachler (AUT)	Manthey PureRxcing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-19 laps
15	Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Valentino Rossi (ITA) Maxime Martin (BEL)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
16	Tom van Rompuy (BEL) Rui Andrade (PRT) Charlie Eastwood (GBR)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	-19 laps
17	Sarah Bovy (BEL) Rahel Frey (CHE) Michelle Gatting (DNK)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx) / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-19 laps
18	Francois Heriau (FRA) Simon Mann (USA) Alessio Rovera (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
19	Clement Mateu (FRA) Erwan Bastard (FRA) Marco Sorensen (DNK)	D'Station Racing (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
20	James Cottingham (GBR) Nicolas Costa (BRA) Gregoire Saucy (CHE)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	-19 laps
21	Ian James (GBR) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA) Alex Riberas (ESP)	Heart of Racing Team (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
22	Darren Leung (GBR) Sean Gelael (IDN) Augusto Farfus (BRA)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
23	Arnold Robin (FRA) Clemens Schmid (AUT) Kelvin van der Linde (ZAF)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
24	Takeshi Kimura (JPN) Esteban Masson (FRA) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	-19 laps
25	Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Franck Perera (FRA)	Iron Lynx / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-20 laps
26	Yasser Shahin (AUS) Morris Schuring (NLD) Richard Lietz (AUT)	Manthey EMA / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-20 laps
27	Ryan Hardwick (USA) Zacharie Robichon (CAN) Ben Barker (GBR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	-20 laps
28	Christian Ried (DEU) Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen (DNK) Dennis Olsen (NOR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
29	Josh Caygill (GBR) Nico Pino (CHL) Marino Sato (JPN)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	-22 laps
R	Rene Rast (DEU) Sheldon van der Linde (ZAF) Robin Frijns (NLD)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	202 laps-technical
R	Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Lynn (GBR)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	193 laps-accident damage
R	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	168 laps-electronics/hybrid
R	Hiroshi Koizumi (JPN) Sebastien Baud (FRA) Daniel Juncadella (ESP)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	164 laps-power steering
NC	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	163 laps-accident damage
R	Frederic Makowiecki (FRA) Matt Campbell (AUS) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	163 laps-accident damage
R	Edoardo Mortara (CHE) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA) Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Lamborghini Iron Lynx / Lamborghini SC63	Hypercar	146 laps-driveshaft

In each car, first-named driver started the race. **Winners’ average speed** 100.503mph. **Fastest lap** Milesi 1m30.943s, 112.236mph. **LMGT3** Riberas 1m40.987s, 101.073mph

QUALIFYING

1 Lynn 1m28.901s; **2** Hirakawa 1m28.942s;
3 D Vanthoor 1m29.059s; **4** Kobayashi
1m29.065s; **5** Estre 1m29.152s; **6** Milesi
1m29.154s; **7** Fuoco 1m29.196s;
8 Campbell 1m29.223s; **9** Kvyat 1m29.582s;
10 Andlauer 1m29.589s; **11** Frijns 1m29.724s;
12 Giovinazzi 1m29.772s; **13** Kubica
1m29.829s; **14** Jensen 1m29.883s;
15 Vaxiviere 1m30.028s; **16** Nato 1m30.072s;
17 Rasmussen 1m30.092s; **18** Duval

1m30.157s; **19** Heriau 1m40.893s; **20** van
Rompuy 1m40.975s; **21** Caygill 1m41.120s;
22 Bovy 1m41.265s; **23** Cottingham
1m41.293s; **24** Robin 1m41.308s; **25** Koizumi
1m41.310s; **26** James 1m41.397s; **27** Flohr
1m41.608s; **28** Hardwick 1m41.719s;
29 Kimura 1m41.850s; **30** Al Harthy
1m41.866s; **31** Mateu 1m41.908s;
32 Malykhin 1m41.935s; **33** Shahin
1m41.999s; **34** Leung 1m42.013s; **35** Ried
1m42.502s; **36** Schiavoni 1m43.417s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Hypercar drivers
1 Lotterer/Estre/L Vanthoor 150; **2** Fuoco/
Molina/Nielsen 115; **3** Kobayashi/de Vries
113; **4** Conway 77; **5** Makowiecki/Campbell/
Christensen 77; **6** Ilott/Stevens 70.

Hypercar manufacturers
1 Porsche 161; **2** Toyota 151; **3** Ferrari 134;
4 Alpine 52; **5** BMW 49; **6** Peugeot 34;
7 Cadillac 30; **8** Lamborghini 11;

9 Isotta Fraschini 0.

LMGT3 drivers
1 Malykhin/
Sturm/Bachler
136; **2** Schuring/
Lietz/Shahin 90;
3 Farfus/Leung/Gelael
85; **4** Riberas/Mancinelli/James 83;
5 Al Harthy/Martin/Rossi 61;
6 Rovera/Heriau/Mann 59.





Herta's win, Palou's title

INDYCAR
NASHVILLE (USA)
15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 15/15

Alex Palou stamped his name among the legends by capturing his third IndyCar Series championship in the season finale at Nashville Superspeedway, while Colton Herta took victory in the wild 206-lap race.

A starting spot of 24th for Palou was made all the more ominous when Will Power, the only other driver with a shot at taking the crown, qualified fourth. While it didn't take long for Palou's Honda-powered

Chip Ganassi Racing Dallara to ascend through the field at the start, Power's chances faded just 12 laps into the race when he was forced to pit his Chevrolet-engined Team Penske machine after his seatbelt randomly "popped off" and disconnected. The issue, which happened twice throughout the race, ultimately relegated Power down the running order to finish 24th, eight laps down. Meanwhile, Palou took the flag in 11th.

"Well, at the beginning I had to go for it," related Palou. "I had to take some chances on the start trying to make up some room. Everything was working right. Up to 15th

or 16th, something like that, which was already a good step. Then I saw the #12 going into pitlane. At first I was like, 'Oh, what strategy are they going to pull off?' Unfortunately, that's not the way obviously you want your biggest competitor to go down on the season finale. At the same time that's what happened to us two weeks ago, so... yeah, it's racing. After that we were doing our own race. Obviously keeping an eye on the #12 car, but just trying to move forward."

In claiming his second consecutive title, Palou became the first to go back to back since Dario Franchitti pulled off a hat-trick from 2009-11. The 27-year-old Spaniard also gave the Ganassi squad its 16th IndyCar crown, including four over the past five years. Only Team Penske has more with 17.

Although Power was perplexed by the seatbelt issue, he was upbeat overall about his season and called it "very satisfying" as a whole: "Obviously, we would love to win the championship. I think we all had the potential, just you know, Palou is very good."

The celebrations at the 1.33-mile oval also extended to Herta, who climbed out of his Honda-powered Andretti Global car after a rousing victory, which featured a late move through lapped traffic on Arrow McLaren star Pato O'Ward.

O'Ward was on an alternative strategy to pursuers Herta and David Malukas. The Mexican made his final pitstop with 45 laps remaining, while Malukas had pitted earlier and had to bail his Meyer Shank Racing



Herta claimed his first
 IndyCar oval victory

GALSTAD

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES



machine from the lead to take more fuel with just five tours to go. Herta, who had made his final stop 19 laps after O’Ward, trailed the Arrow McLaren pilot until the pair came up on the lapped car of Sting Ray Robb with five laps to go. O’Ward drifted high in an attempt to carry his momentum to the outside of Robb, while Herta charged to the inside of both drivers en route to surging into the lead down the backstretch. Herta beat O’Ward by 1.8106s to claim the ninth win of his career, and first on an oval.

“We had a pick to play off of,” Herta said of Robb. “The whole race I was getting all my passing done off the corners. I was really able to drive middle to exit off the corner and get the power down really nicely. Luckily, we had just enough room between me and Sting Ray. There might have been a small nudge there, but I had to use every bit of him to accelerate onto the straight.”

Team Penske’s Josef Newgarden, who was involved in a battle for the lead early on with Andretti Global-run polesitter Kyle Kirkwood, ended up finishing third ahead of Kirkwood, with Scott McLaughlin fifth in his Penske machine ahead of Santino Ferrucci (AJ Foyt Racing).

Herta’s win was the first on an oval for the Andretti team since Alexander Rossi won in 2018 at Pocono, and it vaulted him to second in the standings, just 31 points adrift of Palou. McLaughlin also leapfrogged team-mate Power to take third in the championship.

JOEY BARNES

RESULTS INDYCAR ROUND 15/15, NASHVILLE (USA), 15 SEPTEMBER (206 LAPS – 273.980 MILES)			
POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Global with Curb-Agajanian / Dallara-Honda	1h43m15.2534s
2	Pato O’Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.8106s
3	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.9611s
4	Kyle Kirkwood (USA)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	+4.7175s
5	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.7837s
6	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.2336s
7	Marcus Armstrong (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+14.3870s
8	Linus Lundqvist (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+14.6519s
9	David Malukas (USA)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+15.2726s
10	Conor Daly (USA)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
11	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
12	Rinus VeeKay (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
13	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
14	Christian Rasmussen (DNK)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
15	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Juncos Hollinger Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
17	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
18	Nolan Siegel (USA)	Arrow McLaren / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
19	Christian Lundgaard (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
20	Sting Ray Robb (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
21	Pietro Fittipaldi (BRA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
22	Kyffin Simpson (CYM)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-4 laps
23	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-4 laps
24	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	-8 laps
25	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Andretti Global / Dallara-Honda	137 laps-accident
26	Katherine Legge (GBR)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	85 laps-accident
27	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	55 laps-accident

Winner’s average speed 159.207mph. Fastest lap O’Ward 24.2869s, 197.143mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Kirkwood 201.520mph; 2 Newgarden 195.507mph; 21 Lundgaard 195.469mph; 22 Legge 201.352mph; 3 Rosenqvist 200.676mph; 4 Power 193.081mph; 23 Robb no speed; 24 Palou 199.532mph*; 25 Rasmussen 199.146mph*; 26 Rossi 198.060mph*; 27 Siegel no speed*. * nine-place grid penalty for unapproved engine change.	CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Palou 544; 2 Herta 513; 3 McLaughlin 505; 4 Power 498; 5 O’Ward 460; 6 Dixon 456; 7 Kirkwood 420; 8 Newgarden 401; 9 Ferrucci 367; 10 Rossi 366.
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Verschoor (leading) became the 16th different winner of a remarkable F2 season...



GALLOWAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

For sure it's Verschoor as F2 takes more twists

FORMULA 2
BAKU (AZE)
14-15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 12/14

While Richard Verschoor took feature race victory on a dramatic Formula 2 weekend in Baku, Gabriel Bortoleto displaced Isack Hadjar at the top of the standings on what could prove to be a pivotal event.

Red Bull Junior Hadjar had a comfortable 36-point lead after the Spa round, but failed to score at Monza. It happened again in Azerbaijan, after a crash in qualifying. Bortoleto, on the other hand, continued his relentless scoring on what was an otherwise quiet weekend for Invicta Racing's Brazilian McLaren protege, who was fifth in the sprint race and fourth in the feature to take a 4.5-point lead.

Qualifying was a bruising affair for Campos Racing as a whole, with Hadjar spearing off at Turn 1 into the barriers, and team-mate Pepe Marti immediately doing

the same. Despite the two cars being stuck in the barriers when the red flags were displayed, Hadjar was judged as the sole cause of the disruption, and was stripped of his best time. This left him 20th on the grid, with Marti 21st after failing to set a competitive time to that point.

F3 graduate Christian Mansell started his Trident car on pole for the sprint race, and the Australian defended stoutly for the first third of his debut outing before falling back through the pack. Also making his debut, F3 series runner-up Gabriele Mini (Prema) lined up third, passed Jak Crawford for second at the start, and was the first to demote Mansell when he took the lead.

But it was Joshua Durksen who stole the show on Saturday. AIX Racing's Paraguayan waited patiently behind the pair of new faces before passing them to secure a commanding first victory of his rookie F2 campaign. With fifth place in the feature race, he extended his points-scoring form to five races on the spin, by far his best

streak. Durksen looked clear at the front when a late safety car set up a dash to the flag. But Crawford, now up to second in his DAMS machine, could not keep up Durksen's pace. Behind the American, Mini pipped the ART Grand Prix car of fellow Alpine protege Victor Martins, who got alongside on the run to the chequered flag.

The feature race was truncated thanks to a lengthy red flag. Kush Maini stalled at the start, and Oliver Goethe and Marti could not avoid him, causing Marti's car to flip. Due to the limited time slot to run the race, just under half an hour remained and a reduced points scale was handed out.

Verschoor had taken pole, and the Trident driver called on every bit of his experience on his 98th F2 start. Martins was the man on the move, soon passing Andrea Kimi Antonelli for second and then grabbing the lead from Verschoor, before the top three all made their mandatory pitstops on the same lap. This undid all Martins's good work, and he dropped back behind Verschoor and Antonelli (Prema).

Zane Maloney pitted a lap later and the Rodin Motorsport driver emerged in front of Antonelli in a net second place. But he locked up on his cold tyres at Turn 3, and left Antonelli unable to turn in, enabling Martins though again. The Frenchman then chased Verschoor, whose win was secured when Mini hit the wall at Turn 15, causing the race to finish under the safety car.

Antonelli took third from Bortoleto, Durksen, Paul Aron and Luke Browning, who had a strong F2 debut in place of Zak O'Sullivan at ART.

SAM HALL



FERRARO/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Foster's pedal is steel in Nashville

INDY NXT
NASHVILLE (USA)
15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 12/12

Louis Foster had already been crowned Indy NXT champion two weeks earlier, but the extra weight of hardware didn't slow him down in the season finale at Nashville Superspeedway. The 21-year-old Briton once again proved untouchable and led all 65 laps from pole in his Andretti Global Dallara en route to claiming victory by



0.3071s over Yuven Sundaramoorthy. It was the eighth NXT victory of the season for Foster and 10th of his career, which ties him for second all-time with Tommy Byrne, Alex Lloyd, Paul Tracy and current IndyCar star Kyle Kirkwood, behind only the late Greg Moore on 13. "I would have loved to have done them at Milwaukee, but we had to baby the car for one more weekend," Foster said of the celebratory donuts. "But now we can. Yeah, it's good. If in doubt, go flat out." A late caution, triggered by a crash for Jamie Chadwick after contact with Jack William Miller, brought Abel Motorsports driver Sundaramoorthy into contention, but Foster held firm over the final eight laps. Caio Collet (HMD Motorsports) finished third ahead of an Andretti quartet: James Roe headed them from Salvador de Alba, while Michael d'Orlando passed Bryce Aron after the restart for sixth. Foster ended up 122 points clear of his closest rival, Jacob Abel, who finished eighth on the Music City oval.

JOEY BARNES

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA 2
BAKU (AZE)
Race 1 Joshua Durksen
AIX Racing
Race 2 Richard Verschoor
Trident

INDY NXT
NASHVILLE (USA)
Louis Foster
Andretti Global

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
RED BULL RING (AUT)
Race 1 James Wharton
Prema Racing
Race 2 Theophile Nael
Sainteloc Racing

SUPER FORMULA LIGHTS
OKAYAMA (JPN)
Races 1 & 3 Syun Koide
B-Max Racing Team
Race 2 Kaylen Frederick
B-Max Racing Team

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Nael flows to maiden victory for Sainteloc

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
RED BULL RING (AUT)
14-15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/10

The Styrian Alps climate did its worst over the weekend, and so did the title contenders in the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine. While Rafael Camara and Tuukka Taponen drew a points blank, glory went to James Wharton and Theophile Nael. Wharton claimed pole in the dry for Saturday's opening race. And, on a damp track with everyone on wet-weather tyres, the Prema Racing-run Australian converted that into the lead of the race. His initial challenge came from Williams protege Alessandro Giusti, before the sister ART Grand Prix car of Evan Giltaire scythed through from 12th on the grid. Giltaire audaciously swept around the outside of Giusti at Turn 1 with four laps remaining, and took just two tours to slash the 1.9-second gap to Wharton. But Giltaire was too brave on the brakes into Turn 3 on the final lap, and Wharton was home free. Roman Bilinski (Trident)



wasn't too far away in fourth, while Enzo Peugeot headed Valerio Rinicella for fifth. Noah Stromsted put in a stunning effort for pole in wet qualifying on Sunday, 0.8s clear of the next quickest driver. But, on a dry track for the race, it was Nael who stormed through with a brilliant start from third to take the lead. Stromsted's ability to attack Nael varied depending upon the efforts of Brando Badoer behind. Sometimes the Van Amersfoort Racing-run Italian would challenge the Danish Race Performance Motorsport ace, allowing Nael to eke out a gap. And then Stromsted would catch up again. Following a late safety car, Stromsted moved back into position for the two-lap dash to the flag. His move came into Turn 3

on the final tour and he squeezed down the inside, but ran wide and only just kept ahead of Badoer. Up ahead, Nael and Sainteloc Racing took their breakthrough maiden FRECA victory. Matteo De Palo pipped Wharton and Pedro Clerot to fourth position. Series leader Camara beat Taponen to 11th in race one. On Sunday, Taponen – who was well off the pace in both qualifying sessions – went out on the opening lap, while Camara had to pit after losing his front wing when he hit the back of Badoer. Thanks to the safety cars, Prema's Brazilian Ferrari protege was able to recover to eighth, only to be penalised out of the points for a collision with Red Bull Junior Enzo Deligny.

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Golden Brown tops Triple Eight stranglehold

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SANDOWN (AUS)
15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 9/12

Triple Eight has had some great days in Supercars, but not many would match its performance in the Sandown 500. The new combination of Will Brown and Scott Pye edged out 2023 victors Broc Feeney/Jamie Whincup to take a convincing win, the pair of Chevrolet Camaros swapping the lead in the second half of the race. But while Brown, who started from pole position, was delivering a 0.48s winning margin, not that far behind was the team's wildcard entry in fifth place, veteran Craig Lowndes handing the car over to Super2 star Cooper Murray, who held out many more experienced racers over the closing laps of the time-shortened race. Other teams that may have challenged the flying Chevrolets in the race fell short. Matt Payne/Garth Tander had to recover from a ninth grid spot after a mistake in the Top 10 Shoot-out to bring the Grove Racing Ford Mustang home in fourth. Cam Waters



Camaro of Brown and Pye showed fabulous form

EDGE PHOTOGRAPHICS

made a bad start, and he and James Moffat played catch-up to finish sixth. And behind them was the Walkinshaw Andretti United Ford, Chaz Mostert charging home to seventh after co-driver Lee Holdsworth had a messy spin on a damp kerb. The Erebus Motorsport Chevrolets were halted by engine problems (Brodie Kosteki/Todd Hazelwood) and a crash (Jack Le Brocq/Jayden Ojeda) while both were well-placed. So who finished third? Some fans may have had low expectations of PremiAir Racing after the team delayed its allocated test day to pre-Bathurst, and 14th on the

grid would not have eased those. But James Golding made strong ground early and a stellar middle stint from veteran David Russell moved them to third – and they stayed there to the flag. Supercars' new Virtual Safety Car system was implemented for the first time and looked to work well. Brown has extended his championship points lead over Mostert to 189, with the Bathurst 1000 next on 10-13 October. Many teams will be looking to shine their performances, or they'll be chasing the Triple Eight brigade (again). **PHIL BRANAGAN**

Buescher pips van Gisbergen

NASCAR CUP
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
15 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 28/36

Chris Buescher prevailed in a stunning last-lap duel with Shane van Gisbergen at Watkins Glen, snatching the lead away into the Carousel and holding on through the final set of corners for his first win of the 2024 season. SVG was forced to settle for second, kicking himself over an unforced error. Entering the Bus Stop chicane in the lead on the



Buescher leads NASCAR pack

final lap, he grazed the Armco and unsettled his Kaulig Racing Chevrolet, allowing Buescher to close in and pounce. They slammed doors, but avoided calamity as they battled to the chequered flag. Buescher just missed out on making the playoffs this year, but the RFK Racing Ford man was glad to steal some of the post-season glory. "We came here to be spoilers and we're gonna do that," he promised. Carson Hocevar took a career-best third, polesitter Ross Chastain placed fourth after leading half the race, with Zane Smith next. Chase Briscoe was the only playoff driver to end the race inside the top 10, finishing sixth. It was a tumultuous day for the title combatants, with several collected in a lap-one incident, and many more finding trouble later on. Entering the Round of 16 elimination race at Bristol, Denny Hamlin, Brad Keselowski, Martin Truex Jr and Harrison Burton are below the cut-line. The race was slowed by seven cautions, including a scary moment in the esses when William Byron ended up atop Keselowski, but both drivers were OK. **NICK DEGROOT**

WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
SANDOWN (AUS)
Will Brown/Scott Pye (below)
Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR CUP
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
Chris Buescher
RFK Racing (Ford Mustang)

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
RED BULL RING (AUT)
Race 1 Jordan Pepper/Alessio Deledda
Oregon Team
(Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2)
Race 2 Christopher Haase/Simon Reicher
Eastalent Racing Team
(Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)



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Your Profile

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About you

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- Trackside experience in managing tyre preparation will be beneficial.
- Tyre modelling experience is desirable (Matlab / Simulink).
- Experience of Vehicle dynamics modelling (Matlab / Simulink / SimPack / Dymola, Adams etc).
- Experience in the development of tyre thermo-mechanical models, higher fidelity models (brush model...etc) physical models or FE models would be a distinct advantage.
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50 Porsches to race at Silverstone TOCA

PORSCHE

A total of 50 modern Porsches are set to compete at a British Touring Car Championship event for the first time at Silverstone this weekend, with both the Carrera Cup GB and Sprint Challenge GB series attracting 25-car entries.

Among the additional drivers for the Carrera Cup is Karl Leonard. The Am driver, who took an outright win in the series in 2019, is now back with Team Parker Racing. Meanwhile, numbers in the Cayman-based Sprint Challenge have grown steadily in recent seasons, and Mini frontrunner Jamie Osborne joins this weekend with Parker.

Porsche GB motorsport manager James

MacNaughton said the organising team is “proud” of the strong grids, especially as they are achieved on the weekend where the manufacturer’s 2025 plans are launched.

“Generally, a lot of people are saying it’s very tough at the moment and to achieve the 50 cars towards the end of the season, when grids tend to reduce not grow, we’re very excited to see how the weekend goes,” he said. “Having 50 cars is a big milestone.”

MacNaughton feels the Sprint Challenge has now come of age, particularly with the introduction of the upgraded RS version of the Cayman for this year. “It was a difficult start in 2020 with Brexit and COVID but, even then, we still managed grids in the mid to high teens but it did drop off a little bit,” he

added. “I think the real shot in the arm that helped was the move to the TOCA package [for 2023] and the introduction of the RS has proven popular. It’s a fantastic car to drive and we’ve got a lot of interest for next year.”

MacNaughton also praised the competitiveness of both championships as a factor in attracting the strong grids as well as high standards of scrutineering. “One of the things that’s really important and we always champion is the fact everyone knows the cars offer the same performance,” he said. “All the really important parts are sealed and every single nut, bolt and washer has to come from our truck – we know very quickly if someone has fitted a non-standard part.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Toro Verde second team to plan TOCA Junior bid

TOCA JUNIOR

Porsche squad Toro Verde GT has become the second team to confirm plans to enter the new TOCA Junior Championship next year.

Toro Verde, which was only founded in 2021, competes in both the Carrera Cup and Sprint Challenge GB and has raced in British GT as well as European sportscar series.

It now plans to enter the junior racing scene and has joined Graves Motorsport in pledging to run up to four cars in the inaugural season of TOCA Junior, which will support the British Touring Car Championship next year.

“TOCA certainly knows how to attract and promote a race series, and we’re sure the TOCA Junior Championship will benefit from such an



association,” said team boss Jules Westwood. “We aim to nurture new talent and the series will provide a perfect platform for us to do just that. “We’re keen to cultivate

a ladder of success, where drivers can learn their craft in TOCA Juniors and progress on to the next level without having to change teams and build new relationships.”

SUPER TOURING POWER CONFIRMED FOR NEXT YEAR

CTCRC

A third edition of the popular Super Touring Power event at Brands Hatch has been officially confirmed for next year.

The special fixture that celebrates a halcyon British Touring Car period has been organised in partnership between MotorSport Vision and the Classic Touring Car Racing Club. Next year's event will run over 28-29 June, with action on both the Indy and Grand Prix layouts, and the Super Tourers competing on both days.

"After the hugely positive response to the first two editions, we just had to get the band together [again]," said CTCRC chairman Stuart Caie. "A huge amount of work goes into putting this event together but, when you see the comments from fans and feedback from competitors, it just makes you want to do it all over again."

MSV group motorsport event manager David Willey added: "Super Touring Power is very much a passion project and one which I personally revel in being a part of."

More details about next year's edition will be released in the coming months.



GARY HAWKINS



Teams support Ginetta's 2025 changes and pledge entries

GINETTA

Leading Ginetta teams have given a positive reaction to planned changes to the manufacturer's Junior and GT championships for 2025, with many squads already pledging multi-car entries.

It was revealed last month that the G40s used in Ginetta Junior will undergo major bodywork upgrades for the first time since the model replaced the G20 for 2010, while an overseas round will also be introduced.

"I think the bodywork upgrade has probably been due!" said Eddie Ives, boss of regular frontrunner Elite Motorsport. "I'm very pleased the updates are all retrofittable and every existing G40 on the planet can be converted to a Ginetta Junior for 2025."

"Over the past 10 years there's been a number of overseas drivers coming to the championship and we've always said we need to try to tap into this market, about having an overseas round, and hopefully it helps. Everything that's been announced has been really positive – from the number

of calls we've had since the announcements, you can tell it's working."

Jamie Ross, director of R Racing – which has powered the Junior champion in each of the past three seasons – added he "would like to thank Ginetta for their five-year commitment to the championship" and is "excited to compete with the Evo in 2025".

The other key changes for 2025 concern the Ginetta GT Championship, which has struggled for grid numbers since its formation last year. A new G56 GTP8 will be introduced that delivers performance much closer to GT4 level. A 40-minute mini-enduro will also be added to its weekends alongside a 20-minute sprint contest.

"The G56 GTP8 looks like a fantastic car and should provide some great racing, so we can't wait to get started with them," said Breakell Racing team principal James Breakell. Similar commitments have been made by Fox Motorsport – which guided Mckenzie Douglass to this year's title – along with Xentek and SVG Motorsport.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



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Expanded Combe Classic set to thrill

HISTORICS

Building on its Royal Automobile Club Historic Event of 2023 accolade, this weekend's Castle Combe Autumn Classic features a wider range of series over an expanded two-day programme.

The GT & Sports Car Cup takes centre stage for two hours on Saturday. Chris Chiles/Chris Chiles Jr are aiming for their AC Cobra hat-trick, but 2018 winner Gary Pearson and Silverstone victors Graeme and James Dodd (Jaguar E-types) and John Spiers/Chris Ward (Lister) have other ideas.

There's a strong Healey presence, with Christiaan van Lanschot's triple Le Mans starter DD300, Doug Muirhead's famous 100/6 'The Chairman's Car' – both shared by Jeremy Welch – and Richard Locke's ex-Sebring 12 Hours 3000 racing. John Chatham and DD300 will also be reunited with fellow Bristolian poster co-star Roy Ashford and the Windmill & Lewis MGB 222 WAE among the paddock attractions.

Another local hero, Ron Fry, is honoured in the Ferrari Classic Challenge's Sunday morning race, which features a sonorous selection of V8s.

Formed following the Griffith Formula race at Combe in 1966, the Historic Sports Car Club returns with Historic F3 – the first standalone contests for the 1000cc screamers at the venue since May 1970. Charismatic 70s Road Sports machines and the Griffiths Haig Trophy are also on the schedule.

Julius Thurgood and the Historic Racing Drivers Club's wonderful brand of old-school club racing is evidenced in Sunday's Jack Sears Trophy and Gerry Marshall Trophy touring car sets and the Allstars pre-'66 tin-tops and sportscars mix, running with its Classic Alfa Challenge. The ever-popular Mini Se7ens and Miglias promise daily slipstreamers, while Saturday's programme is bookended by an Ecurie/Jaguar contest and FISCAR '50s Intermarque.

MARCUS PYE

Geoffrey Sizzey 1940-2024

OBITUARY

Former Alan Brown Racing managing director and Turner sportscar racer Geoffrey Sizzey has died, aged 84.

Sizzey started his working life with John Coombs in Guildford, where he met 500cc Formula 3 racer Alan Brown, winner of the 1951 Luxembourg Grand Prix in his Ecurie Richmond Cooper-Norton Mk5. When Brown left to become MD at Connaught, he invited Geoff to follow, so he became a "boy salesman". And when Brown moved his business to Bramley, Geoff went with him as MD. Eventually he left to set up his own garage business specialising in Peugeots.

Sizzey raced karts, and later still

competed in speed events in his Lotus Europa. At his first circuit race, he met Tony Broom and bought his Turner modsports racer. Thus Team Turner was reborn. Its laudable aim was to race seriously but have as much fun as possible on and after events.

Geoff and Team Turner regularly contested the Birkett Relay, and earned the prestigious handicap victory in 1987 at Snetterton with Broom, Robin Knight and Bob Mayfield in assorted models.

Sizzey was a great character and a fast but fair competitor. Above all, though, he was a gentleman who will be missed by all, not only disciples of Jack Turner's little sportscars of which he was so fond.

MARCUS PYE

REYNOLDS TO MAKE F4 BOW

Former Ginetta Junior and GB4 frontrunner Harri Reynolds will make his British Formula 4 debut at Silverstone this weekend with JHR Developments. Reynolds has been driving a Renault Clio in the Britcar Trophy this year, having won the Dragon Sport Scholarship, and will now deputise for fellow Welsh racer Ella Lloyd at JHR while she is in F1 Academy action.

BLACK POTS RALLY TITLE

Callum Black and Jack Morton have won the Asphalt Rally title after a fine campaign in their Ford Fiesta Rally2. Though the season didn't start too well, with suspension damage on the opener, Black and Morton have been the crew to beat for much of the year in Britain's premier asphalt category. On last weekend's finale, the Hills Ford Stages, Black dropped more than half a minute on the opening leg with an engine mapping problem but fought back into contention on the second day to score another victory. Neil Roskell was runner-up for the second year in his Fiesta.

RALLY OF THE AGES SUCCESS

Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation-Endurance Rally Association chairman Tomas De Vargas Machuca has described the second edition of the Rally of the Ages earlier this month as a "resounding success". "There have been so many parents with daughters, sons, friends, sisters and brothers, all in a broadchurch of cars from a 1924 Bentley and 1929 Ford Model A to modern cars," he added. "Hopefully many more youngsters will be converted to historic motorsport – it has been joyous."

DAX IS SOUTHPORT STAR

Motorsport returned to one of Britain's oldest venues on Saturday with the 2024 edition of Southport Classic and Speed. With an entry list running from Sam Wright's Austin Seven special to Paul Wintle's Toyota Yaris, there was plenty of variety, but it was Laurie Hatchard's V8 Dax (below) that powered to victory.





Tyler suffers broken bones in crash

RADICAL

Peter Tyler is recovering in hospital having suffered a high-speed crash at Brands Hatch last weekend that left the Radical racer with broken bones.

The incident happened on the first lap of the final Radical SR3 Cup race when Tyler and James Pinkerton came together on the climb out of Paddock Hill Bend towards Druids.

Tyler's SR3 XXR collided heavily with the barrier and was sent into a roll, coming to a rest upside down before medical

crews attended the scene.

A statement from championship organisers and DW Racing, the team running Tyler's car, confirmed that he "was transferred by ambulance to King's College Hospital for further checks" and tests revealed that he "sustained a fractured spine, sternum and ribs in the incident, but he is well and already commencing his recovery".

Tyler said: "It was a big one and I didn't quite get away without injury. I have a broken back, sternum and ribs but, apart from that, I'm fine and have been told everything will heal in time with no

lasting damage. It's a testament to the strength of the Radical SR3 XXR and the work of the Brands Hatch safety team that I am in such good shape.

"A big thank you to the circuit marshals and medical staff, Nicole Van Der Walt and Radical Motorsport, as well as Darren Winter and the DW Racing team."

A further comment from series organisers added: "We'd like to thank the marshals and medical team at Brands Hatch for their immediate and professional response and, on behalf of the Radical Motorsport family, we wish Peter a speedy recovery."

Festival winner Smith prepares for main event

FORMULA FORD

Josh Smith endured mixed fortunes at Brands Hatch last Saturday as he made his Formula Ford comeback ahead of next month's Festival showpiece event at the track.

Smith, who claimed a memorable victory at the Festival back in 2018, finished second in the first race in his Oldfield Motorsport-run Van Diemen JL13 after working his way up from the third row. Hopes of a further strong result in race two vanished when a tangle with



Jason Smyth's Van Diemen at Paddock Hill Bend on the third tour dropped him out.

Speaking after his race-one podium, ex-British GT star Smith admitted his reasoning for returning to FF1600 action was very much about

preparation for the Festival.

"This weekend has all been about getting back in the groove," Smith said. "I haven't raced against a lot of these drivers before either, so I'm learning about them as opposition too.

"I possibly could have challenged Andrew [Rackstraw] for the [race one] win, but the tyres were getting quite hot towards the end. I'm still looking for a tenth here and there, so I know there is more to come from me."

Fellow Formula Ford returnee and 2014 British (EcoBoost) series champion Jayde Kruger recorded a best result of 14th in race two in his Spectrum 011C having suffered a spin at Druids in the first race.

MARK LIBBETER

World Karting finals drama as Brits come out on top in UK visit

KARTING

British drivers were triumphant as the CIK-FIA World Karting Championships returned to the UK for the first time since 2017 at PFI last weekend, as both of the main finals featured unexpected late twists.

Former British Formula 4 racer Joe Turney was on course to land the OK class title and the world karting crown having won all five of his heats. He was also leading the wet final, too, until a mistake on the last lap enabled Ginetta Junior title contender Ethan Jeff-Hall to pounce and seal the spoils. Turney had to settle for second, while GT Cup racer

Matthew Higgins ensured it was an all-British podium.

There was an even more dramatic conclusion to the OK Junior contest when British drivers Noah Baglin and Kenzo Craigie collided just metres before the finish line, having engaged in an intense scrap.

Craigie was able to emerge from the contact with the lead and took the win from fellow Mercedes junior, Australian James Anagnostiadis. Rocco Coronel, son of tin-top star Tom, completed the podium.

Meanwhile, the CIK-FIA Karting World Cup OK-N final was headed by South Korean driver Kyuho Lee.



Jeff-Hall danced through the rain to clinch OK class title

PAUL HORTON

McRAE'S UK RACING DEBUT

Max McRae, son of British Rally champion Alister and nephew of World Rally champion Colin, claimed three podium finishes in the Radical Cup UK at Brands Hatch last weekend as he made his UK circuit debut at the wheel of an SR3. McRae, who has previously raced Radicals in Australia, took third in the opening two races of the weekend having shadowed Oscar Joyce in both contests. He then had a moment of glory in the reversed-grid race three when he led the opening lap before he had to give best to Chris Lulham.

DIFFERENT HORSE POWER

Well-known Hunt jockey Danny Mullins made his motor racing debut at Mondello Park at the weekend. Supported at the circuit by TV presenter Lee McKenzie, he mixed it with the class regulars in the Fiesta Zetec Championship despite difficult conditions and even managed to claim two rookie podiums.

SHARPLES BACK ON TOP

Former Historic Sports Car Club chairman Chris Sharples reclaimed his Champion of Brands title last weekend, guiding his Palliser WDF1 to a brace of unopposed class wins at United Formula Ford's final visit of the year to the famous Kent circuit.

CATERHAM GRAND PRIX

The Caterham Grand Prix, a one-off long-distance race, will be held for the first time at Snetterton next year (23 August) while all five of the factory series are also set to return to Bushy Park in Barbados to compete at the Caribbean Cup in December.

FREEMAN DOMINATES AGAIN

Will Freeman continued his dominant Clubmans Sports Prototype season at Brands Hatch last weekend as he remains unbeaten in the CSP2 division and secured the overall title with an event to go. The Ardmore FR06B driver (below) has also bagged pole and fastest lap in each race. Alex Champkin took two overall victories in Kent, including setting a new lap record in his Phantom PR24.



GARY HAWKINS

CTCRC to celebrate 50th anniversary

CTCRC

The Classic Touring Car Racing Club will mark its 50th anniversary with special events and a celebration race at its season finale at Thruxton this weekend.

The club was founded in 1974 as the Classic Saloon Car Club and ran its first championship the following year for pre-1957 Classic Saloons, as Mike Hawes won the inaugural title in an MG

Magnette. In its 50th year of racing, the CTCRC now runs eight championships, ranging from Pre-'66 Touring Cars to Super Tourers of the 1990s.

Celebrations will centre around a Saturday-night party in the Thruxton Centre hospitality building, to which various club luminaries have been invited.

"People that were originally involved with the club are coming back," said club chairman Stuart Caie.

"Past committee members have been invited and former champions – we'd love to see them all along."

While its regular championships – with the majority of titles still to be decided – will fill three double-header grids at the event, there will also be a pair of 15-minute allcomers races to mark the anniversary. Entries remain open until midday on Friday.

MARK PAULSON



Summers sets up showdown

CLIVE GREEN

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

Alex Summers ensured that the British Hillclimb Championship title contest will go to the final round at Loton Park next week by taking a mighty double victory at Doune last weekend.

Summers went to the Scottish hill for the penultimate event of the season knowing that he had to bring a halt to rival Matthew Ryder's sequence of eight run-off wins in a row.

In changeable conditions, Summers was superb at the technical hill. He had to push very hard in the wet for the opening run-off to eclipse Will Hall, who came closer than ever to his first win of the season with a 40.56s. Summers ran last as fastest qualifier, and took the DJ Firestorm over the line just 0.02 seconds faster than Hall.

Summers's result was made even better when Wallace Menzies pipped Ryder for

third. Meanwhile, Jack Cottrill starred with a fine fifth in his Cosworth-engined Dallara.

At the end of the afternoon, conditions were drier and this time Ryder ran Summers close. When Ryder was first to break the 36s mark with a 35.95s climb, the pressure was on Summers, but he rose to the occasion and underlined his Doune pace with a winning 35.59s climb. "We needed that," admitted Summers of a very

important weekend.

Hall and Menzies were third and fourth, and this time Johnathen Varley drove a stormer to put his two-litre GWR Predator into fifth slot. Varley's excellent performances mean he has also claimed this year's Midland Hillclimb Championship with one round left, and is also on target to take the BHC Cup, the class-based competition within the BHC.

PAUL LAWRENCE

Harris retains title after setbacks

BRISCA F1

Tom Harris survived a first-corner pile-up and a last-bend hit to successfully defend his BriSCA F1 World Championship crown at Skegness Raceway on Saturday night, driving a new car he had only finished building a few days earlier.

Harris started the 25-lap race from pole and was fortunate not to end his defence at the very first bend after main rival Frankie Wainman Jr planted the world champion into the fence.

Harris popped a rear tyre in a

collision at the same corner a lap later, his race seemingly over, but a multiple pile-up blocked the track and forced the race to be restarted.

Harris withstood attacks from both Wainman Jr and fellow front-row starter Mat Newson upon the restart, and was en route to a fifth world title until Wainman Jr closed dramatically with two laps to go. Going into the final bend, Wainman Jr launched the leader to the outside and, as both cars clattered the fence, Harris was able to gather up his car and win the sprint to the chequered flag.



COLIN CASSERLEY

Final-corner contact
nearly prevented victory

"What a way to win a World Final," said the 35-year-old. "It's special to win any World title, but to win it in that fashion is unbelievable."

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FF1600 double for Rackstraw after tight tussle

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR FORD POWER LIVE
14-15 SEPTEMBER

Porsche Carrera Cup GB star Andrew Rackstraw claimed two superb victories in the United Formula Ford and Champion of Brands double-header at last weekend's Ford Power Live meeting, as preparations for the upcoming Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy events gathered momentum.

The South African took advantage of a slide by polesitter Jason Smyth to move to the front in race one before the contest was halted following a clash at Druids involving Klaus Dieter-Haeckel's Van Diemen RF91 and the Firman RFR1600 of Bruno van Dyke. Rackstraw continued where he left off at the restart at the wheel of his Spectrum 011C, but Smyth (Van Diemen RF00/JL12) continued to give chase, followed by Josh Smith's Van Diemen JL13 and the Van Diemen RF99 of current series leader Morgan Quinn.

Smyth briefly moved back ahead on the climb up Hailwood Hill at half-distance, but another wayward moment at Graham Hill Bend dropped him to fifth and handed Rackstraw a lead he would keep as 2018 Festival winner Smith finished a close second. Smyth, who took third, then collided with Smith at Paddock on lap three of the second race, putting both out of victory contention. Quinn took up the challenge to Rackstraw thereafter, but overheating tyres forced him to settle for second ahead of his Team Dolan team-mate Isaac Canto da Silva.

Drive of the race arguably came from reigning Walter Hayes Trophy winner Chris Middlehurst, who charged through to fourth from the back of the 30-car grid after being forced to miss race one due to being the first reserve.



Rackstraw (left) battled with Smyth and others to take both victories

Tom Ovenden looked set to claim victory in the opening Modified Fords Group A contest in his RSR until he came across Malcolm Wise's slowing Escort Cosworth along the Cooper Straight. Forced to take dramatic evasive action, Ovenden surrendered his lead to Malcolm Harding's RSR. The pair continued their battle until the race was stopped when Wise pulled off moments before his car ignited.

Ovenden and Harding carried their battle over into the second race until Harding retired late on while Simon Light, driving his five-litre V8 Capri, inherited second after charging through from the back.

Mike Thurley (Escort Mk1 Zakspeed) recorded a double win in the two Group B races, but he had to overcome a sturdy defence from Chris Baker in his Escort RS1600i to claim victory in the opener following an exciting tussle.

There was entertainment aplenty in the four EnduroKa sprint races, with Luke Reade and Jack Wright central figures. Reade narrowly beat Wright to win the opener in his Wolf Motorsport entry, but Wright (MilnAir Racing) reversed the result in race two after Reade missed a gear at Paddock Hill Bend.

The pair swapped the lead multiple times

on the final lap of race three before Reade emerged victorious, but Wright levelled the score in the finale after executing a three-wide pass on Reade and Joey Da'Prato on the approach to Druids.

The battle for SR1 glory between Sam Shaw and Marcus Littlewood reached a controversial conclusion in the Radical Cup UK on Sunday after each scored a win on Saturday. Littlewood made a blistering start to usurp front-row starters Shaw and Ashley Gaunt, but later contact between the title protagonists allowed Shaw ahead. He claimed victory on the road, but a penalty handed the win and the provisional crown to Littlewood. Chris Lulham was again dominant in the separate SR3 bouts.

MARK LIBBETER

WEEKEND WINNERS

UNITED FF1600/CHAMPION OF BRANDS

Races 1 & 2 Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum 011C)

MODIFIED FORDS – GROUP A

Race 1 Malcolm Harding (RSR)

Race 2 Tom Ovenden (RSR)

MODIFIED FORDS – GROUP B

Races 1 & 2 Mike Thurley (Escort Mk1 Zakspeed)

ENDUROKA

Races 1 & 3 Luke Reade

Races 2 & 4 Jack Wright

RADICAL CUP UK – SR1

Race 1 Sam Shaw

Races 2 & 3 Marcus Littlewood

RADICAL CUP UK – SR3

Races 1, 2 & 3 Chris Lulham

CLUBMANS SPORTS PROTOTYPES

Races 1 & 2 Alex Champkin (Phantom PR24)

Race 3 Michelle Hayward (Phantom P82TR)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



Wright (46) and Reade (4) shared the spoils in EnduroKa sprints



Neary and Loggie no-show
opened the door for others,
such as G-Cat's Porsche, to win

GT Cup hat-trick for Jennings and Caton in Porsche

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
14-15 SEPTEMBER

There was drama before the penultimate round of the GT Cup Championship even got under way at Donington Park last weekend, with dominant pairing Richard Neary and Ian Loggie forced to miss the event. This was after the Abba Racing-run Mercedes-AMG GT3 the pair share had suffered damage the previous weekend, when a brake disc failure sent the car into the barriers in the British GT round at the same venue.

Their absence swung the narratives of the race outcomes as well as the overall title fight. GTC group leader Topcats Racing pounced and scored an impressive 1-2 finish in the first of four races. Fraser Fenwick led from lights to flag ahead of an almighty recovery by team-mate Tom

Rawlings, who suffered driveshaft failure before qualifying in the sister Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo.

A Saturday sweep was denied by G-Cat Racing pair Shamus Jennings and Greg Caton (Porsche 911 GT3-R), victorious despite a penalty for a bizarre mishap. "I hit the pitstop button into the Melbourne Hairpin," said Jennings. "It meant that it was included in our stop time, which resulted in a penalty. A dopey moment!"

Caton danced through a late downpour in Sunday's enduro on slicks to double G-Cat's win tally, which soon became three from four when Jennings held off a heated lap-one attack from Warren Gilbert's Topcats Lamborghini to clinch the final sprint.

Forsetti Motorsport remains in slim overall title contention, Mikey Porter and Sam Naser taking three GTH wins in their Aston Martin Vantage.

The Focus Cup title was provisionally

sealed, when Lewis Clark scored two wins to take the crown with a meeting remaining. The former Fiesta star asserted his dominance with an impressive display in Saturday's opening contest, before extending his tally to eight victories for the year with a fighting drive from sixth to first later on.

"A brilliant season overall – it's been great fun," said Clark, who passed Mark McCann at the Melbourne Hairpin to complete the double. "I'm hoping to race in GTs, but we'll see what the winter brings."

Jonathan Baker did his utmost to keep the pressure Clark, tailing him home for the runner-up spot in race one. Richard Hall completed the podium and then, along with Jamie Goode, was a beneficiary of five race-two disqualifications for yellow-flag infringements (which included McCann) as they completed the top three in the second outing.

Next year's newer Focus model was tested by Simon Walton and Gary Mitchell, with Walton briefly going from the back to the front in the first race – albeit ineligible for points.

A small six-car grid did not detract from two pulsating Clio Cup GB battles. Both were won by guest driver Will Orton, despite the Forsetti Motorsport British GT regular being forced to overcome a 10-second handicap each time. He survived a barge from Ben Colburn at Goddards in the opener to snatch the decisive lead on lap nine of 12 with a brave sweep around Nicky Taylor into McLeans.

"One of the best races I think I've had all year!" said Orton. "The team got a new car



Orton came out on top
of Clio Cup GB thrillers

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT CUP

Race 1 Fraser Fenwick (Lamborghini Huracan ST)

Races 2 & 3 Shamus Jennings/Greg Caton (Porsche 911 GT3)

Race 4 Shamus Jennings (Porsche 911 GT3)

FOCUS CUP

Races 1 & 2 Lewis Clark

CLIO CUP GB

Races 1 & 2 Will Orton

SPORTS 2000

Races 1 & 2 Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)

PORSCH CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Simon Clark (997 Carrera S)

BOXSTER CUP

Race 1 Ryan Charters

Race 2 Perry Darling

MONOPOSTO (F3/M1400/CLASSIC)

Races 1 & 2 George Line (Dallara F308)

MONOPOSTO (2000/1800/1600/1000)

Races 1 & 2 Matthew Haughton (Jedi Mk7, below)

MSVR ALLCOMERS

Races 1 & 2 Doug Carter (Radical PR6)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

from France and said ‘you’re driving’. We shook it down on Friday, were ready to go and then had a great race.”

Orton doubled his tally in a frenetic second outing. Taylor usurped a resurgent Daire Flock with seven minutes to go, before Orton took full advantage and quickly passed Taylor with a neat dive inside at the Melbourne Hairpin to complete the sweep.

Double delight also went Michael Gibbins’s way in Sports 2000 and Simon Clark’s in Porsche Club, the latter in calm fashion from the front in both races. Boxster Cup honours were shared by Ryan Charters and Perry Darling, despite a tense battle up front in the second.

Across two Monoposto grids, George Line and Matthew Haughton were untouchable. Lines bettered Tony Bishop in both F3 outings, sealing the first in his Dallara F308 with a bold pass at Redgate. Haughton charged to a wet win, beating Eric Cowell’s similar Jedi afterwards.

DAN MASON

THE VETERAN AND THE NEWCOMER LEARNING THE ROPES



The contrast in experience between Simpson Motorsport’s GT Cup pairing at Donington Park last weekend could not have been greater.

One, a newcomer diving head-on into a lofty racing introduction “about 40-odd years late”; the other four races shy of clocking up 300 British Touring Car Championship career starts. What did bring together the contrasting combination of Darren Ridge and James Kaye, however, was a mutual feeling of wanting to improve.

GT racing in the UK has enjoyed a rise in recent years and one of the decisive factors has been the will and effort to accommodate amateur competitors. The GT Cup has made a long-standing example of gifting amateurs experience away from the intense – at times impossible – fight against professional drivers, instead learning alongside them, against those of a similar mindset.

A prominent example was at Donington Park, with Telecoms businessman Ridge diving “balls-deep” into his first motor race at a “daunting” GT4 level with little to no experience.

“A massive experience, and a bit daunting to be honest,” were the first thoughts of the BMW M4 GT4 driver. “I’m diving in at the absolute deep end, but we’ve got a great team around me, and a great mentor in James.

“After years, I finally took the plunge and maybe thought I could try something a little bit less serious first time out. But nevertheless – without sounding too egotistical – I’ve not been used to losing, so coming from miles behind puts a dent in that, but offers a great learning

curve to push you on.

“The skill levels are something I’ve never known from different sports before. People say ‘why not race classics?’ but I want to drive a faster car that interests me, and hopefully I can progress. This weekend has been a massive bonus.”

Kaye, now at the age of 60, shared a similar desire to improve even after spending 20 years in the BTCC, alongside international appearances at Bathurst and Macau.

The 2002 Production class BTCC champion said: “I first dabbled in GTs back in the mid-’90s with the American Saleen team, but my biggest thing was that I’d always raced competitively with front-wheel drive. It’s a whole new learning curve for me in that sense. Each time you’re finding something different.”

From a difficult introduction to motorsport for Ridge in terms of discovering the techniques required, those data traces and numbers were vital notes to the pair, and it left he and co-driver Kaye knowing what to improve after taking a best result of ninth from the weekend.

“You’ve got to find your expectation level first of all,” said Kaye. “Get your licence, then you can race anything or anywhere in the world. At our age, it’s not about being ultra-competitive, it’s about enjoying it.

“We never had that level of data – we didn’t even have a sim! Now, car control and sim work can be done to help better yourself. I’m old school. It’s new. Not only is it a big journey for Darren, it is for me still.”

DAN MASON

Doherty demonstrates he's the real deal with Leinster Trophy triumph

**MONDELLO PARK
MPSC
14-15 SEPTEMBER**

Ronan Doherty is a well-known sim racing star and has also been very impressive in real-life competition in recent times in Formula Vee and, of late, in Formula Ford 1600. Feeling that he should have won the famous Leinster Trophy in 2023, when he was sidelined with a mechanical problem, he appeared on the FVee entry list for the 2024 event at Mondello Park last weekend and certainly wasn't there to make up the numbers.

Doherty was fastest in testing ahead of the weekend and triumphed in the earlier race, after a stoppage and restart, from fellow sim/FF1600 competitor Jordan Kelly, with class returnee Dan Polley third. Doherty then fought off a first-corner challenge from former Trophy winner Polley in the main race of the day, and gradually eased away from the pack, crossing the line an incredible 20 seconds ahead of his nearest challenger. In his wake, Polley drove well to repel a race-long attack from Gavin Buckley.

The Junior Mini class has really taken off this season and once again provided great entertainment in both races. Leo Richardson led away from Jack Fildes in the opener, with Joshua Henry third. Poleman Fildes wasn't done just yet though and closed right up on Richardson mid-race, with Henry lurking in their wheeltracks. Behind them, Jayden McBrearty was also on a charge, displacing Holly Dunnion for fourth and closing the leaders down, too.

When Richardson slowed momentarily at Turn 3, Fildes was through like a flash. Richardson wrestled the lead back at the final corner but Fildes surged ahead again on the exit, with the three leaders starting

the final lap bumper to bumper. At the flag, it was Fildes who just took the victory, with Richardson and Henry shadowing him over the line. Fildes did the double in race two, but only after a hectic scrap with Richardson, the pair swapping the lead on multiple occasions in a battle that had the crowd on their feet throughout.

Despite driving a borrowed Toyota Celica, Patrick O'Malley took his customary Future Classics win in race one. Ian Thornton's similar car prevailed in the sequel, while Noel Conachy's Mini was first of the 'Future' class cars home both times.

Sean McGovern moved one step closer to the hotly contested Fiesta Zetec title with a win in race one, once he displaced the fast-starting Peter Barrable. William Kellett kept himself in title contention by topping the second encounter, after demoting early leader Mark

O'Donoghue on the opening lap.

Roy White is an experienced and highly successful rally driver and, since transferring to circuit racing in 2023, has always been blindingly fast in the wet. It was no surprise therefore to see him top the Fiesta ST timesheets in a wet qualifying session, with former karter John Elliffe alongside, having finally got his new car handling to his liking. The track was drying in race one, but there was no denying White, who eased away from all the usual pacesetters to take a popular win. Elliffe was second, with Victor Cullen third. Darragh McMullen grabbed a lead he wouldn't relinquish at the first corner of race two, holding on despite the close attentions of Derek Graham, who was very impressive on his series debut. Tim McQuaid completed the podium in third.

BOSS Ireland champion Tony Greenan



After last year's disappointment, there was delight for Doherty



White used his rallying experience to help guide him to popular win



Fildes (left) topped two very entertaining Junior Mini bouts

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA VEE IRELAND

Races 1 & 2 Ronan Doherty (Sheane FV94)

JUNIOR MINI CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Jack Fildes

FUTURE CLASSICS

Race 1 Patrick O'Malley (Toyota Celica)

Race 2 Ian Thornton (Toyota Celica)

FIESTA ZETECs

Race 1 Sean McGovern

Race 2 William Kellett

FIESTA STs

Race 1 Roy White

Race 2 Darragh McMullen

FORMULA BOSS IRELAND

Race 1 Tony Greenan (Dallara F317)

Race 2 Jonathan Fildes (Ralt RT4)

SEAT SUPERCUP IRELAND

Race 1 Stephen Wright

Race 2 Paul Parr

IRISH STRYKERS

Races 1 & 2 Michael Cullen

FORMULA SHEANE

Race 1 Philip Sheane

Race 2 Keith Hogg

IRISH LEGENDS

Race 1 Jamie Moylan

Race 2 Scott Jackson

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION

Race 1 Bernard Foley (Crossle 42S)

Race 2 Stephen Kelly (Mallock U2 Mk21)

IRISH TOURING CARS

Race 1 Stephen Traub (Honda Integra)

Race 2 Cian Walsh (Honda Civic Type R EP3)

GLOBAL GT LIGHTS

Races 1 & 2 Cameron Fenton

For full results visit: timing.ie



dominated proceedings to successfully defend his Holmpatrick Trophy win in the opener in his Dallara F317. Martin Daly just pipped Jonathan Fildes's spiritedly driven Ralt RT4 to the line for second. With Greenan sitting out race two, it was Fildes who gave all the entertainment, scything his way through the pack to take an emotional win at the wheel of his late father's car. Mark Reade drove superbly in his 1000cc Leystone to just beat Daly's Dallara World Series to the flag in what was a highly entertaining battle.

Dave Maguire made a great start to lead the first SEAT Supercup race, but was immediately under pressure from former rally driver Stephen Wright. Wright made the move stick into Honda Corner, but almost straight away the red flags flew. On countback it should have been Maguire's victory, but a 10s jumped-start penalty gave the result back to Wright again! Paul Parr

then took the later race's spoils.

Des Meehan made a great getaway to grab the Irish Stryker lead from the usually dominant Michael Cullen, but normal service was soon resumed and Cullen was chased across the finish line by his son Victor, with Meehan having to settle for third. Victory in the second race was enough to assure Cullen Sr of the title for the second year in a row, with class stalwarts Andy D'Alton and Roger Welaratne second and third respectively.

Elsewhere, honours were shared. Philip Sheane led older brother Kevin across the line to take Formula Sheane honours on their class return, with regular conqueror Keith Hogg third. But Hogg was first across the line in race two to claim the coveted David Sheane Trophy, with Richard Kearney charging to second from the back of the grid.

Jamie Moylan took the first Irish Legends race, having charged up through the pack,

from Evan Curran and former Fiesta champion Michael Barrable. Scott Jackson took race two from Lee Malone, while the finale was abandoned after an early red flag at the end of the day.

Bernard Foley, having switched from his usual MGB GT V8 to a Crossle 42S, just held off Stephen Kelly's Mallock in the Historic Racing Car Association opener. Jackie Cochrane closed them both down in the latter stages in his Sunbeam Tiger but had to be content with third. Later, Kelly drove superbly to repay the compliment and take the win. Foley was a close second, with Billy Crosbie third. Cochrane spun off later on when challenging for the lead.

Stephen Traub (Honda Integra) and Cian Walsh (Civic) shared the Irish Touring Car spoils, while Cameron Fenton was first across the line in two poorly supported Global GT races.

LEO NULTY

THE BATTLE TO HEAD THE RYAN AUTOSPORT NATIONAL RANKINGS

1 STEWART BLACK



With just two months of the regular club racing season to go, it's all to play for at the top of the leaderboard

STEPHEN LICKORISH AND MARCUS SIMMONS

The Ryan Motorsport Insurance Autosport National Rankings so far this year have all been about three drivers. Ever since Autosport published its first winners' table of the season at the start of May, one of either Stewart Black, Dan Brown or Piers Grange has been at the head of the leaderboard.

The premise behind these rankings is simple. Each week, we compile a table of the drivers who have achieved the most wins in car races held in the UK and Ireland, with each triumph being treated equally regardless of the series in which it was achieved.

Four and a half months since that initial table, it is impossible to call which of the trio – or even an outsider – will eventually prevail, with just one win currently separating them. Scottish Legends star Black has spent the longest at number one, having topped the charts for 10 weeks (as opposed to six for Brown and four for Grange), but

that is no guarantee of success. Brown has been a regular winner in the Racing Hondas category in his Civic Bali, while Grange has prevailed in several different Ford-based divisions in his Escort Mk2.

Such has been the triumvirate's domination of the top spots, only on four occasions have they failed to fill the first three positions. Perennial Mazda MX-5 victor Ben Short is one driver to have broken into the top three and is now fifth and very much still in contention. McKenzie Douglass, already crowned as this year's Ginetta GT champion, and CityCar Cup frontrunner Stuart Bliss are the other pair to deny Black, Brown and Grange a top-three clean sweep, although Douglass and Bliss have now slipped back to seventh and 12th, respectively.

However, as the weeks have passed, the chasing pack has generally reeled the top trio in. Sim racing star turned Radical ace Chris Lulham heads the challengers after his latest hat-trick



“Such has been the trio’s domination, only on four occasions have they failed to fill the first three positions”

at Brands Hatch last weekend, while Short, Jason Smyth, Douglass, and 2023 table-topper Michael Cullen are all within three wins of Black’s total. Of those, Smyth is perhaps the one to watch. He has already achieved success in several Formula Ford categories and with the end-of-season FF1600 knockout events approaching – and their plentiful opportunities to add to the win tally – Smyth could yet prove to be a real thorn in the established top three’s sides. 🌟

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LEADERBOARD 2024 RYAN MOTORSPORT INSURANCE
AUTOSPORT NATIONAL RANKINGS SO FAR

POS	DRIVER(CAR)	OVERALL	CLASS	TOTAL
1	Stewart Black (Legends Coupe)	15	0	15
2	Dan Brown (Honda Civic Bali)	14	0	14
3	Piers Grange (Ford Escort Mk2/Ford Mustang)	7	7	14
4	Chris Lulham (Radical SR3)	13	0	13
5	Ben Short (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	12	0	12
6	Jason Smyth (Van Diemen RF00/JL12)	12	0	12
7	Mckenzie Douglass (Ginetta G56 GTP)	12	0	12
8	Michael Cullen (Raw Stryker/Ford Fiesta ST)	11	1	12
9	George Line (Dallara F308)	11	0	11
10	Steve McDermid (MG ZR170)	9	2	11
11	Ryan Cunningham (Honda Civic EP3)	0	11	11
12	Stuart Bliss (Toyota Aygo)	10	0	10
13	Jack Parker (Legends Ford Coupe)	10	0	10
14	Matty Cobb (Volkswagen Beetle)	10	0	10
15	Benn Simms (Jomo JMR7)	10	0	10
16	Jake Hill (BMW 330e M Sport/Nissan Primera/TVR Griffith/HWM)	10	0	10
17	Richard Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT3)	10	0	10
18	Peter Bennett (Mini Cooper)	10	0	10
19	Tony Greenan (Dallara F317)	10	0	10
20	Ben Timmons (Caterham 7 270R)	9	0	9
21	Daniel Clark (Legends Coupe)	9	0	9
22	Aidan Hills (Mazda MX-5 Mk3)	9	0	9
23	Samuel Harrison (Reynard SF79)	9	0	9
24	Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S/Lotus Elise S2)	9	0	9
25	Lewis Thompson (Caterham 7 420R)	9	0	9
26	Matt Simpson (SHP Pickup)	9	0	9
27	Craig Ewing (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	9	0	9
28	Keith Hogg (Sheane FS01)	9	0	9
29	Stuart Waite (BMW M3 E36)	2	7	9
30	Paul Goldstein (Caterham 7 Sigma 135/Caterham 7 Roadsport)	8	0	8
31	Michael Gibbins (MCR S2n)	8	0	8
32	Michael Blackburn (Ford Fiesta ST150)	8	0	8
33	Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18/Lotus 20)	8	0	8
34	Deagen Fairclough (Tatuus T-421)	8	0	8
35	Stephen Berry (Mini Cooper S)	8	0	8
36	Ross Alexander (Mini Cooper S)	8	0	8
37	Lewis Clark (Ford Focus Zetec S)	8	0	8
38	Ian Loggie (Mercedes-AMG GT3)	8	0	8
39	Matthew Houghton (Jedi Mk7)	7	1	8
40	Oly Mortimer (Mini Cooper)	4	4	8
41	Sam Shaw (Radical SR1)	1	7	8
42	Douglas Inglis (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	0	8	8
43	David Russell (BMW E36)	0	8	8
44	Bill Garner (Maverick KE01)	0	8	8
45	Hugh Simpson (MG Midget)	0	8	8
46	Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth)	7	0	7
47	Will Gibson (Legends Ford Coupe)	7	0	7
48	Andy Southcott (MG Midget Lenham)	7	0	7
49	Daniel Garrett (Locost 7)	7	0	7
50	Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum 011C/Porsche 911 GT3 Cup/Mygale)	7	0	7

All car races in UK and Ireland are included except qualification/repechage, consolation and handicap races. No races in other countries. Class wins are only counted when there are at least six starters in the class, except: when the race is part of a multi-stage event where six or more have taken part in earlier heats that feed into a semi-final or final; when multiple championships are merged in the same race, the ‘overall’ winner from the slower championship can count a class win as long as that championship has at least 10 starters across all classes. Only classes divided by car characteristics are included, not those divided by driver characteristics such as ability, professional status, age, experience (for example rookie or pro-am classes). Each race counts only once, so an overall winner’s class win is not added. Where there is a tie, overall wins take precedence. Where there is still a tie, average grid size for a driver’s wins determines the order.



GIVING FRIENDS AND FAMILY A TASTE OF THE ACTION

The Caterham Graduates Racing Club held a special contest for novices at Snetterton last month and it left quite an impression on those taking part

STEPHEN LICKORISH

National racing organisers are always looking at developing fresh ideas to encourage new drivers into the sport and breaking down the barriers to getting involved. And a great example of a club innovating in such a way came with the Caterham Graduates Racing Club's Friends and Family race at Snetterton last month.

This was a 20-minute contest purely open to people who had never raced before, and was intended to give those who may regularly trek around the country helping or watching someone race a chance to experience the action for themselves. By enabling them to borrow equipment and compete against other first-timers, it was all designed to be a low-cost and less daunting way to give these friends and family members a little taste of the sport. "We did everything we could to make it as stress-free as possible," explains club chairman Matthew Willoughby. "For example, we staggered the grid rather than having a two-by-two start to make it less intimidating."

Such efforts were clearly appreciated by those taking part, including race winner Ed Drake, who is a technician for Caterham team Williams Motorsport. "When you look at a race weekend, it's quite a daunting thing for a novice if it's a double or triple-header and the costs of it," he says. "Being able to enter the Friends and Family race, that title alleviates a bit of pressure just coming along and having some fun. The costs were nowhere near what a normal race weekend would be and it's such a good way of getting people interested in motorsport."

David Tonge was another newcomer with just a few trackdays to his name prior to his Norfolk race outing. Unlike many of the drivers, he did not have a previous connection to Caterham Graduates but was instantly welcomed into the fold. "It was very friendly – I turned up knowing nobody at all," he relates. "John Benfield, the competition director, was my buddy telling me when the briefing was and what to do. It was less intimidating – we were all looking after each other."



Autosport story encouraged
Tonge to take the plunge

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTTMITCHELL PHOTOGRAPHY



“We did what we could to make it as stress-free as possible – we staggered the grid to make it less intimidating”

Given the whole field were making their debuts, there was the potential for some over-eagerness in battle, but all the drivers made it to the chequered flag – and, just as important, their borrowed Caterhams were undamaged. Each of those taking part emerged with a far greater appreciation of what it means to be a club racing driver. “I had a couple of family members who did it and now they understand what we go through when we compete and the range of emotions,” reckons Willoughby, whose father and “gung-ho” brother-in-law were among those on the entry.

With a grid of novices, there was the potential for the field to quickly get strung out due to their varying abilities. But that was not the case and instead there were great battles throughout the order, especially at the front. Just 0.009 seconds separated the top three in qualifying around Snetterton – perfect for the newbies with its wide spaces and the long lap preventing slower drivers having to watch their mirrors for frontrunners. In the race, Drake overcame the power disadvantage of the Sigma 150 machine he was piloting to emerge triumphant after a close tussle with Oscar McCall. Not that Drake went into the encounter with lofty ambitions.

“I was happy to be able to finally live out a boyhood dream of mine to race,” admits Drake, who Willoughby describes as being “super-impressive”. “I just tried my best and gave it everything. Oscar in P2 is a great driver and we had a great battle – I think we exchanged places about five or six times.”

Drake says he is indebted to Rrutuj Patki and Robin Baslington

for getting on the grid. After a season last year where the Williams mechanics had a fair amount of damage to repair, several of the drivers grouped together to organise a thank you for the hard-working crew. “They booked a trackday at Donington Park and we could drive the cars rather than spanning them,” continues Drake. “Roger [Patki] took me out in his car and I was buzzing because that was my first time in a Caterham on circuit. He said, ‘You’re actually quite good – you need to start racing.’ I said, ‘I would love to but that requires a lot of money – money I don’t have currently.’ A couple of months went by and he called me and asked if I’d checked my emails. He’d entered me in the Friends and Family race.”

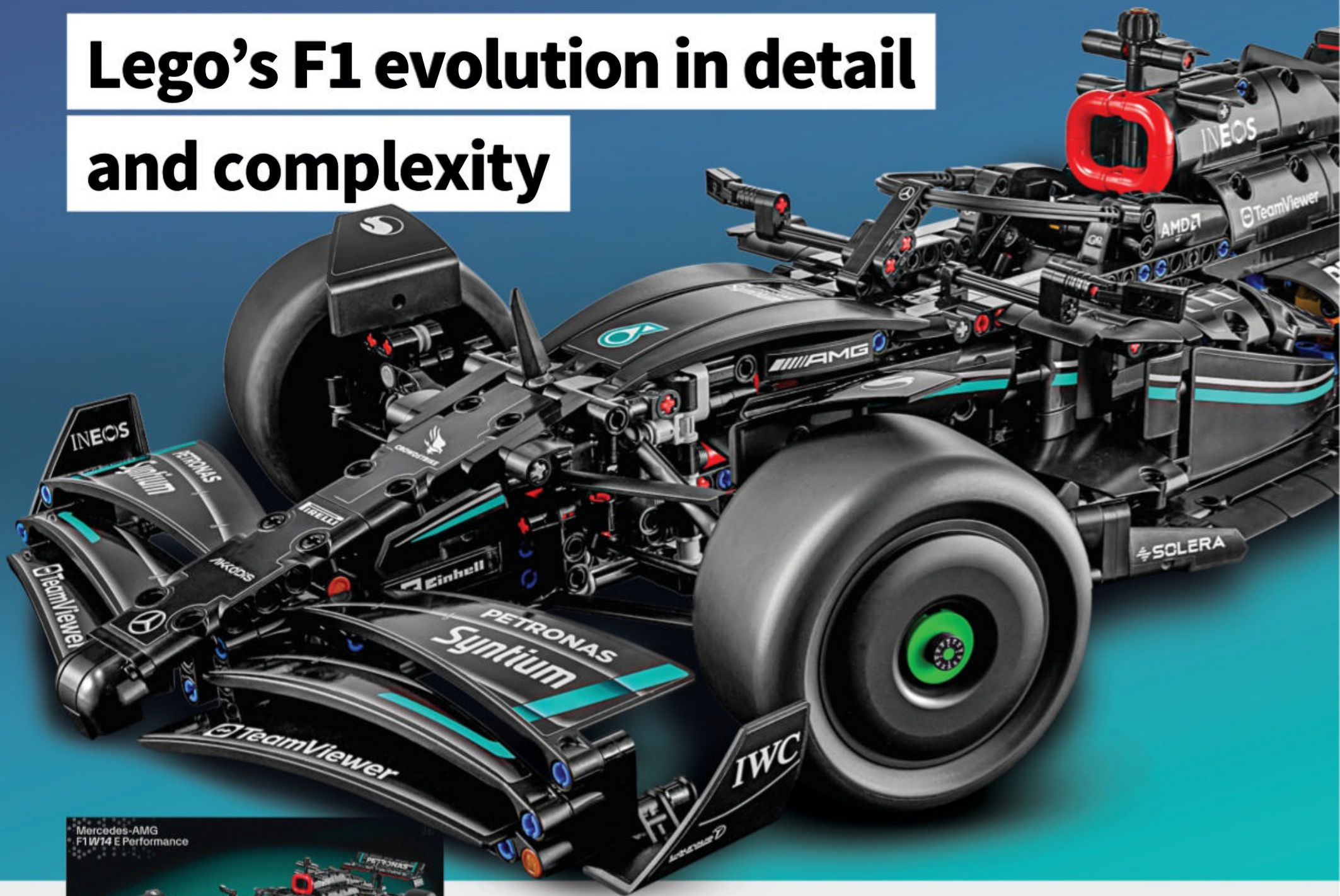
Tonge’s route onto the grid was slightly different. “A friend of mine is doing 420s with Toyo [7 Racing category] and he did the Academy about 20 years ago,” he explains. “He then ran out of money and stopped, and last season he bought this car and I thought, ‘I should be doing something like that.’ I bought a car, but I’d never driven a racing car before, so have spent this year doing trackdays. I saw the story in Autosport about the Friends and Family race and there was a line about it being for people who haven’t raced before. I didn’t know anyone in the Graduates, but used it as my first race.”

And that’s exactly what the ethos of the race is all about, helping new drivers take that first step. Willoughby admits it may not become an annual occurrence, but would like to hold more in future, while the club is now working on plans for another special event next year.

That is something Drake and Tonge could well be a part of as both are keen to do more racing. “Now I have the bug and I’m looking to do some other races – although I’m saving for a house and racing, which don’t go hand in hand with each other!” laughs Drake. Tonge, meanwhile, has already entered the Caterham Graduates season finale at Donington Park next month. Proof, should it be needed, that the friendly approach to encouraging newcomers really can make a difference. ✨

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Lego's F1 evolution in detail and complexity



MERCEDES LEGO
RRP £189.99

While Lego has evolved significantly over time, the core concept of snapping bricks together to create a model that, with a little imagination, resembles something from either the real or fictional world remains.

But how much has the product evolved in the last 20-odd years? Rather conveniently, this writer was able to grab a slightly sun-bleached Ferrari F1 Racer (model ID 8386) from the top of the bookshelf to compare it with the recently released Mercedes W14 Technic (model ID 42171).

Some housekeeping before we start. The Ferrari was not technically a Technic kit and instead fell under the 'Racers' banner. But if you look at the common components – the steering rack, the beams held together by pins and other details – the Ferrari is Technic in all but name.

With that debate sparked for the diehard Lego enthusiasts, let's compare these two kits. With the Ferrari – based on Michael Schumacher's 2004 championship-winning car – the sleek curves are created using bendable pieces, with the 'technic' beams providing the block colour and a frame from which to hang the bargeboards.

This simplicity continues with the front and rear wings – these are formed of single elements, despite the real-world equivalent having dual elements in both cases. With the sidepods also made up of a few larger components, it's safe to say that imagination is crucial to getting the most out of this creation.

Turning to the recently released kit, the first thing that you notice is the sheer difference in the number of pieces involved – up from 738 to 1643. This increase gives plenty of scope for additional detail, although the scale of the car remains similar to that of the Ferrari.

But truth be told, aside from some of the key components and the fact that both models are recognisable as F1 cars, that is where the similarities end – blasting this writer's nostalgia out of the window.

With the increased number of parts comes a far more rigid final product

that gives infinitely more confidence as you proudly carry it around to show your thoroughly uninterested partner, who nods in acknowledgement if for nothing more than to move you on from the topic.

Part of this added security comes from the increased floor area of modern F1 cars, this providing a firm foundation upon which to build the more technical components. Speaking of which, on the Ferrari, the suspension was merely decorative, with the wishbones locked in place and offering no movement. With the Mercedes, yes, the suspension is extremely stiff, but sprung components on each corner mean that each wheel can move independently.

However, nowhere is the evolution





Mercedes W14 is made up of 1643 pieces – for the Ferrari (bottom), it's a mere 738



ALL PICS: LEGO

between kits clearer than on the bodywork. This latest iteration has completely done away with single-piece solutions, and instead goes to painstaking – and extremely complicated – lengths to create something that requires less imagination to view what it is supposed to be. True, there are still larger pieces that act as the main element, but these are surrounded by far more intricate details.

The engine cover highlights this – while a single flexible component previously did the trick, two bags of the 12 total are dedicated solely to this portion of the car.

Comparing these two is very much like comparing real-world F1 machinery from across the eras. When the Ferrari was released, it was at the cutting edge and was mightily impressive. But time moves on, technologies develop and soon enough they become obsolete. With another 20 years of progress, who knows what the Lego of the future will look like...

There is another effect that time can have, and that's to add value. While the new Mercedes costs £189.99, the Ferrari, which was originally £49.99, is currently available on a well-known online auction site for £299.99.

SAM HALL

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Singapore Grand Prix

Formula 1 World Championship
Round 18/24

Marina Bay, Singapore

22 September

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 1255

TV Highlights

Sky Sports F1, Sun 1630
Channel 4, 1730

Indian Grand Prix

MotoGP

Round 15/21

Buddh, India

21-22 September

TV Live TNT Sports 2, Sat 1330, Sun 1115

TV Highlights ITV4, Mon 2000

F1 Academy

Round 5/7

Marina Bay, Singapore

21-22 September

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sat 0800, Sun 0830

GT World Challenge Endurance Cup

Round 4/5

Monza, Italy

22 September

Live stream

YouTube.com

Super GT

Round 6/8

Sugo, Japan

22 September

Live stream

Motorsport.tv, Sun 0515

IMSA SportsCar

Round 10/11

Indianapolis, USA

22 September

Live stream

IMSA.tv

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 29/36

Bristol, USA



Singapore Grand Prix

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

21 September

TV Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 0000

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 26/33

Bristol, USA

20 September

TV Live Premier Sports Streaming only, Sat 0000

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 18/23

Bristol, USA

19 September

TV Live Premier Sports Streaming only, Fri 0030

UK MOTORSPORT

Oulton Park 750MC

21 September

5Club MX-5 Cup, Alfa Romeos, Clio Sport, Club Enduro, Formula Vee, Sports 1000

Live stream

alphalive.co.uk

Silverstone BARC

21-22 September

BTCC, British F4, Mini Challenge Trophy, Porsche Carrera Cup, Porsche Sprint Challenge

TV Live Sun, ITV4 1045

Castle Combe CCRC

21-22 September

Ecurie Jaguar, Ferraris, FISCAR, GT & Sportscar Cup, HRDC (Gerry Marshall Trophy,

Jack Sears Trophy), HSCC ('70s Roadsports, F3, Griffiths Haig Trophy) Mini Miglia, Mini Se7en

Snetterton MSVR

21-22 September

'70s/BCV8s, F2 Atlantic, GTS, Libre, MG Cup, Pre-'63/'50s

Thruxton BRSCC

21-22 September

Audi TT Cup, CTCRC (BOSS/Pre-'93, Pre-'03/ Super Tourers, Pre-'66/ Pre-'83, Thunder/Historic Thunder), Civic Cup, Fiesta Juniors, Fiesta ST240s, TCR UK

Live stream

YouTube.com

Donington Park BRSCC

21-22 September

BMW Compact Cup, Clubsport Trophy, Evolution Trophy, Fiesta ST150s, Fun Cup, Mazda MX-5s (Championship, Clubman, Supercup)

Croft 750MC

21-22 September

116 Trophy, 116 Sprint/120 Coupe Cup, Armed Forces Challenge, BMW Car Club, CALM Porsches, F1000, MR2s, Type R Trophy

British Drag Racing Championship

Round 6/6

Santa Pod

20-22 September



Silverstone BARC

JEP



Preparation and primping is in full flow in the packed pitlane ahead of an 8am start for the 1967 Targa Florio. Fuelling had earlier been interrupted by a power failure that “produced dead pumps and a deal of panic”; according to Autosport’s report, but a swiftly sourced spare fuse ensured the 62-car field was ready on time. When Sicilian home hero Nino Vaccarella suffered a shock early exit from the lead after his works Ferrari 330 P4 clouted a wall, the #220 Scuderia Filipinetti Ferrari 412 P of Herbert Muller/Jean Guichet (right of image) took over at the front, then its transmission failure at half-distance helped pave the way for a Porsche 1-2-3, headed by the 910/8 shared by Rolf Stommelen and Paul Hawkins.

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







Garth Tander

Despite a 30-year career spanning Europe, Japan and Australia, it takes James Courtney an impressively short amount of time to nominate Garth Tander as his favourite team-mate.

When Courtney and Dick Johnson Racing were fighting for the 2010 V8 Supercars title, behind the scenes it was anything but smooth sailing. Team owners Dick Johnson and Charlie Schwerkolt were at loggerheads and, before the championship showdown at Sydney Olympic Park, Courtney and his manager Alan Gow had a deal in place for him to join the Holden Racing Team for 2011, a move confirmed the week following his coronation.

The thing was, the Walkinshaw family-owned Holden works team already had an established lead driver – 2007 champion Tander. Many wondered how and if two ‘alpha male’ drivers in the same garage would get on. The answer was, and is, “really well”.

“When it was announced that I was going to HRT, everyone was saying that we would not get on,” Courtney asserts. “I remember really early on, I realised that we had the same sense of humour, and he is actually a really funny, nice bloke. He acts like someone else when he is on TV!”

“The first day, we were talking about things like movies. I thought, ‘You are



actually an all right bloke, and not the arsehole I thought you were going to be!’ “There was a really good level of respect between us. He has had an amazing career and has achieved so much. He is a good, hard but *fair* racer.”

The Courtney-Tander partnership continued until the end of 2016, when Tander departed for Garry Rogers Motorsport. Courtney’s respect for Tander, who retired from full-time Supercars competition in 2018, remains strong today. “We didn’t ever argue about the direction that the car should be going in,” adds Courtney, now 44. “We always wanted to steer it in the same direction.

“Even now, we sort of gravitate towards each other. We are about the same age, we both have kids, we have a lot in common. He would be the guy I would do Bathurst with, out of everyone.”

PHIL BRANAGAN



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Additional Race Tests by GEDLICH Racing

27/28 NOV 2024 Barcelona Catalunya /E

12/13 DEC 2024 Portimão /P

14/15 DEC 2024 Portimão /P

21/22 JAN 2025 Portimão /P

12/13 MAR 2025 Barcelona Catalunya /E



Info and registration
gedlich-racing.com

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RACE
TEST

