

# Verstappen threatens to quit over FIA swearing row

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SINGAPORE GP

## The dream lives on

Dominant Norris edges closer to Verstappen's points lead

**VERSTAPPEN 331**

'We have to try and improve'

MAX VERSTAPPEN

**NORRIS 279**

'The mission is still on'

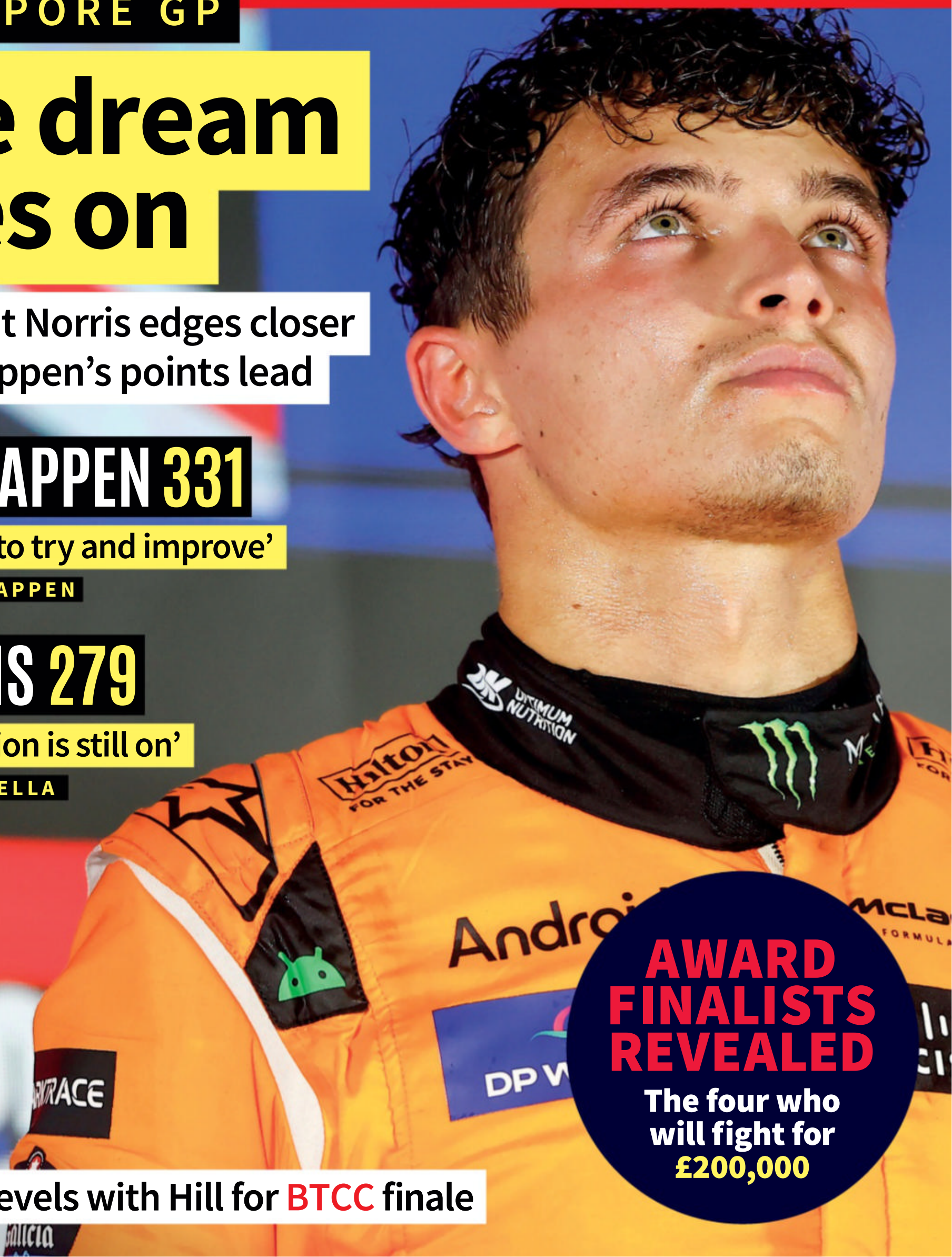
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# Lando dominates but Max does what he needs to do

It was hard to decide on the angle for this week's Autosport cover. On the one hand, Lando Norris put in one of the most dominant non-Red Bull Formula 1 performances we've seen for a long time in the Singapore Grand Prix (see page 14). But, on the other, Max Verstappen (with a little help from Daniel Ricciardo's fastest lap) minimised the points loss to seven and remains a chunky 52 ahead.

In the end, we went for the 'dream is still on' approach, partly because that tallies with McLaren team principal Andrea Stella's attitude, and partly because the situation seems to sit neatly between Norris having a realistic title chance and merely a mathematical one.

McLaren will be encouraged that the MCL38 remained the pacesetter despite the requirement for its clever rear wing to be tweaked (p25), but Red Bull has some upgrades coming and it's hard to believe that it won't strike back at some point over the final six events.

There's no doubt that we have a brilliant British Touring Car title fight to settle at the Brands Hatch finale next month. Jake Hill and Tom Ingram have been outstanding this year (whether that be in their regular mounts or more rorty historic machinery!), and it seems entirely appropriate that they are tied at the top of the table following a dramatic Silverstone weekend in soaking conditions (p30).

This week we also reveal the four rising British talents who will battle it out for an F1 test and £200,000 in the Silverstone Autosport BRDC Award (p10). Congratulations to all four, who will be trying to follow in the footsteps of previous victors Norris and George Russell.



*Kevin Turner*

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Andy Hone/Motorsport Images

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P14 SINGAPORE GP

# Verstappen issues quit threat over impasse with FIA in swearing row

## FORMULA 1

Reigning Formula 1 world champion Max Verstappen has warned that his FIA punishment for swearing in a Singapore Grand Prix press conference could mean he quits the series earlier than planned.

Verstappen was handed a community service punishment last weekend in Singapore by the FIA for describing his Red Bull car's behaviour as f\*\*\*\*\* in Baku during the official Thursday press conference. The punishment comes against the backdrop of a fresh crackdown by FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem on drivers using swear words while on air, telling Autosport in an exclusive interview that he has asked F1 to further limit swear words making it into TV broadcasts, something the series is already doing.

"We are the ones who actually approved more [radio] talk," Ben Sulayem said. "But the rules are there for the benefit of the sport and the rules are there to be policed and to be respected also."

Verstappen protested against the FIA's slap on the wrists by giving curt answers in Saturday's post-qualifying press

conference hosted by the FIA, labelling his punishment as "ridiculous". He then held his own unscheduled gathering outside in the Singapore paddock, where he freely answered questions from the swarm of journalists. After finishing second on Sunday, he gave the post-race press conference a similar treatment before holding a session in the Red Bull hospitality unit.

When asked on Sunday whether this may make him reconsider his future in F1, he replied: "For sure, yeah. These kinds of things definitely decide my future as well. When you can't be yourself, you have to deal with these kinds of silly things... I think now I'm at a stage of my career that I don't want to be dealing with this all the time. It's really tiring. Of course, it's great to have success and win races, but once you have accomplished all that, then you want to just have a good time as well. Everyone is pushing to the limit, but if you have to deal with all these kind of silly things, for me, that is not a way of continuing in the sport, that's for sure."

Verstappen's old foe Lewis Hamilton came out in support of him, urging the Dutchman

not to serve the punishment. "It is a bit of a joke, to be honest," the Mercedes driver said. "This is the pinnacle of the sport, mistakes are made. I certainly wouldn't be doing it and I hope Max doesn't do it." McLaren's Lando Norris also added it was "pretty unfair, I don't agree with any of it".

Asked whether the governing body would risk losing a world champion due to a stringent swearing clampdown, Verstappen said: "I don't know how serious they will take that kind of stuff, but for me at one point when it's enough, it's enough. Everything will go on, I have no doubt. It's not a problem because Formula 1 will go on without me, but it's also not a problem for me. So it's how it is. I shouldn't waste any energy on it actually because it's just very silly."

## EXIT LOOMS FOR RICCIARDO?

At the other end of the grid there was what appeared to be a bittersweet ending to Daniel Ricciardo's F1 career, with the Australian conceding that the Singapore GP may have been his last with Red Bull's satellite team RB.

It is widely understood that Red Bull is





Is it goodbye  
from Ricciardo?



Lawson subbed for  
Ricciardo in 2023

nearing a decision to replace Ricciardo with reserve Liam Lawson from next month's United States GP after Ricciardo failed to secure a promotion to Red Bull's main team, with Sergio Perez having done enough to save his seat for now. With RB a breeding ground for future Red Bull drivers, it is thought that Lawson is a better long-term bet, and that the 22-year-old New Zealander would benefit from getting an early start before embarking on a first full campaign in 2025.

Ricciardo was visibly emotional after finishing 18th in Singapore, dropping down the order after a late pitstop to secure the fastest lap of the race, and the 35-year-old admitted he fell short of his fairytale goal of returning to Red Bull. "I always said I didn't want to come back just to be on the grid," he said. "I wanted to try and fight back at the front and get back with Red Bull. Obviously, it didn't come to fruition, so then I also have to ask myself the question, 'What else can I achieve?' Let's say maybe the fairytale ending didn't happen, but I also have to look back on what's been 13 or so years and I'm proud."

FILIP CLEEREN

# Sprint race for rookies looks set to be signed off by F1

## FORMULA 1

Plans to hold a Formula 1 rookie sprint race after the Abu Dhabi season finale are on course to get the green light next month, Autosport has learned.

F1 is looking to hold the race as part of the Yas Marina post-season test, with the aim of giving young drivers more opportunities to gain mileage in current F1 cars. The idea gathered widespread support and it was decided that the matter should be taken on for evaluation by sporting directors to better understand whether it could be realised in regulatory terms.

Following a recent meeting of F1's Sporting Advisory Committee to consider the wider rule implications of the test, the conclusion was that the proposal was realistic. Multiple senior sources have now indicated that the plans for the sprint are moving in the right direction, and that the formal vote on it, which will be taken during the next F1 Commission meeting on 2 October, will almost certainly be in favour of it happening.

The current plan calls for an event on the Tuesday (10 December) after the season finale, around the regular Pirelli test element to the day, featuring a short qualifying session and then a sprint race involving 10 rookies, with one car per team. Some of the finer logistical details still need to be sorted, including where and to what extent the event will be broadcast, with it likely to be carried by regular host channels.

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said he fully supported the idea and had pushed for it several times in F1 Commission meetings.

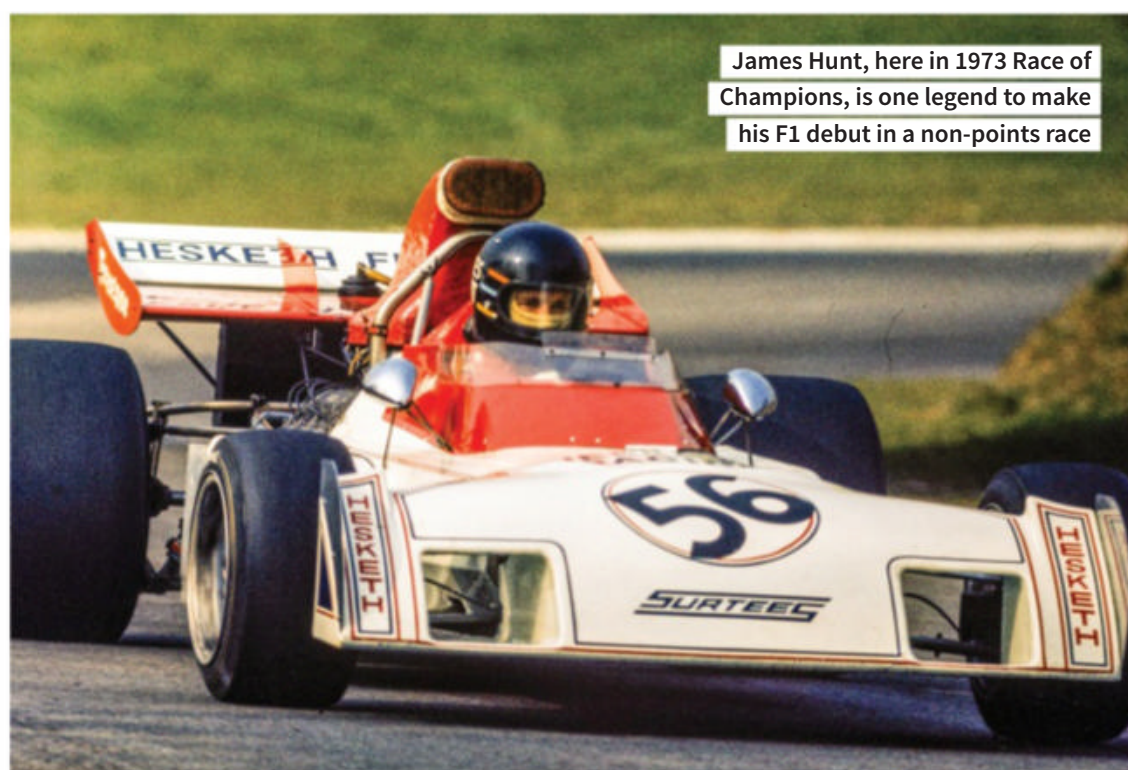


Oscar Piastri drove for McLaren  
in 2022 Yas Marina rookie test

"It's something that I tabled at the last couple of Formula 1 Commissions because I think it's great for the young drivers," he said. "I think that the problem with some of the rookie tests is they all get used for testing. You never know, are they running on 50 kilos, 70 kilos, 30 kilos of fuel? What engine mode are they using? You don't really know. You don't know how the opposition are doing. So I think this non-championship race for the junior drivers is a fantastic opportunity."

From its own junior ranks, Red Bull could field Isack Hadjar and Ayumu Iwasa for the event, while it is likely to feature 2025 F1 graduates Andrea Kimi Antonelli at Mercedes, Jack Doohan at Alpine and Ollie Bearman at Haas. Other highly rated prospects in the frame for a maiden competitive outing could include McLaren's Gabriel Bortoleto, who remains of interest to Sauber for 2025.

JONATHAN NOBLE



James Hunt, here in 1973 Race of  
Champions, is one legend to make  
his F1 debut in a non-points race



# Peugeot not ruling out further 9X8 upgrades

## WEC

Peugeot is not ruling out more upgrades for its 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar World Endurance Championship contender despite the radical overhaul of the design that came on stream at Imola in April. No decision is made, but that could come before the end of the season.

Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Janssonie stressed that extracting the most from the 9X8 2024 version of the car, which took its best result of the season with fourth in the Fuji 6 Hours earlier this month, will be the first priority.

“Right now we are looking at various things: we have evaluated and started to pinpoint so many things on the car,” said Janssonie. “Part of that is for sure set-up, and once we have a clear picture of what we cannot cure with set-up, we will have to look

at evo jokers. We are looking hard into what could bring us performance. So depending upon the findings we do between now and the end of the year, we will decide what we do.”

Janssonie suggested that the final decision will be made after a test at a venue that he would not reveal scheduled between now and the Bahrain WEC curtain-closer at the beginning of November. He played down the significance of the Fuji result notched up by Mikkel Jensen, Jean-Eric Vergne and Nico Muller.

“Look at the lap times, it’s still not looking brilliant in terms of pace,” he said. “But we managed to compensate that and get P4. Maybe we didn’t have the most competitive car, but we made the most of it with our strategy.”

Peugeot will have to apply to the WEC rulemakers – the



9X8 2024 of Jensen, Vergne and Muller took fourth at Fuji

FIA and the Automobile Club de l’Ouest – to be able to invoke more evo jokers. How many it has left after a minor upgrade between 2022 and 2023 and then the revisions for this year is not clear. The take-up of evo jokers,

five of which are allowed over the original five-year lifecycle of LMH or LMDh, is not in the public domain, and neither is it shared between manufacturers.

**GARY WATKINS & RACHIT THUKRAL**

# Maloney drops F2 to join Abt Lola Yamaha project

## FORMULA E

Formula 2 race winner Zane Maloney is to join the Abt Formula E team to compete in the 2024-25 season.

The 20-year-old from Barbados will make his debut in the championship in Sao Paulo on 7 December but already has experience of FE machinery from several rookie tests for Andretti over the past two years.

Maloney sits third in the F2 standings

with Rodin Motorsport but, with the finale in Yas Marina clashing with the FE opener, he will now miss the final two rounds. He has already tested both the new Gen3 Evo machine as well as the first Lola/Yamaha powertrain ahead of pre-season testing in Valencia on 4-7 November.

“I’m really looking forward to the challenge, it’s a great opportunity to join Abt, Lola and Yamaha in this new journey for them,” said Maloney. “A big step in

my career to be employed under such an amazing group of people. No expectations on where we’re going to be – it’s pressure off and just trying to improve every day.”

Maloney will partner series veteran Lucas di Grassi, who is encouraged by the progress of its new powertrain, which replaces the Mahindra units Abt has used since its return to FE. The Brazilian told Autosport that the project, which now features the input of new Lola technical director Peter McCool, has been “born in a very impressive way” since its first shakedown in June. “From how complex a task it is to develop a powertrain, software and a whole team from scratch, I’m very positively surprised on the level of organisation and where the team is at this stage,” said the 2016-17 champion.

Di Grassi also noted how the increased performance resulting from sending 50kW to the front axle, with cars now able to access all-wheel drive in attack mode, “changes the car completely”.

**STEFAN MACKLEY & JAMES NEWBOLD**



Maloney has been a regular in rookie tests





## Toyota to enter Supercars with GR Supra in 2026

### AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

Toyota will join the grid in Australia's Supercars series in 2026 with Walkinshaw Andretti United racing the GR Supra. There will be four of the Japanese coupes on the grid: two with WAU, which is currently running a pair of Ford Mustangs for Chaz Mostert and Ryan Wood, and two with a team to be announced.

Toyota, the long-time market leader in Australia, has made a five-year commitment to the category. Development of the new car is already under way at Toyota Australia's Melbourne base. It will feature an engine based on the 2UR-GSE – an all-aluminium, quad-cam V8 – rather

than the in-line six cylinder motor that comes fitted to the road-going Supra.

"At Toyota, we have been toying with the idea of competing in Supercars for more than 20 years and now with the right car, the right team, and a very strong partnership with the Supercars Championship, the time is definitely right," said Sean Hanley, Toyota Australia vice-president of sales and marketing. Supercars CEO Shane Howard added that Toyota's announcement was "an incredible honour".

WAU will become the homologation team for Toyota, in much the same way as Dick Johnson Racing with Ford and Triple Eight with Chevrolet.

The Walkinshaw Group already has a link with Toyota, converting US-built Tundra pickups to right-hand drive at its Melbourne base. "We have developed a fantastic relationship with Toyota Australia through the Walkinshaw Group, and we are delighted to extend that partnership into Walkinshaw Andretti United – we can't wait to share success together in 2026 and beyond," said team director Ryan Walkinshaw.

The introduction of Toyota means that Supercars will have more than two manufacturers for the first time since 2019, when the Nissan Altima had the last of its seven seasons in the series.

**PHIL BRANAGAN**



## Larson dominates for Hendrick

### NASCAR

Kyle Larson led 462 of 500 laps in a dominant performance at Bristol to capture his fifth victory of 2024. It was the most laps led by a Bristol winner since Cale Yarborough's 495 in 1977, and the biggest margin of victory at the half-mile short track in three decades.

Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolets qualified 1-2-3 with Alex Bowman leading the field to the green flag, but it didn't take long for Larson to snatch the top spot away, and never relinquish control. Team-mate Chase Elliott was second, over seven seconds behind at

the finish, ahead of Bubba Wallace, Denny Hamlin and Christopher Bell.

In the playoff battle, Martin Truex Jr made a 0.09mph error when he sped on pitroad during the final stop. The penalty dropped him from second to the rear of the field and he never recovered. While Hamlin clawed his way back above the cut-line, Truex and fellow Joe Gibbs Racing driver Ty Gibbs were both eliminated alongside Brad Keselowski and Harrison Burton.

Daniel Suarez, who finished 31st, relied heavily on his 36-point cushion to nab a Round of 12 spot from Gibbs.

**NICK DEGROOT**

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Ilott (inset) raced  
with Prema in Euro  
F3 during 2017



TONS



BARTKOWIAK

## Ilott named for Prema in IndyCar

### INDYCAR

Italian single-seater giant Prema Racing has named Callum Ilott as its first driver for its entry to the IndyCar Series in 2025. The 25-year-old year Briton therefore returns to the team with which he finished fourth in the 2017 Formula 3 European Championship.

Ilott, who raced in IndyCar in 2022 and 2023 with Juncos Hollinger Racing and made three substitute appearances this season for Arrow McLaren, has long been linked to a seat at Prema, where he was a popular member of the team. "We had a great time working with him in F3, and we always kept an eye on him after

that," said team boss Rene Rosin. "He proved to be a great fit for us in the past, and I think he will feel like picking up something he had left off."

Ilott switched to the World Endurance Championship this year, racing a Porsche 963 for Jota. His place is expected to be taken by a driver from Cadillac's roster of factory racers as that team enters a new era with the American manufacturer.

The IndyCar driver market has been very busy in the past week. Marcus Armstrong (below), who was Ilott's housemate in Italy when they were Ferrari juniors racing with Prema, has joined Meyer Shank Racing, where he will partner another Prema alumnus: Felix Rosenqvist.

That leaves 2024 Rookie of the Year Linus Lundqvist on the market along with Rinus VeeKay, whose departure from Ed Carpenter Racing has been confirmed.

Aston Martin F1 reserve and 2022 F2 champion Felipe Drugovich will test with Chip Ganassi Racing at Barber Motorsports Park next week, and former Williams F1 driver Logan Sargeant gets a run with Meyer Shank at The Thermal Club in November, although neither team has a seat available for 2025.

**JOEY BARNES & TRAVIS DAYE**



MILLER

### ROSSI'S HYPERCAR TEST...

Valentino Rossi expects to get his promised run in the BMW M Hybrid V8 LMDh at the Bahrain World Endurance Championship rookie test the day after the season finale on 2 November. BMW and WRT have yet to confirm the move that the Italian revealed last week.

### ...AND ONE FOR DE GERUS

Frenchman Reshad de Gerus, who finished third in LMP2 at the Le Mans 24 Hours with IDEC Sport this year, will be given a try-out with the Hypercar marque that takes the manufacturers' crown in Bahrain. The 21-year-old from Reunion has been nominated for the drive at the rookie test by the WEC organisation along with fellow countryman Gillian Henrion. The ELMS LMP3 frontrunner will test a Porsche 911 GT3-R for Manthey PureRxcing, which has already sealed the LMGT3 teams' title.

### MORE ELMS FOR YELLOLY

BMW factory driver Nick Yelloly will complete the ELMS season with British squad Nielsen Racing. The 33-year-old, a member of the Rahal GTP line-up in IMSA this year, came in for Albert Costa at the Spa round in August and will continue in Nielsen's #24 ORECA-Gibson 07 LMP2 alongside Colin Noble and John Falb at Mugello this weekend and then the Algarve Circuit next month.

### SUSTAINABLE FUEL IN BTCC

British Touring Car Championship racer Daryl DeLeon became the first to compete in the series using 100% sustainable fuel at Silverstone last weekend. His Unlimited Motorsport Cupra took a best result of 13th in a field that otherwise uses a 20% mix.

### RUPERT KEEGAN 1955-2024

Ex-Formula 1 driver Rupert Keegan has died aged 69 after a protracted period of ill health. The Briton started 25 world championship races for Hesketh, Surtees and RAM Racing with a privateer Williams and in its March Grand Prix incarnation between 1977 and 1982. A full appreciation will follow next week.

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# Finalists selected for Silverstone Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award



MARK SUTTON

## THE 2024 CONTENDERS



### Deagen Fairclough

Age: 18

British F4 champion  
with Hitech

“I had a feeling I could be in the four – we’ve had such a mega season. I saw Derek Warwick when Joseph Loake had his run in the F1 car to try and get to know people. I’m so excited for all three cars – the driving technique for the LMP3 and GT3 will be completely different to single-seaters and I’m buzzing. It gives us the chance to get that F1 test. It’s a mega thing and I’m going to put so much effort into trying to win it.”



### Arvid Lindblad

Age: 17

4th in Formula 3  
with Prema Racing

“Based on the fact I got in last year and the year I’d had in F3, I thought I was a good candidate. Last year I was very inexperienced, having just done F4, and going into the Award I’d had lots of race weekends back to back. This time I know what to expect and I’m looking forward to it. Silverstone is such a good track and the F2 is fun to drive. It’d be nice to drive the others in the dry but you have to be ready for anything!”



### Louis Sharp

Age: 17

Leading GB3  
with Rodin Motorsport

“It’s a real honour. I was in the top 10 last year and this time I really wanted to put myself in the shootout. The main focus has been GB3 because if you don’t do a good job there you won’t be selected anyway. I’m coming in fresh – I’ve never driven a tin-top so the GT3 and LMP3 will be a new challenge, and the F2 is a step up. I’m definitely going to speak to people who’ve done it before, go in with an open mind and do the best I can.”



### Freddie Slater

Age: 16

Leading Italian F4 and Euro 4  
with Prema Racing

“It’s a surprise. We’ve had a mega season and it’s one of the things you want to be in, but you never know. Last year I was at the Awards night and so many drivers have come through the Award and gone on to F1 or become professional drivers. I’m really excited about the F2 car – something with more power and downforce than I’m used to. I’m not sure about the LMP3 because I don’t know much about it, but the GT3 is something I’ve been wanting to drive for a long time.”



## YOUNG DRIVER OF THE YEAR

The four finalists who will contest the 2024 Silverstone Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award have been selected.

Formula 3 race winner Arvid Lindblad, recently crowned British F4 champion Deagen Fairclough, GB3 points leader Louis Sharp and Italian F4 dominator Freddie Slater will battle it out for prizes that include a test in Aston Martin F1 machinery and £200,000. Only Lindblad has been a finalist before, in 2023.

The Award, which aims to find and assist the best junior British racing drivers, will include fitness tests conducted by Porsche Human Performance and simulator elements before a two-day test at the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit. They will drive MotorSport Vision F2, RLR M Sport Ligier LMP3 and Beechdean Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage GT3 cars.

Silverstone has now become title sponsor, following in the footsteps of McLaren and Aston Martin. “The BRDC and Silverstone have been supporting the Young Driver Award since its outset in 1989 and are delighted the competition continues to go from strength to strength,” said Silverstone MD Stuart Pringle. “Anyone who was at Silverstone in July would have witnessed the effect strong British driver performances have on the home crowd and the unique electric atmosphere it creates.

“I believe the investment we are making into young talent is crucial for the future success of both Silverstone and the

**“We are proud of the part we play in helping recognise and reward British racing talent”**

Formula 1 British Grand Prix, and am proud of the part we play in helping recognise and reward outstanding British racing talent.”

BRDC vice-president Derek Warwick is the chairman of the judging panel, which also includes Award winners Dario Franchitti, Darren Turner, Andrew Kirkaldy and Alexander Sims, successful McLaren designer Mark Williams, Le Mans-winning engineer Leena Gade, leading commentator Ian Titchmarsh and Autosport’s Kevin Turner.

Previous winners include current F1 stars Lando Norris and George Russell, 2009 F1 champion Jenson Button, 13-time grand prix winner David Coulthard, triple Indianapolis 500 victor Franchitti and 2014 World Endurance champion Anthony Davidson.



Left to right: Schonborn, Baudet and Jyrkiäinen got the nod from judges

## Female trio chosen for WRC debut at Central European Rally

### WRC

The World Rally Championship has selected the three female drivers from its inaugural women’s driver development programme who will each receive a fully funded drive at the Central European Rally.

Belgian Lyssia Baudet (aged 21), German Claire Schonborn (25) and Finn Suvi Jyrkiäinen (24) were chosen from a group of 15 finalists that had been whittled down from an array of applications from across the world. Each of them will now pilot one of three M-Sport-built Ford Fiesta Rally3s in the penultimate round of the WRC season from 17-20 October.

The trio were chosen by a panel made up of Peter Thul (WRC Promoter sporting director), Burcu Cetinkaya (rally driver and FIA Women in Motorsport chairwoman), Pernilla Solberg (FIA WRC Commission president and former rally driver), Maciej Woda (M-Sport Poland managing

director) and Isolde Holderied (1994-95 FIA female world rally champion).

The decision was made after the 15 candidates had undertaken an intensive three-day training campaign in Poland, where they were assessed by a panel of experts including Autosport. The drivers were judged on their driving capabilities on asphalt and gravel, how they handled media interviews, pacenote-making skills, fitness and their mechanical knowledge.

Following the Central European Rally, the judges will offer one of the three drivers a full season in next year’s Junior World Rally Championship.

Schonborn, who made her rally debut in the Opel Electric Rally Cup this year, said: “I didn’t think that I was picked up, I’m speechless, it feels like a dream.” Former circuit racer-turned-rally driver Baudet added: “It’s amazing, I feel like I am in a dream but I know that it is only the start of the adventure and I have a lot of work to do, but I am ready for this and I am very thankful. I would like to congratulate the other candidates, the level was very high. It’s been an amazing opportunity for us all.”

“I was happy with my driving throughout the days,” said Jyrkiäinen, who finished runner-up in the 2023 Finnish Rally Championship Ladies Cup. “I wasn’t sure if the other things were enough but I am really happy. It’s really incredible. I cannot imagine myself there in the WRC, but maybe it will sink in in a few days.”

**TOM HOWARD**



Rally3 Fiesta is staple of Junior WRC contest





# Why Toyota is a game changer

*With the Ford-vs- Holden days consigned to history, the reinvention of Supercars aligns perfectly with the ambitions of the biggest-selling manufacturer in Australia*

PHIL BRANAGAN

**I**t was a grey Sunday 32 years ago when Mark Skaife and Jim Richards stood on the top step of the podium. It was an emotional moment; not only had the Bathurst 1000 been cut short by a torrential storm, but the drivers had learned only hours earlier that Denny Hulme, who was racing a BMW in the event, had died of a heart attack while at the wheel.

Richards and Skaife had piloted Nissan's Skyline GT-R to victory, but that did not sit well with many of the fans, who had been led to believe – wrongly – that any other car in the race stood a chance of beating 'Godzilla'. As they booed, Richards retorted: "You're a pack of arseholes!" That moment stayed with many for a long time, among them Sean Hanley, now Toyota Australia's vice-president sales, marketing and franchise operations. Last week he stated: "We often wondered if we went out and won this race, what would really happen. It was probably more risky to win it than not to play at all, back in the tribal days."

That 1992 race was the start of what became the V8 Supercars era. The Australian V8-powered Holden Commodores and Ford Falcons were the centrepiece of what had been touring car racing and, when it was professionally commercialised in 1997, grew and continued to grow. Its preferred backstory was a familiar one – Australian families grew up with either a Holden or a Ford in the driveway and, on the odd chance that they didn't, still followed one brand or the other. It was Red versus Blue, tribal rivalry.

Except... mostly, it really wasn't like that. While the theory played well for a few fans, that rivalry was contrary to one of Supercars' other ambitions – to entice other manufacturers into the category. That worked for a while, with Volvo in for three years, Nissan for five and Mercedes-Benz coming in, on a purely customer basis, servicing the Erebus Motorsport team, for three.

What we know now is that while Toyota was sitting on the sidelines, looking hard at entering the fray twice (in 1999 and again in 2010), the Red vs Blue back story was one of the reasons it stayed away – until the new-for-2023 Gen3 era. "I have no doubt that that tribalism still exists," says Hanley, "but there's now room for a new player, and I think it's timely."

So it is that Toyota will enter Supercars in 2026, with the Walkinshaw Andretti United squad as its homologation team and leader, and another, yet to be nominated squad, each running two GR Supras. This is big news for Supercars. For all the rhetoric around the Holden-Ford rivalry, the truth is the Supercars era has seen those brands' market shares diminish – and Holden vanish entirely. Toyota topped the Australian car market for 21 years, as families migrated from family sedans, which were built locally, to SUVs and 'utes', which weren't. Toyota dominated with no visible desire to come and play Supercars racing, preferring lower-profile

programmes in the Australian Rally Championship and one-make Toyota Gazoo Racing Australia 86 Series.

Credit where it's due. If the new Gen3 platform is performing in some ways below expectations – parity and cost to name two still-problematic areas – Supercars deserves praise for creating a framework that finally hooked Toyota. The timing could not be better. Not only is the category's current broadcast deal up for renewal at the end of next year, but host cable and streaming

## "The new Supercars are sporty two-door Camaros, Mustangs and, soon, Supras"

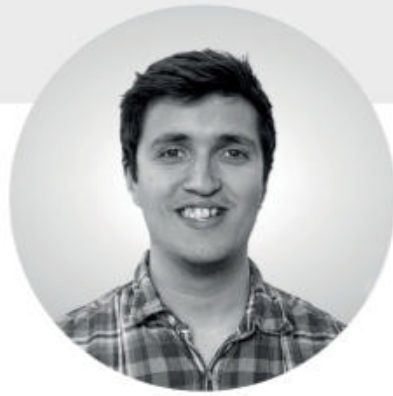
service broadcaster Foxtel itself is believed to be on the market. The arrival of Toyota, Australia's biggest automotive advertiser by far, should make the category a more valuable asset – an important factor when the Gen3 cars are said to be costing as much as A\$800,000 (£410,000), far beyond what was originally planned.

Toyota already has a large footprint across Australian sport, as the naming rights sponsor of the biggest football code (the AFL), in Rugby League, Cricket Australia and the national Olympic and Winter Olympic teams. Its 86 Series is already supported by a solid TV ad spend; whichever broadcaster lands the post-2025 Supercars deal has reason to be optimistic that commitment will expand.

There'll be a lot to play out ahead of 2026. Ford will be losing one of its five two-car teams and will be keen to ensure that whichever team runs the second pair of Supras, it'll be a defector from GM's ranks, not one of its own. In fact, Ford may just go hunting for a new partnership to maintain its 10-Supercar fleet. Potentially, two Chevrolet teams could be changing marques for 2026. WAU will need to run parallel programmes for a bit over a year, one to race its Fords in 2025 and one to develop the Toyotas. Supercars will have to work the Supra into its technical framework, to ensure the issues that have hindered the development and technical parity of the Mustangs and Camaros do not extend to a third model.

All that's in the future. For now, this news underlines that the old Supercars – Commodore and Falcon four-door sedans – is dead. The new Supercars are sporty two-door Camaros, Mustangs and, soon, Supras; a kind of down under version of GT3. 'Win on Sunday' is still a valid mantra, but the vehicles the manufacturers will be trying to 'sell on Monday' now bear no resemblance to those on the track. Times change, and Supercars has done just that – hopefully for the better. 🌟





# Bronze-age thinking

*Increased opportunities for strategic variation created a historic result at Monza. Now SRO must weigh up whether to make this a more permanent adjustment*

JAMES NEWBOLD

**W**hen Alessandro Pier Guidi one day hangs up his helmet, he may well look back on the 2024 season with his head in his hands. Victories at Spa in the World Endurance Championship 6 Hour race and the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup's 24-hour blue-riband were both snatched away by factors beyond his control. And he had reason to think that last weekend's GTWCE Endurance round at Monza was in the bag too.

His AF Corse-run 296 GT3 was the fastest thing on the track – as setting fastest lap by 0.637 seconds attests – and under normal circumstances would surely have converted pole position into victory with Alessio Rovera and Vincent Abril. But instead, an outcome nobody foresaw will be what the race is remembered for: a first-ever outright win by a non-Pro class entry, with a bronze driver in the line-up to boot. WRT BMW crew Jens Klingmann, Sam De Haan and Ahmad Al Harthy delivered what could fairly be described as the year's biggest sportscar racing upset having started 29th, improving on a best finish of 27th in 2024.

It was made possible by a pre-event rule change, stipulating that teams must make three mandatory pitstops instead of the usual two. An SRO statement provided to Autosport said: "It became clear from data gathered during Thursday's test session that the race could not be completed with two refuelling pitstops, as a three-hour Endurance Cup round normally would. This was due to a combination of Monza's new and faster track surface, GT3's 120-litre fuel limit as mandated by the FIA, and the sustainable fuel introduced at the start of 2024. It was therefore necessary to add a third mandatory pitstop, albeit one without driver or tyre changes."

Typically events of this duration are split into three segments, limiting strategic variation, a point that WRT sporting director Kurt Mollekens admits it has lobbied SRO over "because they are narrowing everything down so much that there is hardly any space to be creative with anything". So perhaps it was unsurprising that when the rule change bulletin dropped, WRT immediately began plotting how it could take advantage and devised the plan of getting all its mandatory timed stops out of the way at the start. De Haan coping damage in the opening-lap shenanigans that put the race under caution for 15 minutes made the call a formality.

Mollekens reckons it meant they would save 20s at every subsequent pitstop under green, although it wasn't until half distance before it recognised a win was on the cards. "It was a rather exhausting exercise for the engineers," he admits. Klingmann's pass on Dries Vanthoor's sister car with 11 minutes to go meant it was the Belgian tasked with seeing off Pier Guidi to secure a 1-2 that Mollekens observes "will go in the books as a race that will be remembered for some time".

WRT is firmly in favour of seeing "a bit more flexibility in the

whole strategy area in the championship", Mollekens asserts, but whether this turns into anything more than a one-off should be a topic given serious thought.

"Providing teams with this strategic window of opportunity undoubtedly made for an entertaining conclusion," SRO's statement added. "But it is too early to say whether these pitstop regulations – which originated from a situation of force majeure – will become commonplace."

## "In a BoP series, clever strategy is one area where teams can gain a key edge"

Tight limits on stint lengths is one way of keeping the racing close. It ensures that passes are done on track and rewards the fastest crews. The rule change "favoured teams at the back", noted Rovera. "They got lucky and took risks that we couldn't afford to, being in first place." Mollekens probably has a point too when suggesting that the greater strategic variation would have made it harder for spectators to follow. But endurance racing has always been more than just on-track performance. And in a Balance of Performance series, clever strategy is one area where teams can gain a key edge.

Often races won by inspired strategy calls are among the more memorable even without an underdog fairytale element. This writer thinks back to Von Ryan Racing's Blancpain Endurance victory at Silverstone in 2015 that owed much to a superb fuel-saving effort from Shane van Gisbergen, who stretched his stint to over 70 minutes after stopping early during a full-course yellow.

Although it didn't ultimately yield a win, WRT finishing second at Silverstone in 2016 despite lacking pace is another race that team boss Vincent Vosse remembers fondly, after the team exploited a loophole in the regulations determining minimum pitstop times and short-fuelled its Audi.

Even if the rules are only aligned with Monza for the three-hour races, which this year makes up three of the five Endurance rounds, greater flexibility would add more layers of intrigue and afford more opportunities for special moments, of which last weekend was undoubtedly one. Now, thanks to WRT's ingenuity and its history-making winners, the topic of strategic variance can no longer be ignored. 🏆

➔ P39 MONZA REPORT



# RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

## NORRIS DEFIES DISASTER TO DOMINATE IN SINGAPORE

*The McLaren star had time to flirt with the walls – but Verstappen finished second to minimise the points damage*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport  
IMAGES







#4 MCL38  
held together  
well after its driver's  
potentially  
calamitous  
moments



# “NO WAY!”

When the highlights clips started to air in the cooldown room, Max Verstappen was amazed at Lando Norris's luck in avoiding damage with a Turn 14 lock-up that resulted in the slightest of contact with the barrier.

His surprise was accompanied by Norris and Oscar Piastri making the customary noise associated with watching someone navigate a tiny multi-storey car park in an SUV, as the Singapore Grand Prix race winner relived a squeaky-bum moment that yielded nothing more than barely cosmetic front wing damage.

This wasn't Norris's only brush with the wall in his otherwise dominant display in Singapore. He sustained another in the final 20 laps of the race, perhaps one that would have catapulted his heart a little further into his mouth; a brush with his right-rear wheel at the protruding right-hand-side barrier at Turn 10 might have woken him up ever so slightly. After all, Norris had touched that wall last year en route to finishing second – and watched George Russell behind him do the same, where the Mercedes driver came to rest in the opposite tyre barrier in the latter stages of the 2023 race.

Aside from the moments that jolted the McLaren pitwall – and Norris – out of the intoxicating heat-induced stupor, the Briton produced a crushing drive. It firmly put his stamp into a title fight, albeit one in which he remains an outside bet. “I was definitely pushing,” Norris asserted. “Probably too much, hence the mistakes I was making, or the two mistakes I made with the wall, but otherwise things were going well.”

Although the final 20.9-second margin between himself and Verstappen was not the nearly-30s zenith of the interval between first and second, it still underlined the merits of Norris's drive. It was almost Verstappen-esque in magnitude.

At the fifth time of asking (sixth if you count sprints) this year, Norris not only preserved his pole position into the first corner, but also finished the opening lap with the lead still intact. There was no Verstappen assault on the inside line into Turn 1, or a later attempt at a pass to deprive the McLaren driver of yet another lead on lap one. Norris had shifted like a scalded feline off the line and immediately set to work on breaking the DRS margin.

“You gain confidence, and you gain familiarity with starting from pole position,” McLaren team principal Andrea Stella reflected. “And understanding, even in terms of territorial defence, what you need to do, even to dissuade people from going [for the lead]. So, I think this is part of the journey, and it's just good that we are now having to face this kind of opportunity.”

And Norris's preservation of the lead was done in a well-controlled manner. He opened that one-second advantage over Verstappen, matched the Dutchman's pace for a few laps to bring the medium-compound Pirellis in slowly, and then started to open the taps to demonstrate the McLaren MCL38's searing pace.



This came at the command of race engineer Will Joseph, who asked Norris to “use the pace to get a five-second gap by the mid-teens” to cover off any threats of an undercut, or a safety car. Norris happily obliged, and rather exceeded those expectations – rather than the ‘mid-teens’ target, he’d already almost managed it by the end of the 10th lap. He was well over a second per lap faster than Verstappen; where the Red Bull driver was ensconced in the high 1m37s, Norris was in the mid-to-high 1m36s. And consistently so.

Norris did not relent in this early phase either, and the gap continued to swell. It took just over 15 laps to push it north of 10s, and another 11 tours took it to over 20s. It had looked pretty much like a foregone conclusion at this point, comparable to a common or garden Verstappen victory as seen across 2023.

The call for Norris to pick up the pace, said Red Bull's Christian Horner, was an unwelcome one for the reigning constructors’





Polesitter Norris made an impressive start, keeping Verstappen's Red Bull at arm's length...



champion: "That was taking the piss, although I shouldn't say that in any official capacity! The pace he had in hand on that [medium] tyre at that point in time was... well, at that point we've conceded the race on pace."

Norris was set to break past a 25s margin by lap 29, but for the first of his near-misses. Later admitting that he was perhaps caught out by the tyres running out of life, he locked up into the Turn 14 right-hander, and just about got enough stopping power beneath his left foot for the car to avoid a shunt. That didn't preclude him from contact, and he clipped the barrier with his front wing, but he seemed to be relatively unscathed. His lead took a hit as he lost about four seconds, but it was healthy enough to absorb the damage.

Regardless, Verstappen pitted for hard tyres at the end of the lap, perhaps in the vain hope that he might be able to take a bit more out of Norris's lead with the undercut. McLaren's strategists responded

**"THAT WAS TAKING THE PISS, ALTHOUGH I SHOULDN'T SAY THAT IN ANY OFFICIAL CAPACITY!"**

a lap later, ensuring that any further impact upon their driver's lead was mitigated.

"I don't think [the front-wing hit affected the car]," Norris explained later. "I mean, the team said that there was something with the front wing maybe being a little bit off. I hit the front wing against the barrier, so it might have tweaked it a touch. But I don't think probably enough to change it, but hard to know. On these cars, as soon as you tweak something a tiny bit, it can have quite a big impact, but nothing that I was probably feeling."

All told post-stops, the margin between Norris and Verstappen was now down to 'just' 21s, with a long-stopping Oscar Piastri in between. The Australian, who had never managed to capture the same ease as his McLaren team-mate across the Singapore weekend, was seeking to give himself enough of a tyre offset to challenge the Mercedes duo. He'd spent the early laps stuck behind Russell, without ever really having the ammunition to mount a challenge for fourth in the opening stint.

On the hard tyres, Norris and Verstappen were incredibly evenly matched. There was slightly more ebb and flow to the McLaren driver's lap times, while Verstappen's were solidly in the high 1m36s to low 1m37s. Although Norris could set about restoring his lead and going beyond the high-water mark he'd set down before his front- ➤





Verstappen watches Norris pull away at a rate at which Red Bull “conceded the race on pace”

wing clip, it was not at the precipitous rate of his medium-tyre stint.

When Piastri finally stopped at the end of lap 38, Norris and Verstappen were drawn together again – on the leaderboard, rather than physically on track. The gap was once more blossoming in Norris’s favour, rising to 24s by the start of lap 45, the point at which the Bristol-born racer again survived a tangle with the wall.

He took the customary line on the right-hand side of the track for Turn 10, the site of the once-infamous Singapore Sling chicane that packed an equivalent punch to the cocktail after which it was named. Here, the barrier juts out slightly, and Norris touched it with the right-rear on turn-in to perhaps inject a further cause for concern. One or two millimetres closer, and it might have been game over – as with Russell’s crash last year.

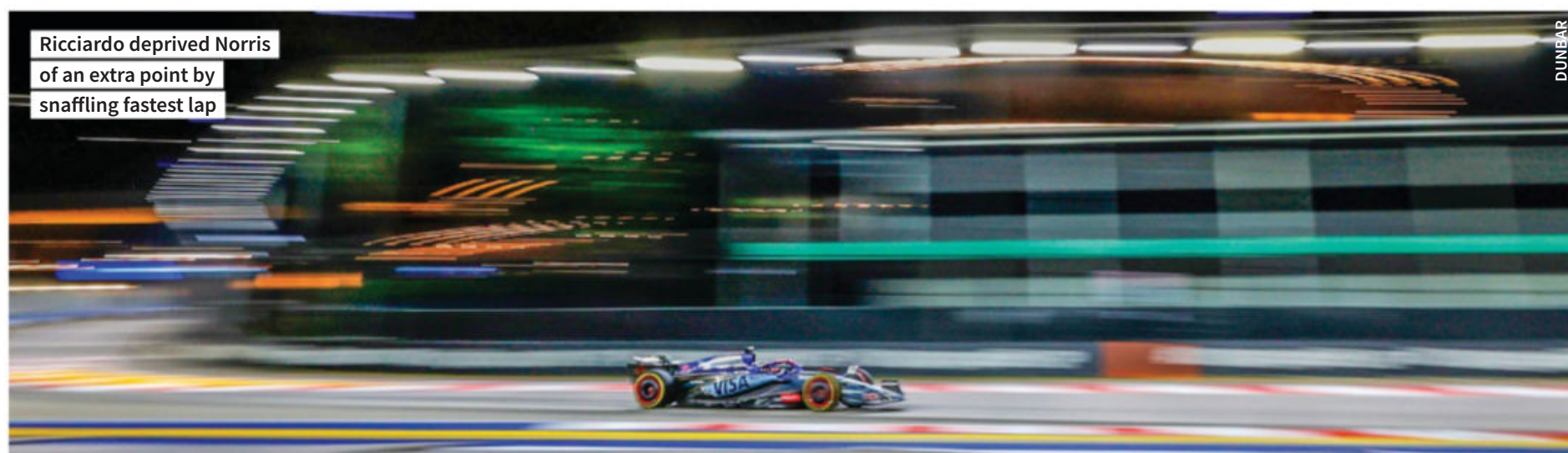
That scarcely deterred Norris. Instead, it rather woke him up and set him back on course to keep opening the gap over Verstappen. It also prompted Joseph to issue a quick reminder to his charge: “Full concentration now, take a drink.” A sip of warm water was likely not a palatable one, but surely more so than any further wall-bothering antics.

“It was definitely not like I was cruising,” Norris recalled. “I was pushing to open up a gap, and at one point I wanted to try and open up a pit window to give myself an opportunity to maybe box at the end of the race for quickest lap, if I needed to try and achieve that.

“But the car was not easy to drive, especially on the hard tyres. I struggled a lot more than I did on the medium. And especially just with the traffic and things, it was a bit harder to manage the second half of the stint compared to the first, but I was pushing.”

Instead, Norris took a couple of laps to charge up his battery and then let fly on the 48th tour to set a 1m34.925s in his concerted effort to get the extra fastest lap point. Spoiler alert: it didn’t stick, as the late-stopping pair of Kevin Magnussen and Daniel Ricciardo wrested the point away. The Dane had suffered a puncture at Turn 5 in a textbook demonstration of what happens when a driver clips the wall too hard, and bolted on the softs to set a 1m34.754s.

But Magnussen’s lap was deleted, and so the mantle passed to Ricciardo to punch in a 1m34.486s late on to erase Norris’s extra point (a parting gift for ex-team-mate Verstappen, perchance?) with a late blast on the soft tyres.







Leclerc recovered to fifth after initially languishing behind Hulkenberg in DRS train

STALEY



Soft-tyre-shod Hamilton led Russell in initial stages, but was undone by early switch to hards

SBLOXHAM

## “IT LOOKS LIKE THERE’S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CAR, BUT IT’S JUST THE EFFECT OF THE DIRTY AIR”

Either way, Norris was only going to get one go at it; instead, McLaren was more concerned about the effect of dirty air from the traffic. The team needed Norris to focus on working his way through the plethora of backmarkers without taking excessive liberties. Joseph told Norris to simply “bring the car home” to end any discourse of opening up a pit window, later adding the difficulties Piastri had faced earlier when running behind the other cars.

“In the second part of the second stint, our attention was drawn on the fact that as soon as you got behind the backmarkers, the car started to feel tricky,” Stella recounted. “So it was all about no issues, no mistakes, no lock-up. We had seen already in practice that as soon as you are behind a slow car, things look like there’s something wrong with the car, but it’s just the effect of the dirty air. So the focus was entirely on bringing the car home.

“We suggested to Lando to have an attempt at the fastest lap, which he achieved. But after that, we didn’t want to talk about fastest lap anymore.”

Versus Verstappen, Norris lost 8s over the final 10 laps to traffic; by the end, everyone up to and including Fernando Alonso in eighth had been put a lap down. But it was time Norris could afford to spend given he’d saved up so much in advance, the sort of disposable margin that can be frittered away when you’re so dominant.

Versappen had little to say in the aftermath, although this was not through disappointment. He was indulging in a partially silent protest of FIA-organised press conferences following his community service sentence for swearing in Thursday’s session. Instead, he >>

### QUALIFYING



SUTTON

When asked to assess the merits of his pole lap, Lando Norris rated it as “not particularly good”. It was evident that he’d left time on the table in the first sector, since he’d fallen behind in the opening split compared to his initial lap, one that he’d had to abort when Carlos Sainz hurled his Ferrari into the barrier at Turn 17.

The Spaniard’s crash, which bizarrely came as he was about to start his own hot lap, put a pin in Norris’s initial attempt for pole position and seemed to hand an advantage to Max Verstappen. Yet the two title protagonists were put on an equal footing: Verstappen’s lap finished under double-waved yellows and had it struck from the record. But, knowing that a pole lap was in the car, Norris said that he “didn’t have to go over and beyond” to squeeze a lap from his McLaren, and duly parked up on the front row alongside Verstappen with two tenths in hand.

Norris didn’t get the benefit of having Oscar Piastri play tail-gunner, as the Australian was outqualified by the two Mercedes. Lewis Hamilton was worried that the Silver Arrows – painted Petronas teal for this weekend – were “a little lost” after Friday, but the team managed to find a decent turn of pace on Saturday that ensured he and George Russell could lock out the second row.

Ferrari’s disaster class continued beyond Sainz’s shunt, as Charles Leclerc battled against cold tyres to set a time only good enough for seventh. The Monegasque had dazzled in Friday practice but looked out of sorts on Saturday and was beaten by the Haas of Nico Hulkenberg by a scant 0.004 seconds. This was ultimately rendered moot when Leclerc’s time was deleted for track limits, further adding to his irascibility. Leclerc therefore lined up ninth, behind Fernando Alonso and Yuki Tsunoda.

**“Leclerc’s time was deleted for track limits, further adding to his irascibility”**

Alonso was typically self-congratulatory, stating that Aston Martin’s simulations suggested that even progressing from Q2 looked unlikely. Lining up seventh was impressive if that was indeed the case. He expressed surprise that he’d outqualified both Williamses – he’d dumped Alex Albon into the drop zone in the final moments of Q2. The Anglo-Thai had just 0.007s over new team-mate Franco Colapinto, the Argentinian continuing to impress after being parachuted into the Williams at short notice. Sergio Perez only managed to line up a lowly 13th in the second Red Bull.

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GALLOWAY





“ON A WEEKEND WHERE WE KNEW THAT WE WERE GOING TO STRUGGLE, TO BE P2 IS A GOOD ACHIEVEMENT”

was moderately pleased with the result in isolation, given that Red Bull looked at sea in Friday practice. The team was perhaps fearing a repeat of last year’s race, where its 2023 dominance was ended with a dismal weekend in the South-East Asian city state.

“I think on a weekend where we knew that we were going to struggle, to be P2 is a good achievement,” he mused before the podium ceremony. “Of course, we’re not happy with second, so now we just have to try and improve.”

Verstappen was feeling much more at ease with the car in Saturday’s practice session, the lack of traction out of the slower corners appearing to be alleviated with an overnight simulator session. Simply put, it was all about getting the tyres into the right window, and Red Bull managed to find something that catapulted it above Ferrari and Mercedes during the Saturday sessions.

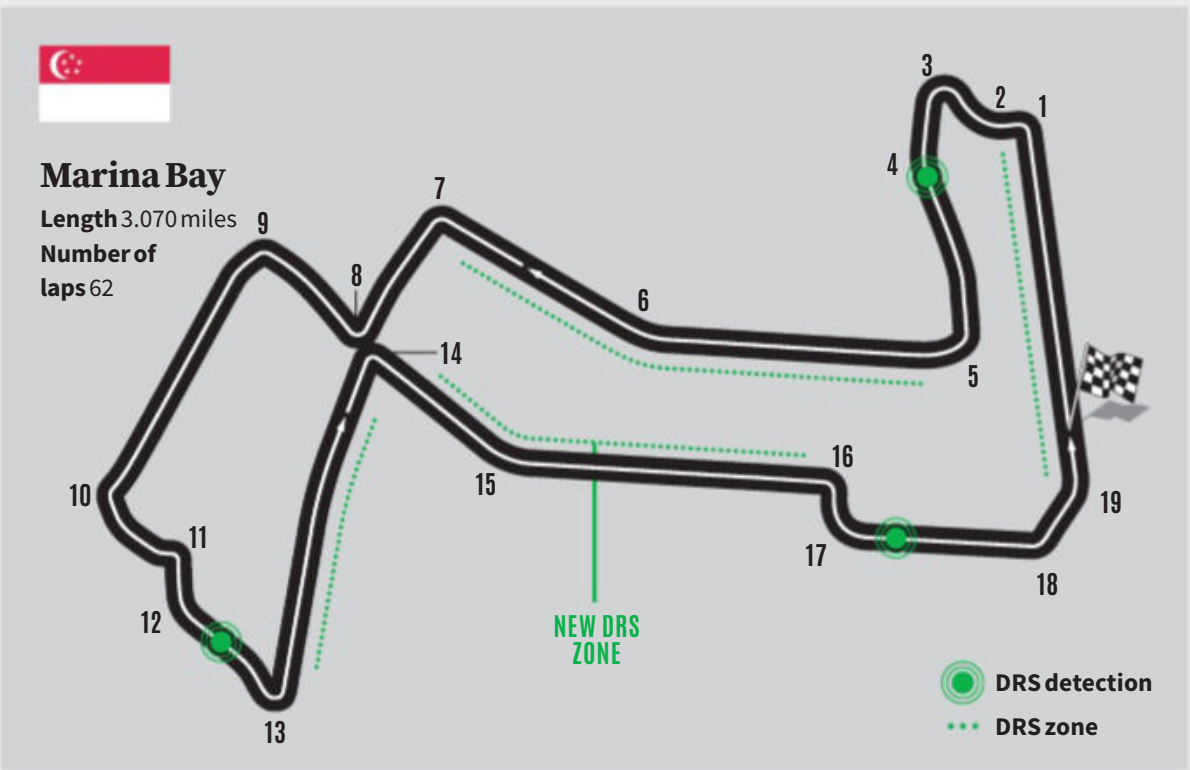


FP2 work on the hard tyre likely helped, as Red Bull focused its longer runs on the white-walled compound. McLaren, for its part, spent more time working with the medium compound – which could explain their relative strengths on the two different options.

“I think if you roll back the clock to Friday night, if you would have said we’d qualify on the front row and take second place a significant amount ahead of the rest of the field, we would have certainly taken that,” team boss Christian Horner said of Red Bull’s weekend. “But obviously the gap to Lando was significant in the first part of the race, and we’ve now got the best part of a month to work hard and try and bring some performance to the car in Austin.”

Horner also noted the efforts of simulator driver Sebastien Buemi (a four-time Le Mans winner) in assisting with the turnaround back at Milton Keynes: “He was consuming plenty of Red Bull to keep him

TRACK MAP







Fireworks for Norris, though celebrations seem a little staid since breakthrough in Miami

going! He played an important part, as does the whole team in working hard and long days and long nights. And with the benefit of there being no factory shutdown over the next three-week period, it's going to be a hive of activity."

In his performance on the hard tyre, Verstappen at least ensured he had one McLaren beaten, with Piastri unable to scythe away at his arrears to the world champion. Once equipped with the hard tyre, Piastri made relatively light work of Lewis Hamilton – an early stopper who was starting to struggle with his own hard compound. It took a little longer to mount an assault on Russell, whose tyres were significantly younger than those of his Mercedes team-mate, but Piastri got past with 17 laps to go.

It was a tough ask for Piastri to close a near-20s deficit to Verstappen in that time. For a brief period, the Melburnian managed to shave 2s

off the gap, but there was no magic second-and-a-half pace advantage that would accelerate his path to a higher step on the podium. Instead, the gap remained rather static, with the two tied for pace.

"I think losing so much time behind the Mercedes in the first stint meant that that was definitely the most we could have done," Piastri reckoned. "I'm walking away reasonably happy. Of course, I'd prefer to be sat in the middle. But I think it was a good damage-limitation day today.

"I knew that the race was going to come to me much later on, and that's basically what we did. When I was in the dirty air behind them, it was tough, as it always is, but I knew that we had a good pace advantage and that the longer we kept going the more opportunities we opened up for ourselves the bigger tyre difference we had."

With six races remaining – a quarter of a season – left in this gruelling 24-race calendar, Norris has to continue to eat away at Verstappen's 52-point advantage at the top of the tree. But he needs Piastri to be in the pocket between him and Verstappen, rather than falling prey to the whims of his fluctuating consistency.

And, of course, Norris needs to tap into his Singapore performance and repeat it across the next six rounds. There's certainly a marked change in his demeanour. The relief of achieving a first win in Miami has long since subsided, and Norris now seems reticent to celebrate the subsequent wins too much. "The focus I see in the team now is this: the team looks like we are on a mission, if that makes sense," Stella concluded. "It almost looks like each of these wins is like it's just a stage, even though when you win you have to celebrate, because it doesn't happen all the time."

But there are four weeks between the Singapore and US GPs, without shutdowns present in the identical gap between races across the summer. Red Bull, for its part, is planning a series of upgrades for Austin that it hopes will see Verstappen to a fourth title at Norris's expense. McLaren also has some updates in the pipeline, although it seems to be continuing to perform without bringing too much to the track. "We need to trust the process," is Stella's mantra: and it won't be long before the final results of 'the process' come to fruition. ❧

**NEXT  
F1 REPORT**

United States Grand Prix  
24 October issue



Singapore's man of few words  
Verstappen moderately  
pleased with second place



## MERCEDES STRUGGLES IN THE HEAT, RUSSELL ABSORBS PRESSURE

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff reckoned that the Brackley squad had “read the race wrong” in its forecasts for the 62-lap Singapore Grand Prix, which took Lewis Hamilton out of podium contention after starting on the soft-compound tyre.

Wolff revealed that Mercedes expected a more processional race and figured that giving Hamilton the softs would allow him to attack Max Verstappen in the early stages. Instead, higher-than-expected degradation on the rear tyres left Hamilton backing up George Russell, who had taken a conventional medium-tyre approach.

“We took a decision based on historic Singapore races where it is basically a procession, Monaco-like, and that the soft tyre would give him an opportunity at the start,” said Wolff. “That was the wrong decision that we all took together. It felt like a good offset but, with the rear tyre deg that we had, it was just one way – and that was backwards.”

Hamilton had to make an earlier call to pit and struggled on the hard tyre, ultimately ensuring he was overcut by Russell. Hamilton finished sixth after starting third. The younger Briton was tasked with two bits of defensive work over the second stint, first in trying to keep Oscar Piastri behind him. The Mercedes was little match for the McLaren in race pace, so proved ultimately unsuccessful, but the defence against Charles Leclerc’s Ferrari was more effective. Leclerc, who was recovering from a lacklustre qualifying, had brought himself into the mix with a long medium-tyre stint, and got onto Russell’s tail in the final phase of the race.

Russell held the position, however, and ensured that Leclerc’s efforts with DRS were ward off to capture fourth place. Both Mercedes drivers were taken off media duties after the race, having felt unwell due to the heat. “It was a really painful evening,” Wolff added. “We struggle at the moment at tracks that are hot and are tough on traction.”



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES



DUNBAR

## Perez’s ‘disaster’ frustrated by Hulkenberg’s defences

Sergio Perez lamented a difficult evening spent stuck in traffic during which he proved unable to dislodge Nico Hulkenberg from ninth place.

The Haas driver, who had qualified sixth, lost positions to being undercut by Fernando Alonso and was overtaken by Charles Leclerc shortly before his only pitstop, but kept Perez behind for the rest of the race to earn his first points since July’s British GP.

“It was a total disaster to be behind Nico for the entire race,” bemoaned the Red Bull driver, who had been knocked out in Q2 and started 13th.

Perez had undercut ahead of Williams driver Franco Colapinto, who made up four places with a

bold move on the inside of the first corner, after issuing a positive radio message that the Argentinian was “difficult to pass”, and later complimented his fellow Latin American for “a fantastic race”.

“He didn’t put a foot wrong, it was very difficult to keep up with him at the time,” added Perez. “In the end we managed to do the undercut on him but that was the only one who we could do.”

Colapinto earned the temporary ire of team-mate Alex Albon for his Turn 1 “divebomb” but, after finishing 1.66 seconds shy of a point, cut a level figure. “We were not perfect today, and I think that’s why we are not in the points,” he said.

“I HAVE A LOT OF EMOTIONS, BECAUSE I’M AWARE THAT COULD BE IT”

Daniel Ricciardo gave the clearest indication that his F1 career could be over, with RB set to put Liam Lawson in the car for Austin.



GALLOWAY



## Q&amp;A

**OLIVER OAKES**  
**ALPINE TEAM PRINCIPAL****How has this weekend been so difficult?**

At Spa, we brought an update, and it was pretty decent. Zandvoort was decent, and then I think Monza, Baku, here, we haven't been very good, being blunt. I think we need to have a good look why, to be honest.

**How do you keep the drivers' motivation up?**

They're both good to work with, massively professional. There's never any concerns over them being motivated. I think they get frustrated, as I would – you don't want to be cruising around on Sunday with nothing to fight for at the moment. But I think, actually, we know between now and the end of the year we have got some performance coming.

**Do the drivers know where the limitations are?**

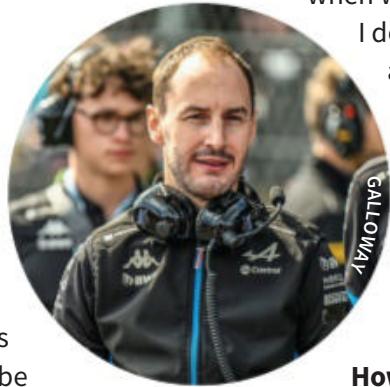
Both drivers are pushing hard because, at the end of the day, they are experienced.

They're both proven in F1, they know how to develop a car. For them, we have to give them a better car.

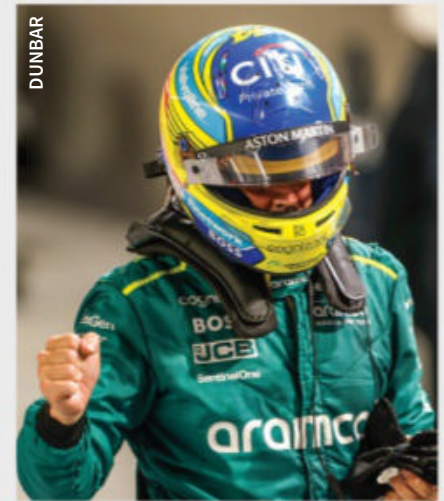
**Will there be enough performance to change your position in the midfield?**

Some people have brought big steps this year, some have brought some that haven't worked. We've just got to see, when we bring it, how it performs.

I don't think it's as simple as always having a number from what you're hoping to bring. It's also got to translate to the track. But it is quite tight in that battle in the middle, and you see it swing.

**How big a task is leading Alpine?**

It is a big job, but I knew that before I took it. There's a lot of support there with Luca [de Meo] and Flavio [Briatore], so it's something I'm quite excited about. I'm just realising it takes a lot of time. You've got to have patience and also build trust because this team has been through a lot for a few years, and we need to make sure we always make the right steps forward.

**ALONSO'S RUN  
'BETTER THAN OUR  
BEST DREAMS'**

Fernando Alonso felt he pushed his Aston Martin beyond expectations with eighth place in Singapore.

While powerless to stop both Ferraris charging ahead, who he said "should have won" given the team's race pace, the Spaniard undercut Nico Hulkenberg to take eighth, keeping clear of the Haas driver on his ageing tyres over the closing laps.

"Finishing eighth is a bit better than our best dreams," the Aston Martin driver said. "Again, good points, but still one lap behind and not great pace, a difficult car to drive the whole weekend.

"We were just lucky. We got points, but it was possible to be P15 and have the same feeling."

The 43-year-old added that both his sixth place in Baku and eighth place in Singapore were the maximum results possible from Aston Martin's current car, and has called on the team to step up its development push.

"We need to raise the level," he added. "We have some new parts coming in the next few races. Hopefully they help to come back to a more strong performance."

Team-mate Lance Stroll had a subdued run to 14th, with his biggest drama a front brake fix carried out by his mechanics on the grid, after he detected an issue on the reconnaissance laps.

**Sainz recovers after Q3 smash**

Carlos Sainz recovered from a bad start to undercut the midfield and use his Ferrari's superior pace to take seventh.

The Spaniard crashed in Q3 to start 10th and lost two spots on the opening lap, triggered by Franco Colapinto's aggressive inside lunge at the first corner, which pushed him to 12th and forced Ferrari to pit him early on lap 13 to enact the undercut. Despite a tyre management run,

Sainz climbed five places and also moved over for team-mate Charles Leclerc's own charge to rescue his weekend.

"We took a bold strategy to try to get out of that midfield battle and undercut the whole midfield," Sainz explained. "We went to the end on the hard, which worked. We made it through the midfield. Otherwise it might have been something similar to what happened to Checo."





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# DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

## McLAREN'S 'MINI-DRS' LOOPHOLE CLOSED

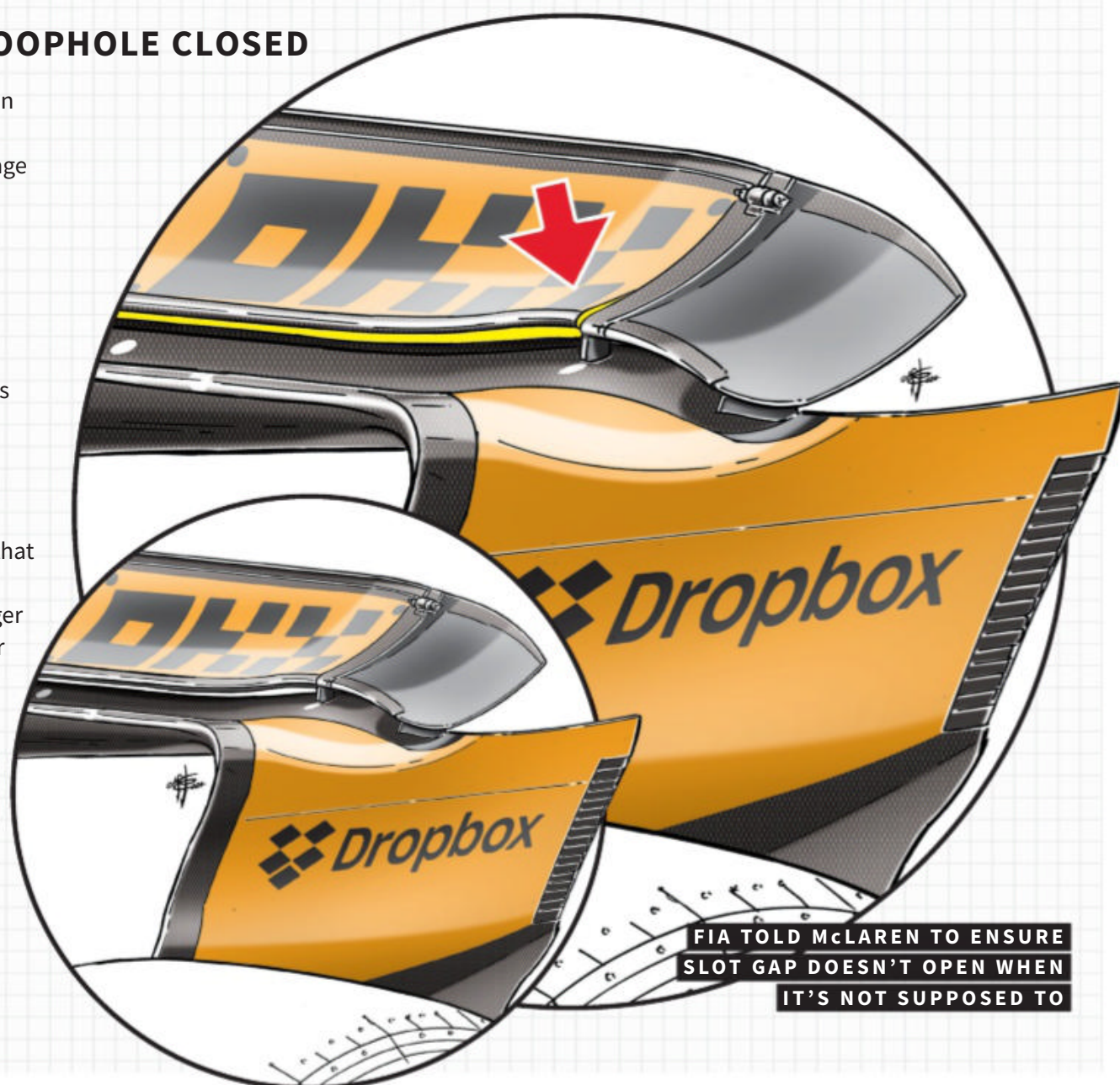
The upper rear-wing element on the McLaren MCL38 had tongues wagging after the Baku race earlier this month, when onboard footage of Oscar Piastri's car showed the bottom corners of the top flap creaking open very slightly on the 2.2-kilometre (1.37-mile) stretch overlooking the Caspian Sea.

The upper and lower elements are separated by what is known as a 'slot gap', which has a defined size. The slot gap breaks the wing up into two elements, allowing airflow to stay attached to a greater curvature, and minimises the interruption to the amount of downforce created.

On a long straight, you really don't need that downforce. If the slot gap is opened slightly more, then the wing starts to stall; it no longer stays attached to the underside of the upper element, cutting the downforce and, by association, the drag. It passed all static flex tests, but McLaren developed it to open at a given speed to dump more drag and push the acceleration up. This certainly helped Piastri keep ahead of Charles Leclerc during the Azerbaijan GP.

There were no formal protests against the wing design, but McLaren was told by the FIA to modify it so that it did not open up without DRS applied.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



## FERRARI'S CURLING FRONT WING

A new front wing was added to Ferrari's SF-24 to rebalance the front end of the car in Singapore, and extract more from the floor revisions over the previous rounds. This included a redesigned upper wing element but, as ever, the devil is in the detail.

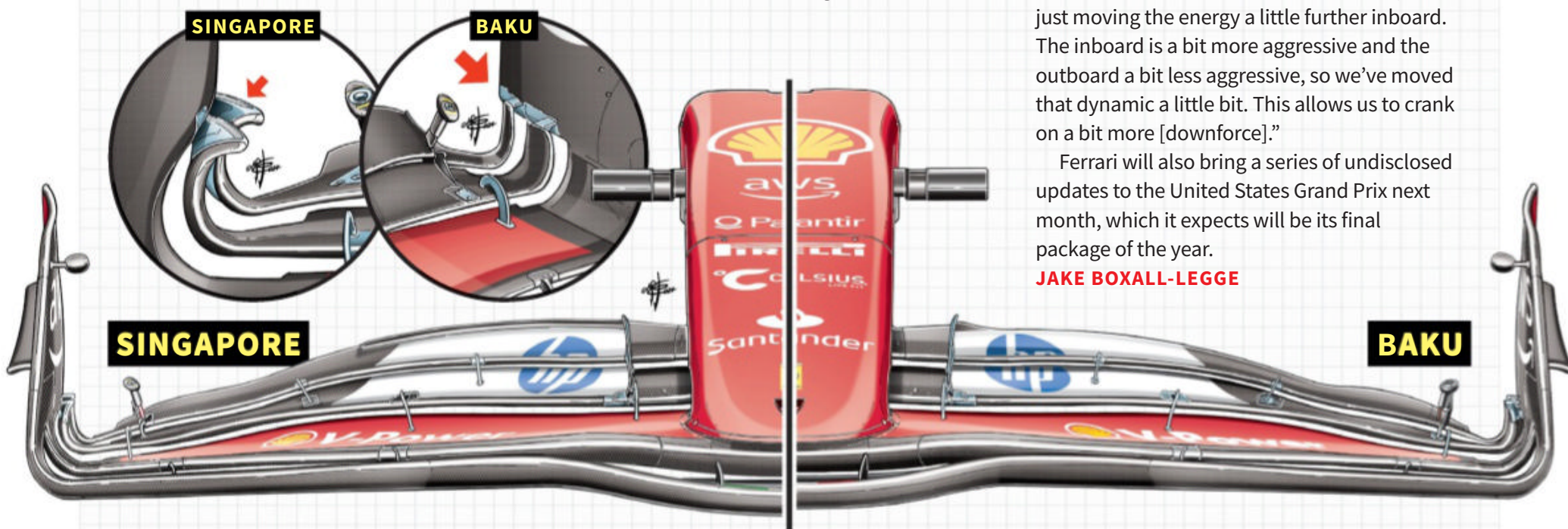
The wing's attachment points to the endplate have also been revised, featuring a more pronounced inboard 'curl' versus the old design. This is something that McLaren exploited with its Austrian Grand Prix upgrades, where the exposed tips form and strengthen a vortex to be

directed outwards around the front tyre.

"Singapore is not the obvious circuit where you would bring an aero upgrade," said senior performance engineer Jock Clear. "It's a very draggy, high-downforce circuit, so it [the wing] is not specific for this circuit, but basically, it's just moving the energy a little further inboard. The inboard is a bit more aggressive and the outboard a bit less aggressive, so we've moved that dynamic a little bit. This allows us to crank on a bit more [downforce]."

Ferrari will also bring a series of undisclosed updates to the United States Grand Prix next month, which it expects will be its final package of the year.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





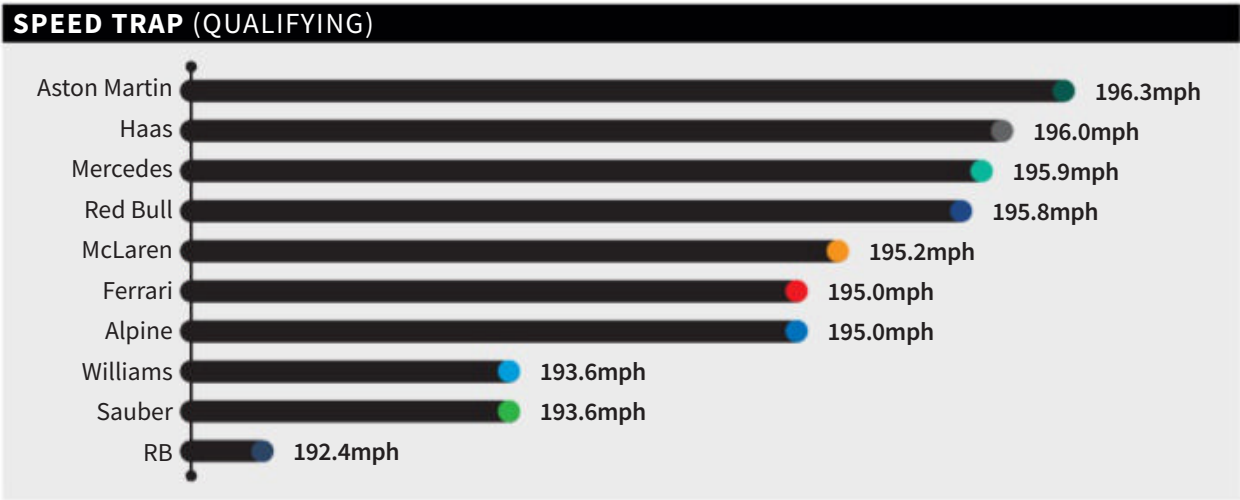


FREE PRACTICE 1			FREE PRACTICE 2			FREE PRACTICE 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m31.763s	1	Norris	1m30.727s	1	Norris	1m29.646s
2	Norris	1m31.839s	2	Leclerc	1m30.785s	2	Russell	1m30.125s
3	Sainz	1m31.952s	3	Sainz	1m31.356s	3	Piastri	1m30.431s
4	Verstappen	1m32.097s	4	Tsunoda	1m31.468s	4	Verstappen	1m30.540s
5	Tsunoda	1m32.263s	5	Piastri	1m31.474s	5	Leclerc	1m30.559s
6	Piastri	1m32.369s	6	Ricciardo	1m31.478s	6	Sainz	1m30.807s
7	Ricciardo	1m32.375s	7	Russell	1m31.488s	7	Hamilton	1m30.864s
8	Albon	1m32.451s	8	Perez	1m31.598s	8	Albon	1m30.949s
9	Alonso	1m32.610s	9	Albon	1m31.650s	9	Colapinto	1m30.989s
10	Ocon	1m32.615s	10	Hulkenberg	1m31.667s	10	Alonso	1m31.082s
11	Colapinto	1m32.618s	11	Hamilton	1m31.709s	11	Tsunoda	1m31.114s
12	Hamilton	1m32.679s	12	Alonso	1m31.750s	12	Hulkenberg	1m31.187s
13	Gasly	1m32.694s	13	Magnussen	1m31.793s	13	Magnussen	1m31.265s
14	Perez	1m32.767s	14	Stroll	1m31.957s	14	Gasly	1m31.367s
15	Stroll	1m32.778s	15	Verstappen	1m32.021s	15	Perez	1m31.440s
16	Russell	1m33.334s	16	Colapinto	1m32.057s	16	Ocon	1m31.559s
17	Magnussen	1m33.377s	17	Ocon	1m32.119s	17	Ricciardo	1m31.561s
18	Bottas	1m33.485s	18	Gasly	1m32.222s	18	Stroll	1m31.719s
19	Zhou	1m33.585s	19	Zhou	1m32.359s	19	Bottas	1m32.098s
20	Hulkenberg	1m33.797s	20	Bottas	1m32.786s	20	Zhou	1m32.652s

WEATHER Cloudy, air 33-34C track 37-39C

WEATHER Clear, air 30-31C track 33-34C

WEATHER Cloudy, air 30-31C track 34-38C



QUALIFYING 1			QUALIFYING 2			QUALIFYING 3		
POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Norris	1m30.002s	1	Piastri	1m29.640s	1	Norris	1m29.525s
2	Verstappen	1m30.157s	2	Verstappen	1m29.680s	2	Verstappen	1m29.728s
3	Piastri	1m30.258s	3	Leclerc	1m29.747s	3	Hamilton	1m29.841s
4	Hamilton	1m30.393s	4	Hamilton	1m29.929s	4	Russell	1m29.867s
5	Perez	1m30.624s	5	Norris	1m30.007s	5	Piastri	1m29.953s
6	Sainz	1m30.670s	6	Sainz	1m30.108s	6	Hulkenberg	1m30.115s
7	Albon	1m30.679s	7	Hulkenberg	1m30.150s	7	Alonso	1m30.214s
8	Alonso	1m30.684s	8	Russell	1m30.153s	8	Tsunoda	1m30.354s
9	Colapinto	1m30.704s	9	Tsunoda	1m30.289s	9	Leclerc	no time
10	Tsunoda	1m30.716s	10	Alonso	1m30.450s	10	Sainz	no time
11	Hulkenberg	1m30.724s	11	Albon	1m30.474s			
12	Leclerc	1m30.786s	12	Colapinto	1m30.481s			
13	Russell	1m30.811s	13	Perez	1m30.579s			
14	Magnussen	1m30.829s	14	Magnussen	1m30.653s			
15	Ocon	1m30.958s	15	Ocon	1m30.769s			
16	Ricciardo	1m31.085s						
17	Stroll	1m31.094s						
18	Gasly	1m31.312s						
19	Bottas	1m31.572s						
20	Zhou	1m32.054s						

WEATHER Clear, air 29-30C track 31-32C

NEXT RACE

20 October

United States Gp

Austin

SEASON STATS			
DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	331	1	1
2 Norris	279	1	1
3 Leclerc	245	1	1
4 Piastri	237	1	2
5 Sainz	190	1	2
6 Hamilton	174	1	2
7 Russell	155	1	1
8 Perez	144	2	2
9 Alonso	62	5	3
10 Hulkenberg	24	6	6
11 Stroll	24	6	8
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		516
2 Red Bull		475
3 Ferrari		441
4 Mercedes		329
5 Aston Martin		86
6 RB		34
7 Haas		31
8 Williams		16
9 Alpine		13
10 Sauber		0











QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	17	1	Perez
Hamilton	5	13	Russell
Leclerc	12	5	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	14	4	Piastri
Alonso	13	5	Stroll
Gasly	7	9	Ocon
Albon	2	0	Colapinto
Sargeant	0	13	Albon
Ricciardo	5	12	Tsunoda
Zhou	1	16	Bottas
Magnussen	2	13	Hulkenberg
Hulkenberg	0	1	Bearman

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
Norris	3	Norris	5
Hamilton	2	Leclerc	3
Leclerc	2	Russell	2
Piastri	2		
Russell	1		
Sainz	1		



## STARTING GRID

	<b>9 Leclerc</b> #16 no Q3 time		<b>7 Alonso</b> #14 1m30.214s		<b>5 Piastri</b> #81 1m29.953s		<b>3 Hamilton</b> #44 1m29.841s		<b>1 Norris</b> #4 1m29.525s
	<b>10 Sainz</b> #55 no Q3 time		<b>8 Tsunoda</b> #22 1m30.354s		<b>6 Hulkenberg</b> #27 1m30.115s		<b>4 Russell</b> #63 1m29.867s		<b>2 Verstappen</b> #1 1m29.728s

## RESULTS ROUND 18/24 (62 LAPS – 190.23 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	<b>Lando Norris</b> (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	1h40m52.571s	62	Mn, Hn
2	<b>Max Verstappen</b> (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+20.945s		Mn, Hn
3	<b>Oscar Piastri</b> (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+41.823s		Mn, Hn
4	<b>George Russell</b> (GBR)	Mercedes	+1m01.040s		Mn, Hn
5	<b>Charles Leclerc</b> (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m02.430s		Mn, Hn
6	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b> (GBR)	Mercedes	+1m25.248s		Su, Hn
7	<b>Carlos Sainz</b> (ESP)	Ferrari	+1m36.039s		Mn, Hn
8	<b>Fernando Alonso</b> (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+0.873s		Mu, Hu
9	<b>Nico Hulkenberg</b> (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+3.140s		Mn, Hn
10	<b>Sergio Perez</b> (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+4.624s		Mn, Hn
11	<b>Franco Colapinto</b> (ARG)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+6.284s		Mn, Hn
12	<b>Yuki Tsunoda</b> (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+8.792s		Mn, Su
13	<b>Esteban Ocon</b> (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+44.005s		Mn, Hn
14	<b>Lance Stroll</b> (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	-1 lap/+47.571s		Hu, Mu
15	<b>Zhou Guanyu</b> (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+57.220s		Hn, Mn
16	<b>Valtteri Bottas</b> (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap/+57.829s		Hn, Mn
17	<b>Pierre Gasly</b> (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+59.059s		Mn, Sn
18	<b>Daniel Ricciardo</b> (AUS)	RB-Honda RBPT	-1 lap/+1m29.796s		Sn, Mn, Sn, Su
19	<b>Kevin Magnussen</b> (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	57 laps/accident damage		Hn, Mn, Sn
R	<b>Alexander Albon</b> (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	15 laps-overheating		Mn, Hn

**WEATHER** Clear, air 30-31C track 34-36C

**WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 113.145mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 116.953mph.**

## FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Ricciardo	1m34.486s	-	60
2	Norris	1m34.925s	+0.439s	48
3	Leclerc	1m35.371s	+0.885s	46
4	Piastrri	1m35.745s	+1.259s	48
5	Verstappen	1m35.967s	+1.481s	59
6	Tsunoda	1m36.393s	+1.907s	53
7	Sainz	1m36.561s	+2.075s	15
8	Albon	1m36.888s	+2.402s	13
9	Gasly	1m36.927s	+2.441s	46
10	Russell	1m37.047s	+2.561s	30
11	Colapinto	1m37.262s	+2.776s	35
12	Hamilton	1m37.393s	+2.907s	43
13	Magnussen	1m37.425s	+2.939s	52
14	Zhou	1m37.461s	+2.975s	47
15	Hulkenberg	1m37.470s	+2.984s	35
16	Perez	1m37.477s	+2.991s	33
17	Bottas	1m37.524s	+3.038s	46
18	Alonso	1m37.741s	+3.255s	54
19	Stroll	1m37.851s	+3.365s	36
20	Ocon	1m37.964s	+3.478s	48

## STATS

17

Number of fastest laps Ricciardo has scored in F1, the same as Rubens Barrichello

# 350

Hamilton has started 350 world championship GPs, second only to Alonso (395)

## 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
	Norris	Verstappen	Hamilton	Russell	Piastri	Hulkenberg	Alonso	Tsunoda	Leclerc	Sainz	Albon	Colapinto	Perez	Magnussen	Ocon	Ricciardo	Stroll	Gasly	Bottas	Zhou
G	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	22	16	55	23	43	11	20	31	3	18	10	77	24
1	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	77	24
2	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	77	24
3	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	77	24
4	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	77	24
5	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	77	24
6	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	24	77
7	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	24	77
8	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	24	77
9	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	3	10	18	24	77
10	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	23	10	18	24	3	77
11	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	10	18	23	24	77	3
12	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	55	31	20	10	18	24	77	23	3
13	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	55	10	18	24	77	23	3
14	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	10	18	24	77	55	23	3
15	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	10	18	24	77	55	3	23
16	4	1	44	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	10	18	24	77	55	3	
17	4	1	63	81	44	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	10	18	24	55	77	3	
18	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	20	44	10	18	24	55	77	3	
19	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	44	20	10	18	55	24	77	3	
20	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	44	20	10	18	55	24	77	3	
21	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	31	44	20	10	55	18	24	77	3	
22	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	44	31	20	10	55	18	24	77	3	
23	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	44	31	20	10	55	18	24	77	3	
24	4	1	63	81	27	14	16	43	11	22	44	31	20	10	55	18	24	77	3	
25	4	1	63	81	27	16	43	11	14	22	44	31	20	55	10	18	24	77	3	

**KEY:** 1 Classification 1 Lap number G Starting grid 23 Lapped  
3 Pit entry 24 Overtook 77 Overtaken Retirement

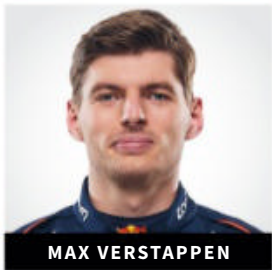


# SINGAPORE GP DRIVER RATINGS

*No one's worthy of a perfect 10 in Singapore, where Norris and Verstappen are the top scorers, and Perez, Stroll, Gasly and Magnussen bring up the rear*

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

## RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **2nd** — Result **2nd**

**9** Made most of turnaround in Red Bull fortunes over weekend. Stuck car on front row, but couldn't pressure Norris's weak spot at start and had to settle for second. Strong on hard-tyre stint, but looked comparatively worse on mediums and was probably lucky Piastri was stuck behind Mercedes duo.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **13th** — Result **10th**

**4** Ignominious return to nowhereville. Made good start to convert Q2 exit into a top 10 place, but spent race stuck behind Colapinto and then Hulkenberg either side of pitstop. Almost hauled in to steal fastest lap point, before Ricciardo did the job. Called his weekend a "disaster".

## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **3rd** — Result **6th**

**6** Not granted particularly good strategy, as soft-tyre opening forced him into long-stinting the hard. Did sterling job in qualifying, but team did not anticipate heavier rear-tyre degradation in race. Couldn't get hard tyres into right window, meaning he was easy prey for Leclerc.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **4th** — Result **4th**

**8** Defence from Leclerc well managed while grappling with car's weakness with tyres on hot circuits. Perhaps stifled by Hamilton early on, shown by speed gain trying to overcut team-mate. Kept Piastri at bay in opening stint but could do little about tyre offset in hard-tyre phase.

## FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **9th** — Result **5th**

**7** Blamed cold tyres for Q3 disaster, and a lock-up cost two grid positions through track limits violations. Stuck in DRS train behind Hulkenberg and Alonso, but managed tyres well. Tyre offset on hards meant second pass on Alonso was easier, and nipped past Hamilton to rescue a solid fifth.

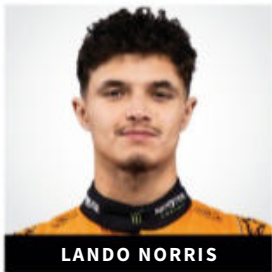


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **10th** — Result **7th**

**6** Q3 shunt arguably cost him and Ferrari team-mate Leclerc a bigger result. Lost two places at start to further compound his misery, but early pace on hard tyres brought him back into play among points positions at end of pitstop cycle. And 49-lap stint on hards was impressive feat.

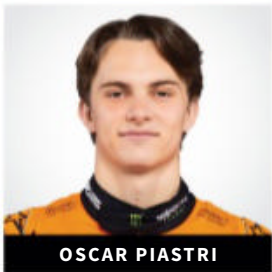
## McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

**9** Commanding, controlling and dominant – but not flawless. Reckoned pole lap could have been a smidgen better, and two brushes with the wall skirted beyond danger. Otherwise, put rest of field to the sword and could have had more than 30s in hand without end-of-race traffic.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **5th** — Result **3rd**

**8** Forced into lock-step behind the Mercs early on, after he didn't capitalise on McLaren qualifying pace. Drove to long-stint strategy on medium tyres well, albeit with bargaining for an earlier stop. Couldn't surpass Verstappen's pace on hard rubber. Could have had more with a stronger Saturday.

## ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **7th** — Result **8th**

**7** Reckoned Aston Martin had no right making Q3, and figured team was set for lowly midfield position. A nuisance for Leclerc early on, and made most of well-timed pitstop to undercut Hulkenberg. Broke free of the Haas by the end, and kept close vigil on Sainz in latter stages. A canny effort.

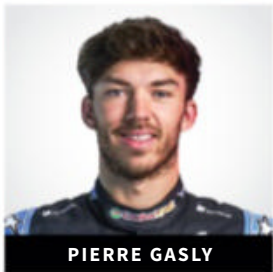


LANCE STROLL

Started **17th** — Result **14th**

**4** Vibrations on reconnaissance laps to grid required quick brake replacement service in starting box. Lost position to Gasly at start, but earlier pitstop rewarded with undercut on Alpine driver. Got past Saubers when on mediums, but failed to make real inroads on Ocon ahead.

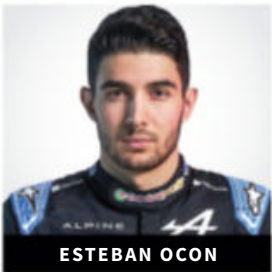
## ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **18th** — Result **17th**

**4** Failed to make Q2, but at least made a place on Stroll at start. Long stint on medium tyres offered precious little in track position. Tried to help Ocon by holding up the RBs, and shook out at the back behind Saubers after pitstop. Couldn't make a move on Bottas thanks to Finn's DRS assist from Zhou.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started **15th** — Result **13th**

**6** Reckoned he got maximum out of Alpine package. Broke into Q2 and made up two places at start, later sitting on cusp of top 10 before pitstop. Had huge gulf between himself and Tsunoda ahead, offering little opportunity to progress further. Felt car lacked grip all weekend.





STALEY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

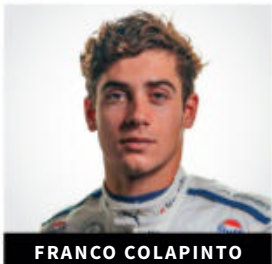
WILLIAMS



ALEX ALBON

Started **11th** — Result **R**

**5** Felt he was boxed in at start, blaming Colapinto’s “divebomb” into Turn 1. Stuck behind Magnussen and ended up pitting early and, although hard tyre pace initially looked promising, he retired with power unit overheating. Felt points opportunity went begging.



FRANCO COLAPINTO

Started **12th** — Result **11th**

**8** “Divebomb”, per Alex Albon, into Turn 1 was actually a brilliantly judged overtaking move. Absorbed pressure from Perez in medium-tyre stint. Undercut by Perez during pit phase, which cost him his place in top 10, resuming position in DRS train behind Hulkenberg.

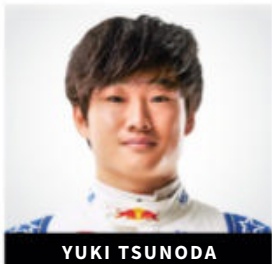
RB



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **16th** — Result **18th**

**5** Made no ground starting on soft tyres, but climbed back into midfield with mediums during pitstop cycle. Moved over for Tsunoda with different strategies, and pitted twice more – both for softs – to go for fastest lap. Likely to be a damp squib to go out on, should this be end of his F1 career.

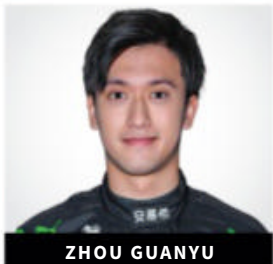


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **8th** — Result **12th**

**5** Dropped to 11th off the line and never really factored in battle for points. Lost ground to Colapinto and Perez in opening stint, hoping long run on mediums would offer track position. Was waved past Ricciardo to challenge Colapinto for 11th, but ran out of time to close the Williams down.

SAUBER



ZHOU GUANYU

Started **20th** — Result **15th**

**6** Played something of a team game to ensure Bottas had DRS to stay ahead of Gasly. Half a second shy in qualifying, but got ahead thanks to team-mate’s brake issues. Managed tyres well and sacrificed good race pace on medium tyre to ensure Bottas could finish a place behind him.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started **19th** — Result **16th**

**5** Struggled with front brakes locking in early laps, costing time and position to team-mate Zhou. Like Zhou, started on hard tyres in anticipation of a safety car, but this never came. Stuck with his team-mate in DRS tow to maintain position ahead of Gasly in a well-worked strategy.

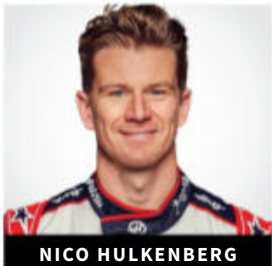
HAAS



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Started **14th** — Result **19th**

**4** Half a second shy of team-mate in Q2, and struggled for pace in opening laps of race after starting on hard tyres, a decision driven by safety car gamble. Knocked wall at Turn 5 and ended up with a puncture, prompting another pitstop. Attempt at fastest lap chalked off for track limits.

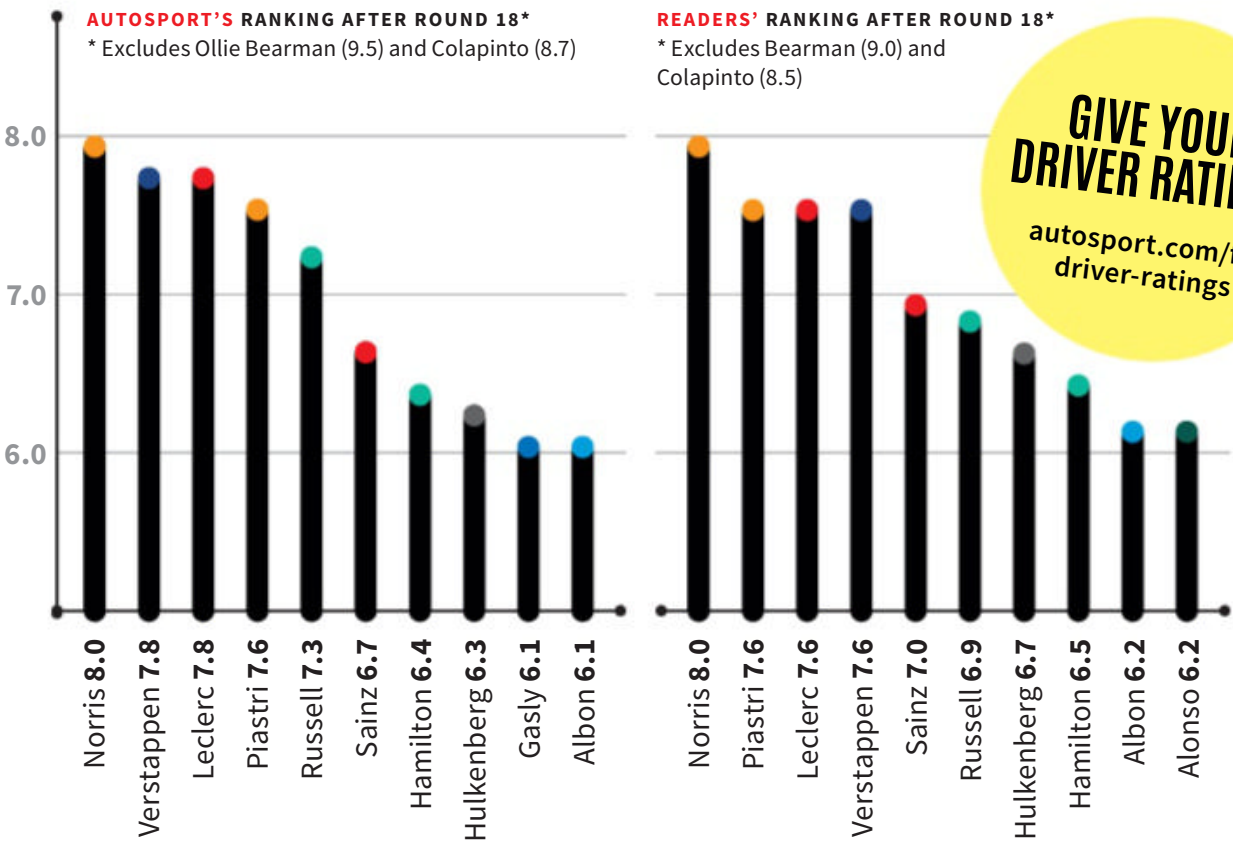


NICO HULKENBERG

Started **6th** — Result **9th**

**8** One of stars of qualifying with sixth on grid. Excellent start briefly carried him above Piastri, before ceding position. Kept Leclerc, Alonso, Colapinto and Perez in a DRS train in early phases, but lost places as tyres faded. Soaked up Perez’s attempts to pass to claim two valuable points.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS







BTCC

# Ingram levels the scores against Hill

*The season-long fight for the BTCC crown couldn't be more finely poised after Tom Ingram won twice, and Jake Hill once, at Silverstone*

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

**T**om Ingram laughed. “I kind of wanted a beige weekend, but a beige weekend has been two wins and a fourth – I think that’s all right if I’m honest!” he exclaimed. “We needed that.” The desire for ‘beige’ was because, as British Touring Car Championship runner-up, he carried a heavy handicap on turbo and hybrid power boost usage into the penultimate round on the Silverstone National Circuit – a track upon which such a penalty hits hard, given its long periods of flat-out running and tight corners.

What we got was well-timed rainfall mitigating that obstacle for qualifying and the first two races, and an even-better-timed cessation of the rain unexpectedly providing us with a thriller of a finale in which Ingram shrugged off a last-corner assault from Ash

Sutton for his second race win of the day, not long after it looked almost certain that the climax would be chalked off as null and void, or at best run to half-distance and 50% points behind the safety car.

On the face of it, things took another upward turn for Ingram some time after that race had finished, while most were heading home with their heaters turned up in their cars to best dry out their soggy togs. Jake Hill, championship leader before Silverstone, had also done a sterling job of turning beige into something bright and fluffy amid the gloom. But his final-race move on Dan Cammish was looked upon dimly by officialdom, and he was demoted back behind him to fifth in the final results.

That means that the loss of two points for Hill brings Ingram dead level in the championship reckoning heading to next week’s



Last corner,  
last lap, last race:  
Sutton runs into  
Ingram...



...who applies dab of  
oppo to hold the slide...



...and drinks in glory  
for second time on  
a very gloomy day

finale on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix Circuit, with Hill ahead on wins countback. But, critically, it also means that Ingram will join Hill on being allowed just one second per lap of hybrid for qualifying; a solitary lap of usage in race one. A cloud to his silver lining, decidedly not beige, and potentially even a boost for Hill.

While Ingram bids for his second BTCC crown and Hill his first, four-time and reigning champion Sutton – after hanging on through much of the summer – now has a mountain to climb. A drive-through penalty in the second race, awarded because a mechanic was still attempting in vain to fix his radio on the grid when the 30-second board was displayed, hit him hard. And the pre-event build-up will also shoehorn in Cammish, Josh Cook (who as usual is 63 points adrift heading to the final weekend)

and Colin Turkington, but they need a succession of miracles in their favour to even take it to the last race.

Against all odds, Ingram started his Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N Fastback on pole for the opening race, despite being allowed just 3s per lap of hybrid in qualifying. It's probably fair to say that the Hyundai has been marginally the best package across the 2024 season. Veteran team-mate Tom Chilton aced free practice, and looked a serious contender. But with his boost penalty, Ingram “was confident enough of top eight, realistically”.

That soon turned on its head. The tyre rules for this weekend mandated – should it be dry – the soft Goodyear in one race, the medium in the other two, and, for qualifying, a free choice among these plus three sets of carryover tyres from previous weekends. »





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While Chilton confidently plumped for a new medium set for the first phase of qualifying, and was baffled to fall at the first hurdle after not getting within half a second of his FP2 best on an older version of the same compound, Ingram went for a relatively fresh set of carryover softs. He scraped through in sixth place in his group, engineer Spencer Aldridge puzzled that, like Chilton, his charge was slower than he was in practice on well-used mediums. And then came the rain, meaning Ingram never even needed the new softs he had in reserve.

In Q2, Ingram was second to the West Surrey Racing BMW 330e M Sport of Turkington; in the Quick Six shootout, he was runner-up to Aron Taylor-Smith, going great guns in his Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra. But then the Irishman was chucked out (see panel, p37), and Ingram was on pole. “It just shows what a bit of weather can do,” he reflected. “In the dry we’ve got the pace, but we haven’t got the hybrid.”

That was a massive boost for Ingram in the title battle, especially because Hill and Sutton looked initially to be starting race one from eighth and 17th respectively on the grid. The dry-weather form of Hill and his Laser Tools-liveried WSR BMW in Q1 was spectacular, bearing in mind his 1s per lap of hybrid – he went through second in his group. That bodes very well for Brands, but it fell apart in Q2. Both Turkington and Hill went out on slicks, and the diminutive Kentishman was the first to call in for wet-weather rubber. Perhaps that’s what cost him. “It was a bit of a







Hill is still BTCC leader on wins countback, and took victory in second race of the day

## “From our side, it’s a double punch in the nuts. This is our weakest circuit on the calendar”

shock to be honest,” he mused after ending up ninth. “We’ve gone in a slightly different direction with spring packages – a little bit to find more speed in qualifying. It paid off, and we were right there. But there was a mistake in Q2. The pressures [at the rear] were way too high, and I only got a lap out of them before that was that.” But Hill’s smile gradually broadened as he sat in the WSR truck after qualifying – the three ride-height exclusions, plus Andrew Watson’s Donington carryover grid penalty, bumped him up to fifth. Four places gained without even sitting in the car.

Sutton gained three spots, and well he needed them. The Alliance-run NAPA Racing Ford Focus ST did not look the weapon of choice around Silverstone, yet still his qualifying position of 17th was a shock, despite his access to just 5s per lap of hybrid. His 57.897s left Sutton 0.2s from making the cut for Q2: “We were a bit confused because in FP2 we put the soft on literally at the last knocking, and did sector one and two just to get a feel – that was good for 57.6, and 57.4 if I’d done the last sector. We bolted on the new set for qualifying and I didn’t go anywhere. I was quietly confident of making Q2 but I’ve been proven wrong.”

One factor raised by Sutton was the aero qualities of the Focus. None of the Alliance quartet featured in the top four in their dry-weather groups, although Dan Rowbottom lost a time that would have put him second to track limits, but he was on the full 15s of hybrid. “There are other hatchbacks here,” admitted Sutton, “so we’re all in the same boat, but they also have a bit of hybrid to pull them out of it. From our side, it’s a double punch in the nuts. This is our weakest circuit on the calendar.”

The knock-on of this was that Sutton, plus the other seven who didn’t make it through to Q2, would go into race one on Sunday effectively blind, with none of the wet-weather running that the top dozen had enjoyed in the later stages of qualifying. As you’d expect, Sutton rocketed through from 14th on the grid to pass Turkington for fourth at half-distance. He was even looking to grab third from the sister Valvoline-liveried (for this weekend) Focus of Cammish, with whom he won a mid-race war of hybrid-boosted fastest laps, before falling away for a secure fourth. “We just used the tyre up – I burned it up trying to do what we did to get to »

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where we did,” Sutton explained. “That was the first bit of wet running we’d done all weekend, and the three in front of us had done qualifying, so they had a bit more idea of what to expect and had dialled the car in for the conditions.”

Up front, Ingram had driven a beautiful race. Second-placed Turkington gradually fell away but continued to lead Hill in a WSR BMW 2-3, before the Northern Irishman graciously left the way clear for his points-leading team-mate to sweep around the outside into the Brooklands left-hander. The problem is, the decision to do this could have been made sooner. “I got Colin with the kindness of

## “We’ve made the car better all day. Great to learn that; shame it’s the second to last race weekend!”

the team and him to let me go,” acknowledged Hill. “That helped me go and get involved, but just a couple of laps too late. Tom had just gained that advantage. He saved it all until I got there.”

What Hill was talking about was the hybrid. Ingram drove a canny race, saving it up until the BMW loomed close. A lunge at Brooklands with two laps remaining, as Hill’s wheels locked, almost ended in contact. But from then on, as Ingram sailed merrily away, Hill, his hybrid all gone, was more concerned with a successful defence from Cammish. The Berkshire-domiciled Yorkshireman was recovering from a poor start and a time-consuming early battle with Rowbottom and the Speedworks-run LKQ Toyota Corolla GR Sport of Cook – until the contrite ‘Rowbo’ locked up and punted Cook off at Becketts, before coasting back to the pits with race-ending damage.

Turkington faded to fifth. “We didn’t have the pace,” he shrugged. “Maybe too much of a qualifying set-up, but we put that right for race two. Once we got it settled down, it was quick.” It certainly was. While Turkington marched his way up the field, Ingram went the opposite way. The Hyundai led the opening six laps after a peach of a start to head the rear-wheel-drive BMW of Hill into Copse, but it perhaps had too aggressive a set-up. “We just went totally the wrong way on the changes and it didn’t work,” related Ingram.

Hill was first to breach Ingram’s defences with a move at Brooklands, and halfway through Turkington pulled off a lovely cutback move on the exit of Luffield. Bearing in mind what we’d seen earlier, there seemed little prospect of a battle for the lead between the WSR duo, and that’s exactly how it played out. Another to pass Ingram was Cook, who had recovered from his Rowbottom



At least Rowbottom tried to light up the day a little

torpedoing in the opener to reach sixth, before getting harpooned by Chilton, whose ill-gotten gains were reversed by the stewards.

This was a very strong weekend performance by Cook, who explained that the Toyota was continually being “nudged in the right direction”. He added another podium in the final race with a lonely run to third: “We’ve just made the car better all day, so that’s what we’ve got to be happy with. It’s really made the car work. Great to learn that; just a shame it’s the second to last race weekend!”

Cook featured in the early laps of the finale before Sutton blasted past him for second on the hybrid button once the race went green following a 25-minute stoppage. A fabulous run to sixth in race two for Chris Smiley, the Restart Racing Cupra Leon driver staving off a late challenge from the WSR BMW of Adam Morgan, was rewarded with reversed-grid pole, with Cammish alongside. But Ingram swept beautifully around the outside of both of them at Copse, and Cammish’s bid to snatch the advantage at Becketts succeeded only momentarily. “I dabbed the brake and the engine stopped!” said the Ford driver. “There wasn’t enough grip to bump-start the engine, and it wasn’t until I got to the grass that it restarted.” It was a shame that cost him the chance of a win on a day when “we were so fast” in race one, but it’s been a huge step forward for Cammish over 2023, as evinced by his joining Turkington and Cook in the ‘forlorn last-round title hopes’ club.

Smiley’s off at Becketts on lap two elevated Cook and Sutton to second and third respectively, a sensational start from the last-named. His drive-through penalty in race two had relegated him to a distant last, but on the final lap he passed Mikey Doble for 14th on the road. Ahead of them, Watson had a 5s penalty >>



Cammish (left) and Ingram (right) draw abreast of finale polesitter Smiley





Cook took third place  
twice in Toyota

for a false start, so Rowbottom slowed to let his team leader through to what would be 12th position, and in the reversed-grid mix. Had Hill drawn ball number '12', a Sutton victory would have been nailed on and we'd be facing a genuine three-way title fight, but the little fella confidently drew the perfect '6'.

The red flag came as conditions worsened under the safety car, called when Turkington spun into the gravel at Becketts. "I'd been off already twice at Copse," he sighed. "No matter how lightly I breathed on the brake pedal, it would just lock. I just caught a pedal and away it went." Everyone agreed that the decision to stop the race was correct. "When someone like Colin goes off, you have to question if it's still the right thing to do," asserted Ingram. "The start of the race was utterly horrendous."

What few could have imagined was that the rain would abate and we would get a thrilling final 13 laps. Once past Cook, Sutton steamed up to Ingram. "I knew that Ash was going to be coming in fast – that was a given," grinned Ingram. "I couldn't afford to make a mistake, but at the same time I had to push on. I couldn't just drive round; I had to crack on with it. So I had to take risks to a certain degree. Ash made a couple of mistakes, a couple of lock-ups deep into Brooklands, and that kind of saved my bacon I think. Very similar to race one [with Hill] in a way – I had to let the laps count down, I had to let Ash get closer, let him use his hybrid. Once I was then able to deploy to the end, I would be all right."



Zelos celebrates  
weekend Jack Sears  
Trophy honours

## "I'd been off already twice. No matter how lightly I breathed on the brake pedal, it would just lock"

But he wasn't. Sutton stopped making mistakes and, at Luffield on the final lap, he took a tight line while Ingram went wider. Their paths crossed, and the contact forced the Hyundai pilot into a massive save. "I think ultimately we had the pace over Tom," reckoned Sutton, "but I just made two big mistakes in the middle of the race, just locking up into Brooklands, which gave him the massive gap he needed. We got it back down. I hadn't used that line pretty much all day, so I'd never experienced the amount of grip that was there. I took a bit of a gamble, but ultimately I was in Tom's blind spot and I kind of realised that three quarters of the way around the corner. I did back out – contact was still made, but if I'd gained a position from it I probably would have given it back. He did come across and chop my nose, but he didn't know where I was."

All good, hard racing, and they were pleased to have been able to fight it out. So too was Dan Zelos, the Excelr8 Hyundai newcomer on just his second BTCC weekend. After qualifying sixth, he was relegated to the back of the grid for failing the ride-height test, but rose to 10th in the opener, eighth in the sequel, then lost a battle for fifth with Cammish in the finale. It was a terrific performance, although Zelos was then penalised down to eighth for a barge on Rob Huff. As the evening set in and he drank in the plaudits, Zelos was praying for this to materialise into a seat for the finale at Brands. If Excelr8 wants Ingram to win the crown, Zelos – just two weekends into his BTCC career after replacing the disenchanted Ronan Pearson – would be a very strong wingman...

Hill, as we saw in race one, has one of those. But he could do little about the weather. A win, a second and a (penalised) fifth were a good return. "The only reason you feel worse is because Ingram's had an absolute stonker of a weekend," he summed up. "He was strong today, but ultimately the amount of rain in that last one just screwed us over in the BMW. We just could not get the grip that we had in race one and two. The front-wheel-drive cars thrive when it's just that bit wetter, because they can just pull themselves through everything, and we just get wheelspin in sixth gear down the back straight." Never mind, it *never* rains at Brands in October... ❄️

[P58 BTCC SUPPORTS REPORT](#)



## LOSING A POLE, BUT GAINING THREE TITLES



Joy, gloom, and then joy again. That was the story for Power Maxed Racing at Silverstone. Just as Mikey Doble had done in 2023, Aron Taylor-Smith appeared to have planted one of the Midlands squad’s trusty Vauxhall Astra warhorses on pole, with Doble third. Then both – along with sixth-placed Dan Zelos – failed the ride-height test, and were consigned to the back of the grid.

The wet-weather Goodyear tyres are a smaller diameter than the slicks, so it’s common practice for teams to jack their cars up when the weather turns – even if it’s mid-race. PMR claimed to have done this, but, as team boss Adam Weaver explained: “The problem is it’s not like a button where you go 1-2-3-4-5-6 on ride height and everything’s clear. In 10 years of being in the sport, we’ve never failed a ride-height test – another couple of psi in there and we might have passed. Unless the car is absolutely on the floor, it’s not something to give you enough of a performance advantage that you should get penalised for.”

Added to this is that Taylor-Smith had needed a broken gear lever fixing after setting his Q1 time. It was so tight that he only just got out to set a time in Q2 and progress to the shootout. The team argued that the side sill – the area that failed the ride height – was damaged while the work was being carried out. PMR appealed the exclusion, but was ruled to be outside the time limit.

On Sunday, Taylor-Smith wrapped up the Independent drivers’ title in the second race, and Doble clinched the Jack Sears Trophy – for those who, pre-season, had never taken an overall BTCC podium – in the finale, when PMR also put the Independent teams’ silverware to bed. Those competitions have lacked numbers this year, but you can only beat who you’re up against, and Taylor-Smith’s seventh in the overall points and Doble’s second place at Oulton Park prove how strong they’ve been this season. Doble is in the budget ‘waiting room’ for 2025, and it’s to be hoped he can get the nod to emulate Taylor-Smith as a BTCC race winner.

### RESULTS BTCC ROUND 9/10, SILVERSTONE, 22 SEPT RACE 1 (22 LAPS – 36.089 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Tom Ingram (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	23m38.761s
2	Jake Hill (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+0.641s
3	Dan Cammish (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST	+0.771s
4	Ash Sutton (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST	+3.520s
5	Colin Turkington (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+8.199s
6	Josh Cook (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+15.854s
7	Tom Chilton (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+14.666s
8	Sam Osborne (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST	+23.412s
9	Andrew Watson (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+24.691s
10	Dan Zelos (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+24.857s
11	Adam Morgan (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330e M Sport	+26.802s
12	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+27.480s
13	Chris Smiley (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon	+28.668s
14	Aiden Moffat (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	+32.903s
15	Scott Sumpton (GBR)	Restart Racing / Cupra Leon	+33.182s
16	Nick Halstead (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+34.337s
17	Rob Huff (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla GR Sport	-1 lap
18	Daryl DeLeon (PHL)	Unlimited Motorsport / Cupra Leon	-1 lap
R	Dan Rowbottom (GBR)	Alliance Racing / Ford Focus ST	4 laps-accident damage
R	Mikey Doble (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	0 laps-turbo

Winner’s average speed 91.57mph. Fastest lap Sutton 1m03.642s, 92.79mph.

**Q3** 1 Ingram 1m02.380s; 2 Turkington 1m02.494s; 3 Cook 1m02.724s; 18 Taylor-Smith 1m02.288s\*; 19 Doble 1m02.414s\*; 20 Zelos 1m02.906s\*. \* excluded.  
**Q2** Turkington 1m02.551s; Ingram 1m02.613s; Doble 1m02.626s; Cook 1m02.720s; Taylor-Smith 1m02.772s; Zelos 1m02.980s; 4 Cammish 1m03.004s; 5 Hill 1m03.115s; 6 Morgan 1m03.148s; 7 Rowbottom 1m03.229s; 8 Watson 1m03.052s\*\*; 9 Huff 1m03.263s. \*\* grid penalty.  
**Q1 – GROUP 1** Cook 57.324s; Hill 57.465s; Turkington 57.484s; Zelos 57.512s; Rowbottom 57.619s; Ingram 57.626s; 10 Chilton 57.720s; 11 Osborne 57.746s; 13 DeLeon 57.820s; 17 Halstead 58.419s.  
**Q1 – GROUP 2** Doble 57.346s; Huff 57.457s; Morgan 57.489s; Watson 57.559s; Cammish 57.611s; Taylor-Smith 57.695s; 12 Smiley 57.750s; 14 Sutton 57.897s; 15 Sumpton 57.996s; 16 Moffat 58.026s.

**GRID RACE 2** Decided by result of Race 1.

**RACE 2** (22 LAPS – 36.089 MILES)  
1 Hill 23m54.086s; 2 Turkington +0.822s; 3 Cook +4.562s; 4 Ingram +7.010s; 5 Cammish +8.439s; 6 Smiley +17.620s; 7 Morgan +17.959s; 8 Zelos +22.649s; 9 Taylor-Smith +23.752s; 10 Osborne +24.541s; 11 Huff +26.884s; 12 Sutton +27.284s; 13 Rowbottom +27.523s; 14 Doble +27.939s; 15 Watson +30.900s; 16 Sumpton +33.443s; 17 Moffat +33.986s; 18 Halstead +37.838s; 19 DeLeon +39.827s; R Chilton 11 laps-throttle body.  
Winner’s average speed 90.59mph.  
Fastest lap Sutton 1m03.980s, 92.30mph.

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

**RACE 3** (25 LAPS – 41.010 MILES)  
1 Ingram 58m51.030s; 2 Sutton +0.293s; 3 Cook

+6.234s; 4 Cammish +13.541s; 5 Hill +12.255s; 6 Morgan +17.341s; 7 Huff +19.014s; 8 Zelos +13.966s; 9 Taylor-Smith +19.366s; 10 Osborne +20.986s; 11 Doble +21.317s; 12 Chilton +22.693s; 13 DeLeon +23.329s; 14 Watson +24.494s; 15 Rowbottom +26.077s; 16 Smiley +26.502s; 17 Sumpton +28.261s; 18 Halstead +29.463s; R Turkington 3 laps-spun off; R Moffat 3 laps-accident damage.  
Winner’s average speed 41.81mph.  
Fastest lap Ingram 1m03.340s, 93.23mph.

**TYRES** All drivers on wet tyres in each race.

**CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Hill 365; 2 Ingram 365; 3 Sutton 332; 4 Cammish 309; 5 Cook 302; 6 Turkington 301; 7 Taylor-Smith 200; 8 Huff 195; 9 Morgan 195; 10 Rowbottom 177.







M Hybrid V8s  
lap an LMP2 car,  
with race winner  
in front

## BMW breakthrough at Indy

**IMSA SPORTSCAR  
INDIANAPOLIS (USA)  
22 SEPTEMBER  
ROUND 10/11**

A thrilling six-hour sportscar race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Grand Prix road course culminated with BMW M Team RLL securing a magnificent 1-2 finish for its pair of BMW M Hybrid V8s. Philipp Eng and Jesse Krohn combined to take top honours, with team-mates Connor De Phillippi and Nick Yelloly close behind after fending off a strong challenge from the Porsche Penske Motorsport 963 of Mathieu Jaminet and Nick Tandy.

Based just a few miles away in the suburbs of Indianapolis, former Indy 500 winner Bobby Rahal's team had managed only a pair of top-five finishes from the previous seven races this season. And its lone previous GTP triumph, achieved last year at Watkins Glen, had been inherited after the Penske Porsche of Jaminet and Tandy, which had taken the chequered

flag, failed post-race scrutineering. But there was no doubting the veracity of its performance on Sunday.

All bar three of the 11 GTP cars in the field led at one stage or another, including – for the very first time – the Lamborghini SC63 of Romain Grosjean, Matteo Cairoli and Andrea Caldarelli, which remained in contention until suffering a broken suspension following contact with a GT car. Fortunes ebbed and flowed as the afternoon progressed, with first one manufacturer and then another seemingly poised to take control.

The race had begun on a track that was still slightly damp following rain earlier in the day. Sebastien Bourdais' Chip Ganassi Racing-run Cadillac V-Series.R was the early pacesetter after the Frenchman had secured his second pole of the season, although he was soon overhauled by Felipe Nasr's Penske Porsche 963, which flew from seventh on the grid and was in the lead before even three laps were in the books.

A majority of the second hour was run

behind the safety car due to huge puddles of standing water following a heavy rain shower. Thereafter the race was remarkably trouble-free, especially considering the fact that a massive field of 56 cars had taken the green flag.

The final restart came with 56 minutes remaining and the Acura ARX-06 of Louis Deletraz and Jordan Taylor was in the lead, followed by the pair of BMWs and Jaminet's Porsche. After earlier being the first driver to venture onto slick tyres as the track dried following the rain storm, Eng soon found a way past team-mate De Phillippi. He then swiftly moved onto Deletraz's tail before taking him by surprise with an incisive pass under braking for Turn 13 – most definitely not one of the circuit's primary overtaking places. De Phillippi followed him through and, while the gap to the pursuing Porsche never stretched to much more than a couple of seconds, the team-mates were able to control the pace and cement an emotional victory.

Steven Thomas and Mikkel Jensen were joined by Hunter McElrea to secure TDS Racing's second successive LMP2 victory at Indianapolis, while the two GT classes were swept by Porsche 911 GT3-Rs.

In GTD Pro, Laurin Heinrich's polewinning run for AO Racing was annulled after the car failed to meet the minimum ride height after qualifying, but that proved to be but a minor inconvenience, and the German combined with Michael Christensen to take an emphatic victory. From a bumper crop of 22 GTD cars, meanwhile, Adam Adelson/Elliott Skeer/Jan Heylen emerged as top dogs.

**JEREMY SHAW**



AO's 'Rexy' Porsche  
took another win  
in the GTD Pro class



# Oh man! It's an Oman upset for bronze joy

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE  
ENDURANCE CUP  
MONZA (ITA)  
22 SEPTEMBER  
ROUND 4/5**

Up and down the Monza pitlane, there was unbridled joy and incredulity as OQ by Oman Racing produced one of the biggest upsets in GT World Challenge Europe history in taking a sensational victory in the penultimate Endurance Cup round of the season. In doing so, the WRT-run BMW of Ahmad Al Harthy, Jens Klingmann and Sam De Haan became the first bronze class crew to triumph overall in a GTWCE race after pulling off a strategic masterstroke during the early stages.

The recently resurfaced track combined with the FIA-mandated fuel supply of 120 litres meant organiser SRO could not guarantee cars being able to complete their normal 60-minute stints. Accordingly, teams were required to complete three – rather than the standard two – compulsory pitstops to ensure a stint did not exceed the new limit of 50 minutes.

Before any of this strategy played out, the race had been dominated early on by the polesitting AF Corse Ferrari of Alessio Rovera, Alessandro Pier Guidi and Vincent Abril. Rovera led away at the start, but chaos ensued as early as the first turn when the Mercedes of Lucas Auer turned into the path of the championship-leading Aston Martin of Mattia Drudi, taking Sheldon van der Linde's BMW into the run-off. Multiple cars shortcut the chicane, while a further – and heavier – pile-up at the



Strategy and an off-track pass cost rapid AF Ferrari



Winning BMW trio were leaping for joy at the finish

second chicane brought a lengthy FCY.

It was during this intervention that both the eventual race-winning BMW and the sister WRT M4 GT3 of van der Linde, Dries Vanthoor and Charles Weerts played their strategy, by carrying out their three compulsory stops and ensuring they could run each driver's minimum stint time around the remaining scheduled stops.

That became clearer as the race entered its closing stages, with the Ferrari having to work its way back through the field from outside the top 10 in a late-race charge that very nearly paid off. What was clear was that Vanthoor, who had taken over from Weerts, was now in prime position for the win. But Pier Guidi was a man possessed and made huge ground in the dying minutes to lie third behind Vanthoor before passing the BMW off-track at the first chicane at the start of the final lap. He had to hand that place back and, as a result, settled for third as Oman Racing claimed a famous win. "I don't know how it happened," said Klingmann. "It was tough at the end, but the strategy was outstanding."

Some consolation for AF came in closing the gap at the top of the Endurance Cup standings to just three points ahead of the season finale in Jeddah in November. Comtoyou Aston trio Drudi, Marco Sorensen and Nicki Thiim still lead, but a difficult race in which their Vantage GT3 ground to a halt on the main straight around

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### IMSA SPORTSCAR INDIANAPOLIS (USA)

- GTP** Jesse Krohn/Philipp Eng  
BMW M Team RLL  
(BMW M Hybrid V8)
- LMP2** Mikkel Jensen/Hunter McElrea/  
Steven Thomas  
TDS Racing (ORECA 07)
- GTD Pro** Laurin Heinrich/Michael Christensen  
AO Racing (Porsche 911 GT3-R)
- GTD** Jan Heylen/Elliott Skeer/  
Adam Adelson  
Wright Motorsports  
(Porsche 911 GT3-R)

### GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE MONZA (ITA) Jens Klingmann/Ahmad Al Harthy/ Sam De Haan WRT (BMW M4 GT3)

### GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES MONZA (ITA) Races 1 & 2 Benjamin Lariche/Robert Consani Team Speedcar (Audi R8 LMS GT4)



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half-distance meant they finished 24th.

One title that was decided was the Silver Cup class, with Winward Mercedes crew Daan Arrow, Colin Caresani and Tanart Sathienthirakul becoming champions thanks to their second win of the year.

**STEPHEN BRUNSDON**





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# Pulling on brink of the crown

**F1 ACADEMY**  
**MARINA BAY (SGP)**  
**21-22 SEPTEMBER**  
**ROUND 5/7**

Abbi Pulling put herself on the brink of the F1 Academy title by stretching out a 95-point lead with two rounds remaining through a pair of dominant lights-to-flag victories in Singapore.

Rodin Motorsport's Alpine F1 protege was in a class of one across the weekend, taking both pole positions on Friday before



leading every lap of each race. Pulling left Ferrari and Mercedes representatives Maya Weug and Doriane Pin respectively to share the remaining podium positions, the pair finishing in that order on both occasions.

While the opening race saw little action with hardly any overtaking, the second was far harder fought. With Pin starting on the front row and Prema Racing team-mate Weug in third, a reversal of their race one slots, the Frenchwoman had hoped to take the fight to Pulling into the opening three-corner complex, but was instead passed after a tardy start.

A standout performer was Williams junior Lia Block (ART Grand Prix), who finished a season-best fourth in both races, fending off Nerea Marti, Hamda Al Qubaisi and wildcard entry Ella Lloyd on Sunday.

On the opposite end of the scale, it was a second consecutive scoreless weekend for McLaren's Bianca Bustamante, who received a 10-second stop-go penalty in race one for overshooting her grid slot and failing to start from the pits, before an anonymous drive to 14th in the second.

**SAM HALL**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

- F1 ACADEMY**  
**MARINA BAY (SGP)**  
**Races 1 & 2** Abbi Pulling  
Rodin Motorsport
- SUPER GT**  
**SUGO (JPN)**  
Ukyo Sasahara/Giuliano Alesi (below)  
TOM'S (Toyota GR Supra)
- NASCAR CUP**  
**BRISTOL (USA)**  
Kyle Larson  
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)



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# Ukyo and Alesi take a 'Tyrrell' win for TOM'S

**SUPER GT**  
**SUGO (JPN)**  
**22 SEPTEMBER**  
**ROUND 5/8**

TOM'S Toyota pair Ukyo Sasahara and Giuliano Alesi claimed a sensational second win of the Super GT season in mixed conditions at Sugo. A superb charge from 14th on the grid by Sasahara put the #37 Toyota GR Supra in the lead by half-distance, before Alesi brought home the car almost 20 seconds clear of the field to add to their maiden win earlier in the season at Suzuka.

The start of the 84-lap race was delayed by almost an hour due to heavy rain, and it was punctuated by two safety car periods, the first of which on lap 26 wiped out a four-second lead for the points-leading #36 TOM'S Toyota of Sho Tsuboi. Sasahara had already risen to fourth by this point, and after the restart he was able to clear Koudai Tsukakoshi's Real Racing Honda Civic Type R-GT, Kazuya Oshima's Rookie Racing Toyota and



finally Tsuboi to take the lead within five laps.

Most of the GT500 field pitted immediately before the second safety car period, including Sasahara. Once action resumed, Alesi was able to more than double his advantage over the chasing pack en route to a straightforward win.

With the Rookie Toyota and Real Honda hit with penalties, and Tsuboi's team-mate Kenta Yamashita struggling, the way was clear for Toshiki Oyu and Hiroaki Ishiura to finish runners-up in the Cerumo Toyota. Ishiura had led the early stages from pole only to drop down the order after losing the lead to Tsuboi, but Oyu was much more competitive, making a daring pass around

the outside of Kazuki Hiramine's Impul Nissan Z to grab second place.

Hiramine brought home the best of the Nissans for a first podium finish of the season for himself and Bertrand Baguette, with Tsuboi and Yamashita claiming fourth, keeping them ahead of Sasahara and Alesi in the standings by one point. Honda's top finisher was the Team Kunimitsu car of Naoki Yamamoto and Tadasuke Makino in fifth place, meaning the pair are six points off the championship lead.

**JAMIE KLEIN**

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## Bastianini takes controversial win

**MOTOGP**  
**MISANO (ITA)**  
**22 SEPTEMBER**  
**ROUND 14/20**

Enea Bastianini's unlikely victory in the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix last Sunday was Ducati's 100th success in the premier class, but two riders who had contributed a substantial portion of the tally were unhappy with the result. That was because Pramac ace Jorge Martin felt he had been denied a win he deserved by an "unfair" last-lap pass from factory rider Bastianini, while two-time champion Francesco Bagnaia was left frustrated by a rear tyre that didn't work for 15 laps before he crashed out of the race.

For the longest time it appeared that MotoGP's second 2024 visit to Misano would lead to a straight duel between

Martin and Bagnaia, the two riders holding first and second positions in the championship. After all, no one other than Martin was able to lap within half a second of polesitter Bagnaia in qualifying, and the duo had again duked it out for victory in the sprint, where Bagnaia claimed top honours after Martin ran a touch wide at Turn 13 with five laps remaining.

But Sunday's GP at the Italian venue didn't follow the script that many had pre-written, and the 27-lap contest ended with an incident that will long be debated.

It was Martin who got the best launch of the front-row starters as the race kicked into action, but a mistake going into Turn 1 allowed polesitter Bagnaia to come back through at him. Martin made another attempt at passing the two-time champion on lap three into Turn 4 but the result was the same: he ran wide at the exit of the

corner and Bagnaia was able to retake the position. It wasn't until he tried passing Bagnaia for a third time that he made the move stick, with a great run on the back straight on lap four allowing him to scoop past the reigning champion into Turn 8.

Bagnaia then dropped a position behind third-place starter Bastianini on the following lap, providing a welcome sight of relief to Martin. From there on, it should have been an easy win for the Pramac rider, who is known for sprinting away into the distance once he is able to get to the front. But Bastianini was surprisingly able to keep up, leading to an unexpected and intense battle between the pair.

Despite the red Ducati breathing down his neck, Martin was doing enough to soak up the pressure, with even a mistake on lap 23 not enough to dislodge him from the lead. That meant it all came down to the final lap, with Martin running in front but with a determined Bastianini behind him.

Under braking for Turn 4, Bastianini threw his bike up the inside of Martin, forcing his Spaniard to sit up as they reached the apex, and made contact. Martin was forced off the track and onto the asphalt run-off, while Bastianini – who himself ran wide – emerged in front from the incident to take a controversial win in front of his home fans.

Martin completely backed off after the incident and took the chequered flag five seconds down on Bastianini, but could take solace from the fact that his nearest points



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: GOLD AND GOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





rival Bagnaia failed to score after crashing on lap 21. The Italian had dropped 3s behind the leading pair in the opening half of the race and it wasn't until lap 16 that he was able to show the pace he had, something he later blamed on an ill-performing Michelin rear tyre. Third place still seemed guaranteed when he lost the front end of his bike into Turn 8 with six laps still to run, leaving him with a 24-point deficit to Martin in the standings ahead of the Asian leg of the campaign.

The biggest beneficiary of Bagnaia's exit from the race was Marc Marquez in third, the six-time champion's Gresini Ducati lacking the pace to repeat his heroic wet/dry win of the San Marino GP from two weeks earlier. Another shunt in qualifying had left him seventh on the grid, but some early overtaking moves, coupled with retirements for Bagnaia and KTM duo Brad Binder and Pedro Acosta, helped him to score a seventh podium of 2024.

Marco Bezzecchi and Franco Morbidelli were fourth and fifth respectively, while Maverick Vinales was the best non-Ducati rider in sixth on his Aprilia.

Fabio Quartararo was poised to score Yamaha's best result of the year in fifth until he ran out of fuel with just two corners to go, dropping to seventh. Honda, however, did equal its highest finish of 2024 as works rider Joan Mir took 11th behind Alex Marquez and the Trackhouse Aprilia of Miguel Oliveira.

RACHIT THUKRAL

RESULTS **MOTOGP ROUND 14/20, MISANO (ITA), 22 SEPTEMBER (27 LAPS – 70.900 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	41m14.653s
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+5.002s
3	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+7.848s
4	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+9.200s
5	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+13.601s
6	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+15.484s
7	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+20.922s
8	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+22.795s
9	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+27.704s
10	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+31.891s
11	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	+33.062s
12	Luca Marini (ITA)	Honda	+35.411s
13	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+36.335s
14	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+37.395s
15	Johann Zarco (FRA)	LCR Honda	+38.909s
16	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+40.454s
17	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+46.394s
18	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+47.755s
19	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+1m25.918s
R	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	20 laps-accident
R	Pedro Acosta (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	8 laps-accident
NS	Alex Rins (ESP)	Yamaha	unwell

Winner's average speed 103.141mph. Fastest lap Bagnaia 1m30.877s, 104.022mph.

**QUALIFYING 2** 1 Bagnaia 1m30.031s; 2 Martin 1m30.245s; 3 Bastianini 1m30.564s; 4 Binder 1m30.636s; 5 Acosta 1m30.731s; 6 Bezzecchi 1m30.837s; 7 M Marquez 1m30.880s; 8 Vinales 1m30.909s; 9 Quartararo 1m30.921s; 10 Morbidelli 1m30.932s; 11 Espargaro 1m31.037s; 12 Oliveira 1m31.114s.

**QUALIFYING 1** Binder 1m31.070s; Oliveira 1m31.146s; 13 Di Giannantonio 1m31.285s; 14 R Fernandez 1m31.402s; 15 Marini 1m31.428s; 16 Mir 1m31.450s; 17 Zarco 1m31.501s; 18 A Fernandez 1m31.554s; 19 Miller 1m31.695s; 20 Nakagami 1m32.061s; 21 A Marquez 1m32.332s.

**SPRINT RACE** (13 LAPS – 34.137 MILES) 1 Bagnaia 19m50.237s; 2 Martin +0.285s; 3 Bastianini +1.319s; 4 M Marquez +5.386s; 5 Acosta +6.580s; 6 Binder +8.143s; 7 Quartararo +8.405s; 8 Bezzecchi +8.965s; 9 Morbidelli +9.271s; 10 Vinales +9.538s; 11 Oliveira +11.542s; 12 Espargaro +12.049s; 13 A Marquez +16.566s; 14 Miller +19.411s; 15 Marini +20.101s; 16 Zarco +20.598s; 17 R Fernandez +20.742s; 18 Di Giannantonio +22.819s; 19 Nakagami +25.394s; 20 A Fernandez +25.431s; 21 Mir +27.208s.

Winner's average speed 103.250mph. Fastest lap Bagnaia 1m30.792s, 104.120mph.

**RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Martin 341; 2 Bagnaia 317; 3 Bastianini 282; 4 M Marquez 281; 5 Binder 165; 6 Acosta 157; 7 Vinales 149; 8 Espargaro 127; 9 A Marquez 121; 10 Di Giannantonio 121.

**CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Ducati 500; 2 KTM 239; 3 Aprilia 234; 4 Yamaha 84; 5 Honda 42.



**NEXT REPORT**  
Indonesian GP  
3 October  
issue



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Top national squad buys **GT3 Ferrari** for European attack

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**Fairclough** and **Eaton** make history at **Silverstone**



Wallace quick as Robinson lands **Drag Racing** title



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Elite is leading European GT4  
and now plots GT3 Ferrari bid



ELITEMOTORSPORT

# Top UK squad seeks to join the GT3 elite

## GT OPEN

Elite Motorsport will expand its European attack next season, having bought a Ferrari 296 GT3 that it plans to run in the International GT Open series.

The squad initially found success in one-make Ginetta categories, before moving into single-seaters and then making its continental bow in European GT4 last year. Former Ginetta GT4 Supercup drivers Josh Rattican and Tom Emson took one win in that debut campaign in a McLaren Artura, and Rattican currently heads this year's standings with co-driver Tom Lebbon.

Elite is now seeking to build upon

that success and progress further up the GT ladder. While the Ferrari will initially tackle International GT Open with a silver-silver line-up, team boss Eddie Ives said a GT World Challenge Europe entry is possible for the following year.

"GT racing is clearly the future for a lot of careers and our GT4 programme has been brilliant – we've got a very good relationship with McLaren and we will see that carrying on," said Ives. "But, to take some of our drivers from GB3 and GT4, the goal is GT3 racing because that's where they're going to get picked up by manufacturers."

He added that the team carefully considered which GT3 to select but felt the

296, which was introduced last year and has already scored some high-profile victories including in 2023's Nurburgring 24 Hours, was the best option. "We're quite unusual, we buy the cars and the timing of when cars came into life was really critical in this decision," explained Ives. "Also, just from our initial conversations, how much love Ferrari have given us [was evident]. They don't have that many silver-silver line-ups – most of the 296 GT3 cars they sell are to Am drivers."

Ives also believes that forming an alliance with Ferrari brings further benefits: "It's good for drivers in our other championships for us to have an association with Ferrari."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

## GB4 champion Mills gets GB3 opportunity

### GB3

Reigning GB4 champion Tom Mills will make his debut in the GB3 Championship this weekend at the Brands Hatch season finale.

The 19-year-old dominated the junior single-seater category last term with 10 wins driving for his family-owned KMR Sport team, having previously shone in Formula Ford 1600 racing.

Despite being awarded £50,000 in prize money for his title success to further fund his single-seater career, Mills has not raced for over a year but will amend that when he competes for Chris Dittmann Racing this weekend in Kent.

"I've been out of racing for a year and didn't think I would get the chance to race in GB3," said Mills. "I thought the step would be too big as



Mills has been on the sidelines this year

we can't self-fund it but, using the prize money from winning the GB4 title last year, we've been able to put something together to be able to compete at Brands Hatch.

"Motorsport is a funny

world, and you can be forgotten quite quickly, so it will be nice to get my face back out there. Brands is where I won the GB4 championship last year, so it's a place I like a lot."



# Boutsen in a Shadow, Hill in a GT40 for Spa

## HISTORICS

Three-time Formula 1 grand prix winner Thierry Boutsen is coming out of retirement to race a Shadow DN5 in the Masters Racing Legends double-header at this weekend's 31st Spa Six Hours event.

Belgian-born Andre Lotterer and local hero Eric van de Poele are among a plethora of stars in Saturday's endurance classic. Jake Hill and Dario Franchitti are also among 20 Ford GT40 teams comprising a quarter of the enduro entry at Francorchamps.

Fresh from his World Endurance Hypercar win at Fuji, championship leader Lotterer is teamed with the Franchitti brothers – quadruple IndyCar champion Dario and 2014 Sebring 12 Hours victor Marino. Van de Poele rejoins Ford chief Jim Farley, meanwhile.

Joint British Touring Car leader Hill augments ERA Motorsport's Kyle Tilley and 2023 winner Miles Griffiths for his second



Boutsen will return to F1 machinery, as other star names will pilot GT40s

start. "I've not driven a GT40, but am buzzing," said Hill, who hurtled a Lotus Elan from last to second in two hours on his Spa debut!

Olly Bryant, Joe Twyman and Phil Keen are another strong squad. Also in GT40s are Alex Brundle, Olivier Hart, Rob Huff, Michael Lyons, Andrew Smith and Nico Verdonck.

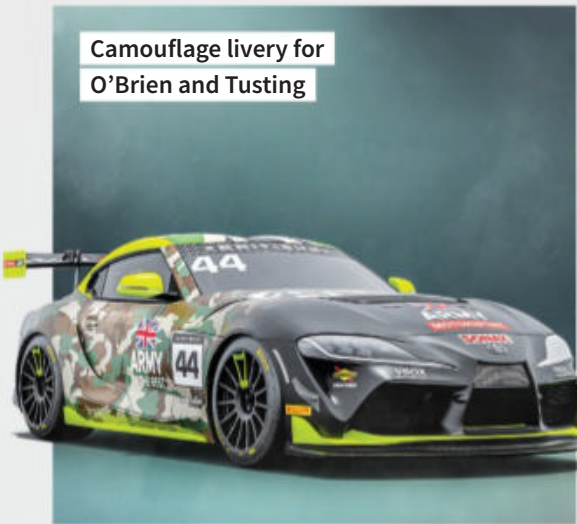
If conditions hamper the Blue Oval icons, Smith and Ben Mitchell share John Clark's Jaguar E-type and record five-time victor Simon Hadfield returns in Wolfgang Friedrichs's 2005-winning Aston Martin.

John Davison, Mike Whitaker and Oliver Reuben (TVR Griffith), Karun Chandhok (Porsche) and Gordon Shedden/Ben Barker/Rory Butcher and Goncalo Gomes/James Claridge/James Denty (Elans) could feature.

Aside from Boutsen's three-litre F1 comeback in the 1975 Shadow, young Dutchman Olivier Hart – 2022's Six Hours winner with father David and Nicky Pastorelli – makes his open-wheel debut in an Arrows A3.

MARCUS PYE

# British Army collaborates with Speedworks entry



## BRITISH GT

The British Army has collaborated with Speedworks Motorsport to contest this weekend's British GT season finale at Brands Hatch aboard a Toyota GR Supra GT4.

It will be a Pro-Am entry driven by Michael O'Brien, who took fourth at Snetterton last year in the Orange Racing GT3

McLaren, and historic racer Benjamin Tusting. The pair will replace Speedworks' full-time entry of Kavi Jundu and Dan Vaughan.

Col Rich Hall MBE told Autosport: "I think there are misconceptions about what the army stands for, so we're trying to lift the lid and show that there are lots of opportunities that exist within the army."

This is the first time it has sponsored a series entry, and soldiers with an engineering background are also part of the squad.

"What we want to do is be a team in British GT next year," Hall said. "The goal is to have a fully branded season and get people excited about how well the army does as a very competitive organisation."

ED HARDY



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Pro-Am racer celebrates  
a remarkable weekend



## Eaton 'speechless' after historic Silverstone Carrera Cup victory

### PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Abbie Eaton said she was left "speechless" after becoming the first female driver to score an outright pole and victory in Porsche Carrera Cup GB history at Silverstone last weekend.

The 2014 Mazda MX-5 Supercup champion and former W Series competitor topped dry qualifying by 0.052 seconds. And, after she had slid wide at Luffield in the wet opener and had to settle for second, she stormed into the lead at the start of race two and defied George Gamble to the flag.

Pro-Am competitor Eaton's previous best result this year had been 10th at Brands Hatch, and she admitted she never expected to begin the weekend by taking pole. "I

would have been happy getting in the top 10 given the pace around here and how close it is," said the Rebelleo driver. "The icing on the cake would have been converting it to a win. But I made a couple of mistakes and [winner] Charles Rainford is very quick.

"I didn't think I would be able to go one better [in race two]. I got a good start and took a bit of life out of the tyres and it was very sketchy with the backmarkers. I'm chuffed to bits and I'm still a bit speechless.

"It's been a journey to get to this point – I've worked so hard throughout the year and to get this car working properly is such a narrow window. I'm buzzing and I'm now trying to put the budget together to do next year."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

## Sprint Challenge to visit Knockhill

### PORSCHE

The Porsche Sprint Challenge GB will visit Knockhill for the first time next year, with the manufacturer launching its 2025 plans for its UK categories.

The Cayman series will again be contested over six of the 10 British Touring Car events, but with a more even spread across the year after the current campaign did not begin until the end of May to accommodate

deliveries of the new RS model. The season will start at the BTCC's Donington Park opener, racing alongside the Carrera Cup, while Sprint Challenge will also be in action on the Brands Hatch Indy layout. Carrera Cup will skip that event, as well as Oulton Park, but will be present at all the rest.

Other tweaks include a significant reduction in the cost of Cayman replacement parts, while several karting

categories have been added to the list of series whereby the champion is eligible to receive half-price entry to one of the Porsche divisions. The Carrera Cup's rookie class will also now be open to drivers who have contested two previous rounds – currently the limit is one.

Former British Formula 4 frontrunner Aiden Neate was a Carrera Cup debutant last weekend with Eden Race Drive, taking a best finish of 15th.

### BEARMAN'S TOUGH DEBUT

Thomas Bearman was one of three British Formula 4 debutants at Silverstone last weekend. The younger brother of Haas F1 driver Ollie impressively qualified 12th of the 22 drivers for Hitech and finished 17th in the opener. He was on pole for the reversed-grid contest but stalled and was collected by Rowan Campbell-Pilling, leaving both of their cars too damaged to take part in the finale. Harri Reynolds deputised for F1 Academy-bound Ella Lloyd at JHR and was seventh in both his races, while Emily Cotty joined the Argenti ranks and was 18th in race two.

### GB3 TEAMS PLACE ORDERS

All eight of the current GB3 teams have placed orders for the category's new-for-2025 car, which features DRS and more power than the current model. Three new squads have also committed to buying the Tatuus machines, which are due to start being delivered to teams before the end of this year. Over 30 cars have been ordered in total.

### CRONIN IN GINETTA SWITCH

Former Porsche Sprint Challenge GB competitor Robert Cronin will make his Ginetta GT Championship debut in this weekend's Brands Hatch finale with Fox Motorsport, the squad that runs his younger brother Colin in Ginetta Junior. "It's all about the learning as we work out our plans for 2025," he said. Fox will also field racing rookie Oliver Fordham in the Ginetta GT Academy in Kent.

### MARCOS GULLWING BACK

The ex-Dave Rees Ashley Smithy Garage Marcos GT Gullwing (below) made its UK racing return at Castle Combe last Saturday. Following decades in Japan and Belgium, the plywood-chassised car, powered by a 1500cc Ford pre-crossflow engine, was given its post-restoration debut by Bob Binfield at last month's Nurburgring Oldtimer GP. Son Sam and Dominic Mooney shared it in the Autumn Classic GT & Sports Car Cup enduro.







## Britcar series to merge

RICHARD STYLES

### BRITCAR

The British Endurance Championship and Britcar Trophy categories will merge into a single championship next year in a move intended to create one larger grid of sportscar/tin-top machinery.

The Britcar Endurance Championship name will be reintroduced for the series in 2025, with one 90-minute race or two 45-minute contests featuring at each of its events.

The combining of the grids

follows a tricky campaign during which the British Endurance Championship has struggled for entries. Just seven cars contested the season finale at Snetterton earlier this month, where the GT3 Audi of Peter Erceg and Marcus Clutton prevailed by six laps as the sole representative in the top class.

A provisional eight-round 2025 schedule has been revealed, with each of these being held over a single day, starting with the Silverstone International circuit on

5 April and including trips to the Grand Prix layout and a rare Thruxton visit, before concluding with the return of the Brands Hatch night race on 15 November.

“We’re extremely excited to be announcing the revamped Britcar Endurance Championship and are confident that it will mark the start of an exciting new chapter in Britcar’s long history,” said Britcar managing director Claire Hedley.

“In response to the current

climate of endurance racing and, after reflecting on the 2024 season, we feel it necessary to bring our two flagship championships together to run as a single grid.

“There are a multitude of benefits for doing this, not least that we will see packed grids of fantastic machines battling it out across the length and breadth of the UK. I’d like to thank all of our partners, teams and drivers for supporting this decision and look forward to 2025.”

## Robinson bags Drag Racing title

### SANTA POD

There was never any doubt that Andy Robinson would leave Santa Pod’s National Finals with another Motorsport UK British Drag Racing Championship to his name, only the manner in which he achieved it.

Another final-round match-up with outgoing champion Bobby Wallace seemed the likeliest outcome to cap a weather-disrupted season, but the elements were not finished. A single qualifying salvo on Friday was enough to seal the crown for

Robinson but, thereafter, the rain called the shots, and Sunday’s eliminations were moved to Saturday following a severe weather warning.

Robinson and Wallace both advanced from the first round before rain stopped play and the meeting was eventually abandoned. Wallace’s 5.944s qualifier was the meeting’s lowest elapsed time, and Robinson clocked 246.37mph in his first round defeat of Mick Payne for top speed.

Owing to rain, just three of the six 2024 championship contests were completed. Robinson reached each final



Not even the rain could stop Robinson’s title

CALLUM PUDGE

round, beaten only by FIA champion Jere Rantaniemi at the European Finals. This was Robinson’s ninth title haul since Pro Modified eliminator was designated the MSA/Motorsport UK championship class in 2007.

ROBIN JACKSON

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Rebranded series will provide a new home for Radical SR1 machines

## Bikesports to be rebranded as Radical Club Challenge for 2025

### 750MC

The 750 Motor Club's Bikesports category will be rebranded as the Radical Club Challenge and feature a dedicated class for SR1 models next season.

The change, in collaboration with Radical Motorsport, will allow entry-level SR1 machines to compete for their own class honours as well as for the overall title against a mixed field of Radical models.

Radical motorsport manager Nicole Van Der Walt said: "We have listened to our customers' feedback and the 750 Motor Club offers an ideal home for our SR1 customers, as well as owners of previous generations of our Radical sportscars.

"Alongside the Radical Cup, the new Radical Club Challenge provides an

option for those looking for a cost-effective yet still competitive and exciting racing series."

The 750MC is synonymous with creating low-cost series for competitors, which in recent years have included the Type R Trophy, 116 Trophy and, from next season, the Swift Sport Challenge.

"We are pleased to be able to build on our new partnership with Radical Motorsport by offering a truly competitive racing home and active club championship for the SR1s," said 750MC managing director Giles Groombridge.

"These more accessible models offer great value both new and used and are already of interest to a number of drivers around our paddock looking for a cost-effective route into sports-racing car competition."

### RYDER ON THE BRINK

Matthew Ryder will go to Loton Park this weekend as favourite to seal the British Hillclimb Championship title. Ryder holds the upper hand over season-long rival Alex Summers and one top-three finish would seal his first BHC title. Ryder, who shares the Gould GR59 of Sean Gould, took the advantage in the title race with a run of eight wins while Summers, in his Cosworth-powered DJ Firestorm, has secured a remarkable record of 25 top-four scores from 25 events, including nine wins.

### BOSS TITLE FOR MIZEN

Tim Mizen provisionally secured the Blue Oval Saloon Series title with two class wins in the final rounds at Thruxton last weekend. Hailsham-based Mizen returned to regular racing two years ago in his Zetec-powered Ford Fiesta Mk3.5 and this year won his class in nine of 14 rounds to head overall pacesetters Olly Allen and Piers Grange in the points.

### RETURN AFTER 17 YEARS

Former Fun Cup Endurance racer Brian Heerey returned to the championship at Donington Park last weekend after a 17-year absence. More often seen in 2CV racing, Heerey is a former Rover Tomcat and MGF racer too. "My last Fun Cup race was at Oulton Park in 2007, when I shared with Paul Rose and Steve Harris and we won," he said. He was less fortunate on this occasion. A broken driveshaft put the car he shared with Rob Croydon out.

### OVER FROM DOWN UNDER

Two teams of Australian drivers made their debuts in the Fun Cup at Donington Park last weekend. Brett Francis brought his TFH Racing squad for their first races in Europe, with Brandon Madden and Scott Andriske used to racing bike-engined silhouettes supporting the Australian V8 Series. The pair finished fourth despite a broken throttle cable (below). The second car was crewed by brothers Joshua and Diesel Thomas, who finished 17th in the shortened race.



## Wood to replace Hawkins for Brands

### BRITISH GT

Beechdean Motorsport driver Jessica Hawkins will miss this weekend's British GT season finale at Brands Hatch due to a scheduling clash.

The ex-W Series driver is undertaking her ambassadorial duties for the Aston Martin Formula 1 team and will be replaced by GT3 debutant Tom Wood.

Wood will line up alongside team owner and two-time

series champion Andrew Howard in the Aston Martin Vantage, which sits 19th in the overall standings.

"This is a dream come true," said Wood, 21, who is a Ginetta Junior race winner and Aston Martin Lagonda Pro, and finished runner-up in the Radical SR1 Cup last term. "To make my GT3 race debut with a championship-winning team like Beechdean is not something I expected even a week ago and I fully intend

to make the most of the opportunity."

The news brings an early end to Hawkins's rookie campaign, where her best overall finish was seventh at the Donington Park penultimate round.

"It's a real shame not to finish the season with Jessica," said Howard. "Jessica has done really well this year and I hope we can work together again in the future."

ED HARDY



# Wilkins seals Type R Trophy glory at Croft

750MC

A pair of Croft podiums were sufficient for Matt Wilkins to clinch his first Type R Trophy Championship title with a meeting to spare.

Local driver Trafford King won the opener before outgoing champion Joe Jessup was quickest to negotiate the reversed top-10 grid, keeping King and Wilkins at bay to claim race-two honours.

Mark White (Honda Civic) and Doug Inglis (Mazda MX-5) were both two-time class winners in the finale of the 2024 Armed Forces Race Challenge, but the Performance Index meant Jonathan Candler (Peugeot 306) successfully defended his title.

Father-and-son duo Stuart and



Andrew Pywell took an overall win each in the BMW Car Club Racing Championship. Pywell Sr topped Class M1 in his M3, and his son's impressive victory came in his Class 6 328i ahead of Mark Culmer (M1). William Lake increased his championship lead with two Cup Class victories.

Title rivals Matthew Highcock and Mack Priestwood traded a victory apiece in Saturday's 116 Sprints. Priestwood was less fortunate in Sunday's 90-minute Trophy encounter, where a fuel leak originating from Saturday's startline shunt ruled him out early on. Four brief safety car outings compressed the field before Highcock's calculated move into Hawthorn on the final lap netted him victory from Will Abraham/Scott Jeffs.

Daniel Silvester's return to the Toyota MR2 Championship spiced up the title

battle between Shaun Traynor and Adam Lockwood. The 2023 Class B conqueror assumed the lead in the early stages of the opener before settling for third, but contact in the afternoon's race sent Silvester dramatically skyward towards Tower corner, the result being two wins for Traynor and Lockwood twice the runner-up.

Reigning champion Tom Gadd bounced back from Silverstone woes in F1000 to take two victories from three, but Craig Pollard's trio of podiums moves him ahead of Rob Welham before the Donington Park finale.

Christian Walker (Cayman S) and Daniel Crego (968CS) were both three-time class winners in the CALM All Porsche Trophy, with Andrew Duce and James Gunn-Carter (Boxsters) sharing SP2 victories.

JAMES WINSTANLEY

# Championships decided at thunderous Oulton

750MC

Saturday's 750 Motor Club race meeting at Oulton Park was brought to an early halt by a spectacular thunderstorm, but not before more champions were crowned.

Samuel Dennis and Ash Moor continued their perfect season in Class C of Club Enduro, reaching an insurmountable 80 points with their fifth straight win in their Honda Civic. Dennis battled ahead of Lee

Dendy-Sadler's BMW 328i in the early stages, ultimately winning the class by more than a lap. The Audi TT of overall winner Scott Parkin and the Ginetta G40 of Chris Webster/Matthew Tidmarsh topped their classes, also wrapping up divisional titles.

Ben Short secured the 5Club MX-5 glory with victory in the first race, adding his 14th win of the year later on. Meanwhile, the loss of the second Clio Sport race may mean that Pete O'Connor cannot be



caught by Justin Griffiths, unless it can be rearranged.

Clint Newman was a thorn in the side of three-time Sports 1000 champion Ryan Yarrow but, with two wins, Yarrow edged nearer to a fourth title as Dan Clowes's Mittell got in

among the Spires.

Matt Harbot also moved closer to the Formula Vee crown with two wins, but was headed briefly by his points rival Craig Bell in race two as the Dominator drivers duked it out.

IAN SOWMAN





# The deciding factor

*Brands Hatch is set to host two major finales in the next two weeks, starting with British GT – where the quality and consistency of the amateur drivers is proving key*

ED HARDY

**B**ritish GT has always been a series for the ‘gentleman driver’ – the non-professional competitor in a driver line-up who often funds the race seat. While their professional counterparts are all usually separated by no more than a few tenths, the quality of the amateur can vary significantly, so they make all the difference.

It was evident in 2022 when Ian Loggie undertook more track time than others, the RAM Racing driver competing across five championships. This led to a title-winning British GT campaign, where he finished inside the top six for all but one round in his Mercedes-AMG GT3. And in 2023, Darren Leung worked seamlessly with BMW factory driver Dan Harper and the Century Motorsport pair clinched a maiden championship.

This year, Rob Collard has been the strongest bronze-graded driver, so it’s perhaps not a surprise that he and son Ricky lead the standings ahead of this weekend’s Brands Hatch season finale, where Collard Sr may claim a second title after winning British GT in 2020. His co-driver that year was Sandy Mitchell, who is second in the other Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini, which sits 24.5 points behind with 37.5 left available. Therefore, the chances of the 24-year-old and co-driver Alex Martin clinching the title are pretty slim, and it’s silly errors in the past two rounds that have cost the #78 Huracan.

**“This is history. I might hang my helmet up at the end of this year, so it’s just fantastic”**

Firstly, the pair were set to leave Snetterton with a 22-point championship lead after two victories that weekend. But, in race two, Martin lapped GT4 traffic under safety car conditions and a post-race 30-second penalty dropped them to 10th, meaning the Collards instead led the standings by five points.

But given the #63 Huracan finished second in that race, it needed to serve an extra 15s in its pitstop at Donington Park, while Mitchell/Martin had no compensation penalty. They still only finished fourth, though, because Martin suffered a puncture after clipping the Fogarty Esses tyre stack while running second behind Collard Sr 45 minutes in. This prompted an unscheduled pitstop and ended their chances of winning the penultimate round, which was eventually claimed by the sister Barwell machine.

So, the title could easily be heading to Mitchell/Martin, who

have won the most rounds, but a consistent and error-free season means their team-mates have one hand on the trophy. The father-son pair is yet to finish a race outside of the top five and, although Collard Jr has driven a fantastic rookie season, his dad has made a huge difference. This was most evident at Snetterton, where Collard Sr climbed from seventh to fourth in the final five minutes of the second one-hour race before post-race penalties pushed the crew up to second. That proved pivotal for the championship, which might be taken by a father-son duo for the second time – after Jim and Glynn Geddie in 2011.

“This is history,” says Collard Sr, 55. “I’m at the age now where I haven’t got many years left, I might hang my helmet up at the end of this year, so it’s just fantastic – I couldn’t have dreamed for better.”

They will seal the title with a top-five finish at Brands, but it’s still not yet over because the championship leaders must serve a 20s success penalty for their win last time out. Garage 59’s Shaun Balfe and Adam Smalley also have an outside chance of winning the title, the Silverstone 500 victors 36 points off the summit.

There are also four cars that could clinch the GT4 crown this weekend. Teenagers Mikey Porter and Jamie Day hold top spot in the Forsetti Motorsport Aston Martin, which has arguably been the surprise package given it is the team’s debut campaign.

Although the championship leaders have not won since the Oulton Park season opener, an incredible run of consistency has them in first place, just like the Collards. Porter/Day have claimed three podiums in the seven races since Oulton, which has also helped Forsetti to clinch the teams’ title.

Behind is the Optimum McLaren pair of Jack Brown and Zac Meakin, who trail by just 3.5 points. This comes after an agonising 2023, when Brown and co-driver Charles Clark led the championship until non-points finishes in the final two rounds handed the GT4 crown to Academy Motorsport’s Erik Evans and Matt Cowley. Optimum boss Shaun Goff said in May that last year “still hurts us”, but the title might slip away again in 2024 after the championship lead was lost at Donington. The Artura finished third on track, but it was guilty of speeding under yellow-flag conditions, causing a post-race 30s penalty that dropped Brown/Meakin to 11th.

Seb Morris and Charles Dawson also cannot be discounted. Their Team Parker Mercedes is only 7.5 points off the top, after scoring the most points in the past four rounds. It means Morris could join his former team-mate Rick Parfitt Jr as the only drivers to have won both the GT3 and GT4 titles. The other Forsetti entry of Will Orton and Marc Warren also still has a chance – they are 13.5 points behind after scoring four podiums, albeit no wins.

With plenty still at stake, Brands Hatch promises to be an intriguing season finale as it caps off a campaign where the quality of a team’s amateur has once again proven incredibly important. 🏆



# Cayman racers shine amid the Silverstone rain

## PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

If you look up the definition of a Cayman, it describes a “semiaquatic reptile” with “heavy armour”. Cayman racer Tom Bradshaw certainly needed some strong armoury in a thrilling wet second Porsche Sprint Challenge GB contest at a Silverstone that was, at times, more suited to amphibians.

Toro Verde driver Bradshaw powered into the lead on lap 11 of 20 with a move on Will Jenkins into Woodcote. But Bradshaw soon had Max Coates’ Cayman snapping at his heels. Coates was on a charge, having fallen to fifth off the line. “My start was shocking, I had to get on with it from there,” said the Graves pilot. And that is exactly what he did, picking off Joe Marshall, Seb Hopkins and then Jenkins to begin challenging Bradshaw.

Coates made several attempts on the inside of Luffield but could not quite make one stick as Bradshaw’s defence was defiant, until Coates finally made the move at Becketts on the last tour. Yet Bradshaw’s resilience was not over and, when Coates got slightly wide at Luffield, Bradshaw snuck ahead again to triumph by just 0.23 seconds. “It was



Bradshaw (l) just outdragged Coates after epic Cayman scrap

a fantastic race from start to finish,” smiled the victor, who said the conditions were “hideous”. “I thought Max had the quicker car, but he hit a puddle and I got a run.”

Coates added: “It was an awesome race – I was quite surprised he managed to get back at me.” Both outsourced fellow title contender Hopkins, who slipped back to fifth. Hopkins had earlier achieved what he described as an “important” win in the opener after passing Team Parker stablemate Jenkins mid-race.

Jenkins then made it three different winners from the event as he topped the finale, held on a drying track. He had attempted to dive between front-row starters Coates and Bradshaw, but was

only able to usurp the latter. Coates began to build a sizeable 4s lead as wet tyres on his and Ethan Hammerton’s Graves machines gave them the early advantage. But Jenkins’s and Bradshaw’s slicks soon came on strong and Jenkins blasted by Coates at Copse on lap six.

Yet it was not straightforward for Jenkins as rain began falling a few laps later, although it was never enough to swing the momentum back towards those on wet-weather rubber. Coates therefore had to settle for third but, with Hopkins fourth, it is the Graves driver who leads the Cayman pack by 10 points heading into next week’s decider.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# Eaton makes history as Carrera Cup title battle tightens

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Abbie Eaton impressively becoming the first female driver to take an overall Porsche Carrera Cup GB pole and win at Silverstone may not have been predicted ahead of the weekend, but equally unpredictable is the destiny of the title as

just four points now separate the top four.

Pro-Am entrant Eaton had endured a tricky debut campaign in Porsches (see News) but turned a corner at her local circuit by edging Hugo Ellis to pole. And the Rebelleo racer backed up that form by continuing to lead for the first eight laps of the very wet opener. But she then ran wide

at Luffield and Charles Rainford, who had already demoted Ellis, pounced to take the spoils for CCK Motorsport. Eaton was still a comfortable second, while Will Martin (Eden Race Drive) stormed from 11th to third as Ellis fell to an eventual eighth.

But Eaton had a second chance of success in the partially reversed-grid second encounter. She started third but was into the lead at Copse. Her decision to opt for wet tyres on the drying track proved inspired as the majority of her rivals had selected slicks. Eaton was therefore able to lead throughout, resisting a brief attack from George Gamble (Century) and navigating the slick-shod backmarkers to score a memorable triumph. With Rainford, Martin and Ellis floundering to 10th-12th places on slicks, Gamble has now grabbed the points lead but it is essentially a winner-takes-all shootout in Kent with such fine margins separating the quartet.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Eaton scored impressive win as Gamble (l) took points lead



# No denying Fairclough's early glory

## BRITISH F4

No one had ever won the British Formula 4 title at the season's penultimate event. And no one had ever won 12 races in a year. But both of those series records have now been broken as Deagen Fairclough continued his dominant display at Silverstone.

Fairclough merely needed to avoid being outscored by rival Alex Ninovic by eight points in the opener to wrap up the spoils. And when the Hitech driver qualified on



Fairclough occupied his customary number one spot

pole and resisted Ninovic's attacks into Copse, that never really looked in doubt. When Ninovic's Rodin team-mates James Higgins and Jack Sherwood started battling him, his faint hopes diminished further and were then extinguished after contact with Zack Scoular left him with a puncture.

Fairclough continued serenely at the front to take the title in style. "To win it a round early, it's such a nice way to win," he smiled. "Now we can have some fun."

While the atrocious conditions for the reversed-grid contest were not fun – and the race was abandoned after a multi-car startline shunt triggered by polesitter Thomas Bearman and Matus Ryba stalling – Fairclough scored his 12th success in the finale. He danced his Tatuus around the wet circuit, including sliding through Woodcote en route to the fastest lap on the final tour. Higgins was a distant second while Virtuosi's Martin Molnar was third after Ninovic spun off at Luffield to compound his misery.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

# Gornall grabs a Mini advantage

## MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Sam Gornall has moved into the Mini Challenge Trophy points lead ahead of its November Brands Hatch finale after dominating race three at Silverstone.

The Westbourne driver also led the opener until he was demoted by Chandler Motorsport's Rhys Hurd on lap five of 17. Gornall slipped further back with a wide moment shortly after and had to settle for fourth. Luca Marinoni Osborne had been set for a podium until a failed move on Hurd at Brooklands left him swamped, enabling Olivier Algieri – in just his second event – and Gabe Fairbrother to complete the rostrum.

James Black (Graves Motorsport)

scored a maiden win in a very wet second bout, which only featured three racing laps. Gornall then battled past Hurd through Woodcote early on in the finale and scampered clear to win by seven seconds as the rest squabbled in his wake. Aligieri and Marinoni Osborne had a great scrap for second, which the former narrowly won, while Harry Hickton made it a Westbourne 1-2-3-4.

Erstwhile points leader Hickton had a tough event as he initially had 14 laps deleted in qualifying for track-limits abuses and was facing a 26th-place start. He got one of those back on appeal and rose from ninth to sixth in the opener, before sliding to 10th in race two.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Gornall now heads Mini pack after finale win

## RACE RESULTS

### PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

**Race 1 (20 laps) 1 Seb Hopkins;** 2 Max Coates +4.293s; 3 Will Jenkins; 4 Jacob Tofts; 5 Joe Marshall; 6 Tom Bradshaw.

**Fastest lap** Hopkins 1m01.640s (95.80mph).

**Pole** Jenkins. **Starters** 24.

**Race 2 (20 laps) 1 Bradshaw;** 2 Coates +0.230s; 3 Jenkins; 4 Marshall; 5 Hopkins; 6 Matt Kyle-Henney. **FL** Marshall 1m01.915s (95.38mph). **P** Jenkins. **S** 24.

**Race 3 (19 laps) 1 Jenkins;** 2 Bradshaw +4.023s; 3 Coates; 4 Hopkins; 5 Reece Somerfield; 6 Marshall. **FL** Jenkins 1m01.140s (96.59mph). **P** Bradshaw. **S** 24.

**Points 1 Coates 116;** 2 Hopkins 106; 3 Bradshaw 99; 4 Jenkins 91; 5 Ethan Hammerton 54; 6 Oliver Cottam 39.

### PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

**Race 1 (30 laps) 1 Charles Rainford;** 2 Abbie Eaton +5.695s; 3 Will Martin; 4 Angus Whiteside; 5 George Gamble; 6 Dan Lloyd. **FL** Harry Foster 1m00.410s (97.75mph). **P** Eaton. **S** 25.

**Race 2 (29 laps) 1 Eaton;** 2 Gamble +1.618s; 3 Lloyd; 4 Whiteside; 5 James Wallis; 6 Will Burns. **FL** Eaton 1m01.099s (96.65mph). **P** Whiteside. **S** 25.

**Points 1 Gamble 91;** 2 Martin 89; 3 Rainford 88; 4 Hugo Ellis 87; 5 Matthew Rees 61; 6 Foster 43.

### BRITISH FORMULA 4

**Race 1 (22 laps) 1 Deagen Fairclough;** 2 James Higgins +8.317s; 3 Jack Sherwood; 4 Gustav Jonsson; 5 Reza Seewooruthun; 6 Rowan Campbell-Pilling. **FL** Alex Ninovic 54.801s (107.76mph). **P** Fairclough. **S** 22.

**Race 2 (17 laps) 1 Fairclough;** 2 Higgins +6.652s; 3 Martin Molnar; 4 Sherwood; 5 Zack Scoular; 6 Seewooruthun. **FL** Fairclough 1m02.275s (94.83mph). **P** Fairclough. **S** 20.

**Points 1 Fairclough 508;** 2 Ninovic 318; 3 Higgins 242.5; 4 Seewooruthun 225; 5 Sherwood 214; 6 Abbi Pulling 122.

### MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

**Race 1 (17 laps) 1 Rhys Hurd;** 2 Olivier Algieri +0.274s; 3 Gabe Fairbrother; 4 Sam Gornall; 5 Alex Solley; 6 Harry Hickton. **FL** Alex Keens 1m10.659s (83.57mph). **P** Gornall. **S** 27.

**Race 2 (8 laps) 1 James Black** (below); 2 Fairbrother +0.885s; 3 Solley; 4 Gornall; 5 Keens; 6 Luca Marinoni Osborne. **FL** Fairbrother 1m17.776s (75.93mph). **P** Black. **S** 27.

**Race 3 (17 laps) 1 Gornall;** 2 Algieri +6.580s; 3 Marinoni Osborne; 4 Hickton; 5 Solley; 6 Black. **FL** Solley 1m13.433s (80.42mph). **P** Fairbrother. **S** 25.

**Points 1 Gornall 684;** 2 Hickton 671; 3 Fairbrother 663; 4 Solley 656; 5 Black 655; 6 Keens 569.



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



# Hibberd, Hibberd, hooray at Combe F3 chequered flag



## CASTLE COMBE CCRC AUTUMN CLASSIC 21-22 SEPTEMBER

Saturday's magnificent 1000cc Formula 3 duel between Andrew Hibberd (ex-Chris Irwin Chequered Flag Brabham BT18) and Peter de la Roche (Alexis Mk17) highlighted Castle Combe's 13th Autumn Classic, a multi-faceted event of meteorological halves. Memorably abreast into the Esses, Hibberd prevailed by 0.127 seconds and then secured the championship with 2024's eighth win in Sunday's rain. With Simon Armer's March 703 in the soft barriers at Tower triggering a red flag, de la Roche spun on old tyres, promoting Mark Carter (Chevron B15) to second.

Although silenced here, the opener left a fine impression of the 1964-70 'screamer'

class, a rare period visitor. Ross Drybrough (Merlyn Mk14), Carter and Armer made it five different chassis marques in the top five. Keith Messer jostled his Vesey from the back to seventh, behind Leif Bosson's ex-Sten Gunnarsson Brabham BT28.

A Jaguar D-type victory opened racing stylishly, Christian Albrec growling the ex-works/Ecurie Ecosse XKD 504 – Mike Hawthorn's Le Mans T-car in 1955 and fifth in Goodwood's 1958 Tourist Trophy race with Masten Gregory/Innes Ireland up – to the front from row seven before relaying Gary Pearson. Invitees the Chatham brothers, Oliver and Jack, finished second in their Healey, ahead of the tail-happy Mike Hawthorn Challenge Jaguar Mk2 saloons of Richard and Tom Butterfield and Tom Barclay, for whom Grant Williams finished flamboyantly. First regular Ecurie

finisher was David Allen (Triumph TR4), despite an enormous spin at Old Paddock.

Damien Harrington beat Mini Se7en polesitter Joe Thompson by 0.300s on Saturday's drying track. Points leader Ross Billison was third, ahead of Matt Ayres from the 'S' grid. Thompson turned the tables on a damp Sunday, heading Harrington and Billison to set up a thrilling Silverstone decider. Ayres wrapped up his title with another fourth, comfortably beating Jonathon Page – who pipped Andrew Hack.

Mighty duels between Andrew Jordan and Jeff Smith characterised the Miglia jousts, with Aaron Smith, Kane Astin and Ben Colburn joining Saturday's lead train. Jordan pipped Jeff Smith as the unrelated Aaron repassed Colburn and Astin to recover third. AJ and points leader Jeff Smith traded the lead as Sunday's rain intensified, before Jeff nose-dived into the barrier cushioning at Camp, bringing out reds. Jordan thus repeated, from Rupert Deeth, Astin, Colburn and Aaron Smith, with Martin Wager up to sixth from 12th.

Weather blunted the Ferrari races, in which Gary Culver's 328 GTB landed a treble-tops checkout over the F355s. Wayne Marrs ran him closest on Saturday, chased by Colin Sowter's Spyder. In Sunday's Ron Fry Trophy race – celebrating the local Prancing Horseman – Culver howled away from Sowter, who survived a hairy spin out of Camp. Colin kept Gary focused in the finale, in which Marrs



Jordan (l) and Jeff Smith enjoyed an entertaining Mini Miglia scrap





Chequered  
Flag BT18 of  
Hibberd leads the  
field away en route  
to the Historic  
F3 title

bagged another third and Jim Cartwright (328 GTB) shot from 16th to fourth.

FISCAR poleman David Alexander gapped Marc Gordon (Jaguar XK150S) and the fellow Lotus Elite of Brian Arculus over 30 minutes. Clutch problems thwarted Angus Fender's strident Triumph TR2 riff, thus Adrian King (AC Ace-Bristol) netted fourth from Mark Daniell and Nick Finburgh (MGAs).

Julius Thurgood's Historic Racing Drivers Club circus braved Sunday's heaviest rain. Following an unbelievable catalogue of errors, rapid novice Lewis Harwood (Alfasud) took the Allstars/Classic Alfas chequer, only to be excluded. Early spinner Chris Snowdon, back ahead of Mike Thorne's Sud, was rewarded. Top qualifiers Tim Sims (Cooper S) and Ben Colburn (Alfa GTAm) slid off at Quarry on lap one, but recovered to fifth and third, split by Pete Chambers' Lotus Cortina.

In Mini weather, Mark Burnett and Scott Kendall shot away from the Jack Sears Trophy pre-'66 pack, chased by Ben Colburn in another Cooper S and Andy Jordan (Austin 'GT40') after Peter Crewes' Mini, off after Camp, triggered a safety car. As Kendall walked on water, Colburn kept second despite a drive-through. Grant Williams's Jag was a lapped third, ahead of Mike Jordan, finishing for AJ.

Kendall, now in the ex-Chris Inch Mini 1275GT, was gunning for a repeat in the Gerry Marshall Trophy pre-'83 race but skated off at Quarry chasing down Jack >>



**AN UNUSUAL HONDA** Introduced at the 1965 Tokyo Motor Show, Honda's diminutive S800's superb 791cc engine pulled 10,000rpm with its needle roller bearing crankshaft. HSCC racing regulars in the 1980s, Barry Fernally and John Ward enjoyed success. Forty years after Ward's Improved Road Sports championship crown and 34 since the Team Piglet quintet's Birkett Six Hour Relay victory at Snetterton, Tony Sighe debuted his coupe on Sunday, cheered on by fellow S800 owners.



**BISHOP'S CAR** Philanthropic Bishop Vesey, founder of the eponymous school in birthplace Sutton Coldfield in 1527 – he championed the town, King Henry VIII granting its Royal Charter in 1528 – inadvertently gave his name to a racing car. Richard Scott of Centaur fame's design for 'Coldfieldian' Monoposto racer Peter Coulborn contested an Oulton Park F3 race in 1970. Keith Messer, 81, Castle Combe's 1996 GT champion in a Lola, restored the car and has raced it internationally since 2001.



**UNIQUE GILBERN** GILes Smith and German BERNard Friese built 1000 Gilbern cars near Pontypridd from 1959-73. A quarter were pretty little GTs, most 1800cc BMC B Series-engined, but Ken Wilson commissioned the factory to create this unique Chevrolet V8-powered version in 1965. Wilson – who graduated to Lotus 30 and McLaren M1C – and Peter Cottrell raced it. Mike Lamplough acquired it last year from Gilbern Owners Club chairman Brian Gent and restored it to race alongside his regular GT.





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Waterfield won in freshly restored Cooper 'Bobtail'

Moody's Rover SD1. After a long caution, John Spiers' Ford Capri led before retiring smokily. The cocktail of its oil on water helped Ben Colburn (David da Costa tribute Ford Fiesta), usurp Moody, with Richard Colburn (Fiesta) a proud third.

Julian Barter's TVR 3000S escaped in both Historic Sports Car Club Road Sports races. Impacts at Camp neutralised the first when Adam Bagnall's Jaguar E-type walloped the padding, then stopped it when John Williams's Porsche did the same after the green. Amazingly, the 911SC returned for race two and, from the back, chased Barter in. Frazer Gibney twice shaded Adrian Russell in Historic

Elans, while 70s title protagonists Mark Leverett (Elan S4) and Howard Payne (Europa) each beat the other.

Tom Waterfield gave Tim Ross's untested Cooper 'Bobtail', fresh from a Dorset Racing restoration, a dream debut victory in what became the sole Griffiths Haig Trophy race as the curfew descended. Slippery conditions were manna to Waterfield, seven seconds a lap quicker than Malcolm Harrison's Cooper-Bristol. In an unlikely tussle for third, Neil Horton (Peerless GT) passed Tony Bianchi's Allard Farrellac momentarily before Cadillac V8 power trumped Triumph 'four'.

**MARCUS PYE**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### HISTORIC ONE-LITRE F3

**Races 1 & 2** Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18)

### ECURIE JAGUAR

Christian Albrec/Gary Pearson (Jaguar D-type)

### MINI SE7EN

**Race 1** Damien Harrington

**Race 2** Joe Thompson

### MINI MIGLIA

**Races 1 & 2** Andrew Jordan

### FERRARI CLUB CLASSIC

**Races 1, 2 & 3** Gary Culver (328 GTB)

### FISCAR HISTORIC INTER-MARQUE

David Alexander (Lotus Elite)

### HRDC ALLSTARS/CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE

Chris Snowdon (Alfa Romeo Alfetta GTV)

### HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY

Mark Burnett/Scott Kendall (Mini Cooper S)

### HRDC GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY

Ben Colburn (Ford Fiesta)

### HSCC 70s ROAD SPORTS

**Races 1 & 2** Julian Barter (TVR 3000S)

### HSCC GRIFFITHS HAIG TROPHY

Tom Waterfield (Cooper-Climax T39)

### GT & SPORTS CAR CUP

John Spiers/Chris Ward (Lister-Jaguar Costin)

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

## LISTER OUTLASTS ITS RIVALS FOR GT & SPORTS CAR CUP GLORY

John Spiers and Chris Ward emerged first time GT & Sports Car Cup winners on Saturday in Spiers' Lister-Jaguar Costin. In a gripping contest, long led by Nick Finburgh/Ollie Crosthwaite's Lola-Climax Mk1, the Lister was the first winner from the pre-1963 sports-racer divisions since Philip Walker/Miles Griffiths' Lotus 15 in 2017.

Chasing a hat-trick, the AC Cobra of Chris Chiles *pere-et-fils* started from pole, Jr 0.4 seconds quicker than Ward in the Lister. From the start, Chiles shook off the Jaguar E-types of Gary Pearson, Jason Minshaw (in Martin Melling's low-drag coupe) and James Dodd, which howled round together as Spiers slipped back.

Minshaw headed the trio before Pearson was black-flagged for excessive noise and led when Chiles installed his father. As Minshaw and Dodd slugged it out, Finburgh – ahead of Spiers since lap five – stayed in contention over a 30-lap run. With Crosthwaite still in Guy Harman's MGB, Finburgh took the lead when Minshaw put Melling in at 37 laps. The Dodds stopped two later, but retired shortly



Spiers/Ward (r) were triumphant in GTSCC

afterwards with differential failure.

Ward was 30s behind the Lola at half-distance as Melling fell prey to Chiles Sr and Ben Tinkler in Steve Jones's Lotus Elan. Meanwhile, a Healey 3000 GT3 battle raged with Jeremy Welch (in Doug Muirhead's) leading Chris Clarkson (for David Smithies), Christiaan van Lanschot (double-stinting in DD300 with Welch to finish) and James Wilmoth in for Crispin Harris, delayed by an extra stop to secure the hardtop.

Finburgh pitted under a safety car at 57 laps, the lead changing within the caution when Ward relayed Spiers. Crosthwaite chased until the Lola's transmission broke, but Chiles Jr thundered on, finishing 50s adrift. Jones/Tinkler were third, chased by Muirhead/Welch, van Lanschot/Welch and Smithies/Clarkson. Malcolm Paul/Rick Bourne (TVR Grantura) won a GT2 thriller by 1.721s from Marc Gordon/Harman/Finburgh's MGB.

**MARCUS PYE**



# Edmundson puts on a masterclass in Civic Cup

THRUXTON  
BRSCC  
21-22 SEPTEMBER

Reigning Civic Cup champion Max Edmundson enhanced his growing reputation with two resounding victories at Thruxton, including a sensational charge from 10th to first in mixed weather.

Edmundson's Saturday success was comparatively routine, leading a seventh 1-2 of the season from Area Motorsport team-mate Josh Files, and 12 seconds clear of Alistair Camp in third. On a patchy drying track in the sequel, Edmundson ran sixth under a safety car before benefiting from Harvey Caton's excursion, picked off Alex Kite and then capitalised on Files's huge slide at Church to outdrag Liam McGill too. He completed his climb by dispatching the tail-happy FN2 of long-time leader Dave Marshall, who plummeted on the final lap. McGill, Camp and Files chased Edmundson home.

"Every time someone ahead of me was going side-by-side, I was seeing where they come out the corner and trying to do the opposite," said Edmundson, "and most of the time it luckily worked."

Series leader Alastair Kellett looked set to dominate the Fiesta ST240s but a red flag undid his opening-race work. A poor getaway in the restart dropped him to third, but Dan Lewis ran wide and damaged his car, and Kellett eventually breached new leader Joseph Knight's defences on the outside line into the chicane.

Kellett lost fifth gear and pitted on the green-flag lap of a wet race two, which brought Henry Howarth a maiden win after a strong rearguard performance staved off Archie Johnson and Charlie Ellis. New 'box fitted for the finale, Kellett charged from 18th to fourth, despite being tipped into a half-spin in the aftermath of an opening-



lap pile-up through the Complex. Winner Zach Lucas rebounded from gearbox and clutch dramas that prevented him from starting the opener.

Jenson Mason converted pole position to Fiesta Junior victory, fending off Jacob Hodgkiss and Alfie Garford. He crossed the line first on Sunday morning too, but a series of penalties for chicane cutting promoted Jenson O'Neill-Going. Points leader O'Neill-Going had only managed seventh on Saturday and slipped back to fifth after mid-race rain in a hard-fought finale won by Finn Leslie with some ruthless moves. Garford pipped Hodgkiss to second.

Carl Boardley closed in on another TCR UK title despite a grassy moment and subsequent pitstops leaving him 10th in race three. Third behind Callum Newsham and Steve Laidlaw on Saturday, Boardley's Cupra won the reversed-grid rematch by passing Sam Laidlaw around half-distance.

Newsham dented his title hopes by crashing out after dipping wheels on the wet grass approaching Campbell on the first lap, collecting Brad Hutchison and

Mark Smith. Hutchison recovered to third and inherited second when Sam Laidlaw's Hyundai failed the ride-height test.

Hutchison repeated that result in the curtain call, despite a fuel-pressure problem, as Steve Laidlaw triumphed for the first time. Erstwhile points leader Adam Shepherd endured another trying weekend as his own recurrent fuel-pressure problem struck while leading (twice) to force his Cupra into retirement in all three races.

Audi TT Cup pacesetter Bradley Burns completed the category's first-ever weekend hat-trick by rising from 10th to second within a lap of race three, then passing Sam Heading at the Complex.

With his 12th championship already clinched, Stephen Primett added two more Pre-'83 Touring Car wins, with Nick Williamson's Rover SD1 twice following the Ford Escort Mk1 home. Fresh from a double triumph at Snetterton, Jonathan Corker (Datsun 510) ran second for most of Saturday's race before falling to Williamson at the last corner. Both jumped Primett on Sunday but paid the price for their tyre choice on a drying track as Primett fought back and Mark Cholerton (Escort Mk2) beat Corker to third. Jack Ruddell and Piers Grange split concurrent Pre-'66 honours in their Ford Mustangs.

After his holiday clashed with June's Super Touring Power event, Stewart Whyte stroked his ex-Tom Kristensen Honda Accord to a Super Tourers double. Champions Stuart Waite (BMW M3) and Gary Prebble (Honda Civic) each bagged a brace in Pre-'93 and Pre-'03 Touring Cars. Gearbox failure for Saturday's Blue Oval Saloon Series/Thunder winner Mike Manning left Josh Lawton's Honda Civic in a class of its own.

MARK PAULSON







### WEEKEND WINNERS

#### CIVIC CUP

Races 1 & 2 Max Edmundson (EP3)

#### FIESTA ST240s

Race 1 Alastair Kellett

Race 2 Henry Howarth

Race 3 Zach Lucas

#### FIESTA JUNIORS

Race 1 Jenson Mason (Mk7 Zetec S)

Race 2 Jenson O'Neill-Going (Mk6 ST)

Race 3 Finn Leslie (Mk7 Zetec S)

#### TCR UK

Race 1 Callum Newsham (Hyundai i30 N)

Race 2 Carl Boardley (Cupra Leon Competicion)

Race 3 Steve Laidlaw (Cupra Leon Competicion)

#### AUDI TT CUP RACING

Races 1, 2 & 3 Bradley Burns (below)

#### CTCRC PRE-'66/PRE-'83 TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)

#### CTCRC SUPER TOURERS/PRE-'93/PRE-'03 TOURING CARS

Races 1 & 2 Stewart Whyte (Honda Accord)

#### CTCRC BOSS, CLASSIC & HISTORIC THUNDER

Race 1 Mike Manning (Ford Sierra RS500)

Race 2 Josh Lawton (Honda Civic EG)

#### CTCRC ALLCOMERS

Race 1 Josh Lawton (Honda Civic EG)

Race 2 James Allen (Honda Civic EP3)



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



**ELF TRIBUTE LIVERY** John Hillyer began racing his self-built BMW E36 Touring in Pre-'03 Touring Cars because he "wanted to be a bit different. It's the same chassis as a normal coupe and it's actually slightly lighter from factory." This year he has added an Elf livery in tribute to seven-time Argentinian TC2000 champion Juan Maria Traverso, who died in May. Racing the colours of Traverso's 2003 Top Race title-winning E36, Hillyer's car has even received praise from Traverso's daughter, Maria Paula.



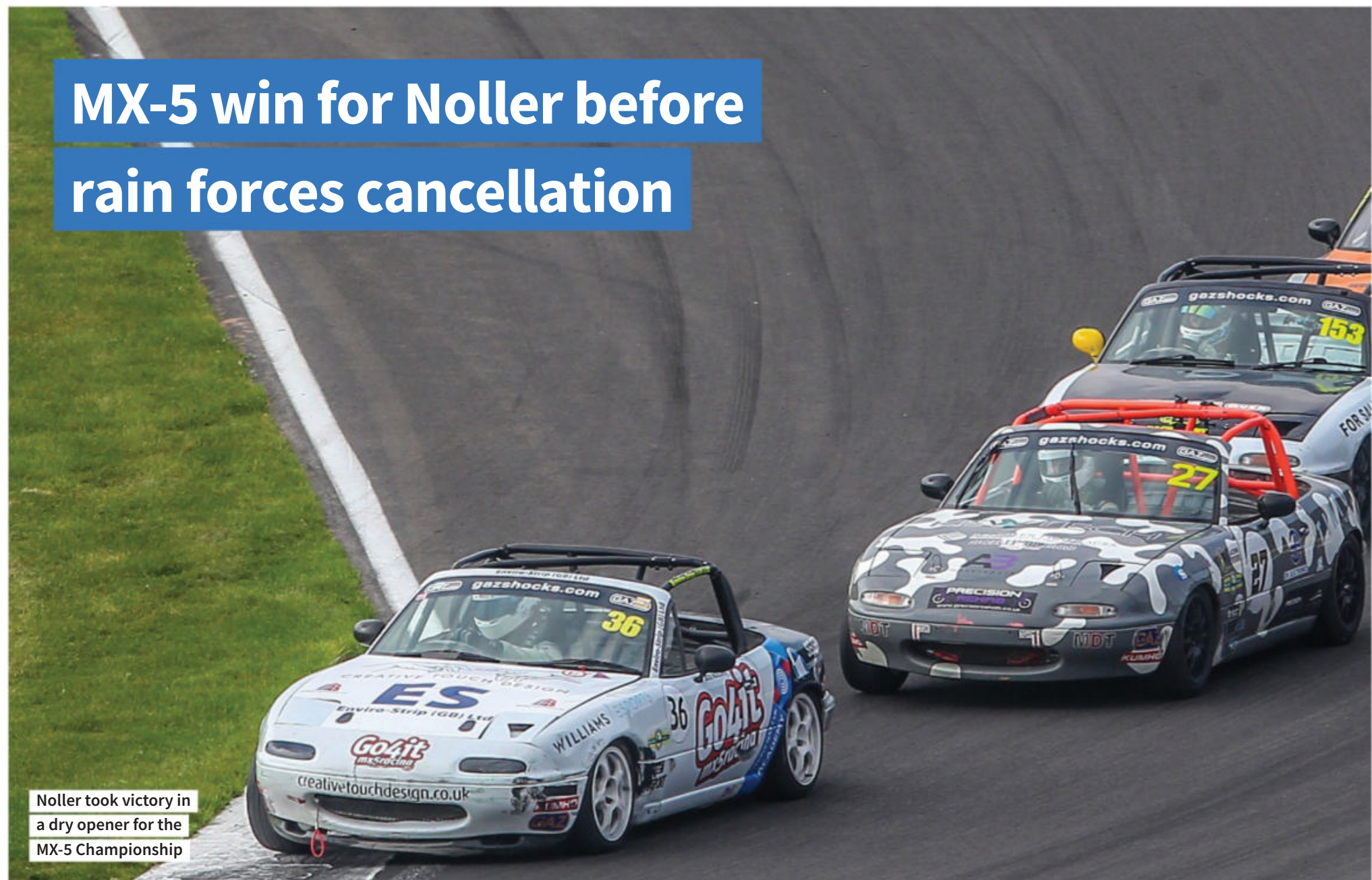
**ON A PAR WITH BTCC RUNNERS** New Classic Thunder champion Josh Lawton measures his supercharged Honda K24-powered Civic EG against British Touring Car Championship lap records. His fastest lap at Thruxton last weekend would have earned pole for the circuit's BTCC round in June. "It spiralled a little bit out of control, it was just going to be naturally aspirated," said Lawson. "It's all built and tuned by myself, all fabrication myself. Any carbon that you see on the car is all DIY."



**OLD CAR, NEW TRICKS** Hot Rod champion Colin Voyce first campaigned his Ford Escort Mk1 nearly two decades ago in the Heritage GT Challenge alongside old friend Dave Mountain of engine specialist Mountune. Built by Gartrac and finished by Sonny Howard, its original Mountune-prepared Duratec was last year transplanted for an EcoBoost block and British Touring Car Championship technology. "I said I want to try a turbo before I retire," said Voyce, winner of the Historic Thunder title.



# MX-5 win for Noller before rain forces cancellation



Noller took victory in a dry opener for the MX-5 Championship

## DONINGTON PARK BRSCC 21-22 SEPTEMBER

The British Racing & Sports Car Club's Donington Park meeting was not spared the brutal weather that loomed over the UK last weekend.

The trouble began on Saturday afternoon when the Fun Cup race had to be stopped, before the second Ford Fiesta ST150 Challenge race was abandoned as thunder and lightning entered the equation. There was another downpour on Sunday morning that was heavier in intensity and, with dense fog, it meant qualifying was delayed. With the track flooded and time running out to get the races under way, officials took the decision to call it a day at lunchtime. Competitors, even those whose championship tilts hung in the balance, were understanding of the decision.

"It's difficult for my championship challenge but the track's soaked and it's not getting better," said Jack Noller from the Mazda ranks. "The officials have run the sweeper trucks to try to clear off the water but it's too intense. Calling it off is the right call."

Clubsport Trophy driver Daniel Cogswell, who didn't get any track time at all before the meeting was called off, added: "I know everyone wants to race but I'd rather take the car home in one piece than have someone smash into the side of me."

Saturday's running therefore proved to be the only day of action and the Mazda MX-5 Championship provided superb entertainment for what would be the category's only race.

Noller secured the win after dropping back in the early stages following contact with Ted Bradbury at Coppice on the second lap. But, while Bradbury retired

in the pits, Noller managed to fight back up the field to dislodge Luke Pullen from the lead. Pullen fell to sixth late in the race, leaving Adam Sparrow and Ewan Thomas to complete the podium.

"Brutal racing but really good racing too," said Noller. "The race was just about making smart moves, working together sometimes and even trying to give a tow to certain cars."

Reigning champion Aidan Hills triumphed in the only Mazda MX-5 Supercup contest after a spirited battle with the SFR Motorsport car of Joe Wiggin. Hills managed to sneak past only when Wiggin dropped back exiting the chicane on the final lap. Wiggin's third gear had shattered and, by the time he grabbed fourth in his Mazda's gearbox, Hills was already past and Wiggin settled for second ahead of Oliver Allwood.

"Very scrappy, probably the right word to use," said Hills. "The slipstream was just incredible today. It was just about keeping my head down because it's starting to get close in the championship fight."

It was drama aplenty in the three-hour Fun Cup race as Morpheus Racing took the win with Neil Burroughs and Ted Bradbury at the wheel when the officials stopped the race. The duo dropped back in the early stages when UVio/Hofmanns Motorsport and Team Ratters Racing took the advantage. Multiple safety cars mixed up



Fun Cup started in the dry but was halted





## WEEKEND WINNERS

## MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP

Jack Noller

## MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP

Aidan Hills

## FUN CUP

Morpheus Racing (Neil Burroughs/Ted Bradbury)

## FIESTA ST150 CHALLENGE

Alex Sprange

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

the order, but the UVio car of Fabio Randaccio and Scott Fitzgerald looked in command until a collapsed front damper forced them into the pits for repairs.

After setting the fastest lap of the race, 2023 teams' champion Olympian-GRD looked set for the win before a brake problem pitched the car off the road at Redgate, with a master cylinder problem suspected. With dark clouds looming and thunder in the air, the rain came down hard, which resulted in the red flags coming out to benefit the Morpheus machine.

"We lost the lead so we decided to settle down for a bit," explained Burroughs. "The car faded a bit as the temperatures rose but, once the conditions cooled, it came back to us. Then Ted put in a great stint, he's a bit of a master in the rain."

In the Fiesta ranks, Alex Sprange won the dry first race with ease, after rising from third on the grid and making a decisive pass for the lead at the chicane. Michael Blackburn attempted to close the gap but had to settle for second, while Samuel Watkins completed the podium. The wet second race was started under the safety car, but ultimately red-flagged and abandoned when it was decided that the conditions were too poor for racing.

MACIEJ HAMERA

## FROM THE STREETS TO THE RACE TRACK



Cogswell has spent six years working on Almera

A BMW, Porsche or Audi are perhaps more obvious choices for race car builds, so to see a 1990s Nissan Almera among the delicate and sleek sportscars at Donington Park last weekend was undoubtedly strange.

A car perhaps more suited to pootling around city streets than pushing on race tracks, this Almera is not for pensioners despite its origin, as owner and driver Daniel Cogswell explains. "We just wanted something different," said Cogswell. "We raced Minis and MX-5s in the past so we just wanted to stand out. We didn't want to build just another Fiesta or Clio."

This is no ordinary Almera – not only is it a GTI model, but it also features multiple upgrades. For example, to improve the Nissan's naturally aspirated SR20 engine, the four-cylinder, 16-valve unit has been mapped with an upgraded ECU and features a more efficient exhaust manifold. In addition, the car has motorsport bushes, bearings and coilovers, meaning Cogswell's Nissan Almera GTI has 158bhp but weighs roughly 1200kg, which does affect the handling.

"As it's front-wheel drive, there's quite a bit of understeer," explained Cogswell. "I try to set it up for maximum oversteer to get the car to rotate. We have more

power than other cars in our class but we feel our weight in the corners."

While the car does contain a custom rollcage, the shell itself is not seam welded. While this would bring increased rigidity, it would have also increased the cost of the build, so the team does without this luxury.

The shell on its own was a lucky find since the original Almera GTI that CMR Racing located was rusted to its core, so a spare shell was acquired from an unusual source. "The shell actually came from a standard 1.4 Almera, which was owned by an old lady," said Cogswell. "She was giving up driving, so we took it off her hands!"

In addition, the Almera bears several aerodynamic enhancements such as a splitter that extends all the way to the bulkhead, as well as several cooling ducts in the front bumper and bonnet.

"We've just developed the splitter and the bonnet scope, which aids with the cooling," said Cogswell. "The car produces more downforce now but that's just based on feel. We haven't been in a tunnel because that's how things get expensive fast!"

The car is a clear result of six years of tinkering and steady improvements rather than an expensive winter build. But the team and Cogswell have achieved considerable success with multiple fastest laps and class wins in 2023. The car even won the 750 Motor Club's 'Best Prepared Car' award in 2021, which shows the quality of preparation behind the scenes.

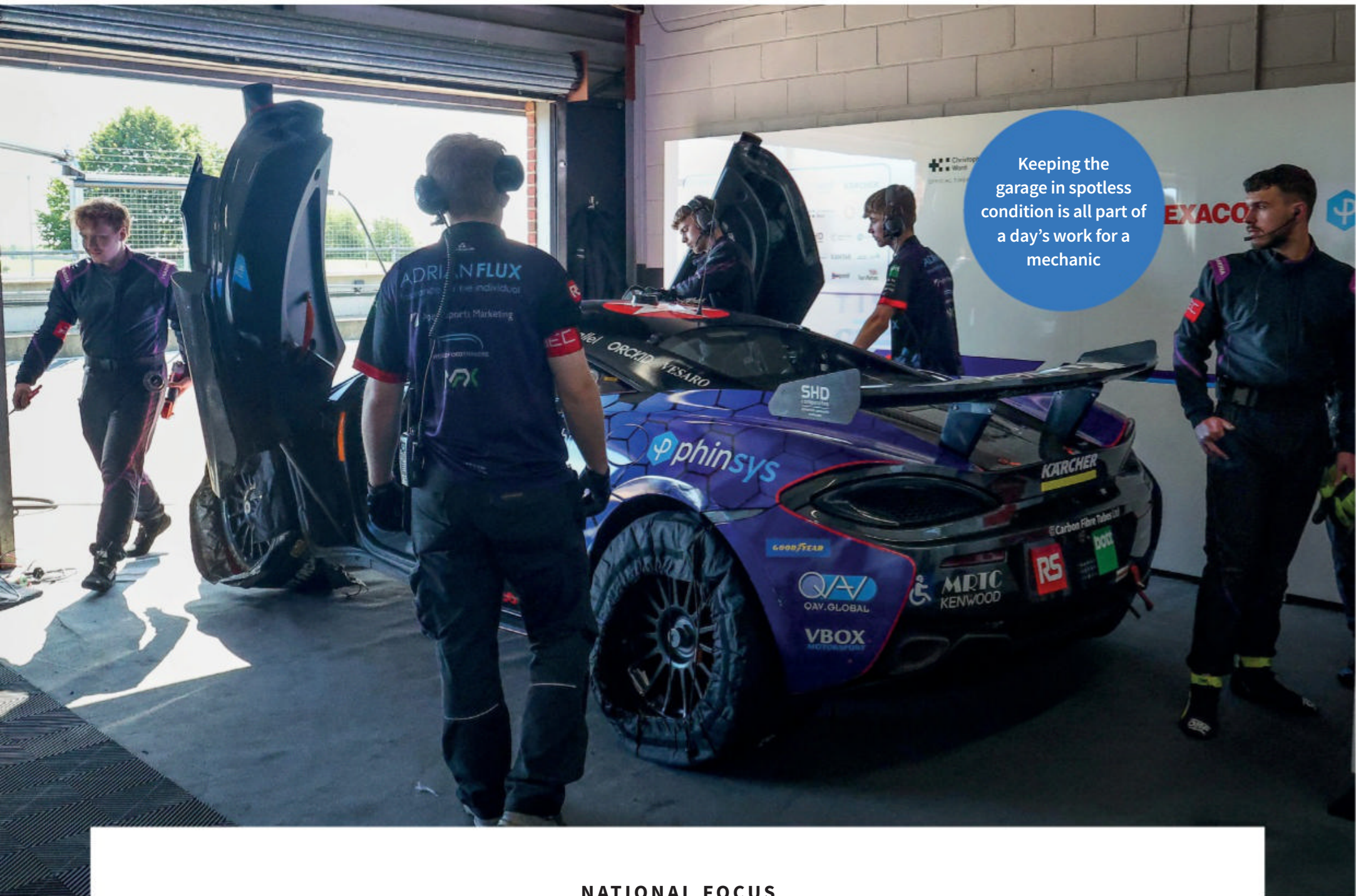
After not racing during the abandoned British Racing & Sports Car Club meeting due to the washout, Cogswell hopes to be back out in Hot Hatch during next month's 750 Motor Club event at Donington.

MACIEJ HAMERA



Nissan SR20 engine produces 158bhp





NATIONAL FOCUS

# THE GRUELLING LIFE OF A MECHANIC

*From the mundane vacuuming of the garage to the fine choreography of completing a perfect pitstop, here's an insight into the demands of working for a national race team*

MACIEJ HAMERA

PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD STYLES

I stand awkwardly in the corner of the garage, desperately trying to stay out of everyone's way. As two Team Brit McLarens are fettled and polished and then fettled and polished again, I can only marvel at the efficiency of the mechanics. With the cool Norfolk sunshine streaking onto the garage floor, I wonder if I will fit in at all.

The squad is competing at the British Automobile Racing Club meeting at Snetterton, and I've signed up for four days as a trainee mechanic to experience life in the pitlane. Given my inexperience, my first duties include vacuuming the garage, tidying the team truck, and polishing the cars. Simple tasks, understandably, but ones the team still expects to be done a certain way and to a specific standard.

Thankfully, multiple people can assist me when I need

guidance on complex issues – like where the vacuum cleaner is. One is engineering director and team manager Al Locke. With slicked-back hair and sunglasses, Locke is the stereotypical portrait of the modern team manager. He has a painstaking approach to detail and only really speaks when an issue must be rectified. An example is presented to me every time the cars leave the pits. "Could we have a tidy up in the garage?" I hear over my headset from the softly spoken Locke. I turn around expecting a sea of spanners strewn across the floor and oily rags littering the garage carpet, but no. Instead, the floors must be vacuumed and the extension leads organised. The modern mechanic must cope with keeping their work area surgically clean. This isn't just to improve the quality of work; they have to think about the team's image as well.

As the days pass, I work through to increasingly more





One of Hamera's tasks was checking tyre pressures



Hamera admits it was an "exhausting" experience



A lot of work goes into getting Team Brit's McLarens on track

important tasks. I get shown how to clean the wheels to remove vibration-inducing tyre marbles, adjust the tyre pressures and fuel the cars. It seems quite repetitive to me and, crucially, exhausting. Across my four days at Snetterton, not once does the crew get back to the hotel before 2100. When you factor in 0630 starts, you won't be getting your beauty sleep on this job.

If that isn't enough, the environment in the pits is savage. As I fumble with the pressure gauge in the pitlane, the heat coming from the McLaren's brakes is shocking in its intensity. I have to wear heat-resistant gloves to adjust the tyre pressures to give my hands a chance of protection. If the heat isn't harsh enough, then there's the noise. You get used to the roar of the engines being warmed up, but never fully accustomed to the shriek of the wheel gun. You feel your senses are under siege.

Thinking about this, I wonder why anyone would do this job. Harsh working environment, long hours, and pay that isn't great. A full-time number-one mechanic at this level can expect around £32,000 per year, which doesn't feel like enough in my view. To counteract my scepticism, Team Brit mechanic Jack Webber sheds some light on what motivates him to go to work in the morning.

"Definitely getting to work on race cars," says Webber. "Though also you have going to new tracks, new places and meeting new people. I've also learned so much more here compared to my old job as a BMW technician."

There may be benefits, but you clearly need certain qualities to thrive in such a strenuous environment. Chief mechanic JJ Spencer appears to be the type of person required for the job. So what qualities does he think are needed to be a successful mechanic?

"One of them is determination," he explains. "Another is being able to control your emotions. It's incredible to

*"This is a high-pressure environment so, if someone has an abrasive personality, they can't be in the team"*

see how someone's work declines in quality once things stop going their way."

An employer sometimes has different views from the employee on what constitutes the perfect hire, so it's unsurprising that Locke has some thoughts of his own. "It's about turning up early, working late, and never complaining!" he explains. "Anyone can be a good mechanic, it's about how good your work ethic is. You need to have reactivity too. I've seen things go wrong in the pits and some mechanics just stand there, not doing anything."

"It's also about being a likeable person. This is a high-pressure environment, the mechanics work long hours together so, if someone has an abrasive personality, they can't be in the team."

For the races, I get to observe the team in action. I watch the pitstops during the British Endurance Championship contest after these have been choreographed earlier in the day. The wheels fly off and the new boots get thrown on. The cars are refuelled and the drivers changed. Then it's all over. No commotion or shouting as I expected, just a symphony of mechanical noise. "Thank God I wasn't involved," I think to myself. "There's no way I could have done that."

The evidence shows that this way of life isn't for everyone, and only the most committed individuals will succeed in this part of the industry. However, even if you don't intend to work in the pitlane, the mechanics still deserve your respect. Very few of us could do what they do. 🏁



# FINISHING STRAIGHT



## Ricciardo road trip hints at life after F1

### DRIVE THE DREAM 2 WITH DANIEL RICCIARDO A WEST AUSTRALIAN ROAD TRIP ADVENTURE

“I could genuinely see myself retiring there one day,” says Daniel Ricciardo; a comment which seems very apt given the recent noise surrounding his Formula 1 future. But for a few moments, let’s park the chatter on the likeable driver’s future and take a look at the Australian in his absolute element.

In what is a nine-minute tourism advert for Western Australia – one that certainly

makes this writer want to return down under to explore a new region – Ricciardo and “best mate” Blake cruise through the usual picturesque locations that you would expect in this sort of thing. Sensational sights, fine food and exhilarating experiences are in abundance, as are some of the world’s largest wine glasses.

With the focus on Ricciardo rather than the sales pitch, the 35-year-old looks a completely different character to the one seen on the F1 world feed for the past few years. Free of the constant questioning over his future and the pressures of the paddock, this is much more the Ricciardo

of old, with his wide smile on display constantly and his fun-loving personality shining through.

A moment that particularly highlights this is when the pair stop off at Gas Bay in the Margaret River Region for a spot of surfing. Conceding that he doesn’t even like the ocean, Ricciardo jokes that you “have to come and try to surf” there.

What makes this so enjoyable is that, firstly, it’s brilliant to see that not even a sportsperson in their prime can completely pull off the wetsuit look. But putting vanity aside, all of the tourism talk stops for the best part of a minute, and you get to see





Eight-time  
grand prix  
winner turns  
travelogue presenter  
for Aussie tourism  
promo

TOURISM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

the pair simply enjoying themselves. This includes Ricciardo being wiped out when attempting to ride a fairly sizeable wave, before an amusing action shot of him drifting in what is unmistakably far shallower water.

Of equal amusement is the lingering shot of the speedo as Ricciardo is driving through the bush, which indicates that he is sitting rigidly on the 100km/h limit and isn't straying over in the slightest.

With further stops to appreciate the local food, experience some Aboriginal culture in the Yallingup Caves, and go mountain biking, Ricciardo seems more than content appreciating life away from the fast lane.

Given the lack of fanfare in Singapore for Ricciardo's (at the time of writing) potential farewell, this video closes on what seems a far more appropriate and characterful note, with the Australian donning a dressing gown, teamed with a comically large towel on his head.

Staring out into the Yallingup sunset with a glass of bubbly and the message "If I'm dreaming, don't wake me up", this is how you drop the curtain. Again, given recent events, this moment strikes a somewhat unexpected emotional chord.

If this is the end for Ricciardo in F1, you should watch this, plan your trip to Western Australia, and enjoy a toast to an irreplaceable character.

**SAM HALL**

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### Rally Chile

**World Rally Championship  
Round 11/13**

Concepcion, Chile

**26-29 September**

**TV Live** TNT Sports 2, Fri 1230, TNT Sports 3, 1845, TNT Sports 2, 1500, TNT Sports 1, 1945, 2100, TNT Sports 4, Sun 1215, TNT Sports 3, 1330, 1700

**TV Highlights**

TNT Sports 1, Sat 0300, TNT Sports 3, Sun 0330,

#### Indonesian Grand Prix

**MotoGP**

**Round 16/21**

Mandalika, Indonesia

**28-29 September**

**TV Live** TNT Sports 2, Sat 0730, Sun 0730

**TV Highlights** TNT

Sports 3, Sun 1530, ITV4, Mon 2000

#### DTM

**Round 7/8**

Red Bull Ring, Austria

**28-29 September**

**TV Live** Premier Sports (streaming only), Sat 1215, Sun 1215

#### NASCAR Cup Series

**Round 30/36**

Kansas Speedway, USA

**29 September**

**TV Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

#### Formula Regional European by Alpine

**Round 9/10**

Barcelona, Spain

**28-29 September**

**TV Livestream** YouTube



Rally Chile

REE/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

#### European Le Mans Series

**Round 5/6**

Mugello, Italy

**29 September**

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### Oulton Park MSVR

**28 September**

750MC Hot Hatch, Clio Cup GB, Clubmans Sports Prototypes, Legends, Miata Trophy, Superkarts

#### Kirkistown 500MRCI

**28 September**

Emerson Fittipaldi Trophy, Fiestas, Martin Donnelly Trophy, Mazda MX-5s, Minis, Saloons/GTs, Superkarts

#### Brands Hatch MSVR

**28-29 September**

British GT, GB3, GB4, Ginetta GT Academy, Ginetta GT Championship, Ginetta Junior

**TV Livestream**

britishgt.com

#### Snetterton CSCC

**28-29 September**

BMW Championship/Open Series, Classics/Future Classics, Classic K/Jaguars, Magnificent Sevens, MG Trophy/Jaguar Championship, Midget & Sprite Challenge, Morgan Challenge, New Millennium/Turbo Tin Tops, Slicks Series, Specials Saloons & Modsports, Swinging Sixties, Tin Tops/Puma Cup

#### Silverstone BRSCC

**28-29 September**

C1 Endurance, CityCar Cup, Cockshoot Cup, MG Metro Cup, Super Classic Pre-'99 FF1600, Supersport Endurance

#### British Hillclimb Championship

**Round 14/14**

Loton Park

**28-29 September**

**TV Livestream**

YouTube.com



Brands Hatch MSVR

JEP





#### FROM THE ARCHIVE

Neither Jacques Laffite nor team-mate Keke Rosberg was remotely happy with the handling of the Williams-Honda FW09, likely under discussion here with Frank Williams,

Neil Oatley and Patrick Head at the 1984 Brazilian Grand Prix, the opening round of the season. After Friday practice Rosberg complained: "The car is a disaster. Just no grip at the front at all." The big talking point

in Rio de Janeiro was the imposition of a 220-litre fuel limit, prompting protests that grand prix racing was being turned into an economy run. At least on this matter Williams nailed it, Autosport saying it had

"clearly done excellent work in marrying horsepower and fuel economy", as Rosberg was able to drive hard throughout the race from ninth on the grid to second place. Laffite retired with ignition problems.





SUTTON



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IMAGES

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# Jordan EJ13

A solitary eighth place at the 2003 Spanish Grand Prix was Ralph Firman’s only Formula 1 points finish driving the Jordan-Ford EJ13, a car slower than all bar Minardi that year. Limited aerodynamic development and Cosworth V10s replacing works Honda power led to Jordan’s slide from sixth in 2002 to ninth in the constructors’ standings, despite Giancarlo Fisichella’s shock Interlagos victory bolstering its tally.

Perhaps unfairly, Firman’s year is best remembered for the rear wing failure in Hungary that resulted in a 150mph impact. Lack of grip – “I had unpredictable oversteer all over the place!” – meant he “never felt confident or comfortable in it” and leaves him no shortage of reasons for overlooking the EJ13 when choosing a favourite car.

Yet Firman doesn’t pick the Dallara-Mugen F396 in which he captured the 1996 British F3 title, or Honda’s NSX in which he became Super GT champion in 2007, nor the Reynard-Mugen 01L that launched him into F1 by winning the 2002 Formula Nippon crown. The son of Van Diemen founder Ralph Sr can’t look beyond the Jordan. “It’s got to be the F1 car, hasn’t it?” says Firman rhetorically.

He clarifies that the emotions surrounding being a full-time F1 driver, even if only for one season, elevate the



EJ13 to a prized status rather than its performance relative to the competition. “Even though the Jordan wasn’t the best one at the time, getting a chance to drive in F1 for season is a very special thing,” he explains. “That technology is so far above anything else.”

Firman believes “I could have won or finished on the podium as a minimum in Brazil” since he was on the same strategy as Fisichella. He regards the right-front suspension failure that put him out of the race as one of his biggest regrets. “That might have changed my career in F1, who knows?” he reflects.

He did get a memorable post-season outing on the Macau Guia circuit in a rare contemporary F1 demo. “It was great fun blasting around there,” adds the 1996 Macau GP winner, who didn’t pass up on the chance to “push it quite hard”.

JAMES NEWBOLD



IN NEXT WEEK’S ISSUE

# When McLaren conquered Indy and F1

ON TRACK IN TWO LEGENDARY 1970s RACERS



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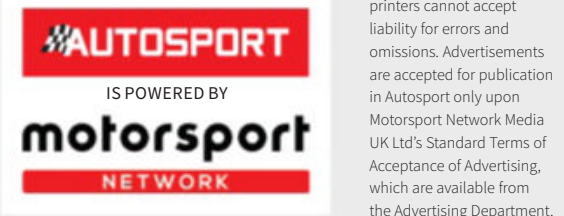
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RACE  
TEST

16/19 JAN 2025 Estoril /P

23/26 JAN 2025 Portimão /P

31/02 FEB 2025 Portimão /P

13/16 FEB 2025 Valencia /E

27/02 MAR 2025 Aragón /E

06/09 MAR 2025 Barcelona Catalunya /E

14/16 MAR 2025 Barcelona Catalunya /E



Info and registration  
[winter-series.com](http://winter-series.com)

## RACE TEST 24/25

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](http://gedlich-racing.com)

