

F1 Max ends Lando's title hopes

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7 NOVEMBER 2024

AUTOSPORT

BRAZILIAN GP

Verstappen's greatest victory

Max masterclass dampens Lando's championship dream

VERSTAPPEN

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The extremes of F1's next four-time world champion

From the ridiculous to the sublime. We've seen the full gamut of Max Verstappen as a Formula 1 competitor over the past couple of weeks. Overly aggressive on-track, penalties that have handed away points, and ludicrous radio messages. And also one of the great wet-weather performances in world championship history.

Moans about Charles Leclerc and the brief period during which Esteban Ocon drove away from the Red Bull aside, Verstappen was sublime as he climbed from 17th on the grid (15th when you remove the non-starters!). Up to 11th after one lap, Verstappen pulled off decisive and entirely fair moves to reach sixth after 11 laps. As Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 16, there were a number of factors that helped Verstappen's rise, but there can be no doubt that he was the class of the field last Sunday. He hit the front on lap 43 and the consistent fastest laps he then reeled off were pure quality.

The 2024 drivers' championship is now all but done, but the constructors' title remains more open. McLaren has a 36-point lead over Ferrari, and its pace in the dry at Interlagos suggests the team in orange should still be the favourite. Red Bull is 13 points further behind and did narrowly outscore its rivals in Brazil. But Sergio Perez only contributed one of Red Bull's 32 from the weekend, despite a new chassis. The Las Vegas GP at the end of the month will be crucial.

The big World Endurance Championship titles *did* go separate ways last weekend. Gary Watkins was in Bahrain to see Toyota snatch the manufacturers' crown from Porsche's grasp, while Andre Lotterer, Kevin Estre and Laurens Vanthoor clinched the drivers' laurels (p32).



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F2 star Bortoleto set to oust Bottas from

FORMULA 1

Formula 2 championship leader Gabriel Bortoleto looks set to race for Sauber next year, with Autosport sources revealing that a deal for the McLaren junior to join the Swiss operation has now been agreed.

The Brazilian had been a frontrunner to become Nico Hulkenberg's team-mate for 2025, but Sauber wanted to take its time weighing up whether to go for the 20-year-old or stick with another experienced driver such as incumbent Valtteri Bottas. With Bortoleto and his representatives present in the Brazilian GP paddock this week, it now appears that a decision has been taken and an agreement has been reached for

next season. It is understood that some final details still need to be sorted out before an official announcement can be made, but matters are likely to be finalised in time for the next grand prix in Las Vegas.

While Bortoleto has been part of McLaren's junior programme since the end of 2023, just after capturing the F3 title, it is understood that the Woking-based team will not stand in the way of a move to Sauber. McLaren had long made it clear that it would support any offer of a firm F1 race seat, but wanted to retain ties to him if he was only offered a reserve or test deal.

Bortoleto's arrival in F1 will mean that Brazil will have its first full-time grand prix driver since Felipe Massa retired at the end

of the 2017 season. In 2020, Pietro Fittipaldi raced two GPs for Haas as the replacement for the injured Romain Grosjean.

Should Bortoleto's deal to join Sauber be confirmed, then it will effectively bring an end to Bottas's hopes of staying on the F1 grid next year, with Sauber the Finn's only realistic option for a full-time cockpit. One alternative could be for Bottas to return to Mercedes as a reserve. "Firstly, the priority is to stay as a race driver and that's what I'm pushing for with Mattia [Binotto, Sauber chief]," Bottas said. "But as I don't have anything signed, I've got to look at all the alternatives including going back to the Mercedes family. That's for sure one option and I would consider it."

Sauber had also shown interest in Williams driver Franco Colapinto, but the Argentinian looks more likely to join the Red Bull family instead. Colapinto has impressed the F1 paddock since he replaced Logan Sargeant from the Italian Grand Prix onwards, and has scored five points in his six GP weekends to date. But there is no room for him at Williams next season, with Carlos Sainz joining from Ferrari to race alongside Alex Albon. Williams team principal James Vowles revealed that he has spoken to several other teams about the possibility of ensuring Colapinto has an F1 drive next year, with Red Bull particularly interested.

The team has a potential hole to fill as it



Colapinto has opened eyes with his pace since joining Williams

FERRARO

It looks like Bortoleto (left) will join Antonelli in 2025 F1 rookie intake

GALLOWAY

HONDA, ALPINE ACCEPT COST-CAP FINES

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 engine manufacturers Honda and Alpine have agreed to pay fines for procedural breaches of the FIA's engine cost cap rules.

Honda will pay \$600,000, with Alpine docked \$400,000 after both manufacturers settled for a so-called Accepted Breach Agreement (ABA) with the FIA.

In its report, the FIA said that Honda Racing Corporation (HRC) failed to file accurate reporting documentation, because its cost calculations included incorrectly excluded or adjusted costs. Alpine was handed



Alpine is one to accept the ABA

GALLOWAY

a smaller fine because it delayed sending its documents and "omitted relevant information".

Because the FIA felt both companies acted in good faith, it offered an ABA without taking matters further, which both HRC and Alpine accepted last month. Both companies will also be required to pay any administrative costs incurred by the Cost Cap Administration. The FIA

stressed that "there is no accusation or evidence that either Alpine or HRC has sought or obtained any undue advantage as a result of the breach".

From 2023, F1's engine manufacturers worked under a cost cap for the first time, with all manufacturers coming out under the budget limit. Alpine is expected to use Mercedes customer engines from 2026.

FILIP CLEEREN

Sauber seat

weighs up whether it will need to replace underperforming Sergio Perez, and it could therefore promote one of its RB drivers: Liam Lawson or Yuki Tsunoda. With Red Bull Junior and current F2 runner-up Isack Hadjar not yet considered to be ready for F1 promotion, it could therefore take an outsider to bolster its four-driver F1 line-up.

"The best I can really tell you is we're actively working with teams that are interested to try and find the right arrangement that helps Franco, that protects Franco and protects all parties," said Vowles. "It is never straightforward between Formula 1 teams, because you're fighting on track and you're trying to find a solution for a career of a young man. We are exploring possibilities with a number of teams that are interested at the moment.

"He's doing an outstanding job on track. But beyond there, I think especially when we look at the fact he's a 21-year-old, my responsibility is also towards him and making sure we do the right thing."

While Red Bull's Christian Horner and Helmut Marko have both spoken in glowing terms about Colapinto recently, Marko has stated that taking him on loan is a non-starter, so both parties would have to negotiate over a permanent release of him from his long-term Williams contract.

JONATHAN NOBLE & MARK MANN-BRYANS

P16 BRAZILIAN GP ACTION



Wash your mouth out with soap, young man!

SUTTON

FIA swears on Leclerc guilt

FORMULA 1

Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc has been handed a €10,000 fine, half of which is suspended for 12 months, for swearing in the Mexican Grand Prix post-race press conference.

After finishing third in Mexico City, Leclerc used the word 'f***' in the FIA press conference to describe going off the track at the final corner and allowing Lando Norris through to claim second. He then offered an apology because he realised he might get in trouble given FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem's recent crackdown on swearing, with Red Bull's Max

Verstappen handed a community service penalty for his own use of the word in Singapore. "Oh sorry, I don't want to join Max!" the Monegasque quickly added.

After investigating the matter over the Brazilian GP, the FIA stewards decided Leclerc did not warrant a penalty for misconduct according to the International Sporting Code, and handed him the fine instead.

Explaining their verdict, the stewards argued that Leclerc's immediate apology was a mitigating factor, and that his offence wasn't to the same level of Verstappen's swearing in Singapore.

FILIP CLEEREN

Lamborghini could drop WEC or IMSA

WEC/IMSA

Lamborghini is re-evaluating its LMDh programme and every option is on the table: axing it entirely, downscaling its campaign to either the World Endurance Championship or the IMSA SportsCar Championship, or remaining in both series.

Parking the SC63 prototypes run by the Iron Lynx squad after a single season is the least likely option, according to Lamborghini chief technical officer and acting motorsport boss Rouven Mohr. The most probable scenario, hinted the German, is that the Italian manufacturer will focus on a single championship in 2025.

The catalyst for the rethink is the new-for-2025 rule that will mandate two-car entries from manufacturer teams, Mohr explained.

“The biggest issue for us is that the second car [in WEC]

was not foreseen,” he said. “It generates in our company issues, to support the second car in an adequate way. Our wish would have been to continue with one car in IMSA [for the full season] and one car in WEC. Now we are in a situation where we need to find a way to manage two cars in WEC and one car in IMSA, or it could be that we have to decide which programme we run.”

Asked if ending the SC63 programme was the least likely option, he replied in the affirmative. “I can say it could be every option, but our wish and clear target is to continue,” he added.

Iron Lynx boss Andrea Piccini insisted that the Italian team is ready to run two cars in WEC and one in IMSA next year, but directed questions about the future to Lamborghini. He stressed at last weekend’s WEC finale that it was business as usual



for team and manufacturer: he pointed out that the team would be taking part in Sunday’s rookie test and a Michelin tyre test on the Bahrain International Circuit on Tuesday of this week.

Speculation about a breakdown in the relationship between Iron Lynx and Lamborghini was fuelled by Michelle Gattling and Celia Martin from its Iron Dames programme

driving a Manthey Porsche 911 GT3-R in the rookie test. It is expected that the Dames WEC campaign will switch over to the German team next year from one of the Iron Lynx Huracan GT3 EVO2 Lambos. But Rohr insisted that this should not be “interpreted as a negative thing” and that Lamborghini and Iron Lynx are “still in partnership”.

GARY WATKINS

Decision still unmade on Valkyrie Daytona debut

WEC/DAYTONA 24 HOURS

The new Aston Martin Valkyrie Le Mans Hypercar will be homologated in time to begin racing on schedule at the Daytona 24 Hours IMSA SportsCar Championship opener in January. But the British manufacturer is still not committing

to kicking off the car’s racing career with a twice-round-the-clock enduro.

The Valkyrie, which will race in IMSA and the World Endurance Championship next year with the Heart of Racing factory squad, is on schedule to complete its homologation before the end of this year. The process is already under way as Aston

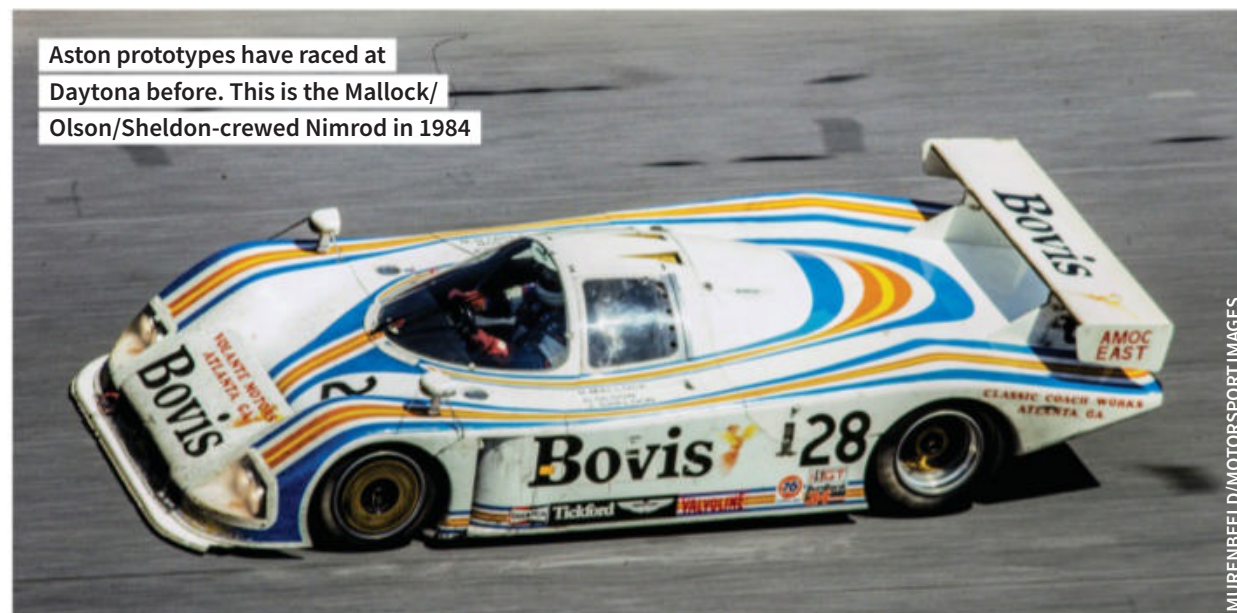
gets into the North American leg of its test programme. That began at Road Atlanta straight after the Petit Le Mans IMSA finale last month, and will continue with the Valkyrie’s first appearance at an official IMSA test at Daytona next week.

“We are going through the homologation process and it will be closed by the end of the year,” said Aston head of endurance racing Adam Carter. “We are scheduled to complete all the necessary homologation activities in time for Daytona.”

On what needs to happen for the car to make its debut at the IMSA season-opener, Carter replied: “We are just going through our programme and looking at our objectives. We will make a decision on what is best for us at a given point. It is still open.”

Aston is now testing on two fronts with the Valkyrie LMH and the total distance completed by the design is up around 11,000km. Aston Martin factory drivers Marco Sorensen and Ross Gunn are among those to have joined the test programme.

GARY WATKINS





FORMULA 1 Lewis Hamilton pulled off the ultimate in a box-ticking exercise during the build-up to the Brazilian Grand Prix last Sunday by lapping the Interlagos circuit in a 1990 McLaren MP4/5B as raced by his childhood hero Ayrton Senna. “I was just revisiting my childhood as I was watching [Senna] race here as a kid,” he enthused. “Hearing that sound and... watching him drive here, winning that race [in 1991], I just couldn’t believe that I just had that chance to do that, and it was really the greatest honour of my career.” He is pictured posing on the grid (inset) with Senna’s sister Viviane. **Photos by Motorsport Images**

Hanson swaps Porsche for AF’s satellite Ferrari

WEC

Phil Hanson has joined the British exodus to Ferrari. The 2019-20 World Endurance Championship LMP2 title winner will race the AF Corse team’s satellite entry in the WEC’s Hypercar class next year.

Hanson, 25, has moved over from Porsche with which he raced customer 963 LMDhs for Jota in the WEC and JDC-Miller MotorSports in the five IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros. Remaining at Jota on its move to Cadillac wasn’t an option, although a US programme was looked at. But the lure of racing for Ferrari kept him in the WEC.

“There is a bit of an emotional pull,” said Hanson, who got his first taste of the #83 Ferrari 499P Le Mans Hypercar during Sunday’s rookie test in Bahrain. “I have always been a fan of Ferrari – road cars and race cars. To now be able to race with them is amazing.”

IMSA, however, remains “an itch to be scratched” for Hanson: “I was



Hanson (inset) drove Ferrari in Bahrain test

definitely looking at America. I did enjoy it this year, which is why I hope to go back one day. But in the short and medium term, I am in WEC and focusing on what I have here.”

Hanson is the first driver to be announced for AF’s third car, which triumphed at the Austin WEC round this year. Yifei Ye, a new-for-2024 member of Ferrari’s factory roster, looks certain to stay, while Robert Shwartzman is certain to go. The Israeli-Russian will leave Ferrari, where he is both a factory sportscar driver and a Formula 1 reserve, to race for Prema’s new IndyCar team.



Robert Kubica, the third member of the 2024 squad, is looking increasingly set to stay. He said that he “didn’t come here for just one year” when questioned about his future after the Bahrain WEC race last week, while stressing that no decision had been taken.

GARY WATKINS



JEP

Porsche comes clean on jokers for 2025 – and 2024

WEC

Porsche has announced that it is planning to introduce an evo joker performance upgrade on its 963 LMDh for next year – at the same time as revealing that it has already used one! Both centre on the front suspension, although the changes in the pipeline are more substantial than those introduced ahead of its title-winning campaigns in the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2024.

They will include changes to the suspension mounting points on the 963, whereas the revisions for 2024 were more subtle. Porsche has previously talked about changes to sensors – including the ones that measure front brake pressures –

without confirming that they were taken as part of one of the five jokers allowed on an LMDh over its initial five-year lifecycle.

“It is a further evolution – there are more parts involved,” said Urs Kuratle, who masterminds the LMDh programme at Porsche. “We need more adjustability in the car, a wider range, more buttons for the engineers to press.”

Porsche is still waiting for written confirmation that it can use the latest evolutions from IMSA plus the FIA and the Automobile Club de l’Ouest, which jointly run the WEC. But it is ready to run them in next week’s official IMSA test at Daytona.

Porsche, meanwhile, has admitted that its plan to run only two drivers in the six-hour WEC races next year could change. Porsche Penske Motorsport

managing director Jonathan Diuguid has admitted that the team will be going into the new season with “a flexible approach” after opting to downsize its driver roster.

Diuguid suggested that PPM could draft in drivers from its IMSA squad to complement its WEC pairings of Laurens Vanthoor and Kevin Estre, plus Michael Christensen and Julien Andlauer. Mathieu Jaminet and Matt Campbell are already scheduled to join them at the Le Mans 24 Hours and the 10 and eight-hour races that bookend the season in Qatar and Bahrain.

“There is only one conflict, which is Spa [and Laguna Seca in May], and outside of that if we think it was the wrong decision for tracks A, B or C, we can go back to three drivers pretty easily,” said Diuguid.

GARY WATKINS

Fittipaldi/McLaren links revived with IndyCar test



GALLOWAY

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES

INDYCAR

Enzo Fittipaldi, whose grandad Emerson won the 1974 Formula 1 crown with McLaren, is to get an IndyCar test with the team. The Brazilian will run with Arrow McLaren at The Thermal Club on 19 November.

The 23-year-old has won two races over three seasons in Formula 2, and his older brother Pietro is a regular

in the category where their grandfather became the 1989 champion, but if he wants a race seat Fittipaldi will need to look elsewhere. “For removal of doubt, our 2025 line-up is firm with Pato [O’Ward], Nolan [Siegel] and Christian [Lundgaard],” read a communique from the team. “Each lap in our cars is important as we continue preparations for the 2025 IndyCar Series season, and we’re proud to

extend this one to Enzo, whose family is so closely connected to the history of McLaren Racing.”

It will not be the first time the younger of the Fittipaldi siblings has tested an IndyCar – he drove with Dale Coyne Racing at Sebring in October last year.

Meanwhile, Felipe Nasr will get a run with Penske, with which he won this year’s IMSA title, at the test.

JOEY BARNES & TRAVIS DAYE



Rossi commits to WEC with BMW

WEC

Bike legend Valentino Rossi looks set to pick the World Endurance Championship over the GT World Challenge Europe as the arena for his slimmed-down race programme next season. The Italian has revealed that he is leaning in that direction at the behest of BMW.

"I have quite a lot of pressure from BMW to remain in the WEC, because for them it is more important," said the seven-time MotoGP title winner. "I am a little bit uncertain and I haven't decided yet: some things are better here, some things are better there. Now it is more WEC."

This year Rossi has raced in the new LMGT3 class of the WEC and the GTWCE's Endurance Cup leg, as well as a couple of Sprint Cup rounds. Next year, with the birth of his second child imminent, he wants to scale back on his racing and will have to make a choice between the two programmes with the M4 GT3.



GT racing remains Rossi's focus, even though he put in an impressive performance at the wheel of his employer's M Hybrid V8 LMDh in the WEC rookie test in Bahrain last Sunday. A move into the Hypercar division has never been the target of a driver who turns 46 in February, but he maintained his 'you never know' attitude to graduation to the Hypercar class.

Rossi was only a tenth or so off the fastest time by a Hypercar newcomer on Sunday. His 1m50.577s best compared with the 1m50.460s set by Arthur Leclerc at the wheel of one of the factory Ferrari 499P Le Mans Hypercars. Both drivers had two shots at a quick time late in the afternoon, though Rossi had the fresher rubber. But he had to abort his first run after a red flag and then spun before his push lap on the second set of Michelin's medium compound tyre.

"Normally when you spin you destroy the tyres, but luckily it was good – I could restart and make the 50.5," said Rossi. "I am very happy about today, because from the first moment I had a very good feeling with the car and especially the tyres. It is a proper race car, more precise and stiffer [than a GT3]."

Alpine academy driver Victor Martins was third fastest rookie in Bahrain, though the Formula 2 ace's laps in the French manufacturer's A424 LMDh had already finished when the quick times by Leclerc and Rossi were being set. His best was a 1m50.717s after being quickest newcomer in the morning with a time a couple of tenths slower.

GARY WATKINS

LE MANS OPENS UP VIEWING AREAS AT PORSCHE CURVES

LE MANS 24 HOURS

The Circuit de la Sarthe will have two new exciting viewing areas in time for next year's Le Mans 24 Hours. Both will offer views of the most challenging part of the 8.47-mile circuit – the sweeping sequence that begins with the Porsche Curves.

New spectator banking is being built on the inside of the track at the Karting right-hander that follows on from the Porsche Curves. The new grass area will be on the site of the Circuit Alain Prost karting venue and, according to race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, will accommodate several thousand people. Across the track in the Maison Blanche area there will be a new covered grandstand offering a view of the left-hand Corvette Corner that follows Karting.

There is also what is being dubbed as a "chill zone" at Tertre Rouge. This will replace the camp site on the outside of the circuit that stretches from the right-hander that takes the cars onto Mulsanne Straight back to the Esses. It will provide room for 10,000 spectators.

The developments follow a record crowd of 329,000 at this year's 24 Hours and are part of a general upgrade of the facility that will include more toilets and food outlets, as well as better transport between spectator zones.

GARY WATKINS





BTCC dumps hybrid and goes to 100% sustainable fuel

BTCC

The British Touring Car Championship's experiment with hybrid power is at an end after three years, with series organiser TOCA abandoning the concept last week while keeping up the series' 'green' credentials by mandating 100% sustainable fuel from 2025.

The power boost from use of the hybrid did away with the long-established success handicap system of ballast upon its introduction in 2022, thanks to a sliding scale of restrictions in use for the leading runners in the championship. The additional power was effectively doubled to approximately 60bhp in 2024 by using a combination of hybrid and turbo boost. From 2025, the turbo boost alone will be used to maintain the same level of extra performance from 'push to pass'.

While the removal of hybrid means a diet of 55kg loss from the weight of the cars, it also means that they will use less of the new Hiperflo ECO102 R100 sustainable fuel, which follows the new guidelines from governing body Motorsport UK (see Autosport last week). The BTCC used 20% sustainable fuel in 2024, but Daryl DeLeon trialled the 100% mixture in his Unlimited Motorsport Cupra Leon over the final two race weekends at Silverstone and Brands Hatch.

TOCA supremo Alan Gow (above right) said the moves came with the support of the BTCC teams. "Very few regulation changes happen without discussing them first with the teams," he said. "This year the hybrid was fantastic. The first year with any new



technology is always challenging, but after that it was fine [in 2023 and 2024]. This year, we upped the amount of output combining the hybrid and the turbo and there were no problems at all – we like what it delivered.

"But, as we've now ticked that box we can move further forward with the introduction of fossil-free sustainable fuel, whilst delivering the same performance parameters. That's why we ran it in Daryl's car for the last two events, and they've done a lot of testing [including two days on track] since then to validate everything we thought we knew about the fuel."

Further rule changes followed in the wake of this, with the race two tyre rules modified so that only the top three from the opening race of a weekend – instead of the top 10 – are required to run the hardest available compound remaining from their allocation. To cut costs, a two-year freeze on engine development will be imposed from April 2025 to the end of the 2026 season.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Yamamoto ends his SF career

SUPER FORMULA

Naoki Yamamoto has announced that his 15-year tenure in Super Formula will come to an end this weekend at Suzuka. The 36-year-old is stepping away from his Nakajima Racing drive and calling time on a spell in Japan's top single-seater series that yielded three titles, nine race wins and 13 pole positions.

It follows the huge crash Yamamoto suffered in last year's Sugo Super GT round that left him with neck and spinal injuries that required surgery in order to allow him to get back in the cockpit. He put that ordeal behind him when he scored his first podium in dry conditions since 2020 in the opening round of this year's series at Suzuka, and sits seventh in the standings heading into his Super Formula swansong.

Yamamoto made his debut with Nakajima in what was known as Formula Nippon in 2010, and earned his first two titles with Team Mugen in 2013 and 2018, earning a reputation as 'Mr Suzuka' with four of his first five wins coming at the track. In 2019 he switched to Dandelion Racing in a bid to find success at other circuits, winning his third crown in 2020, before reuniting with Nakajima in 2021 to work with Alex Palou's former race engineer Yuki Katoh. Since then he has struggled for form, with a win in wet conditions at Motegi in 2022 the highlight.

Yamamoto's decision to step down opens up a prized seat at Nakajima for 2025 alongside Ren Sato, with Honda factory drivers Hiroki Otsu and Riki Okusa as well as current reserve Igor Fraga likely to be among the contenders.

He is expected to continue racing in Super GT next year, most likely with his current squad Team Kunimitsu.

JAMIE KLEIN





Hill stays as WSR seeks to expand

BTCC

Recently crowned British Touring Car champion Jake Hill will bid for a second successive title in 2025 with the West Surrey Racing BMW squad. But the intrigue is that WSR's new deal with Hill's Laser Tools Racing with MB Motorsport commercial and management team is merely the first peg in what could look a very different set-up overall next year.

"We're trying very hard to get back up to four cars or possibly five," said team boss Dick Bennetts, who oversaw a full-time line-up of three of the 3 Series machines in 2024. "There's enough interest to be honest. There are probably eight drivers on the list but it's the age-old problem of getting the numbers and team harmony added up."

The retention of four-time champion Colin Turkington is a no-brainer, while Bennetts confirmed that 2023/24 regular Adam Morgan and 2024 Snetterton cameo star Bobby Thompson are in the frame. He also admitted to talks regarding Scottish series regular Aiden Moffat. Furthermore, rumours were rife last

autumn of a second MB driver joining Hill, and these have not gone away. Andrew Watson was the man most likely this time last year.

WSR has also promoted sporting and operations manager Carl Mitchell so that his role now has the suffix 'director'. Mitchell, who joined the team as a mechanic 11 years ago, has become highly regarded in the BTCC as a team manager. The move is part of a push to diversify into other series, with Bennetts confirming that a Porsche Carrera Cup GB expansion could be on the cards.

"We are looking at other categories so that all our eggs aren't in one basket," said Bennetts, 77. "Carl said, 'Why don't we look at other things?' At my age I'm happy just doing the BTCC, but if they wanted to expand there's quite a bit going on."

Hill, meanwhile, is delighted to carry the coveted #1 in 2025. "I wanted #22 because it's the date of my birthday, but Chris Smiley registered it two weeks before I did," he explained of his regular #24. "My dad said, 'You've got to have James Hunt's 24 from his Hesketh days!'"

MARCUS SIMMONS

LEUPEN OUT OF TOYOTA

Toyota World Endurance Championship race director Rob Leupen will leave the Japanese manufacturer at the end of this year and stood down from his operational duties ahead of last weekend's series finale in Bahrain. The departure of the 60-year-old, who is managing director of the Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe operation in Cologne, comes as part of what Toyota is describing as a "renewal of its leadership structure".

GIUSTI JOINS MACAU ENTRY

Williams F1 protege Alessandro Giusti is one of two late nominations to fill the two 'TBAs' on the initial entry list for next week's Formula Regional Macau Grand Prix. The Frenchman, fourth in this year's European series with ART Grand Prix, has switched to MP Motorsport for the event. Another driver from the European championship, China's Ruiqi Liu, fills the remaining slot with PHM AIX Racing.

BILINSKI TO F3 WITH RODIN

Anglo-Polish Formula Regional racer Roman Bilinski is to step up to Formula 3 next season with Rodin Motorsport. The 20-year-old won this year's FR Oceania title but his European campaign was disrupted by injuries from a road accident. Bilinski, who drove with the team in its Carlin guise in British F4 in 2021, joins Louis Sharp and Callum Voisin. Another F3 recruit is Alpine protege Nicola Lacorte. The son of Italian sportscar veteran Roberto is another to step up from the FR ranks and has joined the line-up at DAMS.

EXHIBITION EXTENDED

The Formula 1 Exhibition has extended its residency at London ExCeL to 2 March 2025 owing to 'phenomenal public demand'. Exhibits on display since the opening in August include a Mercedes W09 from Lewis Hamilton's 2018 title-winning season and an Ayrton Senna-piloted McLaren MP4/4 from 1988. The show also pays homage to the British Grand Prix via a tie-up with the Silverstone Museum.

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Two sides of Max Verstappen

At Interlagos, we saw the worst and then the very best of a man who's surely soon to be crowned a four-time world champion. Can he ever be considered the greatest?

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The faces of Christian Horner and Lando Norris said it all in the deafening aftermath of the Sao Paulo Grand Prix. The race for the 2024 Formula 1 title is now essentially done, the relentless questioning of the contenders set to rescind, all with Max Verstappen's superb win in Brazil. It soothed a championship battle that had got horribly ugly.

Verstappen was letting off steam of his own on the podium, rejoicing in what is, remarkably, his first win since holding off Norris back in June's Spanish GP. Once again, he'd delivered magic at a wet Interlagos – one of F1's best spectacles.

Verstappen's first lap was indeed worthy of Horner's "up there with Donington 1993" Ayrton Senna comparison. His confidence to immediately power around two cars at Turn 3 – where he'd shone so strongly here back in 2016 – was superb.

That was allied with how well the Red Bull starts in low-grip conditions. And yet Verstappen's confidence to pull dive after dive at Turn 1, knowing any race-ending contact would blow the title fight wide open with Norris starting ahead, was unwavering. Even for a man so iron in his desire to be forever unyielding.

His move to finally seize the race lead at the second post-red flag safety car restart from the day's other star, Esteban Ocon, came out of nowhere. But Verstappen nailed it while Norris was slipping off the road in the background at Turn 1 under pressure from Ferrari's

"After being dumped out of Q2, Verstappen raged at 'bulls***' race control decision-making"

Charles Leclerc – the only driver to offer the winner any resistance on his rise. In one corner the 2024 season was encapsulated.

Norris erred when perfection was needed. Verstappen commanded with an RB20 back on song. Leclerc showed more mettle amid Ferrari's own wild performance swings these days.

And, in the brief battle before the red flag and Leclerc's green-flag pitstop, hypocrisy raged on the radio waves. "He was squeezing me onto the white line, not leaving a car's width," cried Verstappen. That's despite Leclerc having given him room and not imperilled the lines that were so disgracefully crossed during the previous two events. And it wasn't the day's only toxicity.

After being dumped out of early Sunday morning's surprise qualifying session in Q2, Verstappen had raged at what he viewed as "bulls***" race control decision-making.

This is exactly what the FIA is trying to stamp out with its ill-defined curse crusade amid concerns for the wellbeing of race officials, and it unleashed the torrents of online vitriol. This came the day after the decision to wait an age to activate the Virtual Safety Car when Nico Hulkenberg pulled off in the sprint race.

Two wrongs don't make a right, but to see Verstappen's fans complaining about an iffy-looking race control call – given the Dutchman was the beneficiary of the greatest handout from such in F1's history at Abu Dhabi 2021 – was truly pathetic.

Sometimes, these things just happen. And until evidence of a conspiracy emerges – as with Red Bull's tyre water-cooling trick suspicion – they can only be treated as such. The scale needed to keep such a ruse quiet makes it so improbable, but this didn't stop the howls. These reignited on Sunday morning when race control took 50s to red flag Q2 after Lance Stroll's first crash of the day.

This enraged Red Bull – even though Verstappen had been eliminated by not getting a better lap in immediately after the previous Q2 restart, as Norris had managed. Horner's "if they'd red-flagged it immediately, there's time for another lap" theory, with only 1m37s left on the clock when Stroll crashed, is shattered when you consider taking qualifying's quickest red flag call (eight seconds after Alex Albon's day-ending Q3 crash from yellows first being displayed) and applying that hypothetically to Stroll's case. There was barely enough time for anyone to get out of the pits and start a lap given the times were coming in around the 1m25s-mark – let alone from Red Bull's pitbox at the far end of the pitlane.

Verstappen's reaction is exactly what the FIA should be penalising – not naughty press conference faux pas, whether they are intentional or otherwise.

Now, the race result will shove this unedifying episode into oblivion on F1's history book pages, into which Verstappen has a real shot of one day going down as the greatest ever.

But, if he wants to achieve that without relying on the overwhelming title and victory statistics he could still one day earn, those Austin and Mexico professional fouls will have to stop for good. Leclerc's tactics of last Sunday show the way forwards.

The upcoming rewrite of racing guidelines for the Qatar GP may take that out of Verstappen's hands but, even with what had come before, it was still so pleasing to see his greatest of races play out without a single *real* moment of racing controversy.

Verstappen himself insisted how at the start of the Senna S "the camber helps you naturally a little bit". But he did all the dives, the daring, the destruction of the field and with it, surely, Norris's slim title chances. And for that alone, Verstappen deserves nothing but the heartiest of congratulations. 🏆

➔ P16 BRAZILIAN GP REPORT



NASCAR's showdown

A thrilling Cup season will come to a conclusion this weekend, the drama bolstered by controversy over manufacturer loyalty, and the imminent result of a lawsuit

NICK DEGROOT

The stage is set for a dramatic conclusion to what has been a sensational NASCAR Cup season this Sunday at Phoenix. The 2024 campaign has featured 18 different race winners, the closest finish in series history, and even fights.

There's also been no shortage of controversy, which continued over last weekend at Martinsville Speedway.

In the closing laps of the race, manufacturer loyalty appeared to take centre stage as Christopher Bell's fellow Toyota drivers and William Byron's Chevrolet stablemates were kept apprised of the fluid points situation. While NASCAR didn't take any immediate action regarding the questionable radio communications, they did act on the other aspect of this bizarre finish. When Bell caught the slowing #23 Toyota of Bubba Wallace, he slid sideways as he made the pass that was supposed to vault him into the Championship 4. In a moment of poor judgement as he impacted the outside wall mid-corner, Bell mashed the throttle and rode against it to the finish line. In doing so, he committed what NASCAR deemed to be a safety violation, which follows a 2023 decision to ban the wall-ride used by Ross Chastain in the 2022 playoff fight.

The worst part about it all is the fact that Bell didn't actually need to do it. He gained no more positions and was not in immediate danger of being passed. He could have pulled the car off the wall and avoided this outcome, but questions would have persisted over what was happening with the slowing Wallace, who reported a tyre issue despite later observations showing the rubber to be fully inflated. And then there was the curious case of the rolling Chevrolet blockade with Austin Dillon and Chastain, including suspicious comms that indicate concern from the Dillon camp over Chastain not initially knowing 'the deal'.

As if this wasn't casting enough of a pall over championship week, lingering in the background is the antitrust lawsuit against NASCAR. A hearing was held on Monday, and a decision is expected later in the week involving the future of the charters held by 23XI Racing and Front Row Motorsports. 23XI, co-owned by NBA legend Michael Jordan, is one of the four teams about to battle for the title at Phoenix. If the courts rule against it, 23XI will find out on the eve of this pivotal title race that it will not be locked into the 2025 Daytona 500 while also facing a significant financial hit as open teams. This could prove to be a serious distraction, or perhaps a motivating factor as it seeks to win NASCAR's biggest prize while suing the dynastic France family that has an iron grip on the sport.

The team's driver is Tyler Reddick, who is the only Toyota man to advance after all four Joe Gibbs Racing contenders fell to the wayside through the first nine races of the playoffs. It was a similar story for Hendrick Motorsports and Chevrolet. While

title favourite Kyle Larson missed out, 2024 Daytona 500 winner William Byron squeezed into the final four. He was the driver who benefited from Bell's shock expulsion from the Championship 4.

But the organisation looking the strongest is the one that has won the past two Cup titles – Team Penske. Two-time champion Joey Logano is having a sub-par season by his standards, but he will still have a shot at the crown this weekend. Logano will be joined by team-mate Ryan Blaney, who could become the first

“NASCAR will be paying attention to anything crossing into race manipulation”

driver to ever win back-to-back Cup championships in the knockout format. The points no longer matter for these four finalists. In this race, whoever finishes highest among them will be the one to walk away with the Bill France Cup.

So who is the favourite entering the weekend? Recent history is in favour of Reddick, since Toyotas crushed the competition in the spring race at Phoenix. Five different Toyotas combined to lead 298 of 312 laps, including Reddick, who led 68. But he and 23XI have never been in this position before, which puts them at a disadvantage to their three rivals. Byron is a Phoenix winner and actually earned pole position for last year's title decider before falling back as the race progressed.

Blaney has never won at Phoenix, but none of the four finalists have a higher average finish at the track than him, which includes three consecutive runner-up results. Then there's Logano, who is the oldest title combatant at 34. He is by far the most experienced driver here with over 30 starts at Phoenix and three Cup wins. Logano is also a driver who lives for these moments, and is more than willing to apply an aggressive touch to ensure his success.

But what role will manufacturer allegiance play in the outcome? Last year, Larson expressed surprise that Chastain didn't ride behind him on the final restart and instead took the win for himself, allowing Blaney to run down Larson and take the title. The year before that, Blaney played blocker for Logano while Chastain tried to close the gap in the 2022 title race. NASCAR will certainly be paying attention to anything that crosses the line into race manipulation, but does anyone know where that line is after Martinsville? 🏁

➔ P43 MARTINSVILLE REPORT



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YOUR SAY

It is still worth paying but, as you rightly say, there surely is a limit to what the core audience of enthusiasts will bear

STEPHEN CHIPPING

The cost of being an F1 fan

It's high time the soaring cost of watching Formula 1 is called out and your investigation (Autosport 17 October) makes many good points. However, it somehow fails to grasp the way costs have actually risen.

Suggesting Monaco offers the best value for money immediately sounds an alarm. General admission at Monaco is cheap for a reason. It gives you access to a steep, rocky slope with a distant bird's-eye view heavily obstructed by buildings. There is no question of wandering round the circuit with this ticket as you suggest. To have any kind of view requires a grandstand seat, which costs well over £1000 for the weekend.

Back to something more normal for most of your readers, which is the cost of attending the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. For many years I did buy general admission but my favourite spot at Club disappeared under a grandstand so a grandstand is how I have watched for over 10 years. I book early and choose my grandstand carefully to balance cost, view and proximity to the track. I have checked back and in 2019 my three-day grandstand ticket cost £225. This year for a comparable open stand it was £425. As recently as 2022 my ticket cost £270. Your calculation says cumulative inflation from 2015 to now was about 30%. Silverstone's rate of inflation for the typical grandstand seat that I buy over just five years is 90%. And a big part of this happened in 2023 when dynamic pricing appeared.

Talking of which, my £425 seat this year was bought the day tickets were released and subsequently increased to £600. Imagine paying that and throwing in the cost of camping, which has shot up in equal measure to well over £200 for the weekend and any suggestion that increases have been lower than general inflation is just not right.

As regards content, I appreciate that the music festival element has grown. Not my bag but no complaints about that. I do complain about the quality of the support races though. At least at Silverstone we get Formula 2 and 3 together with Porsche Supercup whereas at many venues some or all those are missing. There used to be a historic race but this year there was a feeble demonstration of a few old, obscure backmarkers. I totally agree

with Mr Wells (letters, Autosport 17 October) that races are now constantly blighted with protracted and multiple safety cars, which seem to be sprung for the most minor incident.

Despite these negatives, attending a GP live is a compelling spectacle and the weekend has a special atmosphere. Clearly the numbers say people are prepared to pay. For me, it is still worth paying but, as you rightly say, there surely is a limit to what the core audience of enthusiasts will bear. For the future one must hope all those youngsters flocking in don't disappear as fast as they showed up. Next year? I'm going to Classic Le Mans instead.

Stephen Chipping
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Thank you for the insight. Regarding Monaco, we did point out it came out on top because of its short lap distance and that it 'isn't brilliant for watching F1 on a budget' – ed

Max shows how it's done

Credit where credit is due – after the awful manner in which Max Verstappen drove at times in the US and Mexico. He showed all of the field and the crowd/TV audience how it's done in the race in Brazil. Good pressure on other drivers and clean overtakes. Well done, shows you can do it when you want.

Steve Mundy
Gosport, Hampshire



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RACE CENTRE

FORMULA 1

MAX SHOWS THEM WHO'S BOSS

*After his recent struggles, Verstappen
bounced back to get one hand on the title
with a sublime drive in the wet*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY





A winner from
17th on the grid:
the champion was
in stunning form
on Sunday



“DEFINITELY THIS ONE IS THE BEST ONE.”

Max Verstappen was unequivocal in ranking his 2024 Sao Paulo Grand Prix victory, which puts him on a total of eight for the year and now on the brink of a fourth straight Formula 1 world title.

All of that was, however, secondary to one statistic from last Sunday at a soaking Interlagos – how the Dutchman climbed from starting 17th and feeling like he was “almost trying to destroy the garage” in reaction to his Q2 exit, to reflecting it was ultimately “unbelievable to win here from so far back”. Except it wasn’t, really, because for all of their mid-2024 run being flummoxed against McLaren, Ferrari and occasionally Mercedes, this was still Verstappen and his crack Red Bull squad.

There was an air of inevitability even before his polesitting title rival Lando Norris had erred in reacting to the ‘Aborted Start’ message at the intended 12.30pm start time, which had been brought forward. This would hang over the McLaren driver the whole race, with Verstappen among the seven who correctly waited for green lights before moving off to commence another start procedure – called only because the cars ahead had already left the grid again. This was all after Lance Stroll had so poorly (brake failure or not) got his repaired Aston Martin stuck in the Turn 4 gravel on the race’s first formation lap.

But Verstappen’s experience of start rules from his 40 poles wasn’t the difference in one of F1’s great wet-weather performances. Norris and his fellow front-row starter and aborted start gaffe-maker George Russell were also eventually only fined €5000 each for their

mistake, which 11 others followed.

Instead, there were 10 far more important factors in what Red Bull team boss Christian Horner described as Verstappen’s “Donington 1993” performance, none of which was immediately apparent.

1. Verstappen’s start so good he “didn’t even see” Perez

After the extra 10-minute wait for the start, it was Russell who made the best getaway of the leaders. He and Norris reacted very similarly, but the McLaren driver’s wheelspin in the second phase, while feeling “the left side looked a bit better than the right” in terms of grip, made the difference. Russell was past and immediately pulled a 1.3-second lead by the end of lap one of a contest that would be to 69 tours rather than the scheduled 71 thanks to Stroll’s off and the extra formation laps, although the stewards did not declare this until we were over a quarter of the way through.

By this stage, Verstappen had gained six places from his lowly starting position, made worse by Red Bull fitting a sixth internal combustion engine of the year after his air intake leak the previous weekend had left him running a unit from pooled parts slightly down on power in the Mexican GP. Two of these place gains came automatically with the absence of Stroll and Alex Albon’s Williams, crashed in Q3. But the rest were brilliantly earned.

For a start, Verstappen carved ahead of Ollie Bearman in Kevin Magnussen’s Haas on the row ahead off the line, then went around the



QUALIFYING

Russell leads Norris from the start. Meanwhile, Verstappen is beginning his climb

Stroll beached his Aston Martin, which forced an aborted start



outside of Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez on the outside line at Turn 1. This was a move Verstappen claimed he “didn’t even see” when he was in the cooldown room nearly three hours later.

At Turn 3, just like in the 2016 Brazilian GP, Verstappen powered around the outside of two cars – the other Williams of Franco Colapinto, and Valtteri Bottas’s Sauber too.

Over the next 26 tours, in what was effectively the first act in this race of two distinct near-halves, Russell held off Norris for lap after lap. Verstappen, meanwhile, passed former title rival Lewis Hamilton – for once without controversy – at the Senna S on lap two, then did likewise to Pierre Gasly on the fifth tour, before vaulting Fernando Alonso’s remaining Aston Martin the next time around at Turn 4.

“IT’S VERY HARD TO PASS AROUND HERE WITH THE NEW [ASPHALT]. I HAD CONFIDENCE ON THE BRAKES”

It then took Verstappen two laps to erase a 2s gap to Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren, and at Turn 1 the Australian didn’t offer any battle at all. Verstappen was easily past at what was clearly already his favourite passing spot, even with its new “oily layer” surface and, in the words of Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola, “very limited” grip levels in the wet. “It’s very hard to pass around here with the new [asphalt],” Verstappen said afterwards. “I had confidence on the brakes as well.”

But, once he’d been basically waved ahead of Liam Lawson’s RB into Turn 8 on lap 11, Verstappen’s charge was blunted. He erased the near three-second gap to Charles Leclerc’s Ferrari, but overall spent 11 laps trapped behind the red machine.

The 2022 title contenders did have one thrilling scrap – the only resistance Verstappen faced at Turn 1 all race. At the end of lap 21, Verstappen had the perfect run on Leclerc up the long, meandering pitstraight. But when they braked into the Senna S Leclerc was stubbornly on the inside line. He held this, gave Verstappen room on the outside and, as the sequence unwound, stayed sixth. >>

“I was struggling, I was miles off the pace,” Sao Paulo Grand Prix polesitter Lando Norris reflected after a wild, wet qualifying session. This lasted nearly two hours from 7.30am on Sunday, after being rained off on Saturday afternoon, thanks to a crashfest that ended with the McLaren driver’s eighth Formula 1 career pole.

Williams and Aston Martin contributed four of the five shunts, with Franco Colapinto going around at Turn 3 midway through Q1. Here Norris was “pretty concerned” as he sat 2.5s off the pace – just lacking confidence in a car he said “was the same from start to finish” all session. But a last-gasp improvement to 1m30.944s on the extreme wet tyres squeaked him through in 15th, while Verstappen progressed fastest of all.

In Q2, Oscar Piastri went out immediately on intermediates, while Norris continued to toil on full wets. He was 11th before Carlos Sainz crashed at Turn 2, while Verstappen was also without an inters time, but seemingly more at ease with the conditions in fourth.

“Liam Lawson shuffled Verstappen to 12th. Therefore he didn’t make Q3”

Norris headed the restart queue and his first lap on inters got him up to third (that became seventh before another Q2 effort put him quickest of the middle segment), while Verstappen was shuffled to the peril of 10th. Here, controversy occurred when Lance Stroll crashed and yellow flags flew with 1m37s left on the clock. Two seconds later, Charles Leclerc went from 13th to third and so knocked out Verstappen, who had been running behind Stroll when the Aston crashed. In the 50s delay before the session was stopped and not restarted – because race control could see Stroll trying to drive his wrecked car back to the pits in circumstances and this is normally covered with double yellows – Liam Lawson shuffled Verstappen to 12th. Therefore, he and team-mate Sergio Perez didn’t make Q3.

Norris finally led Q3 from the off – the cars fuelled to run long in the fluctuating rain, which had been at its worst in Q1. Norris’s 1m24.158s had him ahead of Alex Albon and Piastri, before Fernando Alonso shunted his Aston at Turn 12.

George Russell and Norris headed another restart, after which Albon crashed at Turn 1, braking on the wet outside white line but blaming “a beep in my ear which normally means there’s a failure, rear locking and a big crash”.

Afterwards, the remaining teams took two different approaches, with the McLarens fuelled for two laps. Norris improved the pole time with both – first to a 1m24.092s and finally to a 1m23.405s. Piastri did not get quicker on his first go, then locked up at Turn 1 and went off on his final lap. That meant the drivers – including Russell and Yuki Tsunoda (second and third by the end for Mercedes and RB respectively) who had been kept in the garage for extra time with their inters in blankets and time for just one run – could gain.



SPRINT RACE



Piastrì played the team game after leading Norris from the sprint's start



S BLOXHAM

TEE

Lando Norris won the sprint race at Interlagos but was “not proud of it” since it required gracious assistance from polesitter, team-mate and long-time leader Oscar Piastri.

Norris had looked to be the sprint qualifying pacesetter on Friday afternoon, when he topped SQ1 and SQ2. But a series of small snaps – “so many mistakes”, Norris called them – opened a gap that Piastri stormed through to head the grid by 0.029 seconds. Behind, Charles Leclerc started third and looked the favourite after promising FP1 long-run times for both Ferraris. Max Verstappen would start fourth.

When the lights went out, Piastri

“Verstappen decried ‘so many mistakes’ from Leclerc before going deep at Turn 1 himself”

immediately moved to cover Norris’s seemingly slightly better launch, while Verstappen dived up the inside of Leclerc at Turn 1 and badly locked his left-front. But, with Leclerc having enough space to keep his nose ahead as the outside of Turn 1 became the inside of Turn 2, the Ferrari stayed third.

At the end of lap one of 24, Piastri led by 0.6s with Norris in hot pursuit. The McLaren pair then moved slightly clear of the other chasers in the initial going, before Leclerc – who was unmoved by an early look from Verstappen into Turn 4 on lap three – and the world champion closed back up.

On laps five and seven, Norris suggested he thought Piastri should let him by, as per McLaren’s team orders plan, but the only instruction in the race’s first half was for the leader to give Norris

DRS, after the second McLaren had fallen slightly away as the first 10 tours concluded. Leclerc still ran just behind Norris, with Verstappen threatening, before a Senna S moment on lap 13 meant Leclerc had to defend against the Red Bull to Turn 4 and the McLarens finally snapped his DRS threat.

Verstappen decried “so many mistakes” from Leclerc before going deep at Turn 1 himself a few laps later. But then, just after McLaren was telling Norris it expected to swap positions late in the race, Leclerc’s pace took a surprise dip. As he grappled tyre wear on the medium tyres (all the drivers were using them in this race), it meant Verstappen was finally able to fight past at Turn 4 with DRS on the outside on lap 18.

Verstappen’s gap to the lead from third got as high as 2.9s, but

he’d taken a second back when Nico Hulkenberg pulled off at Turn 8 on lap 21. This was controversially covered by yellow flags for almost two laps, during which McLaren hurriedly swapped the lead between its cars before the virtual safety car was activated.

When this ended with Norris in Turn 4 on the final lap, he pulled clear to win by 0.6s. Verstappen had swarmed Piastri at the restart, for which he was later penalised 5s for being “0.63 seconds below the minimum time at VSC end”, according to the FIA document announcing his sanction. This dropped him to fourth in the results.

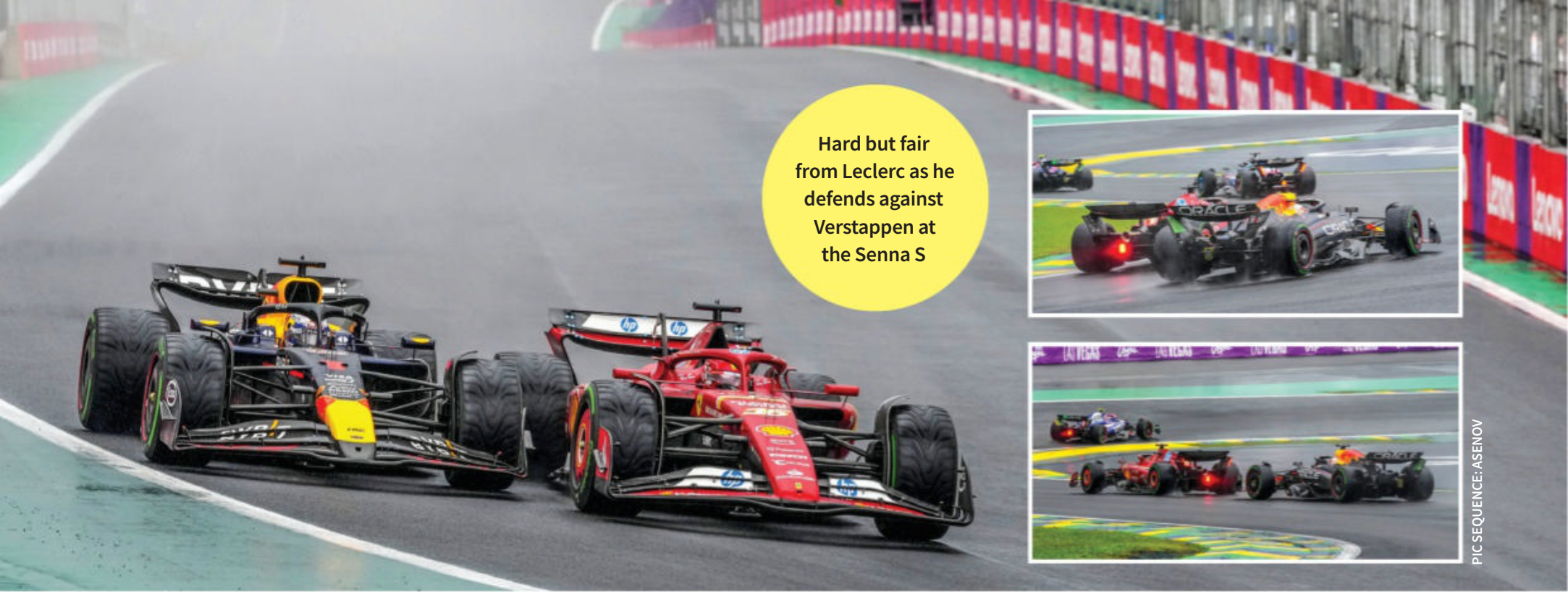
Behind Leclerc on the road came Carlos Sainz, George Russell and Pierre Gasly, while Sergio Perez recovered the final point in eighth from another early qualifying exit. In the other Haas, Kevin Magnussen substitute Ollie Bearman faded from starting and running 10th early to 14th by the flag after caning his medium tyres.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Verstappen chased Leclerc, finally got past but was still classified fourth

ASENOV



Verstappen hypocritically and incorrectly called foul (see page 12), but didn't have long to fret. Just two laps after their refreshingly clean battle, Ferrari called Leclerc in to take another set of the intermediate tyres on which the pack had all started.

2. Red Bull's new inters and upgrade progress

Leclerc, along with Russell and Norris a short while later, would get used inters in his service. They'd all had come into the race with no new sets available, while Verstappen – and this was the flipside of the Q2 exit about which he had raged – had started on a new set of the green-walled rubber and had two more for race use too.

Unlike the soft tyres, inters after a heat cycle weren't heavily damaged, but there can be no doubt that the freshness of new ones was a boon in the treacherous conditions all throughout the elongated race day. "The team have worked very hard to try and understand these tyres," Horner said of Pirelli's range overall, and his next point was important too: "The upgrades that we've brought [lately], we really started to get the most out of them here."

3. Leclerc's pitstop while fifth

While Leclerc was making for the undulating Interlagos pitlane, the clouds above the track had already darkened considerably. The intermittent rain of the opening phase of the race and the steady drizzle of early Sunday morning qualifying were about to be replaced with something far more serious.

Leclerc had asked Ferrari to "find free air", which it did ahead of the Bearman/Hamilton scrap over 11th. But Ferrari's Fred Vasseur said his team "underestimated the loss in the pit exit" on colder inters and, when Leclerc understandably exited gingerly, Vasseur said he "lost a couple of tenths" and so rejoined behind Hamilton.



"THE UPGRADES THAT WE'VE BROUGHT [LATELY], WE REALLY STARTED TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEM HERE"

With Leclerc now bottled up, Verstappen was unleashed to chase Esteban Ocon and Yuki Tsunoda – the other stars of wet qualifying for Alpine and RB respectively – and their battle for third. At this mini-phase, Verstappen was a maximum of 15.3s adrift of first place, having dropped back from 10.5s behind Russell when he'd first caught Leclerc.

On lap 27, Ocon mugged Tsunoda delightfully at Turn 10 – where Perez had spun the other Red Bull solo back on the opening tour – to grab a podium berth he wouldn't lose thereafter. But barely 30s after the Frenchman's pass, the race ahead was forever altered, in a way that would catapult Ocon into a shock lead.

4. Mercedes overruling Russell proves key

Far back from the leaders on lap 27, Nico Hulkenberg made another wincing memory in the Interlagos Turn 1 run-off by braking on the white line – "I took a little break from paying attention", he'd later say – and spinning off. The Haas came to rest initially stuck on a drain.

This meant the virtual safety car was activated when the leaders were heading out of Turn 3 on lap 28. They obviously couldn't pit, but behind them Piastri led Alonso and five others into the pits to take more inters (or in Perez's case, full wets).

The state of the inters removed from Perez's car meant Red Bull could see "the tyres were in very good shape so that's why we elected not to fit [Verstappen] for a new set of inters and go longer", said Horner. "Because we [also] knew more heavy rain was coming. So it was a question of, 'Right guys, you're in survival mode'."

McLaren had already told Norris this was the case with the clouds looming, but the Woking squad changed its mind when, according to team principal Andrea Stella, "with the VSC and with the increased amount of water on track it was important to go on to the new tyre".

From the lead, Mercedes forcefully ordered Russell in, with team engineering director Andrew Shovlin coming in on his radio and "overruling my engineer to say 'box'", as Russell explained it. The Mercedes – quickest down the straight to Turn 4 and therefore a potentially massive stumbling block to Verstappen's rise – never saw the front of the field again.

5. Red flag rules stop Norris's clear gains

Although Ocon, Verstappen and Gasly had cycled to the podium positions by not pitting – Tsunoda had gone to full wets when he came in well behind Russell and Norris – the early leaders' real frustrations were still yet to come.

On lap 30, with the rain absolutely pelting down, Norris sailed past the suddenly timid Russell into Turn 4. And coming back up the hill he'd got within a few car lengths of Gasly and Verstappen ahead, having been around six seconds behind the Red Bull exiting the pits. Ocon, >>

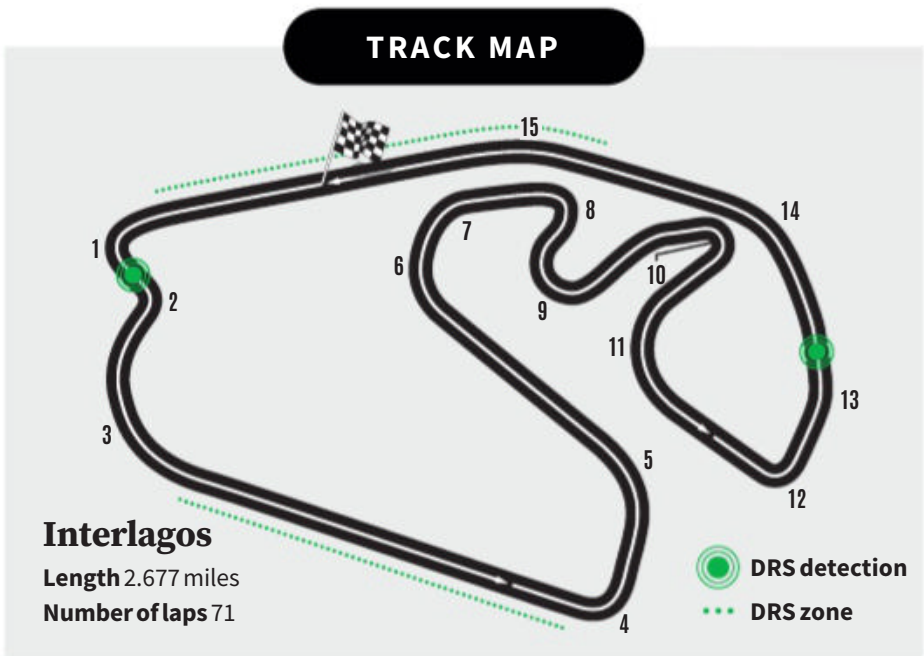


“I KNEW THAT I PASSED A FEW PEOPLE THERE BEFORE. SO, I WAS LIKE, ‘I’M GOING TO SEND IT UP THE INSIDE’”

at this point, had pulled an impressive eight seconds in the lead. But here the race was neutralised by the safety car’s activation – called “when visibility was deemed too poor”, according to Isola and amid the lack of an official explanation from the FIA. This then became a red-flag stoppage when Colapinto crashed (not quite 2003 Mark Webber/Alonso-style here given the lower speeds involved) into the Turn 14 outside wall heading up towards the grid. He’d pitted when the safety car was first called. A near 25-minute delay followed, during which Verstappen and Gasly were able to fit new intermediate tyres without losing places, while Ocon did likewise with used ones.

6. Verstappen beds in his brakes wisely after restart

There was a rolling restart on lap 33, after just a single lap of running behind the safety car. This surprised Horner, who felt “it just seemed overambitious to get the race going again” because “the back of the tail hadn’t caught up”. Indeed, Bearman and constant backmarker Zhou Guanyu fell off in separate incidents at Turn 12 running well adrift of the pack, while Ocon ahead was getting ready to light up the restart. He did this magnificently and blasted to a 1.5s lead at the end of lap 34, evoking memories of his 2021 Hungarian GP win in other wild circumstances. Ocon even extended his lead to 3.4s over the next three tours. Back on the first lap of the restart, Norris had locked up and gone deep at Turn 4, handing Russell back what was now fourth place as they



raced back up the hill to Turn 6. On lap 39, Verstappen had just cut Ocon’s lead to 3.2s when the race was interrupted again. This time, Carlos Sainz had spun after braking for Turn 8 from the perilous white line and had whacked the barriers. Sainz was eventually out when it was clear how much damage he’d sustained, but he actually put his steering wheel back on under orders from Ferrari and briefly pulled away when the marshals had already started fitting a recovery lifting tether to the Ferrari’s roll hoop. Sainz was reprimanded for his infraction. “He just couldn’t see a thing [and] he wanted to bring the brakes in nicely,” Horner later said of Verstappen’s time behind Ocon before Sainz’s crash. “He was very conscious of just bringing all the temperatures up. The weather was only going to get better and so, again, he was just using his head.” Alpine team boss Oliver Oakes also insisted that “the advantage was being in front with no spray”, which he said couldn’t be denied on a day he felt his team had to stay “humble”. 7. Ocon’s unwillingness to risk Alpine’s result Ocon again had to use his nous for the second restart three laps later. Here he was also magnificent, dropping Verstappen as they climbed back towards the grid hatchings. But it wasn’t enough. From so far back, 0.3s as they crossed the start/finish line, Verstappen dived to the inside of Turn 1. It looked wild, but it wasn’t –





he got it stopped commandingly well on that oily, bumpy surface. “I was in the tow,” Verstappen said. “And I knew that I passed a few people there before. So, I was like, ‘I’m going to send it up the inside.’

Ocon, like so many before him, didn’t make a fight of it because “Max clearly was quicker on that second stint, so there was no way for me to be fighting”, and he’d recalled how in qualifying “90% of my laps I had the front locking into Turn 1”.

“He made it stick,” added Ocon, who also had in play Alpine’s potential \$30million constructors’ prize money gain in going from ninth pre-weekend to sixth leaving Brazil. “And it was a nice move.”

8. McLaren’s brake issues hamper Norris

Behind Verstappen’s surely title-clinching pass, Norris was in trouble again. Leclerc was attacking at the restart in a move that also got him ahead of Russell’s Mercedes.

Norris, with Leclerc on his inside, locked up again and slid off into the Turn 1 run-off. He later admitted “I made a couple of mistakes, which I own up to”. But Stella said there was another unseen factor at play in Norris eventually finishing sixth, aided by Piastri waving him through three laps after the Turn 1 off. “We have struggled with the lock-ups all weekend in wet conditions with both drivers,” said Stella. “And I think from a car point of view this is also something that we need to look into. We didn’t give the drivers easy material to handle in these difficult conditions.”

After McLaren’s 1-2 in the sprint race, Norris had also come off its



Rings of change: Ocon, Verstappen and Gasly are all smiles on the podium

nifty new medium-downforce rear wing, which had made the MCL38 quickest in dry conditions. This change was to provide better stability via a bigger rear downforce arrangement in the wet. Indeed, Norris felt “the wing was helping”.

But his comment about “we just weren’t quick enough” in the GP had much to do with how the extra downforce hampered his chances of passing the slippery Mercedes out front early on when “we were faster than Russell but no way to overtake”, as Stella put it.

9. Ferrari’s new-found struggles in cold conditions

Another ‘what if?’ from this contest is how Austin and Mexico winner Ferrari tumbled from being only a fraction behind Red Bull on dry race pace in the sprint to nowhere in the wet.

Leclerc blamed his own set-up going in the “wrong” direction, which Vasseur insisted was team effort. But Leclerc had another theory too – around Ferrari’s impressive gains on tyre management this year. This doesn’t bode well for the Maranello team in the coming cool night conditions of Las Vegas next time out.

“We’ve done a big step in tyre management,” Leclerc reflected. “Which means that we also left something behind in cold conditions and tyre temperature – just like today.”

After his restart heroics, Leclerc fell off at Turn 4 three laps later and let Russell back past through the ensuing Turn 5.

But he kept ahead of Norris to the finish, while the Mercedes in front “damaged his tyres a bit” when running very close to Gasly late on – according to the Alpine driver – and so early race leader Russell could never have “the idea of trying anything” to rescue a consolation podium.

10. Verstappen’s pace to the flag

Once he was finally in free air, Verstappen checked out. Over the final 26 laps, feeling that “the car was having a nice balance” – for once amid Red Bull’s downturn since May’s Miami GP – he eased away from Ocon at the rate of 0.7s per lap to win by a whopping 19.5s.

And while his fastest lap efforts kept flashing up on timing screens, the total number of times he lowered the benchmark was not. All told, Verstappen set it 17 times in the race, with 14 coming once he’d grabbed the lead from Ocon.

That extra point means Verstappen left Brazil leading Norris by 62, with 86 left to race for over the final three rounds of 2024. It’s all over bar the inevitable online shouting. 🗣️



Brake problem hampered Norris on his run to sixth

TSUNODA'S HOPES OF LEADING THE GP DASHED BY RED FLAG

Yuki Tsunoda was happy with the RB team's call to switch to the extreme wet tyres as conditions worsened in Brazil, and believed that he could have led the Grand Prix without the red flag.

Tsunoda preserved his lofty grid position of third and kept the growing train of Esteban Ocon, Charles Leclerc and Max Verstappen at bay. Eventually, Ocon nipped past for third, prompting RB to switch Tsunoda to the extreme wet tyre; as the rain fell more heavily, the Japanese was catching George Russell and Lando Norris before Franco Colapinto's crash produced the red flag.

This nixed Tsunoda's hopes of catching the yet-to-stop Alpines and Verstappen out front. "If the red flag didn't come out, probably I would have overtaken a lot of cars and maybe got P1 at some point," Tsunoda rued after finishing seventh. "It just didn't come towards us today."

Team-mate Liam Lawson captured ninth despite being in the wars. He was nerfed off the road by Oscar Piastri at the Senna S on lap 26 having largely contained his Antipodean counterpart in the opening stint. The Kiwi then found time for another skirmish with Sergio Perez, just denying the Mexican at Turn 2 (with a hint of contact) a chance to pass for ninth – and Perez's lost momentum allowed Lewis Hamilton to snatch 10th. This stalled Perez's recovery from a first-lap spin at Laranja.



FERRARO

Williams feels the pain after Sunday's crashfest

Williams endured an expensive Sunday littered with crashes as both Alex Albon and Franco Colapinto put their cars in the wall during qualifying – and Colapinto then added to the tally with his red-flag producing Turn 14 shunt during the grand prix.

The Argentinian lost grip at the sodden Curva do Sol early on Sunday and his FW46 swapped ends, although the damage was not so great that the car could not be fixed promptly for the start of the race.

Albon, meanwhile, progressed to the final stage of qualifying and was lying second in the order after the field had set their opening flyers, but caught the white line while trying to open up the first corner and caused heavy damage to his Williams, which could not be repaired in time for the start of the race.

This left Colapinto as the sole charge for the Grove operation, and

he spent the opening laps mired in the midfield until his heavy crash sustained a few laps after stopping for fresh intermediates put the race on pause. "We tried to keep the temps up, we were pushing, and there was a very big river there before the straight and I lost the car very, very aggressively there," Colapinto said. "I was a passenger. It's sad, as the team did a great job to put the car back on track."

Having been three points clear of Alpine before the Brazil weekend, Williams has now been left behind by the French squad following its 35-point haul.

"The nature of Formula 1 is that you can have some of the most incredible feelings and results, as well as some of the lowest moments that you can feel within a sport," said team boss James Vowles. "I think it's fair to say this weekend is the second of those two."

“WE HAD TO DO IT FOR THE MECHANICS, FOR ME, WHO HAD A BIT OF A BAD TIME, FOR THE PEOPLE IN VALENCIA, WHO ARE IN A WORSE SITUATION THAN I WAS TODAY”

Fernando Alonso battled worsening back pain, brake problems, and recovery from an intestinal infection to make it to the end of the Sao Paulo GP.



MAUGER

Q&A


CARLOS SAINZ
FERRARI DRIVER
What are your thoughts on what happened?

Just two very strange and unfortunate crashes, so a bit of a nightmare day honestly. I cannot explain them very well. It's very unpredictable this car – in the wet this year it has been very difficult to drive. The two of them, there was just no sign of me crashing so I couldn't do anything to avoid them.

How was progress during the race?

It wasn't easy to overtake out there so starting from the pitlane, it was always going to be difficult to make it to the points.

But at the same time, apologies to the whole team for the two crashes. I hope we can come back stronger.

Do you think McLaren's performance today helps Ferrari stay alive in the constructors' championship contest?

We will be alive until the very end. Three weekends now coming up that are going to be important for the whole team and now we need to refocus, regroup and see how we can approach these last three races in the best possible way. We're going to try our best, we're still in the championship, we're going to try and have three

strong races and hopefully we can finish on a high.

Was the car particularly tricky in the wet conditions?

Yeah. I've always been a very strong driver in the wet, but for some reason, ever since I've tried this car in the wet, I've never had a good feeling with it. I don't know if we just don't put energy into the tyres, we run it too stiff in the medium to high speed, or what it is. It is clear that it's very difficult and unpredictable to drive. I'm pleased that Charles [Leclerc] managed to bring it home in P5. I heard he was also struggling, so a bit of a nightmare the whole race, but hopefully some dry races coming up and we will try to go for it.

Bearman rues errors after late call-up, Hulkenberg disqualified

Ollie Bearman was a late call-up to the Haas team after Kevin Magnussen was ruled out of the Interlagos weekend through illness, but the Briton endured his toughest F1 race yet and admitted "I made a lot of mistakes" en route to 12th.

After starring in sprint qualifying, Bearman had his SQ3 lap deleted for track limits and started 10th, but dropped back to 14th after getting as high as ninth.

In the grand prix, the Essex-born racer's early efforts were hindered by a small clash with Franco Colapinto,

which yielded a 10-second penalty he dubbed as harsh. He then suffered a slide at Ferradura on lap 36 and touched the wall, but crucially did not need to pit again and rose to 12th on the final restart.

Haas's misery was compounded when Nico Hulkenberg was shown the black flag because he was pushed off the drain on which he was stuck by the marshals, resulting in instant disqualification.

"[The marshals] came out, they pushed me off and they were really happy with themselves," said Hulkenberg. "They were partying and pushing me on and saying, 'Come on, go, let's go, this race isn't finished.' In that moment, you don't really think and you don't care, to be honest; you continue and you deal with the consequences later."

Gleeful marshals' 'help' brought out black flag



HAMILTON'S HORROR SHOW OF A WEEKEND

Lewis Hamilton said that he was "looking forward to Christmas" in the wake of a miserable weekend in Brazil that featured 11th place in the sprint, failure to escape Q1, and multiple excursions en route to 10th in the grand prix.

Despite the early travails, he had worked his way back into the top 10 before a wet-tyre-shod Liam Lawson dispatched him after the Kiwi pitted. Hamilton then jumped Lawson and Fernando Alonso at the second restart, but was repassed by the RB driver and let Perez follow him through. Eventually, Perez fell to Hamilton when the Mexican's pass on Lawson was stoutly defended.

Hamilton did get to drive Ayrton Senna's MP4/5B around the circuit on Sunday to delight the home fans, so it wasn't a completely wasted weekend.



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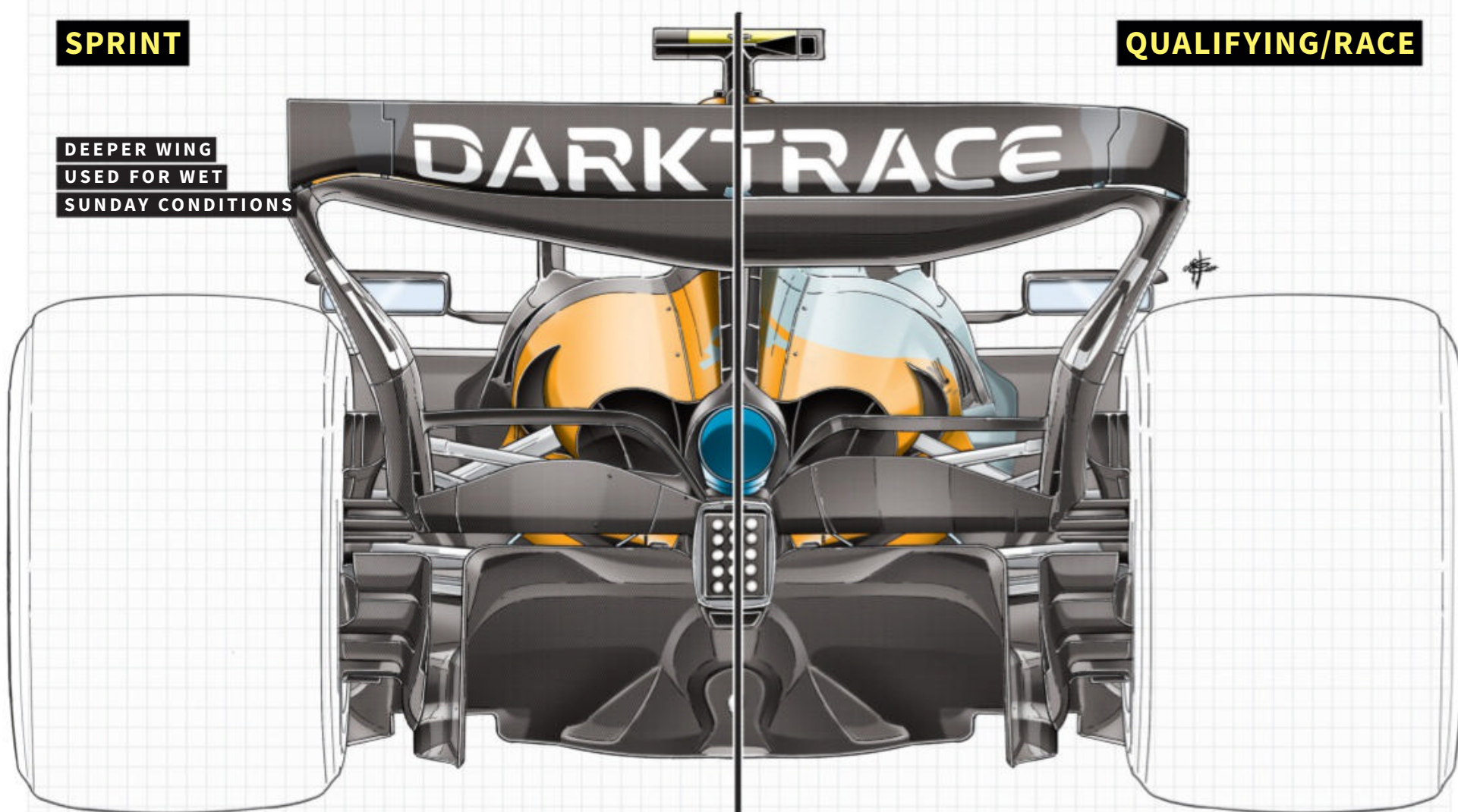
DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA

SPRINT

QUALIFYING/RACE

**DEEPER WING
USED FOR WET
SUNDAY CONDITIONS**



McLAREN CHANGES WINGS FOR THE WET

McLaren changed its rear wings between the sprint race and the grand prix sessions as it wanted to capture a better set-up for the rain on Sunday, although the combination of beam wing and upper rear wing elements ultimately proved to be slightly too draggy to make up places in the race.

For the sprint, McLaren had its shallower rear wing mainplane and squared-off upper element, while a lower downforce beam wing was also selected for the Saturday race in more standard conditions. With the onset of rain, which postponed qualifying to Sunday, McLaren changed to the higher-downforce

wing to account for the reduced corner speed and help the wet tyres stay in the temperature window. There was also the small effect of reduced air density as Sao Paulo is 750 metres above sea level, but it was not nearly to the same extent as Mexico's altitude a week prior.

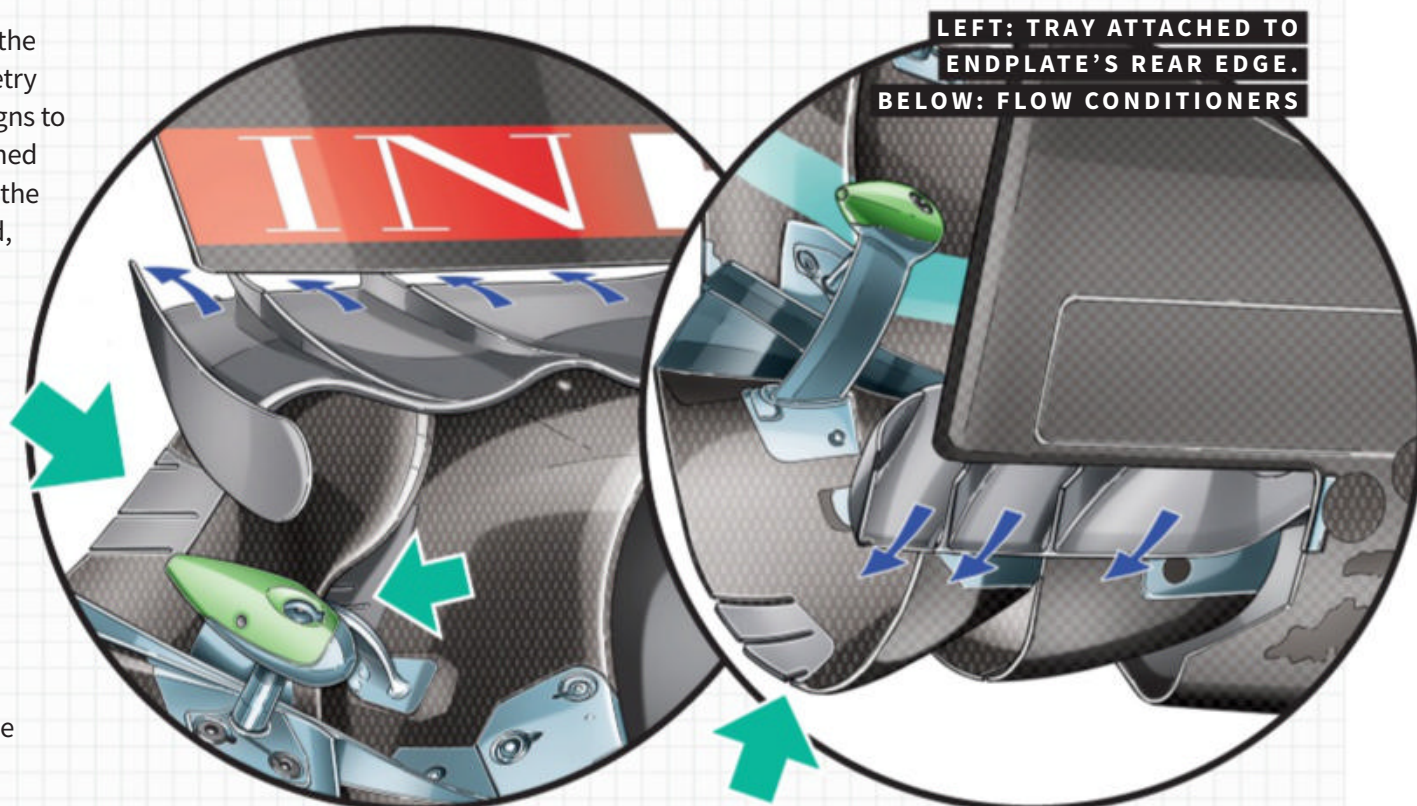
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

MERCEDES PUSHES FRONT WING REGS FURTHER

When the 2022 regulations first emerged, the restrictions made to the front wing geometry attempted to limit teams developing designs to create outwash, particularly with the defined attachment points between the wing and the endplates. But workarounds have evolved, such as wing elements attached to the endplate but with a detached trailing edge to fire airflow outwards.

With its update first used at the US GP, Mercedes has taken this a step further and attached its rear two elements to a tiny tray added to the rear edge of the endplate. This ensures that the wing elements remain attached per the regulations, but also allows for flow conditioners to the top-side of this tray to turn air around the front wheel. There's also a trio of slots at the trailing edge of the final wing element to improve this effect.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





19 Zhou #24
1m32.263s



17 Verstappen #1
1m27.771s



15 Bearman #50
1m31.229s



13 Gasly #10
1m29.614s



11 Bottas #77
1m26.472s



20 Sainz #55
1m29.406s



18 Hulkenberg #27
1m31.623s



16 Colapinto #43
1m31.270s



14 Hamilton #44
1m31.150s



12 Perez #11
1m28.158s



FREE PRACTICE

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Norris	1m10.610s
2	Russell	1m10.791s
3	Bearman	1m10.805s
4	Piastri	1m10.950s
5	Albon	1m10.955s
6	Leclerc	1m11.038s
7	Sainz	1m11.100s
8	Hulkenberg	1m11.124s
9	Alonso	1m11.215s
10	Gasly	1m11.216s
11	Lawson	1m11.301s
12	Tsunoda	1m11.483s
13	Colapinto	1m11.619s
14	Bottas	1m11.651s
15	Verstappen	1m11.712s
16	Hamilton	1m11.754s
17	Stroll	1m11.783s
18	Ocon	1m11.827s
19	Perez	1m11.845s
20	Zhou	1m12.883s

WEATHER Sunny, air 27-29C track 54-55C

SPRINT QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Piastri	1m08.899s
2	Norris	1m08.928s
3	Leclerc	1m09.153s
4	Verstappen	1m09.219s
5	Sainz	1m09.257s
6	Russell	1m09.443s
7	Gasly	1m09.622s
8	Lawson	1m09.941s
9	Albon	1m10.078s
10	Bearman	no time
Q2 11	Hamilton	1m09.941s
12	Hulkenberg	1m09.964s
13	Perez	1m10.024s
14	Colapinto	1m10.275s
15	Bottas	1m10.595s
Q1 16	Alonso	1m10.978s
17	Ocon	1m11.052s
18	Tsunoda	1m11.121s
19	Stroll	1m11.280s
20	Zhou	1m12.978s

WEATHER Overcast, air 20-22C track 36-40C

RACE QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME
Q3 1	Norris	1m23.405s
2	Russell	1m23.578s
3	Tsunoda	1m24.111s
4	Ocon	1m24.475s
5	Lawson	1m24.484s
6	Leclerc	1m24.525s
7	Albon	1m24.657s
8	Piastri	1m24.686s
9	Alonso	1m28.998s
10	Stroll	no time
Q2 11	Bottas	1m26.472s
12	Verstappen	1m27.771s
13	Perez	1m28.158s
14	Sainz	1m29.406s
15	Gasly	1m29.614s
Q1 16	Hamilton	1m31.150s
17	Bearman	1m31.229s
18	Colapinto	1m31.270s
19	Hulkenberg	1m31.623s
20	Zhou	1m32.263s

WEATHER Rain, air 19-21C track 21-24C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	393	1	1
2 Norris	331	1	1
3 Leclerc	307	1	1
4 Piastri	262	1	2
5 Sainz	244	1	1
6 Russell	192	1	1
7 Hamilton	190	1	2
8 Perez	151	2	2
9 Alonso	62	5	3
10 Hulkenberg	31	6	6
11 Tsunoda	28	7	3
12 Gasly	26	3	7
13 Stroll	24	6	8
14 Ocon	23	2	4
15 Magnussen	14	7	7
16 Albon	12	7	7
17 Ricciardo	12	8	5
18 Bearman	7	7	11
19 Colapinto	5	8	9
20 Lawson	4	9	5
21 Zhou	0	11	14
22 Sargeant	0	11	12
23 Bottas	0	13	10

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS
1 McLaren	593
2 Ferrari	557
3 Red Bull	544
4 Mercedes	382
5 Aston Martin	86
6 Alpine	49
7 Haas	46
8 RB	44
9 Williams	17
10 Sauber	0

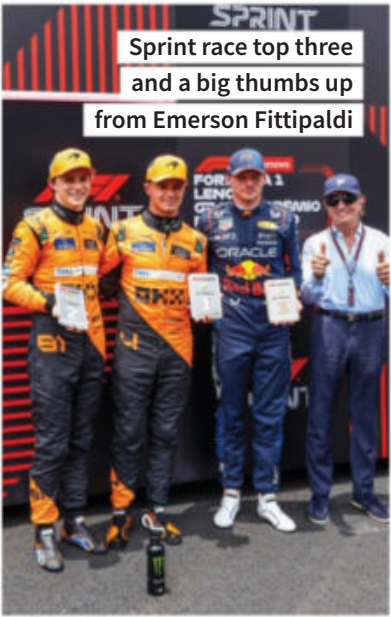
QUALIFYING BATTLE			
Verstappen	20	1	Perez
Hamilton	5	16	Russell
Leclerc	13	7	Sainz
Leclerc	1	0	Bearman
Norris	17	4	Piastri
Alonso	16	5	Stroll
Gasly	9	10	Ocon
Albon	5	0	Colapinto
Sargeant	0	13	Albon
Tsunoda	2	0	Lawson
Ricciardo	5	12	Tsunoda
Zhou	1	19	Bottas
Hulkenberg	0	2	Bearman
Magnussen	4	13	Hulkenberg

GP qualifying sessions only, not sprints. Events removed when one driver in a team could not record a representative lap time for reasons outside their control

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

SPRINT RACE 24 LAPS – 64.22 MILES

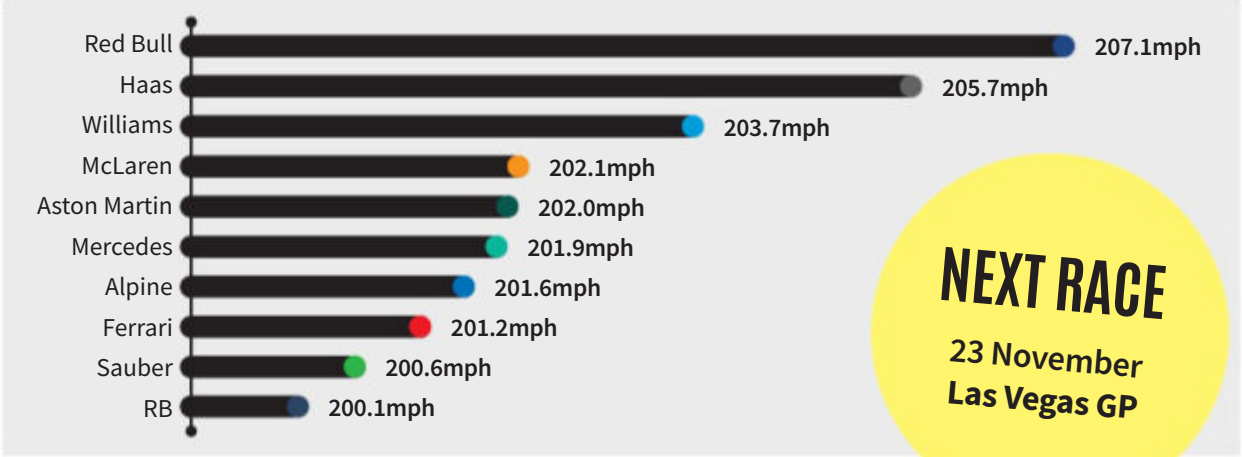
POS	DRIVER	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRE	FASTEST LAPS
1	Norris	29m46.045s	3	M	1m11.917s
2	Piastri	+0.593s	21	M	1m11.783s
3	Leclerc	+5.656s		M	1m11.914s
4	Verstappen	+6.497s		M	1m11.852s
5	Sainz	+7.224s		M	1m11.975s
6	Russell	+12.475s		M	1m12.142s
7	Gasly	+18.161s		M	1m12.400s
8	Perez	+18.717s		M	1m11.678s
9	Lawson	+20.773s		M	1m12.596s
10	Albon	+24.606s		M	1m11.692s
11	Hamilton	+29.764s		M	1m12.546s
12	Colapinto	+33.233s		M	1m12.701s
13	Ocon	+34.128s		M	1m12.882s
14	Bearman	+35.507s		M	1m12.974s
15	Tsunoda	+41.374s		M	1m12.838s
16	Bottas	+43.231s		M	1m12.698s
17	Zhou	+54.139s		M	1m13.559s
18	Alonso	+56.537s		M	1m13.111s
19	Stroll	+57.983s		M	1m13.560s
R	Hulkenberg	19 laps-gearbox		M	1m12.879s



WEATHER Sunny, air 34-35C track 50-52C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 129.448mph
FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 134.475mph

SPEED TRAP (SPRINT QUALIFYING, FINISH LINE)



NEXT RACE

23 November

Las Vegas GP

STARTING GRID



GP RESULTS ROUND 21/24 (69 LAPS - 184.71 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	2h06m54.430s	27	In, In
2	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+19.477s	14	Iu, Iu
3	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+22.532s		In, In
4	George Russell (GBR)	Mercedes	+23.265s	28	Iu, Iu, Iu
5	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	+30.177s		Iu, Iu, Iu
6	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+31.372s		Iu, Iu, Iu
7	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	RB-Honda RBPT	+42.056s		Iu, Wn, Iu
8	Oscar Piastri (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+44.943s		Iu, Iu, Iu
9	Liam Lawson (NZL)	RB-Honda RBPT	+50.452s		Iu, Wu, Iu
10	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+50.753s		In, In, In
11	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda RBPT	+51.531s		In, Wu, In
12	Ollie Bearman (GBR)	Haas-Ferrari	+57.085s		In, In, In
13	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m03.588s		In, In
14	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m18.049s		In, Iu, In
15	Zhou Guanyu (CHN)	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m19.649s		In, In, Wu, In
R	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	Ferrari	38laps-accident		In, In, Iu
R	Franco Colapinto (ARG)	Williams-Mercedes	30laps-accident		In, In
DQ	Nico Hulkenberg (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	30laps-outside assistance		In, Iu, Wn, In
NS	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	warm-up accident		In
NS	Alexander Albon (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	qualifying accident		

WEATHER Rain, air 20-23C track 26-31C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 87.328mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 119.780mph.

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Verstappen	1m20.472s	-	67
2	Norris	1m21.517s	+1.045s	67
3	Piastri	1m21.532s	+1.060s	69
4	Leclerc	1m21.631s	+1.159s	60
5	Gasly	1m21.645s	+1.173s	66
6	Russell	1m21.645s	+1.173s	66
7	Ocon	1m21.771s	+1.299s	64
8	Tsunoda	1m21.828s	+1.356s	69
9	Hamilton	1m22.041s	+1.569s	69
10	Lawson	1m22.123s	+1.651s	67
11	Perez	1m22.143s	+1.671s	67
12	Alonso	1m22.293s	+1.821s	59
13	Bearman	1m22.494s	+2.022s	64
14	Bottas	1m22.877s	+2.405s	67
15	Zhou	1m23.058s	+2.586s	65
16	Sainz	1m24.201s	+3.729s	19
17	Colapinto	1m24.296s	+3.824s	21
DQ	Hulkenberg	1m23.764s	+3.292s	21
19	Stroll	No time	-	-
20	Albon	No time	-	-

TYRES

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



LAP CHART

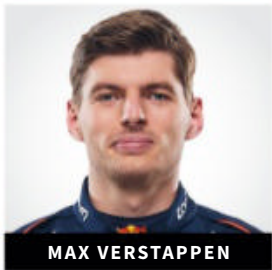
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BRAZILIAN GP DRIVER RATINGS

The Alpine duo scale the scoring peaks alongside Verstappen, Russell and Leclerc, although no one's worthy of the maximum, while Stroll falls flat

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

RED BULL



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **15th** — Result **1st**

9 Misses maximum because of sprint race penalty, not nailing it immediately in Q2, plus times when Ocon gapped him in race. Utterly excellent otherwise. Had edge on tyre management in sprint, and GP drive was one for the ages, his many late passes and preservation of inters stunning.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **10th** — Result **11th**

4 Dumped out in SQ2 and Q2 – although in each Red Bull's run plan was suspect. Rescued final point in sprint, but solo spin on lap one of GP was poor. Ran only ahead of Saubers for most of first half of GP, but did make second restart gain with Hamilton, before losing out in Merc/Lawson scrap.

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **12th** — Result **10th**

4 Hated his car. Couldn't tame lively rear even with lifted ride height. That meant SQ2 and Q1 exits. In GP, shot past Perez and Bottas, before Verstappen dived at Turn 1 on lap two, then later went off solo at Turn 12 and Hulkenberg and Colapinto pounced. Passed Perez late on.



GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **2nd** — Result **4th**

9 SQ3 result reflected car pace, then held sixth in first race. GP qualifying was brilliant as he found confidence with rear handling in wet. Nailed GP start and had Norris covered before team's VSC pit call. Couldn't get Gasly late on when Norris and Leclerc had gifted him places.

FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started **6th** — Result **5th**

9 Held Verstappen off for 17 sprint laps even when it was clear that Ferrari's long-run pace wasn't like in Austin or Mexico. Qualified behind slower cars for GP, and the Ferrari can't fire tyres up like it used to. Earns credit for race's only defence offered to Verstappen, plus second restart double pass.

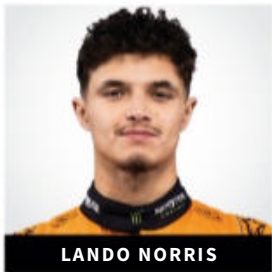


CARLOS SAINZ

Started **18th** — Result **R**

4 Just 0.1s from Leclerc in SQ3 in dry, but that was the high point, and quickly dropped from lead pack in sprint. Crashed in Q2. Then, after catching the field following his pitlane start in the GP, he scrapped with Bearman, Hamilton and co. Spun off solo and crashed again after the red flag.

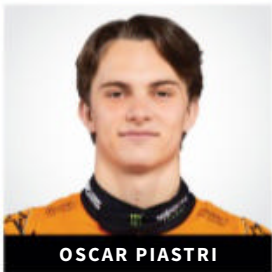
McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

Started **1st** — Result **6th**

7 Tiny "mistakes" of SQ3 slides opened crack for Piastri's pole. Chased in sprint but couldn't pass, so was waved by to win. Took great pole after early scares on full wets, but Russell powered past at GP start. Was again bottled up and later offs costly. Pass of Russell and refreshed inters pace excellent.



OSCAR PIASTR

Started **7th** — Result **8th**

7 Score brought down due to botched GP Turn 1 attack that spun Lawson, but also for how he couldn't match Norris's Q3 pace before Turn 1 lock-up. But weekend to that point had been superb – he topped SQ3 and took deserved sprint win. Played team game again in GP.

ASTON MARTIN



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **8th** — Result **14th**

4 Illness and back pain from awful porpoising took toll. Didn't make SQ2 cut so started from the pitlane with Stroll, after which Zhou passed them. Q3 crash meant going back to "less performing" aero parts. Claimed issue with brake bias changing rearwards was behind his wildness in the GP.

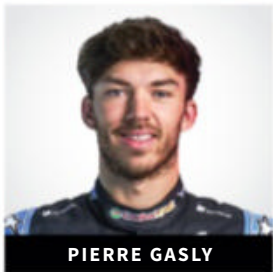


LANCE STROLL

Started **DNS (10th)** — Result **N/S**

1 Three places back from Alonso in SQ1, around struggles to set AMR24 up for bumps on Friday. Not only driver to crash in Q2 and was told to try to return to the pits. Said brake problem explained formation lap off, but this did not cover embarrassing gaffe of driving into gravel and beaching.

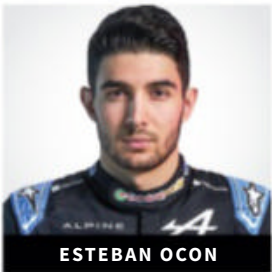
ALPINE



PIERRE GASLY

Started **11th** — Result **3rd**

9 In SQ2/3 was impressively rapid, then maintained sprint starting spot even with Perez bearing down late on. After Verstappen came by in GP, he eventually passed Alonso before not stopping under VSC catapulted him to third. Holding off Russell after second restart was superb.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started **4th** — Result **2nd**

9 Sunday brilliance means he gets so close to the maximum, but it can't be denied that he was well adrift of Gasly on Friday afternoon. Sprint overtakes, GP wet race pace confidence, Tsunoda Turn 10 pouncing and various GP-leading moments were excellent.



WILLIAMS



Started **DNS (7th)**—Result **N/S**

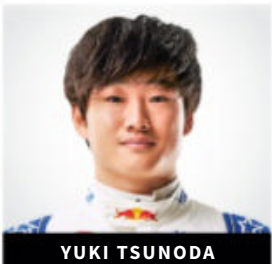
5 There’s still no confirmation of “beep in my ear which normally means there’s a [brake] failure” claim explaining Q3 crash, yet he didn’t quite seem to be braking on white line that proved so slippery. Shame, as it undid excellent qualifying pace. Slipped back at sprint start, but rose to 10th.



Started **14th** — Result **R**

3 Didn’t have Albon’s pace in sprint qualifying, while in sprint race he shot past Hamilton at Turn 3, then nailed Bearman as VSC ended. Crashed in wet Q1 and forced Williams into another hurried rebuild. Damaged diffuser from Bearman tap offers some mitigation for GP safety car crash.

RB



Started **3rd** — Result **7th**

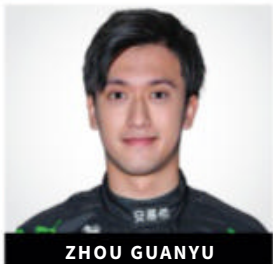
8 Dumped out in SQ1 but made sprint progress with swoop outside Bottas at Turn 1 for 15th. Delivered great Sunday pace, and confidence in wet qualifying meant starting GP third. Ocon did jump him before VSC-tempted stop, while Leclerc and Piastri got past him at the first restart.



Started **5th** — Result **9th**

8 Made SQ3 while Tsunoda was out in SQ1, then was fifth in tricky Q3. Like Tsunoda, lost out with pitstop for full wets before red flag. Forcefully passed Hamilton seconds before safety car. The Merc responded at the first restart and he demoted it again at the second to recover ninth.

SAUBER



Started **17th** — Result **15th**

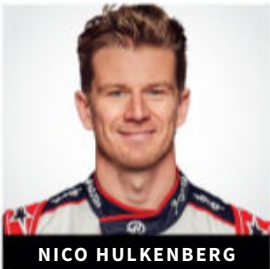
4 Qualified last in both against-the-clock sessions. Started from pitlane in sprint and chased Aston Martins, before passing these with DRS to Turn 4 (Stroll) and mugging gripless Alonso at Turn 9 late on. Score brought down by how he was so far off in GP first stint, plus solo off after the first restart.



Started **9th** — Result **13th**

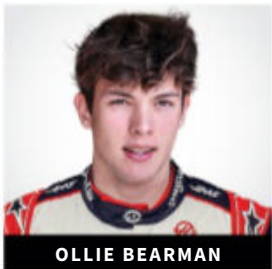
8 Made SQ2 in dry session, then in sprint lost out to Ocon at start before Tsunoda came past midway through. Overcame this with great wet qualifying performance to be likely Q3 progressor, with red flag meaning he was thwarted by 0.008s. Tyre warm-up struggles cost places at start and first restart.

HAAS



Started **16th** — Result **DQ**

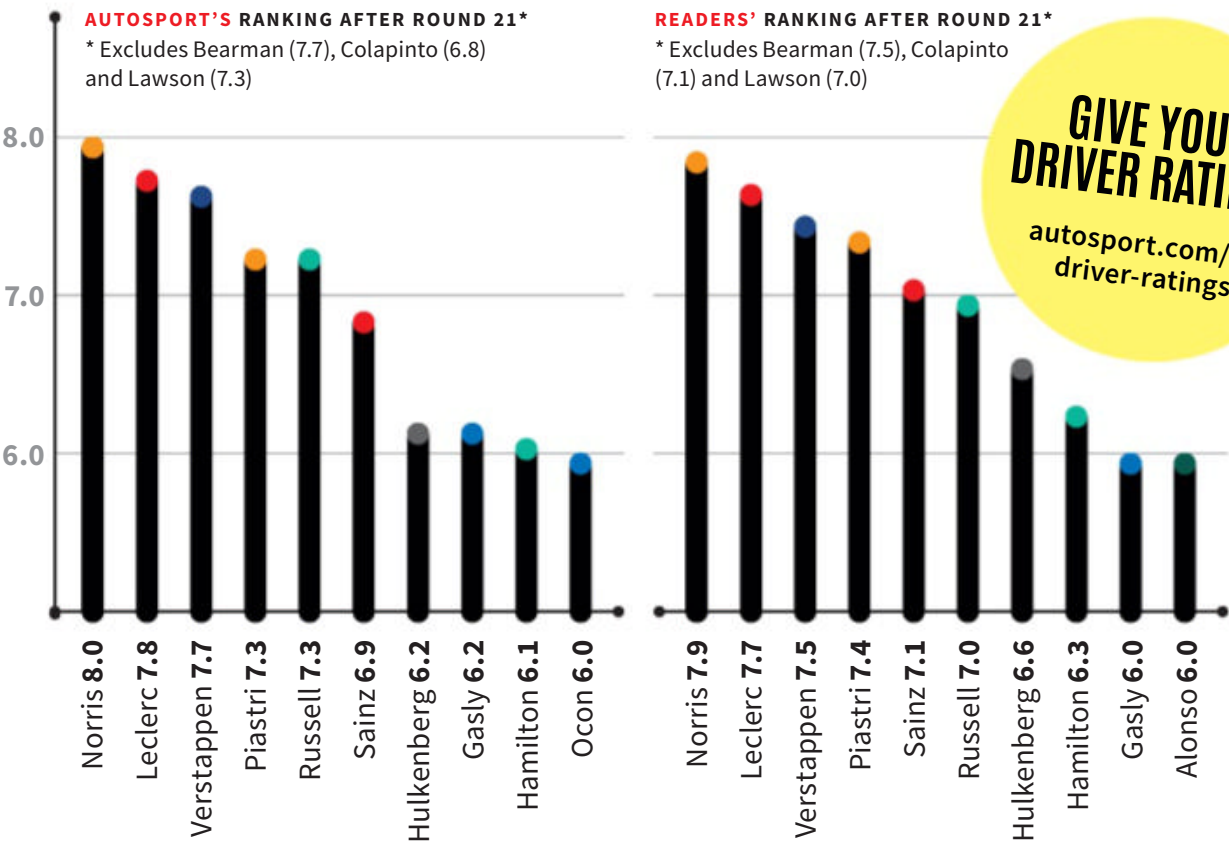
5 Didn’t gel with the VF-24 around new bumps here so wasn’t able to match Bearman in progressing to SQ3. Acing sprint start earns bonus mark, but was going backwards with tyre wear struggles before gearbox problem put him out. GP lap one and first stint progress undone by Turn 1 spin.

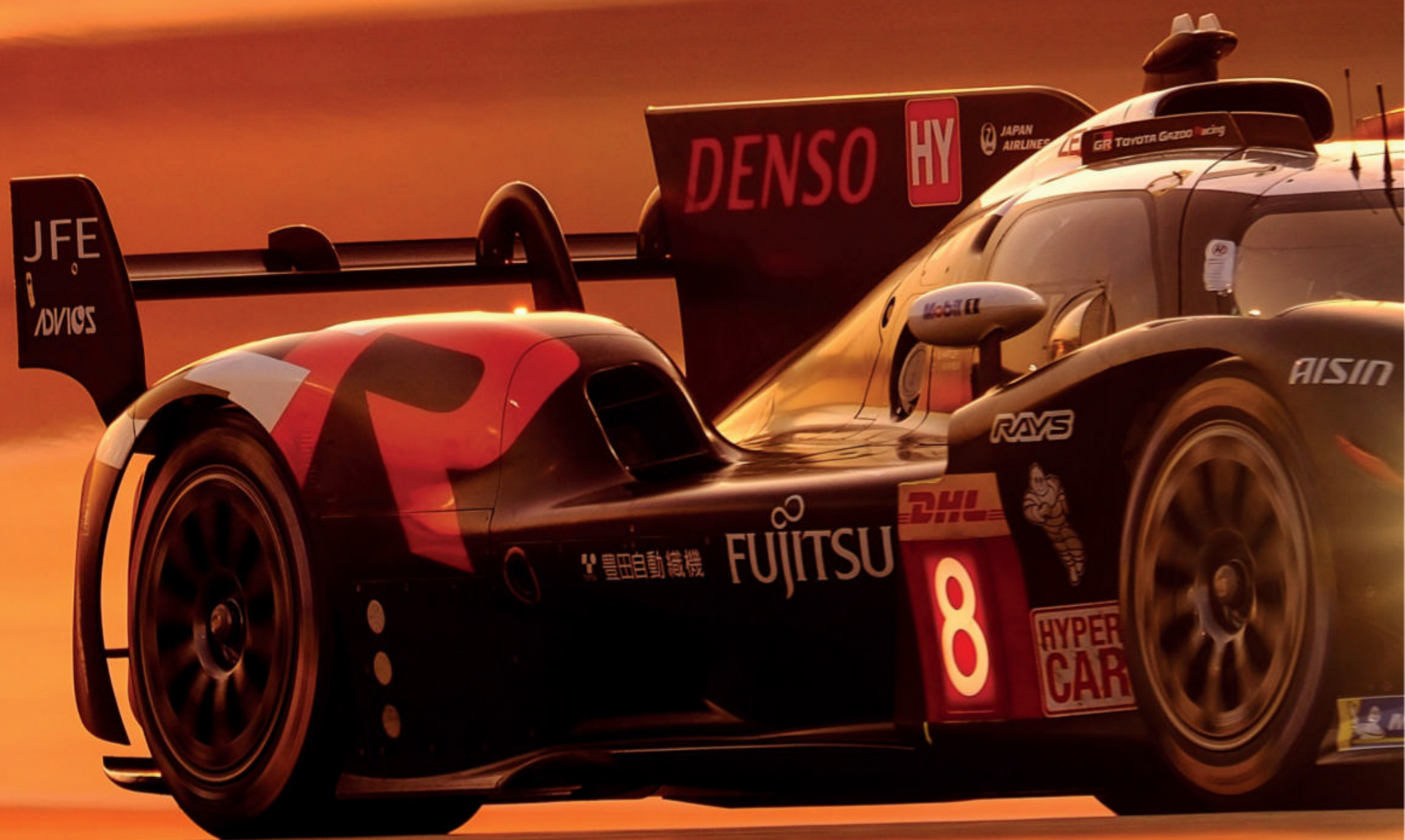


Started **13th** — Result **12th**

4 Making SQ3 showed more standout one-lap pace, but so many things bring the score down. In GP, Verstappen passed immediately, he tagged Colapinto, spun and earned 10s penalty, went off solo chasing pack at first restart and spun again later chasing Sainz. Did repass Saubers.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS





HYPERCAR

LMGT3

Toyota snatches late victory with Buemi charge

A pair of safety car interruptions helped, but an all-or-nothing final stint from the Swiss made the difference as Toyota won a sixth straight manufacturers' crown

GARY WATKINS

With 90 minutes to go in Bahrain, Toyota's hopes of hanging onto its World Endurance Championship manufacturers' crown looked all but gone. One of its GR010 HYBRID Le Mans Hypercars was sitting *hors de combat* in the pits, and the other was down in 10th place. Yet when the chequered flag fell at 22:00 last Saturday it had somehow taken the win it needed to yank the silverware out of Porsche's grasp.

That it did owed something to good fortune and two safety cars that shook up the order in the Bahrain 8 Hours, but also some long-game tactics and a win-or-bust performance at the end from Sebastien Buemi in the winning Toyota shared with Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa. The Japanese marque's chance of taking the drivers' crown

was over thanks to the retirement of the sister car of Mike Conway, Nyck de Vries and Kamui Kobayashi, but Buemi came through to take a clear victory that gave it a sixth straight manufacturers' title.

Achieving that looked unlikely to everyone, the Toyota Gazoo Racing squad included, as the race drew to a close. Buemi admitted afterwards that he "thought we were done, thought we were out of it" as he sat down the order in the safety car queue. Toyota is always strong on the Bahrain International Circuit's low-grip and abrasive surface, unchanged since the day it was laid ahead of the 2004 season, and the GR010 looks after its tyres better than any other car in the Hypercar field, but Buemi's downbeat assessment of his chances was based on his experience from earlier in the race.

The Swiss had converted Hartley's pole position – a third in a row

Sebastien Buemi proved unstoppable for Toyota as the sun set on the 2024 WEC



From left: Hirakawa, Buemi and Hartley let rip after final win of 2024



From Hartley's pole, Buemi was punted into a spin in the early stages

for the Kiwi in Bahrain – into the lead of the race. He was a handful of seconds up the road when, after 18 minutes, he was punted into a spin at Turn 1 when Hiroshi Koizumi aboard one of TF Sport's Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.Rs missed his braking.

The #8 Toyota had started on the medium compound tyre. They worked when Buemi was out front in clear air, but when he was down in the gaggle he was in trouble on the softer of the two Michelins available, a tyre on which only a handful of cars started the race. The erstwhile leader dropped to seventh behind the two WRT BMW M Hybrid V8 LMDhs, passing Marco Wittmann quickly, but then getting bottled up behind Rene Rast. Only at the first round of pitstops did he jump the second Bimmer.

"Those 20 laps behind the BMW really damaged the tyres, so I was

thinking I might be able to pass two or three cars, not to overtake everyone and come through to the front," said Buemi. "But I thought, f*** it and took a lot of risks – I was going to overtake or DNF."

Buemi had fresh tyres for the run to the flag, and that he did owed much to the pain his team-mates endured during their stints. Hartley had continued on the medium – including two tyres from the car's allocation used in qualifying – even though Toyota believed that the hard would have been the quicker option at this point. But a change of strategy at this juncture would have left the car with fewer fresh tyres at the end. Hirakawa did go onto the hard, even though the temperatures were dropping in the early evening, and still struggled. "I think we'd done some stuff on set-up that didn't really work with the hard," reckoned Buemi. »



Toyotas lead at the start, but victory eight hours later had looked unlikely

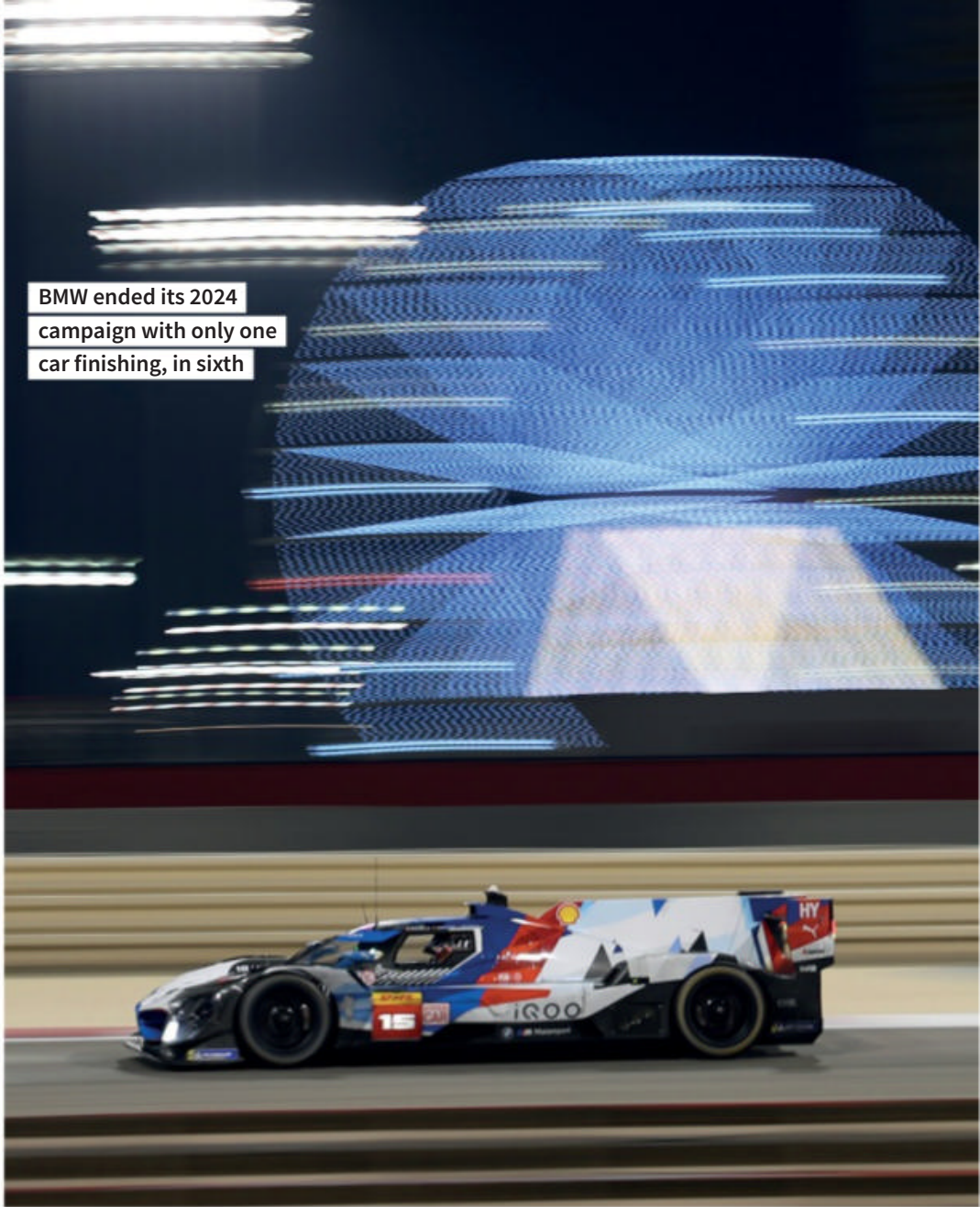
But pain taken, Buemi had six fresh tyres for the final double stint. Toyota brought him in early during this period to give him four new tyres. “We decided to cut short the penultimate one so we got 25 and 25 laps, instead of extending the first one to 32 and doing only 19 on the second one,” added Buemi. “It meant we could maximise the tyres that we had.”

Buemi was up to fifth within a dozen laps of the restart and then jumped the #6 Porsche with Laurens Vanthoor at the wheel at the last round of pitstops. Now just a couple of seconds behind the other 963 LMDh, he moved past Matt Campbell to seal an against-the-odds victory four laps later. The Australian, sharing as usual with Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki, had nothing for the Toyota and Buemi simply drove away.

Campbell was clearly struggling with his tyres, and on the final lap would lose second to Antonio Giovinazzi aboard the #51 factory Ferrari 499P LMH. The Italian car, co-driven by James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi, was subsequently penalised for a tyre-allocation infringement. That extended Buemi’s margin of victory from 27.5s to 29.2s.

A penalty of 4m55s awarded after the completion of the race dropped the 499P to an unrepresentative 14th. Ferrari had mistakenly put two Michelins on the car over the course of the race that were not part of its allocation: they were tyres to which it had made the reconnaissance laps on the way to the grid. The Italian manufacturer argued that no advantage was gained as a result.

The battle for the manufacturers’ title was a winner takes all affair. It didn’t matter where Porsche, the points leader coming into the series finale, finished if Toyota won, courtesy of the extra points on offer for an eight-hour race compared with a regular six-hour WEC event. That was never going to make much difference in the fight for the drivers’ crown. Vanthoor, Kevin Estre and Andre Lotterer were



BMW ended its 2024 campaign with only one car finishing, in sixth

35 points to the good after their Fuji victory in September, with only 38 up for grabs on Saturday.

There was, however, some squeaky bum time for the Porsche crew on the opening lap and those that immediately followed. Estre had qualified a solid sixth, but Vanthoor was hit twice by Porsche’s closest challenger. The double tag from Miguel Molina in the #50 Ferrari bundled him down to 15th, though the Italian car came off worse in the skirmish. It would require a new nose when the Spaniard pitted for the first time in the car he shared with Nicklas Nielsen and Antonio Fuoco. That put the Porsche trio’s big rival right to the back of the Hypercar field.

On the assumption that the Ferrari wasn’t going to win this one, Vanthoor and co only needed to finish 10th even if Kobayashi and de Vries took the victory with Conway. Vanthoor made no headway in his opening stint, but Porsche tightened its grip on the title as the race progressed, Estre moving the car into the points and then the top 10 in hour three, and the top six in hour four.

The car even looked like a contender for victory late in the race, backing up Porsche Penske Motorsport’s pre-race claim that it wouldn’t be racing for points and wouldn’t be doing anything different to normal. But a total of three late penalties for Vanthoor when he got back in dropped the car down the order. One was for contact with an Alpine, one for a track limits violation while



Matt Campbell faced tyre struggles, lost second on the final lap, then got it back

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Ferrari led the biggest chunk of laps, but fell away in the final result

“It would have taken 15 minutes to change the pump and it was better to focus on the other car”

battling with brother Dries's BMW, and one for speeding under a Full Course Yellow.

When the flag fell, Vanthoor was down in 11th, though it didn't matter because the #50 Ferrari was behind him and the #7 Toyota that lay a couple of further points behind the Italian car coming into Bahrain was out of the race. It was irrelevant that the Porsche moved up into the points on the penalisation of the Ferrari.

Yet it could have mattered because Kobayashi, de Vries and Conway, who wasn't a title contender after missing the Le Mans 24 Hours through injury, were in the mix to win this one – before and after a problem with the fuel pump struck. Conway had the first knockings of the problem during his opening double stint, and then Kobayashi suddenly slowed after taking over the car. Pushing some buttons and turning some knobs got the car back up to speed but, when the issue returned as de Vries climbed aboard, Toyota opted to park the car.

“We started to have power loss, intermittent at first and then more and more,” explained Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director David Flourey. “It would have taken 15 minutes to change the pump. There was no point doing that and it was better to focus on the other car.”

So one of the cars that could have deprived Porsche of the drivers' titles was out, and the other was never really in the game after Molina's early moment. He struggled throughout his double stint at the start, first with the damaged nose and then the knock-on of that over the remainder of his stint after only taking new hard-compound Michelins on the right-hand side.

The car came back after Nielsen got four fresh tyres, and was in the fight for a podium when the Dane was tagged by Charles Milesi in the #36 Alpine A424 LMDh at Turn 4. A slow lap back to the pits with a punctured left-rear left the car 11th.

Yet Ferrari might have won this race, or probably would have won it but for the two late safety cars, the first early in hour seven when the #88 Proton Ford Mustang GT3 stopped on track with a flaming engine, and later in the same hour when the #94 Peugeot ground to a halt with a hybrid issue. Once the red safety light came on, race control had no choice but to throw the yellows.

Giovinazzi had got into the lead after Buemi was sent across the asphalt run-off early on and the red car would lead the majority of the way. It sat at the front for 142 of the 235 racing laps in Bahrain, but >>

JOTA MISSES OUT IN LAST HURRAH AS PRIVATEER

The British Jota squad signed off as a Porsche privateer in Bahrain before it moves over to become Cadillac's World Endurance Championship representative next year. It sealed a 1-2 in the FIA Endurance Trophy for Hypercar independents, but it might have ended up with another victory.

The #12 Porsche 963 LMDh shared by Will Stevens, Callum Hogg and Norman Nato was running second to the #51 Ferrari at the point the race turned on its head with the first of the two safety cars, and got out of the pits ahead of the Italian car during the caution. Hogg quickly lost out to Antonio Giovinazzi when the race went green, but was within a couple of seconds when the team opted to bring him in to hand over to Stevens.

Jota's misfortune was that the Virtual Safety Car was called while he was in the pits. Time was lost to the competition that stopped under yellows, which meant Stevens was only ninth in the queue, but still just ahead of a certain Sebastien Buemi in the Toyota that would go on to win the race. There's every reason to believe that the car would have been in the mix for the victory: it was among the fastest cars at the end.

It might have been a big ask for Stevens to stay ahead of the flying Buemi, but he

never got the chance to show his mettle. A coming-together with an LMGT3 car at the restart resulted in a puncture. The chance of victory was gone for a car that ended up classified down in 13th.

“It's frustrating because I think we were incredibly strong,” said Stevens. “We had been saving tyres for the end of the race so we knew we would come on strong.”

The Briton reckoned that even with the loss of time when he took over that he could still have won. “There's no question we would have driven through the field if it wasn't for the puncture,” he insisted.

For Jota technical director Tomoki Takahashi this was “one that got away”. There was a plus side, however, reckoned team boss Sam

“There's no question we would have driven through the field if it wasn't for the puncture”

Hignett. The travails for #12 allowed #38 shared by Jenson Button, Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen to take maximum privateer points with seventh. That was enough to vault it over the AF Corse ‘customer’ Ferrari 499P LMH in the final standings to make it a Jota 1-2.



Stevens was convinced a victory went begging

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Drivers' title fell to Porsche trio, even if the teams' crown slipped away



crucially not the one that mattered. Ferrari admitted afterwards that it didn't get its strategy right in the final hours, but stressed that it probably wouldn't have had anything for Toyota even if it had.

The Ferrari had a lead of eight seconds before the first of the Virtual Safety Cars that these days in the WEC lead into the real thing. That was wiped out by the first caution, which was quickly followed by a second – there were only 10 green laps in between.

Giovinazzi was at the head of the queue at the final safety car, the AF Corse factory deciding to leave him out in the name of track position. Ferrari technical director Ferdinando Cannizzo admitted that with hindsight he would have pitted like the majority of the field. When the car did come in for its final stop, Giovinazzi got caught up in some pitlane traffic and lost something approaching 10s.

He resumed in 11th, which became fifth when the final pitstop cycle was complete. He had no problem clawing his way back up the order before snatching second on the final lap. Second became 14th in the small hours of Sunday morning when the Ferrari was deemed to have violated the tyre rules.

The other car that might have triumphed was the #12 Jota Porsche in which Spa winners Will Stevens and Callum Ilott were joined by

“The target was to stay on the lead lap and hope things happened. They did with the safety cars”

Norman Nato, who was on Formula E duty that weekend (see panel). A tyre issue did for their chances, too, a puncture courtesy of contact with another car.

Ferrari's penalty gave Peugeot its first podium of the season: the first with the revised version of its 9X8 LMH introduced at Imola back in April; and only the second, after Monza last year, since its return to the pinnacle of sportscar racing in mid-2022. It was a case of déjà vu for the French manufacturer as Mikkel Jensen put in another storming finish to the race in the 9X8 2024 he shared with Jean-Eric Vergne and Nico Muller to improve on their fourth place at Fuji in September.

The tactics were the same this time around, too, explained Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Janssonie. “It was about not putting too many fresh tyres early on and saving fresh tyres for the end,” he explained. “The target was to stay on the lead lap and hope things happen. They did happen with the safety cars: they shook things up and were a huge bonus for someone with fresh tyres for the end.”

Alpine followed up on its Fuji podium with a fourth for the #35 Signatech-run A424 LMDh shared by Ferdinand Habsburg, Paul-Loup Chatin and Jules Gounon with a similar strategy. The sister car, into which Milesi swapped over to join Mick Schumacher and Matthieu Vaxiviere, would probably have inherited the podium had not the first-named been penalised for his contact with Nielsen.

The top six was rounded out by the only one of the two WRT BMW M Hybrid V8 LMDhs to make the finish, the #15 entry shared by the younger Vanthoor, Wittmann and Raffaele Marciello, and Ganassi's Cadillac V-Series.R driven by Earl Bamber, Alex Lynn and Sebastien Bourdais. The former was in the mix for a podium before the safety cars, which in team boss Vincent Vosse's words “undid our good work”. The latter, meanwhile, most definitely wasn't after Lynn could only qualify 13th and a penalty for FCY speeding by Bourdais. ❄



Peugeot inherited its first podium of the season in third, ahead of Alpine

P38 LMG3 REPORT

HYPERCAR

LMGT3

Ferrari again despite Corvette charge

AF Corse's sister entry to the Fuji winner saw off TF Sport's Corvettes at the Bahrain season finale

GARY WATKINS

Ferrari had taken a first World Endurance Championship class win with its 296 GT3 last time out at Fuji and followed it up with victory number two in Bahrain. The #54 AF Corse entry took the honours in September, but this time it was the #55 car shared by Alessio Rovera, Simon Mann and Francois Heriau. The sister car, however, played a part in the Italian manufacturer's victory last Saturday.

The Ferrari wasn't the fastest LMGT3 car in the closing stages of the Bahrain 8 Hours. That honour was taken by the Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R, the two TF Sport-run cars rounding out the class podium positions and both finishing within five seconds of the winner. On another day, the British squad might have ended a difficult maiden season with the American car with a victory.

The second-placed car that Charlie Eastwood shared with Rui Andrade and Tom van Rompuy was sitting pretty at the top of the leaderboard until the first of the safety cars. It led for the majority of the way – 121 out of 214 laps – and was half a minute up the road in Andrade's hands when the yellows flew first time around.

Out of the confusion of two safety cars more or less back to back, Eastwood resumed in eighth, but was able to storm through the pack and take the lead from Rovera shortly before the frontrunners made their final pitstops. His life wasn't many any easier by the fact that he had to battle his way past Davide Rigon in the sister Ferrari, which with a penalty acted as a rear gunner for the race leader.

The chance of a first victory for the Corvette in the WEC disappeared at the final round of pitstops. Eastwood lost out in the turnaround, emerging five seconds behind Rovera. There wasn't enough time for him to make up the deficit, which stood at three seconds at the fall of the chequered flag. Had he got to the front earlier before the stops, Eastwood might have been able to build enough of a gap to hang onto the lead even with a slower pitstop.

TF boss Tom Ferrier wasn't too disappointed at the finish after

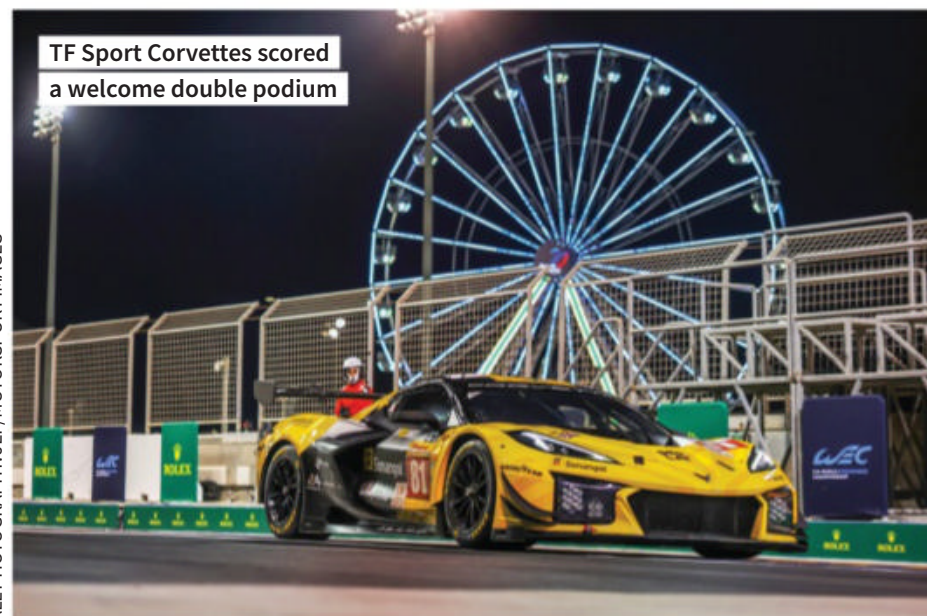


Is AF Corse's winning crew hierarchy based on height?

the sister car driven by Daniel Juncadella, Sebastien Baud and Hiroshi Koizumi – a beneficiary of the late safety cars – made it two Corvettes on the podium.

"Sure, we were in the box seat before the safety car and then Charlie got us to the front again, but I'll take that after the year we've had," he said in reference to both the near-miss at Fuji, where Eastwood and his team-mates finished fourth when they arguably should have won and the lack of top-six finishes before that. "I wouldn't swap two cars on the podium for a win. It's testament to all the hard work put in by all the boys and girls since we got these cars."

Iron Lynx took fourth with the best of its Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2s shared by Matteo Cairoli, standing in for Franck Perera,



TF Sport Corvettes scored a welcome double podium



United's McLaren took pole but faded in race



Ferrari's
eventual winner
heads Iron Dames
Lamborghini in
Bahrain season
climax

“I wouldn’t swap two cars on the podium for a win. It’s a testament to all the hard work this year”

Matteo Cressoni and Claudio Schiavoni. The first-named was on a charge at the end but ran out of brakes in his bid for a podium.

Richard Lietz, Morris Schuring and Yasser Shahin, winners of the new-for-2024 LMGT3 class at the Le Mans 24 Hours, sealed the runner-up spot in the championship behind their team-mates in the sister Manthey Porsche with fifth position. It wasn’t going to get much better than that after the car pitted for Schuring to return to the cockpit just two laps before everyone else could stop under yellows under Virtual Safety Car conditions.

A United Autosports McLaren took sixth, which was poor reward for Gregoire Saucy, Nicolas Costa and James Cottingham as well as the team. It had locked out the front row, Josh Caygill in the #95 car pipping Cottingham in #59 by just 0.002 seconds.

The sixth-placed 720S GT3 Evo was a genuine frontrunner in Bahrain. Cottingham took over from Caygill at the front after 19 laps, and the car returned to the top of the leaderboard in hour five and was running an admittedly distant second to the Corvette when the first of the safety cars was called. The #59 car’s pursuit of a first podium wasn’t helped by Costa being on old tyres at the first restart and then a wheel problem that cost a handful of seconds at its pitstop.

“The safety cars properly did for us,” said United boss Richard Dean. “It undid all our good work and we’re all pretty deflated.



But if you look at it from where we have come since Qatar [the series curtain-raiser in March], we’ve got to be happy. This project started late and by the end of the year we have been regularly challenging for the podium.”

Manthey PureRxing Porsche drivers Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alex Malykhin, who sealed the title at Fuji, rounded out their season with ninth. They were looking good for at least a top-six before the safety cars, but a car carrying 35kg of sucess ballast didn’t have the pace for the dogfight that followed. 🏆

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RESULTS

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 8/8, BAHRAIN 8 HOURS, SAKHIR, 2 NOVEMBER (235 LAPS – 790.272 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM/ CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	8h01m25.839s
2	Matt Campbell (AUS) Michael Christensen (DNK) Frederic Makowiecki (FRA)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+29.177s
3	Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Nico Muller (CHE) Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	+36.799s
4	Jules Gounon (FRA) Paul-Loup Chatin (FRA) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	+37.404s
5	Marco Wittmann (DEU) Dries Vanthoor (BEL) Raffaele Marciello (ITA)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	+47.916s
6	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA) Earl Bamber (NZL) Alex Lynn (GBR)	Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) / Cadillac V-Series.R	Hypercar	+55.841s
7	Phil Hanson (GBR) Jenson Button (GBR) Oliver Rasmussen (DNK)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+1m00.834s
8	Robert Kubica (POL) Robert Shwartzman (ISR) Yifei Ye (CHN)	AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	+1m03.539s
9	Charles Milesi (FRA) Mick Schumacher (DEU) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA)	Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) / Alpine A424	Hypercar	+1m12.064s
10	Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Kevin Estre (FRA) Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche Penske Motorsport / Porsche 963	Hypercar	+1m19.711s
11	Miguel Molina (ESP) Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Nicklas Nielsen (DNK)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	+1m30.651s
12	Julien Andlauer (FRA) Harry Tincknell (GBR) Neel Jani (CHE)	Proton Competition / Porsche 963	Hypercar	-1 lap
13	Will Stevens (GBR) Callum Ilott (GBR) Norman Nato (FRA)	Jota / Porsche 963	Hypercar	-1 lap
14	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA) Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR)	Ferrari AF Corse / Ferrari 499P	Hypercar	-2 laps
15	Francois Heriau (FRA) Simon Mann (USA) Alessio Rovera (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
16	Tom van Rompuy (BEL) Rui Andrade (PRT) Charlie Eastwood (GBR)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	-21 laps
17	Hiroshi Koizumi (JPN) Sebastien Baud (FRA) Daniel Juncadella (ESP)	TF Sport / Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	LMGT3	-21 laps
18	Claudio Schiavoni (ITA) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Matteo Cairolì (ITA)	Iron Lynx / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-21 laps
19	Yasser Shahin (AUS) Morris Schuring (NLD) Richard Lietz (AUT)	Manthey EMA / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-21 laps
20	James Cottingham (GBR) Nicolas Costa (BRA) Gregoire Saucy (CHE)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	-21 laps
21	Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE) Davide Rigon (ITA)	Vista AF Corse / Ferrari 296 GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
22	Josh Caygill (GBR) Nico Pino (CHL) Marino Sato (JPN)	United Autosports / McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	LMGT3	-21 laps
23	Alex Malykhin (BLR) Joel Sturm (DEU) Klaus Bachler (AUT)	Manthey PureRxcing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	LMGT3	-21 laps
24	Sarah Bovy (BEL) Rahel Frey (CHE) Michelle Gatting (DNK)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx) / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	LMGT3	-21 laps
25	Ian James (GBR) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA) Alex Riberas (ESP)	Heart of Racing Team (Prodrive) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
26	Clement Mateu (FRA) Erwan Bastard (FRA) Marco Sorensen (DNK)	D’Station Racing (TF) / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
27	Darren Leung (GBR) Sean Gelael (IDN) Augusto Farfus (BRA)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	-21 laps
28	Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Valentino Rossi (ITA) Maxime Martin (BEL)	Team WRT / BMW M4 GT3	LMGT3	-22 laps
R	Edoardo Mortara (CHE) Mirko Bortolotti (ITA) Daniil Kvyat (RUS)	Lamborghini Iron Lynx / Lamborghini SC63	Hypercar	200 laps-cooling
R	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL) Paul di Resta (GBR) Loic Duval (FRA)	Peugeot TotalEnergies / Peugeot 9X8 2024	Hypercar	179 laps-hybrid
R	Ryan Hardwick (USA) Zacharie Robichon (CAN) Ben Barker (GBR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	178 laps-engine
R	Takeshi Kimura (JPN) Esteban Masson (FRA) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	176 laps-throttle
R	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Toyota Gazoo Racing / Toyota GR010 HYBRID	Hypercar	175 laps-fuel pump
R	Giorgio Roda (ITA) Giammarco Levorato (ITA) Dennis Olsen (NOR)	Proton Competition / Ford Mustang GT3	LMGT3	148 laps-engine
R	Rene Rast (DEU) Sheldon van der Linde (ZAF) Robin Frijns (NLD)	BMW M Team WRT / BMW M Hybrid V8	Hypercar	111 laps-engine
R	Arnold Robin (FRA) Conrad Laursen (DNK) Kelvin van der Linde (ZAF)	AKKODIS ASP Team / Lexus RC F GT3	LMGT3	36 laps-suspension

In each car, first-named driver started the race. **Winners’ average speed** 98.490mph. **Fastest lap** Buemi 1m50.492s, 109.567mph. **LMGT3** Cairolì 2m01.914s, 99.301mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Hartley 1m46.714s; **2 de Vries** 1m47.037s;
3 Giovinazzi 1m47.080s; **4 Jani** 1m47.234s;
5 Fuoco 1m47.527s; **6 Estre** 1m47.542s;
7 Campbell 1m47.630s; **8 Nato** 1m47.950s;
9 D Vanthoor 1m47.970s; **10 Frijns**
1m54.564s; **11 Rasmussen** 1m48.263s;
12 Ye 1m48.282s; **13 Lynn** 1m48.466s;
14 Habsburg 1m48.534s; **15 di Resta**
1m48.552s; **16 Kvyat** 1m48.555s;
17 Schumacher 1m48.796s; **18 Vergne** NT;

19 Caygill 2m02.201s; **20 Cottingham**
2m02.203s; **21 Heriau** 2m02.367s; **22 Bovy**
2m02.636s; **23 Malykhin** 2m02.720s;
24 James 2m02.949s; **25 Flohr** 2m03.033s;
26 van Rompuy 2m03.125s; **27 Koizumi**
2m03.176s; **28 Robin** 2m03.269s;
29 Mateu 2m03.763s; **30 Leung** 2m03.785s;
31 Al Harthy 2m03.797s; **32 Shahin**
2m03.975s; **33 Roda** 2m04.315s;
34 Hardwick 2m04.606s; **35 Kimura**
2m04.772s; **36 Schiavoni** 2m05.237s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Hypercar drivers

1 Lotterer/Estre/L Vanthoor 152; **2 Fuoco/**
Molina/Nielsen 115; **3 Kobayashi/de Vries** 113;
4 Hartley/Hirakawa/Buemi 109; **5 Makowiecki/**
Campbell/Christensen 104; **6 Conway** 77.

Hypercar manufacturers

1 Toyota 190; **2 Porsche** 188; **3 Ferrari** 137;
4 Alpine 70; **5 BMW** 64; **6 Peugeot** 57; **7 Cadillac** 42;
8 Lamborghini 11; **9 Isotta Fraschini** 0.

LMGT3 drivers

1 Malykhin/Sturm/Bachler 139;
2 Schuring/Lietz/Shahin 105;
3 Rovera/Heriau/
Mann 97; **4 Farfus/**
Leung/Gelael
85; **5 Riberas/**
Mancinelli/
James 83;
6 Al Harthy/
Martin/Rossi 61.



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Toyota duo prevail to close in on Super GT crown

SUPER GT
MOTEGI (JPN)
3 NOVEMBER
ROUND 7/8

TOM'S Toyota pair Sho Tsuboi and Kenta Yamashita put one hand on the Super GT title with a dominant second win of the season at Motegi. The occupants of the #36 GR Supra took advantage of two early full-course-yellow periods to go from third on the grid into an early lead, and proceeded to pull away from the rest of the field by 20 seconds over the course of the 300km race.

It leaves Tsuboi and Yamashita needing just five points in next month's postponed Suzuka finale to guarantee the title. They have opened up an 18-point advantage over Team Kunimitsu Honda duo Naoki Yamamoto and Tadasuke Makino, who finished sixth.

Honda had locked out the front row in a wet qualifying session, with the Nakajima Racing Civic Type R-GT of

Takuya Izawa starting on pole ahead of Nobuharu Matsushita's ARTA example. Matsushita moved ahead at the end of the first FCY, but he dropped to third behind Izawa and Tsuboi upon the end of the second FCY, with Tsuboi then clearing Izawa a lap later to take a lead that the #36 Toyota wouldn't lose.

While Izawa struggled on his Dunlop tyres, he and team-mate Riki Okusa eventually finishing 10th, Matsushita and Tomoki Nojiri went on to claim second place for their second podium of the season, making it five races out of seven that a Civic has finished in the top three.

Cerumo Toyota pair Hiroaki Ishiura and Toshiki Oyu came out on top of a close battle with the second of the ARTA Hondas, the car of Hiroki Otsu and Ren Sato, for third. It means that Ishiura and Oyu keep their slim title hopes alive, as do Ukyo Sasahara and Giuliano Alesi in the #37 TOM'S Toyota that retired due to an engine issue. Sasahara and Alesi remain in mathematical contention but would need to score the

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER GT
MOTEGI (JPN)
Sho Tsuboi/Kenta Yamashita
TOM'S (Toyota GR Supra)

NASCAR CUP
MARTINSVILLE (USA)
Ryan Blaney
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)



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maximum 23 points at Suzuka with their team-mates failing to take any points.

Nissan's championship hopes came to an end when the marque's best-placed car in the standings, the NISMO NDDP Z of Mitsunori Takaboshi and Atsushi Miyake, could only manage seventh.

JAMIE KLEIN

Drama overshadows Blaney win

NASCAR CUP
MARTINSVILLE (USA)
3 NOVEMBER
ROUND 35/36

While Ryan Blaney took the chequered flag at Martinsville, securing himself a shot at a second successive NASCAR Cup title this weekend, all eyes were elsewhere on track.

Two Chevrolets ran side-by-side behind William Byron and kept all challengers at bay while Bryon in his Hendrick Chevy desperately tried to stay above the Championship 4 cut-line. Meanwhile, Christopher Bell, who was one point out, rapidly closed in on fellow Toyota driver Bubba Wallace, who reported a tyre issue.

Entering the final corner, Bell flew past Wallace but slid up the track due to the awkward entry. He hit the wall and then throttled up and rode the wall to the finish line. It was a slower, sloppier version of Ross Chastain's now-banned wall-ride. By passing Wallace, Bell advanced after winning the tiebreaker against Byron. NASCAR quickly moved to review the finish, deliberating for nearly 30 minutes, and Blaney's win was overshadowed as the stone-faced Byron and Bell awaited to hear their fates.

NASCAR finally removed Bell from the Championship 4 and reinstated Byron due to what they called a safety violation as he drove against the outside wall. But NASCAR did not review any of the questionable



THACKER/NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

radio communications from the Toyota and Chevrolet teams. They will take a closer look, but Bell's penalty can't be appealed.

Team Penske Ford pair Joey Logano and Blaney, plus Tyler Reddick (23XI Toyota) and Byron, will therefore fight for the title.

NICK DEGROOT



Bagnaia wins epic duel with Martin

MOTOGP
SEPANG (MYS)
3 NOVEMBER
ROUND 19/20

It took until the penultimate race, but the 2024 title battle finally got what it had been missing in Malaysia. Sepang was the scene of the long-awaited spicy tussle between Jorge Martin and Francesco Bagnaia.

And what a worthy scrap it was. For the first four laps, Martin tried every trick to get past polesitter Bagnaia. The Spaniard repeatedly led him too – only he couldn't make his moves on the Italian stick.

It would be easy to write that their battle was all about the broader world title duel. But in championship terms, Martin should have stayed safely in second. He came into the grand prix 29 points clear of Bagnaia after his factory Ducati rival had fallen in

the sprint, a gift on which Martin had cashed in to the full with a win. But a cautious approach does not suit Martin, who has repeatedly told the world that he's more likely to make an error when throttling back his Pramac Ducati.

So it was simply about the win: Bagnaia needed it and Martin wanted it. It was about securing that critical early lead in broiling conditions that exaggerated the difficulty of one machine following another. Both riders knew that once one of them settled into a groove up front, he would be home and dry.

All the better for those lucky folk with sweeping views in the Sepang grandstand: this was a show they won't forget. Nor will Martin's team boss Gino Borsoi: "It was a pleasure to see this guy fighting all the time and overtaking at every corner. But you can age 10 years watching a race like this!"

The scrap was effectively resolved in Bagnaia's favour when Martin got a touch ragged towards the end of that fourth lap. This gave Bagnaia a brief moment's respite to get the hammer down. The works Ducati star duly responded with fastest lap on lap five. And that was essentially that: Martin would have to console himself with the still-chunky 24-point lead he'll take into the final round.

Marc Marquez was a "VIP spectator for a battle I enjoyed a lot" aboard his Gresini Ducati, but admitted he was only that close because the title rivals were taking time off each other. Then, on lap seven, the Spaniard crashed out of third at the final corner.

Joining him on the floor that same lap was Franco Morbidelli (Pramac Ducati), who had just been overtaken for fourth by factory Ducati rider Enea Bastianini. While both Marquez and Morbidelli remounted to score points, their accidents allowed Bastianini a straightforward run to the final podium spot – albeit one distant enough to make the Italian "angry".

Pedro Acosta once again put on a show after getting it wrong in qualifying. The Tech3 KTM rider recovered from 13th on the grid to make a spirited assault on Alex Marquez (Gresini Ducati) for fourth place. But a Turn 15 scare in the closing stages was enough for even the bullish rookie to "not put the race in the bin for nothing", so he settled for fifth.

The race needed two attempts to get



Martin noses ahead but Bagnaia (1) took win after title rivals' duel



going after a frightening accident at the second corner led to a stoppage. Deemed a racing incident by the stewards, it began with Brad Binder touching Alex Marquez and ended with a tumbling Jack Miller headbutting the rear of Fabio Quartararo's Yamaha. Joan Mir (Honda) then ran over Miller's leg, leading to the red flag while the Australian received medical attention on the track. There was consternation in the paddock as Miller was taken to the medical centre, but soon the Queenslander was seen sauntering back to his garage in better health than many had feared.

It was nonetheless a terrible Sunday for the factory KTMs, with neither Miller nor Binder able to take the restart. Quartararo, however, was able to jump on a less-than-ideal spare Yamaha and ride to an impressive sixth place.

The sprint had followed the usual 2024 Saturday pattern. Everything went right for Martin, who muscled out Bagnaia at the first corner and ended up leading home Marc Marquez for the win. And everything went wrong for Bagnaia, who fell out of second place at the troublesome Turn 9 as he tried to mount a fightback.

Bagnaia's lap-three sprint fall was in fact the weekend's decisive moment in terms of the points race. He will need mistake or misfortune to strike Martin in order to snatch an unlikely title hat-trick at the finale, which has been moved to Barcelona following the flooding in Valencia.

RICHARD ASHER

RESULTS **MOTOGP ROUND 19/20, SEPANG (MYS), 3 NOVEMBER (19 LAPS – 65.441 MILES)**

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	38m04.563s
2	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+3.141s
3	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+10.484s
4	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+12.230s
5	Pedro Acosta (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+13.699s
6	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+16.245s
7	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+19.447s
8	Alex Rins (ESP)	Yamaha	+20.611s
9	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+21.994s
10	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+22.174s
11	Johann Zarco (FRA)	LCR Honda	+25.625s
12	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+27.276s
13	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+27.604s
14	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+27.949s
15	Luca Marini (ITA)	Honda	+28.838s
16	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+38.847s
17	Andrea Iannone (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+47.599s
18	Lorenzo Savadori (ITA)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+48.956s
R	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	14 laps-vibrations
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	5 laps-accident
NS	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	accident
NS	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	accident/injury

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
Celestino Vietti
(below)
Ajo Motorsport (Kalex)

MOTO3
David Alonso
Aspar Team (CFMoto)



Winner's average speed 103.121mph. **Fastest lap** Bagnaia 1m59.118s, 104.092mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Bagnaia 1m56.337s; 2 Martin 1m56.553s; 3 A Marquez 1m57.275s; 4 Morbidelli 1m57.279s; 5 M Marquez 1m57.301s; 6 Bastianini 1m57.366s; 7 Miller 1m57.558s; 8 Quartararo 1m57.592s; 9 Rins 1m57.726s; 10 Binder 1m57.882s; 11 Zarco 1m57.971s; 12 Vinales 1m58.046s.

QUALIFYING 1 Zarco 1m57.635s; Binder 1m57.800s; 13 Acosta 1m57.839s; 14 Bezzecchi 1m57.869s; 15 R Fernandez 1m58.023s; 16 Espargaro 1m58.107s; 17 Iannone 1m58.183s; 18 Nakagami 1m58.300s; 19 Marini 1m58.520s; 20 Mir 1m58.618s; 21 A Fernandez 1m59.006s; 22 Savadori 1m59.263s.

SPRINT RACE (10 LAPS – 34.443 MILES) 1 Martin 19m49.230s; 2 M Marquez +0.913s; 3 Bastianini +2.010s; 4 A Marquez +6.575s; 5 Quartararo +7.917s; 6 Morbidelli +8.957s; 7 Binder +11.015s; 8 Miller +11.834s; 9 Acosta +12.091s; 10 Bezzecchi +12.840s; 11 Rins +14.901s; 12 Espargaro +15.224s; 13 A Fernandez +17.115s; 14 Vinales +18.603s; 15 Marini +19.090s; 16 Mir +20.204s; 17 Nakagami +21.711s; 18 R Fernandez +23.814s; 19 Iannone +25.898s; 20 Savadori +29.778s; R Zarco 7 laps-mechanical; R Bagnaia 2 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 104.263mph. **Fastest lap** Martin 1m57.805s, 105.253mph.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Martin 485; 2 Bagnaia 461; 3 M Marquez 369; 4 Bastianini 368; 5 Acosta 209; 6 Binder 206; 7 Vinales 189; 8 Fabio Di Giannantonio 165; 9 Morbidelli 161; 10 A Marquez 155.

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 685; 2 KTM 316; 3 Aprilia 285; 4 Yamaha 119; 5 Honda 73.



Happy Bagnaia – but a
title hat-trick is unlikely

NEXT REPORT
Barcelona
21 November issue

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HEALTH & SAFETY CO ORDINATOR
Alpine F1 Team

The Role

This is an important role, working with the Health & Safety Manager to deliver a first class service to the team. You'll be responsible for ensuring that employees comply with safety legislation and that our safety policies and practice are adopted and adhered to.

Key accountabilities for this role are:

- Record and monitor accidents, incidents, near misses, hazards, and property damage in conjunction with the Health and Safety Manager
- Support and assist thorough investigations for accidents and incidents and ensure follow-up of any corrective action is undertaken
- Work with Department Heads across all functions throughout the business to create and modify risk assessments with guidance from the Health and Safety Manager
- Maintain and develop the H&S management system Be-Safe on an ongoing basis

The Person

You will have a passion for health and safety and building key relationships internally to drive our Health & Safety strategy. You will be proactive with a confident approach to the key accountabilities of the role. Attention to detail is key, with a desire to complete all tasks to a high standard.

Previous experience in a similar role is desirable along with a NEBOSH general certificate or equivalent experience. Ability to learn and use a range of IT systems is a requirement with strong proficiency in the MS suite of applications.

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SUPPLIER QUALITY ENGINEER
Haas F1 Team

This position reports to the Director of Procurement or their designee; is located in Banbury, UK. Responsible for ensuring that quality assured parts are delivered from our external suppliers in a timely and conforming manner, working within the Supplier Quality Assurance team.

Key Responsibilities:

- Promote teamwork and effective communications to develop working relationships between all personnel and departments.
- Responsible for ensuring that quality products and services are received from our suppliers, achieving the high standards required, and right first time.
- Collaborate with procurement and technical in the supplier selection process to make sure supplier's capabilities and capacity match the quality standards required by Haas.
- Accountable for the on-boarding of new suppliers ensuring that their processes, procedures, and quality management systems are fit for purpose.

Education and Work Experience:

- Member or Associate member of a Chartered Institute
- Honours Degree in an Engineering subject or equivalent experience
- 5 Years minimum in a Quality role within an equivalent fast paced parts manufacturing environment.

Specialized Knowledge and Skills:

- Strong communication skills, written and verbal.
- Experience working in a fast paced, technically advanced environment.
- Strong understanding of composite, metallic and Additive manufacture.

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PR MANAGER
Honda Racing UK

The PR Manager is responsible for assisting the PR Department Manager in the implementation of both internal and external communication strategies. Their duties include managing external communication channels such as traditional PR activities and new media approaches such as social media platforms and company websites.

Responsibilities include:

This role will assist the PR Department Manager by carrying out the following duties:

- Collaborate with the Department Manager to plan, implement and manage public relations programs and activities.
- Collaborate with the Department Manager to plan and manage section budget.
- Collaborate with the Department Manager to develop and implement department KPIs, policies and procedures.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Experience:

Public Relations and Media

- Have a full understanding of media needs and media relationships.
- Excellent organisational and planning skills.
- Accuracy in document creation with attention to detail.

Industry Experience

- Proven track record in Media/PR roles in motorsports or similar environments.
- F1 PR experience would be highly valued.
- Strong knowledge of F1 history or ability to learn and quickly apply F1 knowledge.

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FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS COORDINATOR - MOTORSPORT
JOTA

We are looking for a dedicated and dynamic Freight and Logistics Coordinator to join our motorsport logistics team. This role is crucial in ensuring the efficient transportation and management of racing equipment, vehicles, and components between events and facilities. The ideal candidate will have a passion for motorsport, a strong logistics background, and excellent organizational and communication skills. Worldwide travel.

Key Responsibilities:

- Plan and execute the transportation of motorsport vehicles, equipment, and materials for events, ensuring timely arrivals and departures.
- Collaborate with all departments within the team, to coordinate logistics of equipment for race weekends and testing sessions.
- Manage relationships with freight carriers, customs brokers, and logistics service providers to negotiate rates and schedules.
- Ensure compliance with global shipping regulations, including customs requirements for international transport eg. ATA carnets & import/ export duties that must be paid.
- Monitor and track shipments, addressing any delays or challenges proactively.

Qualifications:

- 3 years of experience in freight/logistics, with a preference for experience in motorsport or a similar high-pressure environment.
- Strong understanding of the specific logistics needs and challenges within the motorsport industry.
- Proficient in logistics software and Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, PowerPoint).
- Excellent attention to detail, problem-solving skills, and ability to prioritize tasks effectively.

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M-Sport UK

The Role

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The role responsibilities include:

- Delivering innovative electrical engineering solutions.
- Design advanced models and drawings of a variety of electrical components and wiring assemblies.
- Verification of designs through own calculations, analysis and CAE.
- Ensuring the success of the design from inception through to production.
- Creating real or CAD mock up installations.

WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR

- We're looking for a self-motivated team player with an enthusiastic and positive attitude.
- You should be educated to BEng or MEng level in Motorsport, Electrical or Automotive Engineering, and have good knowledge of 3D CAD, preferably CATIA V5.
- You should have the fundamental knowledge of the latest electrical system and materials is essential, and preferably in Automotive.
- You should have meticulous attention to detail and a practical approach to problem solving.

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TECHNICAL SALES – MOTORSPORT
PWR Performance

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Job Description:

- Provide motorsport expertise within the sales team in regard to assigned autonomous tasks from the
- Technical Sales Manager and report back to sales team for review and action.
- Respond to assigned customer calls and emails in a timely and professional manner;
- Ensure sales related paperwork is complete for every sale with a high level of accuracy;
- Work in collaboration with the design team and production departments to ensure products are built and delivered to each customer within agreed time frame;

Qualifications:

- High level communication skills – both written and oral
- Persuasive and effective sales techniques
- Team player
- Highly motivated personality

Key Personal Attributes / Behavioural Competencies

- Team-working skills to collaborate and liaise with people at all levels.
- Good diagnostic and problem-solving skills.
- Confidence to respond positively when under pressure.

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SENIOR MODEL MAKER
Visa Cash App RB F1 Team

We are looking for an experienced Model Maker to be responsible for ensuring that wind tunnel models and projects are manufactured to a high standard and to tight deadlines. They will also be responsible for assembling and maintaining scale models in the wind tunnel and model shop.

Model Making

- To attend Wind Tunnel tests, and perform changes in the Wind Tunnel on the model under direction of the Duty Aerodynamicist.
- To ensure that all tasks are carried out to our exacting standards within tight deadlines.
- Work with the Model shop, Designers & Aerodynamicists to develop our scale models and working practices to assist in the development of our F1 car.

Professionalism

- To investigate and implement new techniques.
- Provide flexible attendance and attitude to work, both in line with the requirements of the role and any specific requirements of the projects.
- Work in a professional manner at all times regardless of the task set and be pro-active in promoting a positive image for the department / team/ sponsors.

Experience

- Automotive and engineering working experience ideally in F1.
- Familiarity with digital measurement and scanning systems such as Leica or Creaform and the associated software.
- Familiarity with pressure tap checking and management.
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ENGINEERING APPRENTICE - ASSEMBLY & TEST
Williams Racing

The Role

Our Level 3 Assembly & Test apprentice programme offers a range of pathways. As an apprentice, you will be based in Grove, Oxfordshire, working in the factory and then studying alongside this, at our partner apprenticeship providers. This role will start from September 2025. You will be asked during the recruitment process to make a preference from the following areas:

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Electronics

As an Electronics apprentice, you'll play a vital role in supporting the design, testing, and integration of electronic systems for our Formula 1 cars.

Who We're Looking For

We seek motivated, curious, and passionate individuals who are ready to learn and take on challenges. Ideal candidates will have:

- A strong interest in engineering, technology, or motorsport
- A minimum of GCSEs in Maths, English, and Science (Grade 4/C or above) and A-Levels (or equivalent qualifications)
- Excellent attention to detail and a proactive approach to problem-solving
- Strong teamwork skills and an eagerness to work collaboratively
- An ability to communicate effectively and professionally

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Smith soars to Walter Hayes win

B-M driver produces defensive masterclass
to land Silverstone spoils



Red Bull talents join
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Coronel (left) and Lindblom tackled Ginetta Junior Winter Series ahead of 2025 season

JEP

Red Bull Juniors make Ginetta debuts

GINETTA JUNIOR

Red Bull Junior Team drivers Rocco Coronel and Scott Lindblom made their car racing debuts in the Ginetta Junior Winter Series last weekend at Silverstone with multiple title-winning squad R Racing, in preparation for full campaigns in the main championship next year.

The 14-year-olds both sported Red Bull liveries, and have recently been signed up by the energy drinks firm following decorated karting careers and becoming Ginetta Junior scholarship finalists.

“The boys are getting on very well for the days they have done,” said R Racing’s Nathan Read. “They’ve both got to be looking at a big

winter programme and, by the first round at Donington, these boys should be on the pace.

“It’s super-exciting to be working with Red Bull, and for us as a team it’s just a nice promotion for all our hard work over the last four, five years of winning championships. I think it shows Ginetta is a recognised path from karts to cars. I think a lot of them do it to learn the UK circuits to set them in good stead for F4.”

Coronel, son of touring car and Dakar star Tom, scored a pair of sixth places before spinning on the final lap of the third contest while challenging for fourth.

“Not too bad,” he said of his first weekend. “We are just learning for next year. I’ve just turned 14 so I couldn’t do the last few races

[in Ginetta Junior]. In [other series] you can’t drive until 15. Red Bull has helped me a lot with physical training.”

Lindblom came into the event less prepared than Coronel after only completing a handful of test days. He scored a pair of 13th-place finishes, and was hampered by incidents and penalties, but the Swede is hopeful that a full testing programme over the winter will enable him to be more competitive next season.

“Obviously it’s a difficult car to drive,” said Lindblom. “I’m just learning how to drive it and how the racing is. It’s about going up [into cars] as early as possible. It’s a great honour to have Red Bull supporting me.”

STEVE WHITFIELD

Islin selected as new Fiesta Junior scholar

FIESTA JUNIOR

Karting graduate Lewis Islin has been selected as the latest winner of the British Racing & Sports Car Club’s Fiesta Junior scholarship.

The BRSCC ran the scholarship for the second time at Blyton Park last week, with around 50 drivers taking part. The best six from each of the first two days, when their

driving performance, media skills and fitness were tested, progressed to the final. It took an extra shootout between the last pair to determine the eventual winner, with Islin getting the nod.

He now receives a fully funded season in Fiesta Junior next year, including entry, registration and club membership fees, ARDS training and testing costs.



JAMES ROBERTS

A prize worth £65,000 is heading Islin’s way

Islin will also benefit from mentorship from British Touring Car frontrunner Josh Cook – who was one of the

judges at Blyton – along with receiving race equipment in a total prize that is estimated to be worth over £65,000.

FISHER ONE OF TWO DRIVERS EXCLUDED FROM WHT EVENT

WALTER HAYES TROPHY

Five-time Walter Hayes Trophy podium finisher Josh Fisher was one of two drivers excluded from last weekend's Silverstone event and he was given a 30-day ban.

Fisher was sanctioned after two instances where he was alleged to have verbally abused rivals. The first followed a fierce tussle between his brother Felix and Chris Middlehurst during heat two, after which he was angry at Middlehurst.

Before that was investigated, he was also in hot water after a Brooklands clash with Mikel Bezuidenhout in his own heat (below) that left Fisher in ninth. More swearing was alleged to have taken place afterwards and this offence was deemed more serious because Bezuidenhout is under 18. Fisher did not wish to comment on the incidents when asked by Autosport.

Meanwhile, Melly Zhang was also in trouble with the officials after she heavily collided with a spun Isaac Canto da Silva on the exit of Brooklands in the Last Chance race. It was considered novice Zhang had ample time to take avoiding action because she was at the back of the field. She was excluded from the event and handed six penalty points.



Magnussen eyes further FF1600 races despite early Hayes exit

WALTER HAYES TROPHY

Ex- Formula 1 driver Jan Magnussen is planning further Formula Ford outings after enjoying his return to the category in the Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone last weekend.

The sportscar star made an FF1600 comeback in the Formula Ford Festival three years ago in more modern machinery – his first outing in the category since winning the 1992 Festival – but swapped to a Van Diemen RF78 run by Mike Gardner's GT Race & Trailers squad for the Hayes.

Magnussen was among the Carl Hamer Trophy pacesetters, the class catering for cars built before 1982, and finished just fractions of a second behind Joseph Ahrens' Royale in the pre-final. But an overtaking attempt on Ahrens at Becketts in the final went wrong, Magnussen instead clipping his rival and they were both out of the race.

Nevertheless, Magnussen described his pre-final battle as being "so much fun" and is already planning further appearances.

"It's been great and everyone's been so nice – Mike Gardner and all his team," said Magnussen. "For sure this isn't the last time. I told my son Luca, who is here, we need to get one of these just for something fun to drive around in when we're not doing all of the serious stuff. Drive around, have some fun and have a big smile on our faces, and he thought that sounded like a good idea. I'm coming back somehow, I don't know in what."

Magnussen suggested returning to a Van Diemen RF92, the model with which he triumphed in the Festival, could be a possibility. The Magnussen name is already set to feature more regularly on these shores next year with Luca eyeing a GB4 bid.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

P60 WHT REPORT



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STEVE JONES

Castaldini's fiery end to Speads debut

HSCC

Myles Castaldini's hopes of giving his striking Speads RS08 a victory on its racing debut, having acquired the manufacturing rights for the cars, were ended by a spectacular engine failure in last Sunday's Historic Sports Car Club Allcomers race at Silverstone.

After issues in qualifying left him starting well down the field, Castaldini scythed through the order to battle Steve Deeks' Alfa Romeo for victory until the late drama, which left him making a sharp exit from his machine after flames poured out of the airbox.

"I caught up to Deeks and it got stuck in gear

so that's why I was hanging back," he explained. "I thought I was managing it, keeping the revs down and the engine went bang. I was warm!"

Castaldini has no current plans to race the car again, though is hoping the fire damage won't prevent him from running it on trackdays.

"That's the first time I've driven it," he added. "I bought it with the manufacturing rights for the cars, and we've spent the last three months getting it ready, putting all the instrumentation in it. It's never been raced before, it was used as a trackday car previously. I always do the Hayes, so I thought it would be a good chance to give it a go. It's quick, and it will go quicker I'm sure."

STEVE WHITFIELD

Barnard plans more outings after first race in restored Escort Mk1

HSCC

Steve Barnard is planning more outings next year in his recently restored Ford Escort Mk1 after finishing second in last



STEVE JONES

weekend's first Allcomers race at the Silverstone Walter Hayes Trophy event.

Sporting an iconic yellow Duckhams livery, the ex-Geoff Wood machine returned to action for the first time in 40 years at a Curborough sprint in September in the hands of Barnard, after a planned Croft outing was thwarted by suspension trouble. Barnard led most of Saturday's Allcomers contest before finishing second behind Charlie Besley's Tiga.

"The car hasn't been out in 40 years – we found it in a lock-up and [restored] it," said Barnard. "Everything is 1970s on the car. It's a nice car, unusual, and it's getting a lot of recognition. We will do the Historic Special Saloons [next year] and get it out there."

STEVE WHITFIELD

THEMED THRUXTON

A new themed event, the Thruxton Tops Down Weekender, will kickstart the Hampshire circuit's racing season next year. The fixture is described as a "celebration of open-air driving" and will feature a variety of Caterham categories in action over 4-5 May. Alongside traditional British Touring Car, British Trucks and Classic Sports Car Club meetings, the track's historic event is being rebranded as Thruxton Retro for 2025 and will be held on 21-22 June.

VIRTUAL BRITCAR 24 BACK

The virtual Britcar 24 Hours of Silverstone will be held again this year, taking place across 30 November-1 December. The race will feature both a GT3 and GT4 class, with each category open to five current car models. Both class winners will receive a gaming system from the race's sponsor ButtKicker alongside HaptiConnect software.

PAYNE WINS MALTON AGAIN

Triple BTRDA Rally champion Elliot Payne took his third successive Malton Forest Stages win last weekend. Payne and Patrick Walsh's Ford Fiesta Rally2 was fastest on all six stages through Langdale, Gale Rigg and Cropton Forest. Kyle White/Anthony Nestor's Hyundai i20 R5 and Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson's Fiesta Rally2 completed the podium finishers.

TAYLOR TO STAY AT FORTEC

Jack Taylor will remain with Fortec Motorsport in GB4 next year when the category introduces a new, halo-fitted car. The Australian (below) finished ninth in this season's standings, taking a best result of second. "He's a young driver with good potential, and it's been impressive to watch his progress so far," said Fortec boss Ollie Dutton. "Moving all the way from Australia was a big step, and it demonstrated just how dedicated he is and how hard he's willing to work to reach his goals."



Silverstone to celebrate F1's 75th birthday

SILVERSTONE FESTIVAL

The 75th anniversary of the start of the Formula 1 world championship will be marked by special races and displays at next year's Silverstone Festival.

With the Northamptonshire circuit hosting the first point-scoring F1 grand prix in 1950, it is fitting that 75 years of the championship should be celebrated at the venue's historic extravaganza, which takes place from 22-24 August.

There will be plenty of historic F1 racing action at the event, with contests for the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association and Masters Racing Legends categories that between them cater for F1 machinery up to 1985. And organisers have further announcements to come about



other F1 celebrations to be held at the event.

Tickets for the Silverstone Festival have gone on sale, and anyone who buys one before this Sunday will be entered into a special draw, with prizes including admission to next year's British GP.

"2025 is a massive milestone in the histories of both F1 and Silverstone, and there could be no better occasion to celebrate the world championship's 75th anniversary than at Silverstone

Festival," said event director Nick Wigley. "We have some huge plans in the pipeline, which we will be announcing in the coming months."

A swathe of other categories have been confirmed as appearing at the 2025 edition. Further single-seater action will come via Historic Formula Junior, while GTs and tin-tops will also be catered for. Among the other races on the timetable will be the Royal Automobile Club Historic Tourist Trophy and the International Trophy.



VETERAN CAR RUN

The latest edition of the world's longest-running motoring event took place last weekend as more than 350 machines participated in the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. Over 100 different marques were represented among the cavalcade, which also celebrated 120 years of the Ladies' Automobile Club. A single-cylinder 1894 Benz powered by a 1.5hp engine was the oldest car in action.

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Micouris eyes Michelin Le Mans Cup after Ligier title

LIGIER EUROPEAN SERIES

Ligier European Series champion Theo Micouris is eyeing a graduation to the LMP3 class of the Michelin Le Mans Cup next season after securing his second title in two years.

Micouris only made his car racing debut last season and snared the overall Radical Cup UK title having starred in the SR1 class. He then teamed up

with fellow Radical racer Haydn Chance to tackle the one-make Ligier series for the frontrunning Team Virage squad in a JSP4 and also netted that crown last month.

“For winning the championship you get prize money [€150,000], which goes towards the Michelin Le Mans Cup in LMP3, so that’s the aim for next year,” said Micouris. “Winning the championship

this year was a major step in my career. It opens up opportunities and gives me the prize money and it’s making everything so much more possible. We’re in talks with a couple of different people and will see what happens – a lot of people are interested.”

Micouris described his title success as something he “only dreamed of at the start of the year”, but hit the ground

running by triumphing at the Barcelona opener. “Starting the season with a win was incredible – I didn’t expect it at all,” he said. “It’s my first year on the European stage and it was a fantastic way to start. Visiting places like Le Mans and Spa, and being able to drive on all those unbelievable tracks – there were so many moments that were special.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Ford takes Oulton Park rally win but maximum points for Igoe

CIRCUIT RALLYING

James Ford and Neil Shanks took the victory spoils on the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park last weekend, the opening round of the 2024-25 Circuit Rally Championship.

Ford’s Citroen C3 Rally2 had been fastest on the opening stage, but was given a 10-second penalty for hitting a chicane, leaving him in joint second with John Griffiths and Emma Morrison’s Skoda Fabia R5, 6s off the leading Citroen of Michael Igoe and Will Atkins.

However, Ford was back in front from stage three and went on to

build a 28s lead over defending champion Igoe. But, with Ford not registered for the championship, it was still maximum points for Igoe.

Griffiths was an early retirement when he began to lose power with a split manifold, which left John and Alex Stone’s VW Polo GTI R5 in third. Stone managed to hold the place until the final night test, when Ryan Burns and Harry Walshaw’s Ford Fiesta Rally2 not only got ahead of Stone, but fourth-placed Josh and Tamsyn Davey’s Darrian T90 to seal the final spot on the podium.

Kieran Hankin and James Swallow’s Citroen completed the top six, after



starting the day with the wrong set-up, while in seventh Wil Owen and Chloe Louise Thomas’s Ford Escort was the first two-wheel-drive car and led Class C all day.

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Barrett and Bennett bag final 2024 BRX wins

RALLYCROSS

Irishman Ian Barrett became the latest new winner in the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy in the penultimate round of the campaign at Lydden Hill last weekend under the cover of darkness.

At the Kent circuit's annual fireworks weekend, where the Saturday Supercar final is followed by an impressive pyrotechnics display, Barrett put a maiden rallycross campaign of poor fortune behind him with a dominant drive to victory. He also led the final in the series' concluding round on Sunday, after starting on pole, but it was former World Rallycross Championship driver Oliver Bennett who



Irishman Barrett landed his first BRX victory



Barrett enjoyed his strongest BRX event of 2024 but couldn't repeat his Saturday success

5 NATIONS BRX

ultimately claimed a third BRX career win. Bennett had lined up on pole for Saturday's final with his BMW Mini, but a poor launch dropped him to third by the first corner, and Barrett's VW Polo stormed into the lead. Bennett and John McCluskey then had contact in a battle for second down the hill into Paddock Bend on the opening tour, sending both off the circuit and putting McCluskey's Ford Fiesta out. Bennett dragged a wounded car to fifth, while Barrett led home six-time champion Julian Godfrey and Lydden Hill local Tristan Ovenden to complete the podium.

In a career-best performance, another Irishman, Gary Donoghue, finished fourth – but his run was far from trouble-free.

Contact between Godfrey, Donoghue and Steve Hill away from the startline had spun the latter pair, Colin Anson's Mitsubishi Mirage being left nowhere to go and colliding with Hill's Mitsubishi Evo. Both retired, while Donoghue continued.

The following day, Bennett applied big pressure to early final leader Barrett in the opening stages, and overtook the Polo on the second tour, Barrett retiring on the next lap with car woes. Bennett controlled the race thereafter, with McCluskey second and Godfrey third. Fourth place for 74-year-old Hill ahead of points rival Ovenden was enough to secure Hill third in the standings behind absent champion Patrick O'Donovan and McCluskey.

East Riding Stages is the new BRC opener

RALLYING

The British Rally Championship has revealed a tweaked calendar for 2025, with the East Riding Stages becoming its new opener.

After organisers of this year's curtain-raiser, the North West Stages, decided not to run the event next season, the Yorkshire-based closed-roads East Riding Rally will instead begin the campaign on 23 February. The rest of the schedule comprises familiar BRC events, with the Severn Valley Stages, Jim Clark

Rally and Grampian Forest Rally the next trio.

Rali Ceredigion – which also featured the European Rally Championship this year – will now represent one round instead of two, and the season will conclude with the Cambrian Rally.

The BRC enjoyed a boost in fortunes for this year, with a focus on reducing costs and terrestrial TV coverage helping to increase interest.

“The 2024 season was one of the best for the British Rally Championship in recent times and so it made total sense to build on the



Cambrian remains as the BRC finale

JEP

success of the past season and offer some stability to our competitors, teams, fans and stakeholders,” said championship manager Reece Tarren.

“It's exciting to welcome the East Riding Stages Rally into the mix in February, which means we have a much earlier start to the

season. We always knew we would need a new curtain-raiser as the North West Stages takes its sabbatical.

“With a thrilling calendar, and continued terrestrial TV coverage on ITV4 and ITVM, I believe we'll continue the momentum we've built up during 2024 and I'm excited to see how 2025 shapes up.”



Supreme Smith keeps the chasing horde at bay

SILVERSTONE HSCC WALTER HAYES TROPHY 2-3 NOVEMBER

A fortnight ago, Rory Smith had to launch an almighty fightback from a driveshaft failure on the way to the grid for his Formula Ford Festival heat race to finish an eventual sixth in the final. And, although his path to pole position for the final of the Walter Hayes Trophy last weekend was far more straightforward, he faced another gargantuan scrap to land his maiden overall win at the Silverstone event.

Overtaking countless rivals was the B-M Racing driver's task at Brands Hatch; this time it was all about defending from countless attacks. Smith's Medina JL18 was never allowed an inch of breathing space throughout a pulsating final that, unusually for the Hayes, was held on a completely dry track.

His first challenge came from KMR Sport Spectrum pilot Andrew Rackstraw, the South African having lined up on the front row after successfully appealing a 10-second track-limits penalty from his semi-final. The Porsche Carrera Cup GB

frontrunner did edge ahead at Copse on the second of the 15 laps, but Smith retaliated almost immediately, braving it around the outside of Rackstraw at Brooklands to move ahead on the inside at Luffield.

As the top two continued to squabble, it brought a cacophony of established Formula Ford stars into the mix behind. First to threaten Rackstraw was last year's event winner Chris Middlehurst. But, just as the Team Dolan man was really starting to look menacing, his Van Diemen LA10 suddenly slowed and crawled into the pits. "A plug lead came off," he explained. "It was a great race and great to be a part of – who knows what could have happened. The car was fantastic and I had a great chance of winning. But that's racing – these trophy races are a lottery."

While it was not to be for Middlehurst, his retirement left Rackstraw's fellow sportscar racer Alex Walker in third. As Rackstraw continued to unsuccessfully try to prise the lead away from Smith, Walker saw an opportunity at Copse on lap 10 to grab second. Two tours later, Walker was again on the march at the same corner as he braved it around the outside to snatch the lead. But, once again, Smith was quick to respond, edging back ahead on the inside at Becketts, which also delayed Walker slightly, allowing Jason Smyth to pounce.



Smith (inset)
was under attack
right from the start
of the final and was
never able to
escape

JEP

That Smyth was even in the race at all was remarkable as he woke on Saturday morning to hear a differential problem on his Van Diemen RF00/JL12 was going to curtail his event before it had even begun. "I was in shock and had to go away," recalled Smyth. "I thought, 'I'm sure we will change it.'"

Sure enough, team boss Bernard Dolan agreed to attempt a complicated repair. "We had to put a new box in it," Smyth continued. "Bernard had a bell housing with suspension and gearbox on it. Me, my dad, my grandad, my uncle, Bernard and a few of the mechanics, we got the gearbox done in an hour, which is nearly unheard of. It was like organised chaos."

Incredibly, Smyth went from that strife to challenging for the lead in the final. Having been unable to make it out in heat one qualifying, Smyth was switched to heat four and he shadowed Smith in both that contest and the first semi-final to bounce back in style and therefore be in victory contention for the final.

Despite battling a lack of straightline speed, with Walker delayed, Smyth passed a bunch of cars into Brooklands to move into second with three laps to go. He immediately set about fighting Smith with the top nine now circulating as one. Smyth dived to the inside of the long-time >>

MAGNUSSEN AMONG THE STARS IN HARD-FOUGHT HISTORIC BATTLES

Ex-F1 driver relished his
Carl Hamer pre-final fight



STEVE JONES

Plenty of successful stars of motorsport have made appearances in the Walter Hayes Trophy over the years, and this time around it was the turn of ex-Formula 1 driver and four-time Le Mans class winner Jan Magnussen. The 1992 Formula Ford Festival victor had made an FF1600 comeback in the Festival three years ago in modern machinery, but was out in a far older Duckhams-liveried Van Diemen RF78 at Silverstone. And he proved to be one of the stars of the Carl Hamer Trophy element.

Although a gearbox problem forced Magnussen out of his heat in the main WHT contest, he was in the thick of a thrilling Carl Hamer pre-final. He missed out on qualifying on pole by just 0.003 seconds to Andy Gosling's RF79, but Magnussen got into the lead at Becketts on the first lap. And so began a brilliant battle between the duo and Joseph Ahrens's Royale RP26 that lasted throughout the eight laps. In the end it was Ahrens who prevailed by just 0.03s, but Magnussen had thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

"It was basically exactly what I hoped it was going to be like when I said yes to coming here," he said. "That was fantastic, all the way through fighting,

every corner, every straight. It was great, I loved it, and I'm looking forward to much more of that tomorrow."

While Magnussen enjoyed more battling in the Progression and Last Chance contests, sadly his Carl Hamer final was over all too quickly. He got ahead of Ahrens at the start only for the Royale to pull back ahead out of Copse. Magnussen then attempted to pass Ahrens at Becketts but succeeded only in clipping his rival, sending them both out, while Gosling and Rick Morris also went off behind. "It wasn't a big hit and I was on the wrong side of him," said Magnussen. "I'm disappointed I put myself in that position."

The Becketts mayhem left Benn Simms's Merlyn in the lead, and he enjoyed a close scrap with Mark McKenna's Crossle and Matthew Wrigley's Merlyn before eventually pulling clear as Alex Fores (RF80) rose to second.

There was further entertaining squabbling in the Janet Cesar Trophy final for slightly newer machinery. Darwin Smith (Van Diemen RF90) jumped the Reynard of pre-final winner Richard Tarling and Cam Jackson's RF90 at the start and then caught his rivals napping after an early safety car to build a sizeable lead.

But it was not long before the chasing pack reeled Smith in again, and Alex Ames, in another RF90, challenged into Brooklands on the seventh lap of 12. But Ames was caught out by Smith's defence and Jackson in turn went off in avoidance. Jackson soon picked off Tarling and Callum Grant (RF91) with a double move at Brooklands while, further ahead, Ames got close to Smith but could not deny him a second historic victory in a fortnight.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Smith scored Janet
Cesar honours



STEVE JONES

leader at Becketts on the penultimate tour, only to run slightly wide, enabling Smith to get back ahead. As they squabbled, Walker sensed an opportunity into Brooklands, but the inevitable contact came and his Wayne Poole-run Van Diemen RF01 speared into Smyth, who was sent spinning. “It’s hard to take,” said a disappointed Smyth, who felt a collision was “going to happen” with the leaders tussling so hard.

Walker described the racing as “brutal” after going on to finish fifth. “Anybody could have won it, but Rory did a great job out in the front,” he added. “It’s hard to attack and defend at the same time. I think we were about five cars wide and it wasn’t going to end well.”

This incident split the pack and meant Rackstraw was back to challenging Smith. The South African made one final attempt around the outside of Brooklands but could not quite make it stick, and Smith prevailed by 0.293 seconds.

“I spent every lap just defending – with the tow, you could never pull away,” said the winner. “I had to try everything in my power to keep them behind. It’s the Walter Hayes final, it was always going to be a pretty crazy race and I couldn’t be happier – it was an awesome race.”

Rackstraw had also enjoyed the battle



and, after finishing third last year, he now wants to go one better in 2025. “Me and Rory have been racing for so long and have a great mutual respect,” he said. “I felt like I could go for the move – I just couldn’t get it to stick, he outsmarted me.”

There was a second KMR-run South African on the podium, with KC Ensor-Smith – runner-up in the F1600 Championship in his homeland – taking third on his UK racing debut. Michael Eastwell was another delayed by the Walker/

Smyth clash and had to settle for eighth, thereby ending his run of two consecutive second places. Instead, Luke Cooper – demoted down the grid for a track-limits sanction in his semi-final – emerged from the chaos in an impressive fourth in his Swift SC20. While all of these drivers were a whisker away from success, it was Smith who was left celebrating the most after a sublime performance to banish the memories of his tricky Festival weekend.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

UNUSUALLY SMOOTH PROGRESS FOR MOST OF THE MAIN CONTENDERS

There were plenty of unusual features about this year’s Walter Hayes Trophy. The lack of rain throughout the weekend was strange, as was the lack of safety cars during the entertaining heat races – from which, in another major break from tradition, all of the major frontrunners successfully progressed.

The closest to having to face an early start on Sunday morning with the Progression and Last

Chance bouts was four-time event winner Joey Foster. A carburettor problem in qualifying left the Firman driver down in 21st on the grid. From there, he rose to eighth when a clash with Darwin Smith hampered any further gains. “I got my head down and I was picking them off,” said Foster. “I caught up with Darwin and got a good run on him into Copse. I thought he knew [Foster was there] but he kept turning – my

rear wheel hit his rear wheel. I’ve raced Darwin for 20 years and these things happen.”

Up at the front, Alex Walker led initially before Andrew Rackstraw moved his Spectrum ahead at Copse, with his countryman KC Ensor-Smith also getting the jump on Walker, who was later demoted to sixth with a track-limits penalty.

Heat two was arguably the feistiest of the curtain-raisers, Chris Middlehurst grabbing the lead from Luke Cooper on the final lap at Brooklands after a close scrap also involving Felix Fisher (TM Racing Ray GR05). Heat three was then all about Michael Eastwell – the 28-year-old defying his own description of himself as the “old guy” compared to his younger KMR stablemates as he made his traditional sole race outing of the year – after he jumped Hugh Esterson (Ammonite Ray) on lap two.



The final heat then gave a glimpse of what was to come, with Rory Smith having a tussle with Jason Smyth that continued into the first semi-final. The pair were never far apart after Smyth jumped Eastwell at Becketts on the opening tour. Rackstraw continued his strong event in the second semi, resisting Middlehurst and Ensor-Smith to land a front-row start for the final.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



WEEKEND WINNERS



JEP

WALTER HAYES TROPHY

Heat 1 Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum 011c)**Heat 2** Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)**Heat 3** Michael Eastwell (Spectrum 011c)**Heat 4** Rory Smith (Medina JL18)**Progression race** Isaac Canto da Silva (Van Diemen LA10)**Last Chance race** David McArthur (Medina BH19, above)**Semi-final 1** Rory Smith (Medina JL18)**Semi-final 2** Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum 011c)**Final (15 laps) 1 Rory Smith (Medina JL18);**
2 Andrew Rackstraw (Spectrum 011c) +0.293s;
3 KC Ensor-Smith (Spectrum 011c); 4 Luke Cooper (Swift SC20); 5 Alex Walker (Van Diemen RF01);
6 Jonathan Kotyk (Van Diemen RF01).**Fastest lap** Walker 1m01.559s (95.93mph).**Pole** Smith. **Starters** 36.

CARL HAMER TROPHY

Pre-final Joseph Ahrens (Royale RP26)**Final** Benn Simms (Merlyn Mk20, below)

JANET CESAR TROPHY

Pre-final Richard Tarling (Reynard 89FF)**Final** Darwin Smith (Van Diemen RF90)

STEVE JONES

GINETTA JUNIOR WINTER SERIES

Races 1 & 2 Isaac Phelps**Race 3** Colin Cronin

MONOPOSTO TIEDEMAN TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 George Line (Dallara F308)

HSCC ALLCOMERS CLOSED WHEEL

Race 1 Charlie Besley (Tiga SC82)**Race 2** Steve Deeks (Alfa Romeo 4C, below)

STEVE JONES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

PHELPS POWERS TO GINETTA WINTER SERIES CROWN

Isaac Phelps of Elite Motorsport won last weekend's Ginetta Junior Winter Series, which raced on the support bill at the Walter Hayes Trophy for the first time. After finishing fifth in the main Ginetta Junior championship this year, Phelps delivered on his favourite tag in the three-race mini-series. But only just.

Phelps led for most of the opening contest to take victory despite facing late pressure from Colin Cronin (Fox Motorsport) and R Racing duo Alfie Slater and Max Cuthbert. He then took an even more comfortable triumph in the sequel, helped by Cuthbert and Cronin both sliding off the circuit during a dice into Becketts. A four-car battle for second raged in the closing stages, with Slater recovering from sixth to edge Cuthbert in a photo finish.

That left Slater as Phelps's main challenger for the crown in the finale, and his chances were boosted by snatching the lead from his rival on the opening lap. Phelps lost further ground during the early exchanges and was shuffled down to eighth, and he then spent several laps in a feisty scrap with Slater's team-mate Rocco Coronel, competing in his first weekend of car racing (see News).

After building a 1.4-second advantage, Slater was eventually caught by both Cronin and newcomer Joseph Smith (Elite), and a frenetic battle then ensued. Slater looked on course for the title by leading onto the final lap but, crucially, he lost out to his two pursuers at Becketts. While Cronin edged Smith to victory, fifth for Phelps was enough to deny Slater. "I just did what I could on the last lap," said Phelps. "I saw Colin in the lead and I was like, 'I'm behind Felix [Livesey], so I can sit here and win the championship.'"

After dominating this year's Monoposto Championship, George Line took two more wins in the final round of its autumn series, the Tiedeman Trophy. After overcoming an oil leak in qualifying, he was challenged at the start of the opening contest by Tony Bishop, who – like Line



Elite driver Phelps narrowly claimed Winter Series glory

JEP

– was at the wheel of a Dallara F308. The lead battle was quickly extinguished, however, when Bishop spun on cold tyres exiting Luffield for the second time.

On his recovery to finish second ahead of James Williams's Dallara F311, Bishop set the fastest lap to take pole for race two, where his advantage only lasted a few corners. Lines moved to the outside at Brooklands before snatching the lead on the inside at Luffield and, despite the gap fluctuating while negotiating lapped traffic, he kept Bishop at bay until the finish. Williams was again best of the rest, while Will Cox was crowned Tiedeman Trophy champion in a Ralt RT3.

An eclectic mix of cars took part in the Allcomers races, with 38 drivers starting Saturday's contest, which was a two-way affair at the front. Steve Barnard led in his Ford Escort Mk1 until the closing stages, where Charlie Besley swept past in his more nimble Tiga SC82 Sports 2000 machine before taking victory. Colin Elstrop finished over a minute behind them in David Beatty's Chevron B8.

Steve Deeks (Alfa Romeo 4C) won from Barry McMahon's Giulia in Sunday's bout, which was brought to an early end when Myles Castaldini's unique and faster Speads RS08 (see News) suffered an engine failure while chasing the lead duo.

STEVE WHITFIELD



Besley battled past Barnard's Escort in first Allcomers contest

STEVE JONES

Smith seals ninth Truck title in a row – and quintet of wins

BRANDS HATCH
BARC
2-3 NOVEMBER

A sell-out crowd for the last Brands Hatch meeting of the year witnessed truck racer Ryan Smith achieve a remarkable and unique ninth consecutive British Truck Racing title, plus the nailbiting conclusion to other championships and a firework display bringing the season to a suitably spectacular end.

Smith's championship success wasn't quite a foregone conclusion when the convoy rolled into Kent for the season finale, but he put it beyond doubt with a lights-to-flag victory drive in the first of five races, and went on to complete a clean sweep of the other four as well.

Former champ David Jenkins was a distant second in the opener, while Michael Oliver pipped father Stuart to third place. Oliver Sr is still the man to beat with 10 championships to his name, but they weren't achieved in successive years.

Smith made winning look all too easy in race two, while Michael Oliver tailed Jenkins from start to finish, but the best action was in a hectic fight over fourth downwards. The new champion's hat-trick then came from eighth on the grid on Sunday morning. He was helped by Michael Oliver bumping Steve Powell out of the lead at Druids, Smith hitting the front with four laps to spare.

Smith's winning run seemed to be over in race four when Neil Yates's truck veered across the grass at Surtees and T-boned the helpless Smith at Clearways. Remarkably, both trucks joined the rerun and Smith charged from a pitlane start to win again.



Tom O'Rourke went clear in the finale, only to be clobbered with a penalty for a jumped start. With Smith quickly on the move from eighth, it was a matter of time before he caught and passed O'Rourke, who was classified fourth behind runner-up Oliver Sr and Jenkins.

Division 2 victories were secured over the weekend by Paul Rivett (four times) and Adam Bint, but John Powell clung on by his fingertips to take the class crown.

Six drivers arrived with a theoretical chance of taking the Pickup Trucks title, although Dale Gent, Mark Willis and Matt Simpson were the main contenders. Race one went comfortably to Ryan Hadfield after Eric Boulton had an excursion from second place. Simpson survived a couple

of tricky moments to finish runner-up, and Gent was a close third, staying out of trouble to protect his points advantage. Willis, in contrast, was a non-finisher.

Track-limits penalties were dished out in race two so the order at the flag did not reflect the published results. Simpson was undisputed winner, with Allen Cooper second and Chris Brockhurst a pleased but surprised third, while Gent was demoted from a podium. Nevertheless, it was still enough for Gent to seal the title and he therefore felt free to race, and led the finale until he was caught and passed by Simpson towards the end. Cooper and Brockhurst followed.

Another championship with much still to be resolved was for Mini Challenge





Truck titan Smith (leading) was unstoppable as he put on a show for the crowds

Trophy glory. The first of three races had a poor start, four cars off at the opening corner causing a red flag.

At the restart, points leader Sam Gornall had his clutch explode, dropping him down the order from a pole position start before the safety car appeared to deal with a crunch at Druids. Local man James Black took over the lead and, despite briefly slipping to third, drove to his second win of the year under pressure from Gabe Fairbrother, Alex Keens and Harry Hickton, the last-named closing his points gap to the struggling Gornall.

After a slow start from pole in the part-reversed-grid second race, 17-year-old Leo Purches was spat out of the pack at Paddock on lap two and rolled his car,

causing a stoppage. When the race was rerun, Hickton shot across the grass at Surtees/McLaren, causing chaos among the leaders at Clearways as he rejoined. This, and damaged cars scattered elsewhere, brought out red flags again, the countback result showing Hickton as the winner from Ronnie Smith and Black.

Black took an early turn in the lead of the championship decider, but the race developed into a frantic five-way battle, with the following five threatening to join in. Hickton kept his nerve when Gornall hit the front half a dozen laps from the end, and third for Hickton behind Fairbrother won him the title by two points from Gornall after dropped scores were applied. Black, fourth in the race, ended the season third in the points.

The Junior Saloons needed the safety car on their first lap, but stayed out of trouble from then on in the opener, with James Sherrington leading to the flag. Harry Smith headed Jonathan Moore in the points before the meeting, and in this race Moore finished second and Smith third.

However, the juniors' season ended in farcical fashion with a safety car intervention on the first lap of race two, a red flag on the restart lap with a car on its roof at Clark Curve, and then a terminal stoppage following another crash. Moore was the official winner after a single race lap and, since he also recorded the fastest time on that lap, he provisionally grabbed



Moore claimed Junior Saloons crown by smallest of margins

WEEKEND WINNERS



BRITISH TRUCKS

Races 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 Ryan Smith (Daimler)

PICKUP TRUCKS

Race 1 Ryan Hadfield

Races 2 & 3 Matt Simpson

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Race 1 James Black

Race 2 Harry Hickton

Race 3 Sam Gornall

JUNIOR SALOONS

Race 1 James Sherrington (above)

Race 2 Jonathan Moore

MINI 7 WINTER SHOOTOUT

Races 1, 2 & 3 Aaron Smith (Miglia, below)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

the championship by a single point.

Mini Miglia driver Aaron Smith had the distinction of being the only one across all the categories to break the 60s barrier in qualifying, making the most of a drying track on a damp Saturday morning. But the grid for the first of three Mini 7 Club winter shootout races was decided on ballot, and Smith had to work hard for victory from seventh in the line-up against stern opposition from Ian Curley and Rupert Deeth.

Smith and Deeth were tied together in race two after starting side-by-side on the front row, and they finished side-by-side again in that order after they dropped Curley. Competition over fourth was equally tight among the other Miglias and the place fell to Phil Bullen-Brown.

The leaders were again inseparable for much of the finale but, despite Deeth's unceasing efforts, Smith was not to be denied his personal hat-trick.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



A RACE TO REMEMBER

Anglesey's Race of Remembrance celebrates its 10th anniversary this weekend, having become a staple of the national motorsport calendar

STEFAN MACKLEY

“

I was slightly amazed that we got to the end of the weekend when we ran the first one. I sort of jokingly said it felt like Guernsey launching a space mission in terms of overambition.”

Race of Remembrance co-founder James Cameron might have felt the task of hosting the inaugural event was a monumental challenge that even verged on impossible, but it's one that has been tackled and overcome multiple times across the past decade as this weekend marks the 10th anniversary of the popular end-of-season event.

It's the brainchild of Cameron and Anglesey circuit manager Jon Earp, and the Welsh venue has hosted the November meeting since its inception in 2014, minus the 2020 edition due to COVID-19 restrictions, having been created as an outlet for military personnel and their families, as well as to commemorate those who have lost their lives serving.

The event has been organised by several clubs over the years, including the 750 Motor Club, British Automobile Racing Club and, most recently, the British Racing & Sports Car Club, with the meeting itself expanding during those tenures.

This weekend's event will include the BRSCC's 45-minute Clubsport Trophy, while the traditional 12-hour Race of Remembrance will run with a capacity grid of 56 cars, a new record and more than double the 26 vehicles that formed up for the first race 10 years ago.


“Theoretically, we could go higher, but you've got a mixed grid at Race of Remembrance, so you've got to manage the speed of the slowest things on the grid and the fastest things on the grid,” says Cameron. “But what it does, it makes amazing racing because everybody on every lap is managing traffic. Doing it without giving up your line, doing it in the dark, in the horizontal rain, all the rest of it, you're just busy all the time, and it makes for wonderful racing. There's a point at which there's too many on the circuit and I don't want to get to that.”

The event is unique for several reasons, not least the fact that the 12-hour race is held over three instalments, this year's running from 1500-2200 on Saturday, resuming on Sunday morning from 0900-1030, and ending with a final stint at 1130-1500.

The break on Sunday morning has become a tradition and creates one of the most impactful sights in national motorsport, as the meeting comes to a halt and hundreds join together for a




Unique contest features poignant pause in the racing for Remembrance service



Event founder Cameron was keen to support fellow veterans

JPEIMAGES

“I sort of jokingly said it felt like Guernsey launching a space mission in terms of overambition”



Launch event for this year's event took place last month

STEVE JONES

REDWATER IMAGES

service of remembrance to honour those who have lost their lives in the military.

“It was extraordinary because what we did was we had a remembrance service, and then we draped an endurance race over the top of it,” says Cameron of the first event.

“So it literally stopped, you get the safety car out, you stop them [drivers] on the grid and you bring everybody in. We initially thought we needed to leave the marshals out because we’re not going to be stopped for that long, but you try stopping the marshals from coming in...”

“That first time we did the remembrance service I was just standing there and I had two simultaneous emotions. One was f*** me, this is amazing, this is hairs up on the back of your arm

sort of thing. And then the other feeling that I had at the same time was, we’ve got to do this every year now.”

Another special aspect is that, while Anglesey often struggles to get a large enough quota of marshals for general meetings given its remote location, there are no such problems for the Race of Remembrance. Its unique appeal and importance on the national calendar means that more than 200 of them had volunteered for this year’s meeting a month in advance.

The appeal of the event means there has also been no shortage of guest drivers over the years, including 2022 British Touring Car champion Tom Ingram, six-time Olympic gold medal winner Chris Hoy and former *Top Gear* presenter Chris Harris, all of whom have added to its reputation. >>



A diverse range of cars tackle the endurance race

Supporting military personnel is a stance that governing body Motorsport UK has also pledged itself to in recent years, signing the Armed Forces Covenant, which commits the organisation to give its ongoing backing to the community, helped in part by the success of Race of Remembrance.

The event was created off the back of charity Mission Motorsport, which was founded two years earlier in 2012 by Cameron, the Major in the Royal Tank Regiment having returned from Afghanistan. He was looking to use motorsport as a way to help military personnel suffering from physical or mental injuries.

“Unlike rugby, cricket, swimming or anything else, there wasn’t a structure in place, to be a coach, to borrow some kit to have a first go at it,” recalls Cameron. “We saw several examples where people were doing things, often driven by great philanthropic intent, but

actually causing more harm than good because it’s such a powerful thing to be able to go, ‘Do you want to go in a Ferrari?’ Nobody does any therapy that day because the lads want to see red cars and get taken around by the Ferrari Owners’ Club.

“They all go home and they’re in the pub being clapped on the back by some of their mates, telling them about the great thing they’ve done. But for the bloke who’s in the wrong headspace, you’ve just shown him what he can’t have.

“You use something really powerful, but you’ve not enriched them in the long term. And to be able to link this wonderful, uplifting adrenaline, the power of sport that genuinely benefits people on a recovery journey was why the charity was born.”

One of those to benefit from the Race of Remembrance and Mission Motorsport has been Steve Binns, who has been involved

THE SUBARU WITH A DIFFERENCE

One of the cars competing in this weekend’s Race of Remembrance will be a Subaru BRZ that had been repaired by members of Mission Motorsport, some of whom will now race it.

The car was declared a category N write-off, meaning that, while it had suffered damage, none of it was structural, and it has been rebuilt over three months by ex-servicemen using parts sourced from eBay, one of the Mission Motorsport charity’s partners.

Dominic Pearson was one of those involved in the rebuild, having joined Mission Motorsport after a cycling accident left him paralysed from the waist down after 16 years’ service in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

“I spent two years in rehab, and it was there that I come to know about Mission Motorsport,” he says. “And how I got involved with this project was just randomly – a message was put up about rebuilding this car and that’s how it came about.

“I already had all the mechanical skills and the experience, but for me, it’s about seeing what I can



Pearson has relished being part of the BRZ project

do now that I’m in a wheelchair.

“Something that I can’t do is work on the engine, because I can’t get into the engine bay, and I can’t take a wheel off because of the weight of the wheel. I need a lot of assistance when doing anything on the car.”

While Pearson already has the technical and mechanical knowledge of working on cars, Mission Motorsport offers training for those who don’t and a pathway to get injured ex-military personnel who have been forced out of the service back into work.

In the case of the BRZ project, it has also brought people from similar backgrounds and injuries together, creating a close bond as well as offering them a purpose.

“When you get forced out of the military for an injury, you don’t know what you want to do, you don’t know what’s going to happen,” says Pearson.

“Obviously, with my injury, I can’t just walk into a garage and be a vehicle mechanic. I’m quite limited now, so being around these people and having this project has given us a sense of purpose, something to be looking forward to.”

The car had its first run at Thruxton in October, where a special launch event was held for Race of Remembrance approaching its 10th anniversary, with the 200 people in attendance able to learn



A huge entry is expected for this year's 10th edition



First race was held in 2014 and it's grown from there

“Unlike rugby, cricket or swimming, there wasn't a structure in place to borrow some kit to have a first go”

with the charity for seven years. Having served in the Falklands War, the ex-paratrooper was left paralysed following a motorcycle accident just 20 days after his return, forcing him out of the military.

“When I was first injured, the army's idea was you're of no use to us, here's a pension, go away and no help whatsoever. Luckily things have changed and continue to change,” he says.

“Looking after the military community is important because a lot of people fall by the wayside; there was nothing for me. If this [Mission Motorsport and Race of Remembrance] would have been around when I had my accident, I'd have been all over it like a rash.

“When people told me about it [Race of Remembrance], I thought, being a sceptic, that this is probably not that good,” he adds, having made his race debut in the event last year at

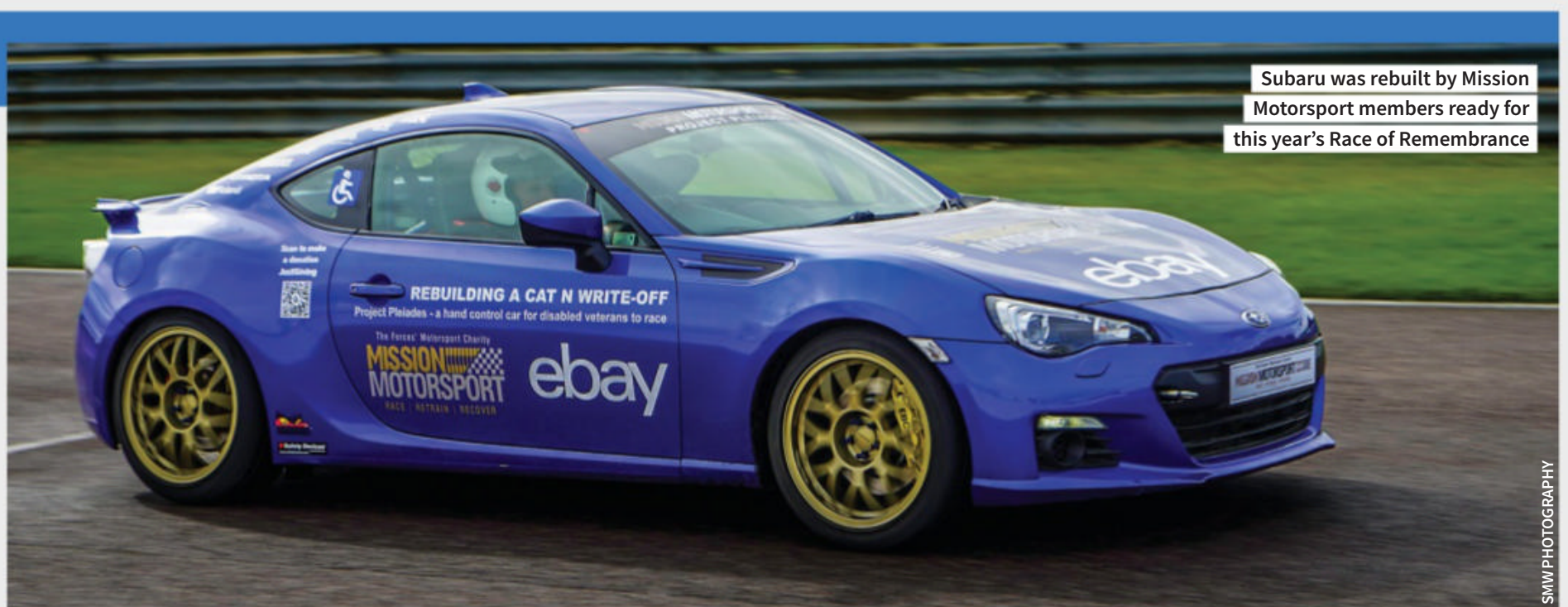
the wheel of a Morgan. “But when you actually go and you do the remembrance service and you do the racing, it's so emotional and it's a cliché but the camaraderie of everybody is fantastic.”

Binns has been part of the team that has built a hand-controlled Subaru BRZ that will be driven by himself and three others in this year's edition (see below).

Offering ex-military personnel the chance to gain new skills is one of the key aspects of Mission Motorsport, and the success of the Race of Remembrance goes hand-in-hand with that as it enters its second decade.

“That for me feels surreal,” says Cameron when asked if he feels the Race of Remembrance is now one of the highlights of the national racing calendar. “I always tremendously looked up to the Birkett Relay, it's such an important part of motorsport, like the Plum Pudding. It's one of those things, it's a real hook event, the [Goodwood] Revival and these kinds of things.

“And to have something that's in the same sentence as things like that for me is incredible, because I'm a motorsport fan at the end of the day. I absolutely love it and to have been able to be part of the creation of something that the motorsport community loves as well as us, is something that is deeply flattering.”



Subaru was rebuilt by Mission Motorsport members ready for this year's Race of Remembrance

more about the contest and charity.

The BRZ has an automatic gearbox and hand controls, comprising a lever to the driver's right that's attached to the brake and accelerator pedals, with pushing slowing the car and pulling accelerating. Pearson describes it as “quite a

simple design”, and one that means the pedals remain in the car, allowing for an able-bodied driver to get behind the wheel if needed.

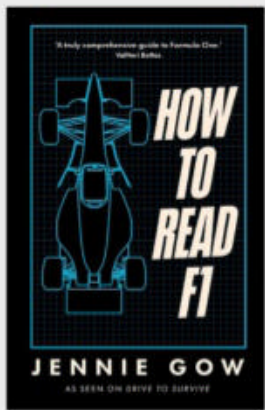
For Pearson, this weekend will be his first race and, as a life-long motorsport fan, it is an experience he's relishing.

“Once you get in the car, we're on the same level playing field as anyone who's able-bodied,” says Pearson. “That's something good about it – I can't think of any sports you could do the same.

“Hopefully I'll be the fastest out of our team, but we'll see. The main thing is to enjoy it.”

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Aid to recovery results in an enjoyable read



PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

BOOK REVIEW
HOW TO READ F1
Jennie Gow
RRP: £16.99

In December 2022, Formula 1 reporter Jennie Gow's life was turned upside down. Out of nowhere, the BBC 5 Live radio journalist suffered

a stroke that left her unable to read, write or speak, with fears over whether she would ever be able to live a normal life again, never mind be her energetic and loquacious self on the BBC's popular radio broadcasts and podcasts.

Fast-forward 22 months and Gow has not only made a huge amount of progress during a tough recovery process, but she has also written a book about Formula 1, which seemed inconceivable at the start.

How to Read F1 is a witty and light-hearted glossary of often-used F1 terms, infused with anecdotes from Gow's broadcasting career. But the title can also be read as a reflection on her recovery, in which she's had to learn to read again.

"Nine months after my stroke one of my bosses at the BBC called me and asked how I felt about writing a book, and I said, 'You do know I had a stroke, right?'" relates 47-year-old Gow. "I thought they were maybe joking at first, but then I had a lovely conversation with the publisher. We discussed the concept of an A to Z guide and immediately that felt slightly more manageable."

Gow hasn't just attempted to teach fans about how F1 works. Writing the book has also taught her a lot about herself, and alongside untold hours of therapy it became a valuable tool to speed up her recovery. Still suffering from dyslexia as a result of her stroke, she considered calling in the help of a ghostwriter but decided to carry on herself by writing the book in painstakingly small steps.

"It kept me motivated. I used it as like a working therapy, because it gave me a purpose and something to work towards," she explains. "Some days I'd really struggle and couldn't make any sense of what I was doing, but I just got more and more fluid and fluent. It helped me massively."



FILIP CLEEREN

Last month's
US GP was a
milestone for Gow
as first flyaway
since her stroke



JENNIE GOW

Gow shares anecdotes,
experiences and facts

Coming in at 216 pages, the book is an inviting collection of bite-sized facts about F1's drivers past and present, and an explanation of some of the most important concepts and jargon from the paddock. And while it is clearly aimed more at the casual fan, there are also some interesting and revealing nuggets about some of F1's most prominent drivers that diehard fans may not know, which we won't spoil for you here.

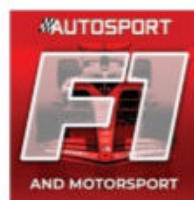
"The book reflects a lot on me," Gow says. "I miss the travelling F1 family and the paddock is a special place to work. This was a way of being able to have that connection, but this was also my platform to share my experiences with the listeners or readers at home; those anecdotes, those stories, facts about F1."

"You do doubt yourself, and there are so many amazing journalists and people in that paddock who might have been better placed to write this book," she adds. "But I feel like I'm in a position where I can straddle the fans who have been there for decades and the newer fans who may be approaching the sport with a bit of nerves of how they'll be received. Being able to bridge that gap is, I hope, what I can bring to that mix."

Gow doesn't need to worry, because *How to Read F1* is a fine and warmly written book, good to have within arm's reach while following the grand prix action or to gift to newer fans to bring them up to speed.

But just the fact that the book exists is to be celebrated in itself. For any budding author, seeing your first book published is a milestone. For Gow, who covered her first flyaway since her stroke at Austin last month, it is another major marker as she works on her fully-fledged return to the F1 paddock.

FILIP CLEEREN



[autosport.com/podcast](https://www.autosport.com/podcast)



MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Brazilian Grand Prix review and Q&A

Kevin Turner and Ben Hunt sit down to review the chaotic Brazilian Grand Prix, which put Max Verstappen on the brink of a fourth consecutive F1 world title as Lando Norris's hopes faded to a flicker in the Sao Paulo spray.

The pair also take time to answer some of your most burning motorsport questions in a segment that's sure to cause some debate!



WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Super Formula

Round 7/7

Suzuka, Japan

9-10 November

Livestream

Motorsport.tv,

Sat 0515, Sun 0515

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 36/36

Phoenix, USA

10 November

TV Live Premier Sports 2,

Sun 1900

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 33/33

Phoenix, USA

9 November

TV Live Premier Sports

(streaming only), Sat 2200

World Rallycross

Championship

Round 5/5

Istanbul Park, Turkey

9-10 November

UK MOTORSPORT

Anglesey

BRSCC

9-10 November

Clubsport Trophy,

Race of Remembrance

Livestream

[brscc.co.uk](https://www.brscc.co.uk)



HANSEN/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Lotus of Romain Grosjean reaches for the sky after a squeeze on Lewis Hamilton's McLaren launches him into this infamous first-corner pile-up at the 2012 Belgian GP. Look

how close, in these pre-halo days, Fernando Alonso came to a severe head injury and probably worse. The immediate aftermath left Grosjean, Hamilton, Alonso and Sergio Perez's Sauber out of the race. The Williams

of Pastor Maldonado (number 18), which had jumped the start from sixth on the grid, was spun round, while Kamui Kobayashi's Sauber was also caught up. Maldonado received two five-place grid penalties for the

Italian GP – the first for the jumped start, the second for later contact with Timo Glock's Marussia. As for F1 *enfant terrible* Grosjean, he was fined a hefty €50,000 and banned for a race – which most felt he deserved.





BMW M1 Procar

Ask Jan Lammers to name his favourite racing car, and he doesn't plump for any of the Formula 1 machines he raced or tested – and the latter category includes the Lotus 79. Nor does he go for the Toyota TS010 3.5-litre Group C contender that he describes as the “fastest thing I ever drove”. Top of his list is the BMW M1 Procar in which he was a race winner in the F1-support series that many regard as the greatest ever one-make championship.

“It's everything about that car, the series and the time,” says Lammers, a veteran of 23 F1 starts and 24 at the Le Mans 24 Hours. “It was the engine and the gearing, the way it handled – it was such a joy to drive and really suited my style. That series was a special time and place for me. Sweet memories.”

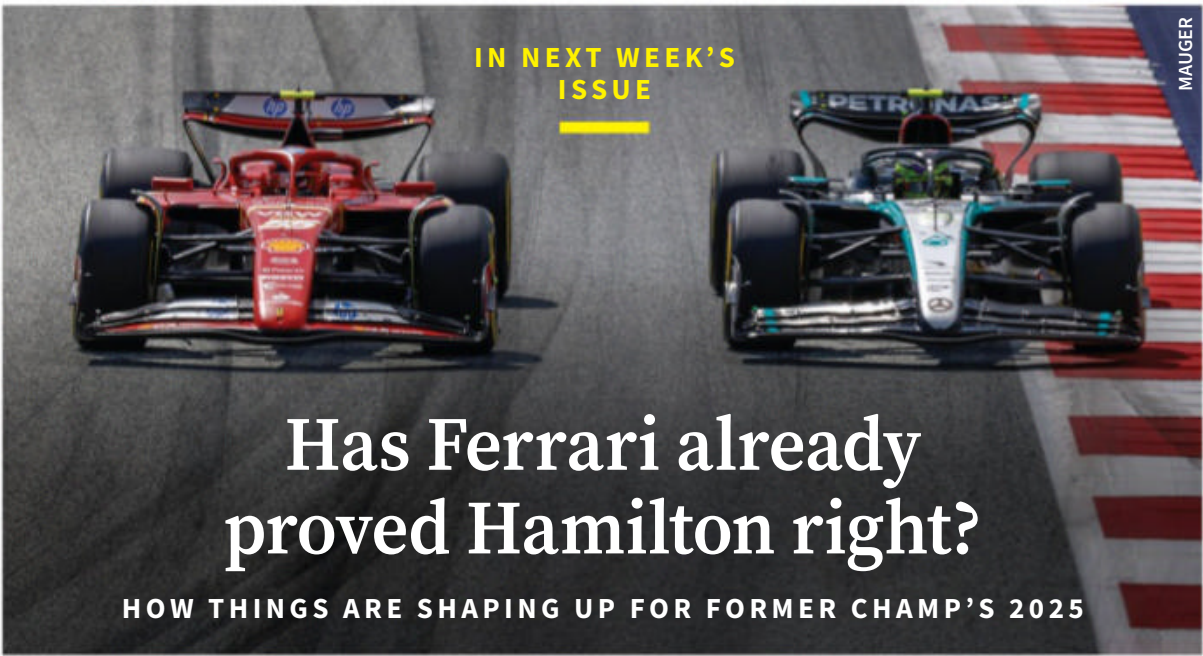
Those recollections include an out-of-the-box victory on his M1 debut from pole at Donington Park in April 1980 and then near-misses at Avus and Monaco. Lammers would almost certainly have won the former had not his fire extinguisher gone off mid-race, and he remains disappointed and more than a bit miffed that he missed out at the latter. He lost a clear chance to win on the streets of Monte Carlo courtesy of a bump from Didier Pironi while at the head of the field.



“I was leading in the wet and braked early at the Tip Top bar for Mirabeau and Pironi torpedoed me,” recalls Lammers of an assault from the Frenchman, who was driving one of the entries that went to the five highest-placed Goodyear-shod drivers in opening F1 qualifying for the grand prix-supporting Procar rounds. “He pushed me over one of those high kerbs and I realised straight away that my suspension was broken.

“I was furious because I really wanted to win that one. I was racing for ATS in F1 at the time, but the Procar race was a chance to show your talents with equal machinery in front of everyone. That was one of the beauties of that series.”

GARY WATKINS



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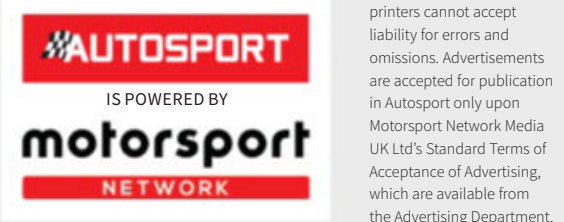
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