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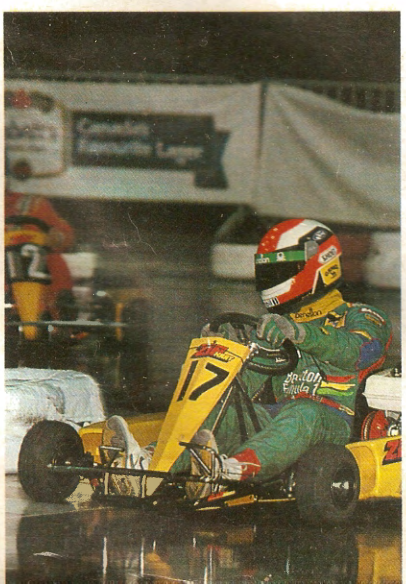

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Caffi's surprise move

Alex Caffi is to switch to the USF&G Arrows team next year to join Michele Alboreto. The young Italian was due to test an Arrows A11 at Silverstone yesterday (Wednesday).

The news comes as a shock, as it was believed that Alex had signed a contract to remain with Scuderia Italia for a third season.

In the last couple of weeks, Caffi's personal manager, Patrizio Cantu – who was also the Scuderia Italia team manager – left the team. It seems that this was a major part of Alex's decision to switch.

We understand that a settlement has been finalised, although Arrows team boss Jack Oliver refused to comment on the situation.

There was some confusion at Scuderia Italia when we spoke to the team at the start of the week.

"Officially we don't know anything," said Pierpaolo Gardella, the team's sports and logistical director. "We heard the news through the newspapers. We have received no information from Alex or Arrows. It's unbelievable."

"We are looking around for another driver. I think the best attitude is to keep watching. I want to see what is going on with Alex and see what else is happening."

Caffi's move has renewed speculation that Sergio Rinland will move from Brabham to Arrows. Rinland worked with Caffi to good effect at Scuderia Italia in 1988.

Alex has followed personal manager Patrizio Cantu in leaving Scuderia Italia.

Morbidelli's Ferrari deal

Ferrari has confirmed that Gianni Morbidelli will the the team's nominated third driver. The official announcement has been anticipated for some time.

The 21-year-old Italian Formula 3 Champion, replaces JJ Lehto as the team's test driver.

Morbidelli tested for for three days last week at Fiorano, getting used to the feel of a Formula 1 car.

He is to travel with the team to Estoril to take part in the Goodyear testing on December 4-7.

His busy programme also includes a visit to Macau, where he will be hoping to add victory in the Grand Prix to his F3 FIA Nations Cup win.

A full interview with Morbidelli appears on p65.

Prost in the saddle

Alain Prost visited Maranello last week for a seat fitting in a Ferrari. The Frenchman is expected to return to Italy for two days of testing at Fiorano beginning today (Thursday).

Prost's visit came on the same day that McLaren and Ferrari agreed terms for the release of the World Champion from his existing contract.

At the same time Ferrari agreed to release Gerhard Berger, who immediately flew off to Japan for his first runs in a McLaren (see separate story).

Alain's first public appearance in a Ferrari will be during the Goodyear tyre testing at Estoril on December 4-7.

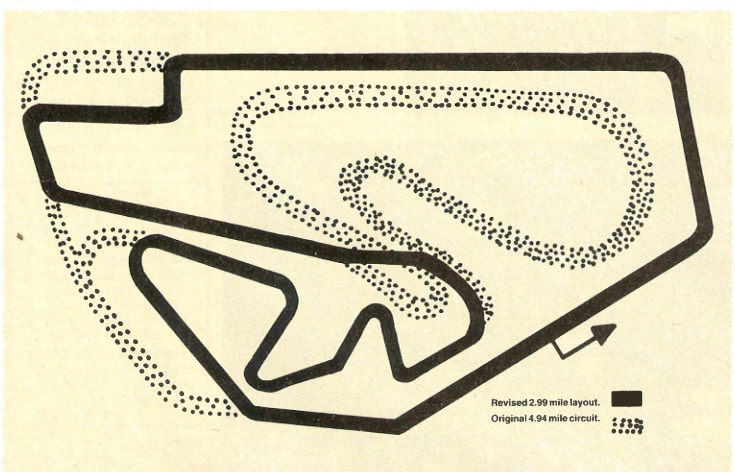
Minardi confirms Sala's departure

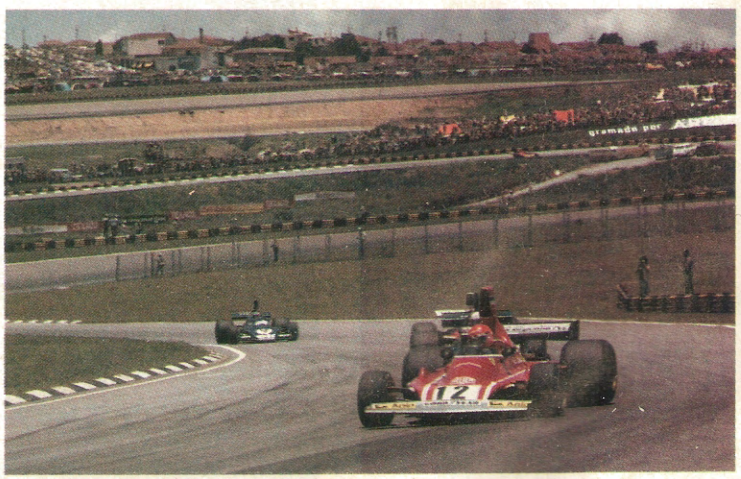
Luis Sala will not be staying with Minardi next season. The Italian team confirmed at the start of the week that the Spaniard has decided against continuing and is looking for another drive.

Minardi has been talking to Paolo Barilla, Olivier Grouillard, Roberto Moreno and others, but no final decision on Sala's replacement is expected for some time.

The team was due to conduct tests at Misano on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this week with Pierluigi Martini being joined by Barilla and, possibly, talented Formula 3000 driver Emanuele Naspetti.

Aldo Costa and Nigel Cowperthwaite are working on the all-new M190, which is expected to be ready in April next year.





The revised Interlagos circuit will be shortened from 4.94 miles to 2.99. Niki Lauda is pictured on the majestic original track in 1975.

Revised Interlagos to host 1990 Brazilian Grand Prix

Interlagos will be back on the Grand Prix calendar in 1990, 10 years after the last Brazilian Grand Prix at the Sao Paulo circuit.

The Mayor of Sao Paulo, Luisa Erundina, announced the deal last week, although FISA has yet to confirm the news. No official word is expected from Paris until the next World Motor Sports Council meeting at the start of December.

Work to shorten the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace began a week ago and is scheduled to be completed before February 25, when the track will be inspected by FISA safety delegates.

The US$3.5 million redevelopment scheme will see the 4.94-mile track being shortened to 2.99 miles.

The main straight is to be cut by 200m, and a new left-right complex will be added. This will bring down the average speed considerably.

A new control tower and media centre are to be built and new pits are also planned although, with the rainy season approaching, the garages are not expected to be built until 1991.

After the deal to hold the race in Rio fell through, the local national sporting authority, the Confedracao Brasileira de Automobilismo, tried to have the race moved to Brasilia, but Sao Paulo has landed the prize thanks to a financial package between Shell Brazil and Sao Paulo City Hall.

Webb retires from BHL

John and Angela Webb are to leave Brands Hatch Leisure plc in February of next year.

The shock news of the Webbs' departure was contained in a statement issued by BHL, which read as follows:

"Coinciding with the 40th Anniversary next Easter of Brands Hatch as a surfaced race circuit, John and Angela Webb are retiring to Spain. John Webb will then be in his 60th year.

"As a result the Webbs are relinquishing, from February 28 1990, their day-to-day responsibilities and directorships respectively as chief executive and deputy managing dirctor of Brands Hatch Leisure PLC.

"Following nearly 55 enjoyable years of joint service, and an anticipated record trading year in 1989, Mr and Mrs Webb are seeking a more relaxed life together in the future. They will continue, however, to act as consultants to the group.

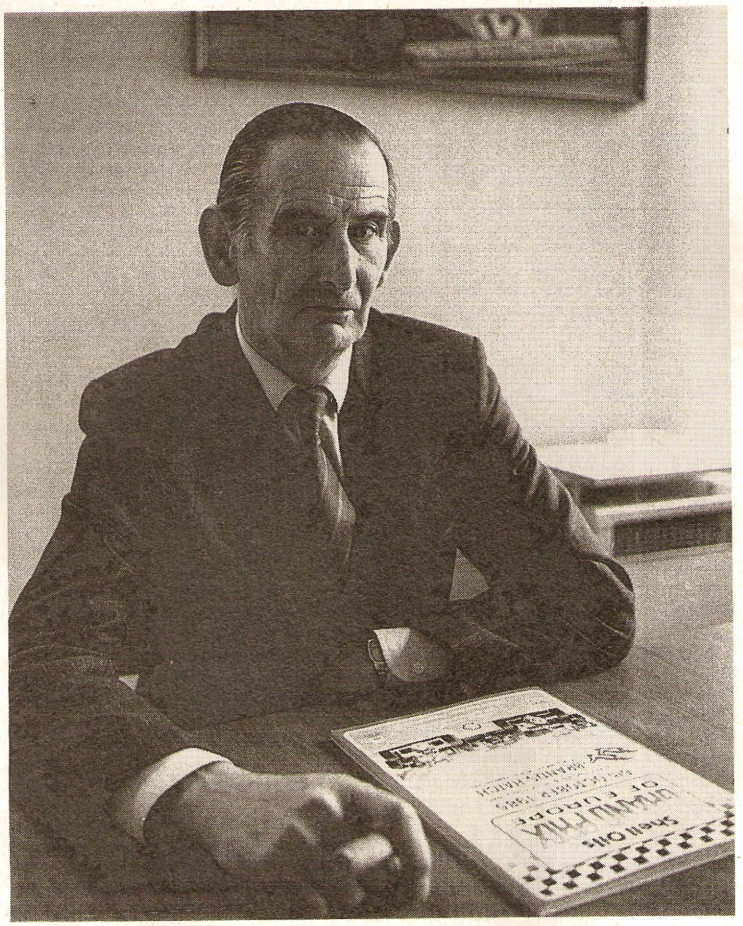
"As of March 1 1990, Mrs Mary Foulston, chairman of the board, will assume the additional role of chief executive of Brands Hatch Leisure plc and Nicola Foulston, the commercial director, will become chief executive of Brands Hatch Circuits Ltd and its associated operating companies."

John Webb himself has refused to comment on the circumstances of his departure beyond the contents of the Brands Hatch statement, but Nicola Foulston told us: "It has been planned for about the past 18 months that whenever we were in a position, and when the calendar allowed, the Webbs would move aside to go to Spain and continue working with us on a consultancy basis."

The new chief executive of Brands Hatch Circuits added that there are no changes of direction planned for 1990, but that an increased re-investment would begin in the middle of next year.

Conflicting stories about the future of Brands Hatch to reach our ears have hinted at both the sale of the track and a multi-million pound facelift. Nicola Foulston, however, was categorical on both issues: "As long as I am chief executive, the circuit, or any part of it, is not for sale.

"As regards the development, large sums are not involved at the moment. Some family money may be available in future, but the idea is that the re-investment will occur from self-financing."



John Webb has been a leading light in British motorsport for over 30 years.

Berger in Japan

Gerhard Berger had his first runs in a McLaren-Honda MP4/5 over the weekend at Suzuka.

The Austrian was using the McLaren development chassis, based permanently in Japan, and normally used by the team's test driver Emanuele Pirro. This is slightly larger than the race chassis used by Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost this season and, at present, is the only MP4/5 into which he fits.

Gerhard's first McLaren test came just four days after McLaren and Ferrari agreed terms for the release of the Austrian from his Ferrari contract. This was linked to the release of Alain Prost from his McLaren commitments and leaves the World Champion free to begin testing work for Ferrari.

McNish in Portugal

Allan McNish had his first taste of Formula 1 power last week when he tested for McLaren at Estoril.

"I ran five laps on Wednesday and some 30 laps on Thursday," said the British F3 Champion, speaking from Macau. "It was in the development car. It was good fun. I really enjoyed it. It was much easier than I anticipated."

The test was just a one-off for McNish, as Emanuele Pirro is expected to be retained as McLaren's test driver next season.

"As far as the test went," said a McLaren spokesman, "he did a good job – as one would expect. We were not expecting fireworks and we'd probably have been unhappy if we'd seen them!"

Senna: no retirement

Ayrton Senna has denied stories circulating that he is considering retiring from Grand Prix racing.

Senna was testing for McLaren at Estoril and told local journalists that he is now more motivated than ever.

He will, however, now be taking a long holiday in Brazil, missing the forthcoming Estoril tests.

Yamaha consolidates

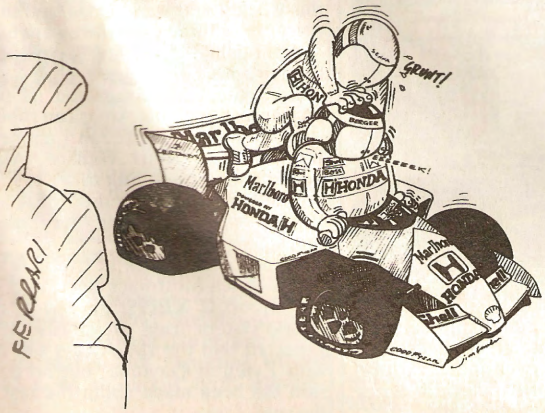
Yamaha has confirmed that it will be supplying its engines to Zakspeed in 1990 on an exclusive basis.

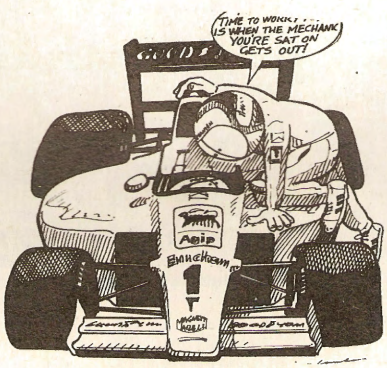
The announcement ended rumours that the Japanese manufacturer would also be giving its power units to the Minardi team.

"There have not been the results expected this year," said Mr R Yamashita, Director of Automotive Engine Operations at Yamaha. "Among these, the quality of some of the parts supplied to us early in the year was not very good and our electronic management system was not right. We are switching to the Bosch system.

"Improved performance is expected in 1990. We have confidence in Zakspeed and the future."

Mr Yamashita added that the company will continue to develop the OX88 engine and that Yamaha is still of the opinion that the V8 offers advantages over the V10s and V12s.





Boost for Eurobrun

The EuroBrun team is to run a two-car Formula 1 operation next season, with major financial backing having been found from Middle Eastern sources.

The sponsorship is believed to be substantial and should allow the team to show better form than it has demonstrated to date.

Swiss sources suggest that Walter Brun is intending to move the team's base from its present location at the Euroracing workshops at Senago near Milan in Italy. It is thought likely that the new base will be in Switzerland. It remains to be seen whether Pavanello will continue to have an active involvement in the running of the racing team.

Brun Technics, the team's design office in Basingstoke, will continue in its present form, under the guidance of George Ryton.

The Basingstoke team is working on an all-new ER190 which should appear in the mid-season. The team is expected to start the year with a Judd-engined ER189.

There is no word on who might drive, but in recent days the name of Roberto Moreno has come up, the Brazilian visiting Switzerland last week.

Touring car cup denial

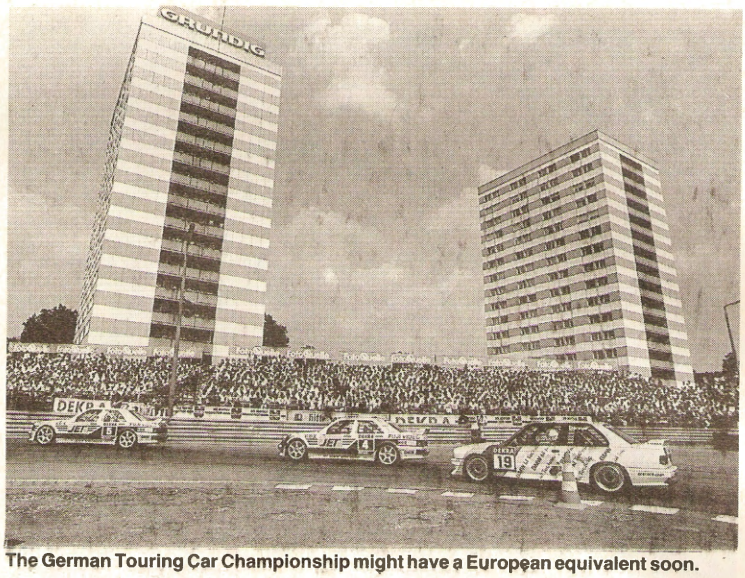
FISA has denied any involvement or discussions with DEKRA, sponsors of the German Touring Car Championship, regarding a single class FIA Cup touring car series supporting Grands Prix.

DEKRA has already issued draft proposals to several manufacturers for a 1990 FIA International Touring Car Cup. The intention was to have technical regulations based upon the GTCC, although manufacturers were asked to submit any suggestions that they may wish to see incorporated in the series.

The races were planned to support the Grands Prix of San Marino, Monaco, Germany, France, Britain, Hungary, Spain and Belgium with practice taking place on Friday and the race the following day.

DEKRA's projected sporting rules suggest races of 75kms each and a maximum of 14 cars with two cars per team competing. Each team would be allowed to participate twice with three cars without paying a further entry fee, and it has been suggested that Grand Prix drivers may be seen in guest appearances.

The entry fees mentioned were substantial, $250,000 per car for the series, with the teams undertaking to contest all eight races. According to DEKRA, some seven manufacturers and seven teams have shown strong interest, although it is now thought that if the series does come to fruition, it will now begin in 1991.



The German Touring Car Championship might have a European equivalent soon.

DEKRA told AUTOSPORT that it envisaged the series becoming an official FISA championship and that the entry fees are justified by the position on the F1 programme and by television coverage, which, it said, would be organised by FOCA TV.

In its proposal to the manufacturers, DEKRA states that "current discussions with the responsible people at FIA, FISA and FOCA TV have been very positive." FISA, however, says "neither the FIA nor the FISA has had any contact with this company."

The suggestions sound very much like the proposals laid down for the World Touring Car Championship back in 1987. While FISA may indeed know nothing about the plans, other interested parties may be floating the idea to test response from manufacturers.

Honda's WS-PC project?

It seems increasingly likely that Honda is planning an assault on the World Sports-Prototype Championship, starting as early as 1991.

We hear that a car will be built in Japan under the auspices of Mugen, possibly utilising British technology. It will be raced with the new 3.5-litre V12 engine which McLaren is due to start using next year!

Although confirmation from Honda itself is a long way off, we understand that the other Japanese manufacturers – Nissan, Toyota and Mazda – are convinced that it will happen...

Nissan at Estoril

The factory Nissan Group C team is to undertake two days of testing at Estoril this week.

With Julian Bailey in Macau, Mark Blundell and Andrew Gilbert-Scott will be on hand to try two cars. One will be set-up for testing Dunlop's latest radials, while the second will incorporate a number of chassis mods, including Eric Broadley-inspired front suspension.

The new Nissan R90C is due to appear in January, and will feature several changes from the existing car, including revised aerodynamics and new suspension.

There is still no news on Nissan's WS-PC plans for 1990, which are partly dependent on the result of the Le Mans discussions. NME boss Howard Marsden is due in Japan next week for the final decision.

Alfa shelves sportscar challenge?

Alfa Romeo's on-off World Sports-Prototype Championship programme looks to be floundering once again.

Although the company has tested its Procar V10 in the back of an old Lancia LC2, and there have been rumours that Dallara was invited to build a chassis, little firm news has been forthcoming about the project.

We now hear that the company has decided that the Indycar effort and Lancia rally programme have stretched its resources sufficiently and that it no longer wishes to participate in Group C. Alfa insiders have apparently suggested that the move to long distance four hour races in 1991 was the final straw.

Alfa will be forced to declare its hand next month, when members of the Sports-Prototype Manufacturers' Commission will have to provide confirmation of their participation in 1991, or concede their places...

FIA and Le Mans close to solution

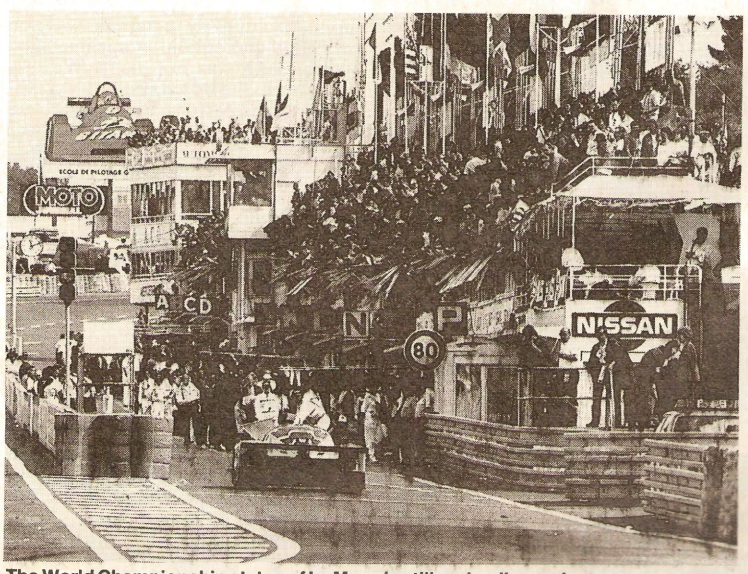
Jean-Marie Balestre met representatives of the Automobile Club de l'Ouest in Paris last week, in order to discuss the World Championship status of the Le Mans 24 Hours.

No decision has been made as yet, but the ACO has issued a statement suggesting that agreement is close at hand.

The statement, headlined "Within sight of a solution", says that the "FIA and ACO examined the basis of an agreement likely to protect major interests of both parties. It has been decided that the ACO would present a draft agreement within a few days in order to clarify the situation with as little delay as possible, the ACO emphasising to the FIA the fact that a decision has to be made very quickly, as choices of pilots and sponsors are beginning to take shape."

No details of the discussions have been revealed, but we understand that the ACO wishes to retain the TV rights to the event, and complete existing multi-year contracts with broadcasters. In return, FISA would receive certain benefits, perhaps including some advertising rights.

No firm indication has been given as to when a final announcement will be made, but news is expected next week.



The World Championship status of Le Mans is still under discussion.

It is no exaggeration to say that the future of the WS-PC depends upon the outcome of the discussions, as Le Mans will determine the shape of the still unconfirmed 1990 calendar.

Most of the major manufacturers have yet to finalise their plans, and some teams have even indicated that they might not participate in a series which doesn't include Le Mans.

Jaguar to run Goodyears

TWR's Jaguars will run on Goodyear tyres in both IMSA and the WS-PC next year, ending a five year association with Dunlop.

"We've signed a contract with Goodyear for IMSA and Group C for 1990," commented Tom Walkinshaw this week, "and we have an option to carry on for three years if we want to."

Although Goodyears have been tried in both Europe and the USA this season, the team conducted its first proper tests with the American rubber at Daytona last week. Jan Lammers, John Nielsen, Andy Wallace, Alain Ferté and Eliseo Salazar were all present and tried both the IMSA and WS-PC cars, recording very quick times.

Another change for next year is the use of Bosch Motronics electronics on the Group C XJR11, instead of the Zytek system used previously. It is expected that the IMSA cars will run with Zytek at Daytona, but no decision has been made about the rest of the year.

Mercedes supports juniors

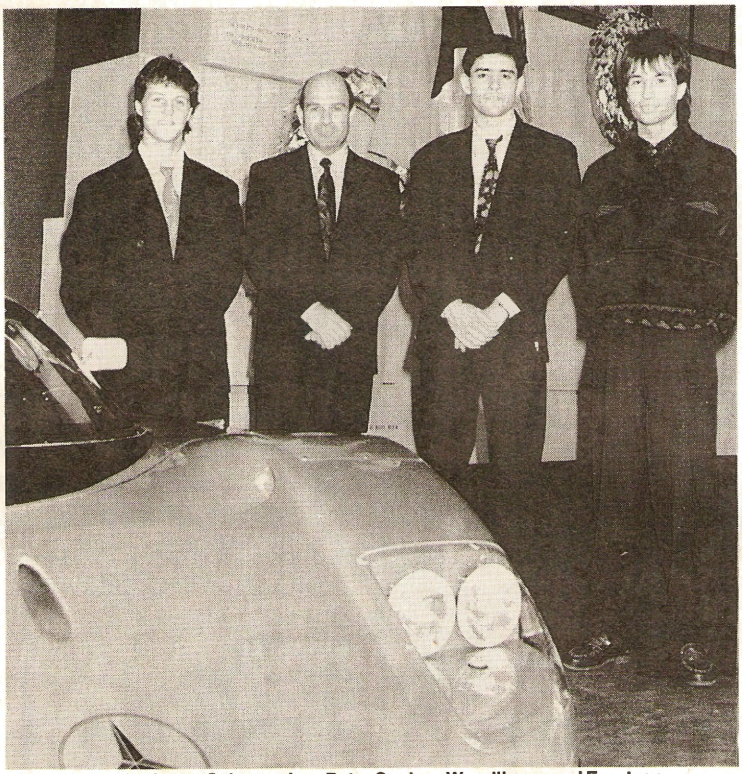
Mercedes has announced its plans for the 1990 World Sports-Prototype Championship. As exclusively revealed in *Pit & Paddock* on October 19, the German giant has ditched Kenny Acheson in favour of a junior team.

World Champion Jean-Louis Schlesser and Mauro Baldi will both stay on, sharing car No 1. Jochen Mass will anchor car No 2, and co-driving duties will be split during the season between Heinz-Harald Frentzen, Michael Schumacher and Austrian Karl Wendlinger.

These three, who will all be 21-years-old at the start of next season, will be collectively known as the 'L-Team', and will spend the year learning from Mass. It is expected that at least one of the Formula 3 graduates will earn a full time seat in 1991, the first year of the 3.5-litre formula. They will continue to run parallel programmes in F3000 or F3 this season.

In announcing the L-Team, Mercedes motor sports boss Jochen Neerpasch opined that the new 3.5-litre era of Group C cars will require a younger, more competitive type of driver. "Our task is to make the team of drivers younger in the future."

The three newcomers gained their first experience of a Sauber-Mercedes C9 at Paul Ricard last week. Frentzen proved the quickest, while Wendlinger had a couple of spins, but all three apparently showed promise.



Happy Mercedes boys; Schumacher, Peter Sauber, Wendlinger and Frentzen.

Eliseo – Jaguar chance.

Salazar to Daytona

Chilean Eliseo Salazar is to join the TWR Jaguar squad for the Daytona and Le Mans 24 Hour races.

Salazar spent most of the 1989 season driving for Spice Engineering, but had a one-off drive for Jaguar at Le Mans, sharing a car with the Ferté brothers. He put in a good performance, despite having undergone a serious chest operation just a few weeks beforehand.

The former ATS, March and Ensign Formula 1 driver tested for TWR at Daytona last week.

Schlesser defends crown with new C11

The Sauber Mercedes team has confirmed that its new C11 will debut at the first race of next season, in the hands of Jean-Louis Schlesser and Mauro Baldi.

Intriguingly, the car will be known simply as a Mercedes C11, the Sauber tag having been dropped from the car name. The C9 will not be pensioned off immediately however, as Jochen Mass and his squad of junior 'L-Team' drivers will definitely start the season with one of the older cars, before switching to a C11.

Sauber faces a triple challenge in 1990, as the new 3.5-litre car – to be known, somewhat curiously, as a C291 – will test before the end of the year.

All the cars will use Goodyear tyres next year, having run on Michelin rubber for the past three seasons. The move has been prompted by Michelin's commitment to Peugeot. The team tried Goodyears in the first C11 test six weeks ago, and used them again when the C11 ran for the second time at Paul Ricard last week.

Safety at the Sarthe

Among the modifications to the Le Mans 24 Hours circuit for 1990 will be the introduction of concrete retaining walls in the 'new section', on the run from the Porsche Curves to the Ford Chicane.

In recent years this has been the scene of many of the race's most serious accidents, and on several occasions cars have flattened or cleared the guardrail.

Andrea – hot pursuit?

F1 fun in Bologna

The annual Bologna Motor Show on the weekend of December 3-4 is to feature a unique Formula 1 event.

The competition will see pursuit races between pairs of Grand Prix cars. The winner of each race will go forward in a knockout format.

Scuderia Italia is expected to send one car for Andrea de Cesaris, with two Osellas, two Colonis and two Minardis also expected to appear.

Goodyear is not expecting to be called upon to supply tyres for the event.

March's custom build

March will dedicate its full Indycar effort to its two major client contracts, Porsche and Alfa Romeo, next season.

"Both require a much larger commitment than before," commented March Engineering MD Dave Reeves. "To engineer customer cars for perhaps three further engine installations, particularly at a time when next year's rules package is still not finalised, would force us to dilute our efforts for Porsche and Alfa. We also want to keep design and manufacturing capacity available for the 1991 sportscar programme."

Six Indycar chassis will be built for Porsche in March's Bicester factory, which has been extended by the addition of new autoclave and assembly facilities.

The March Alfa design and build programme will be based at Colnbrook where four cars will be constructed with appropriate short and high speed oval, and road race kits for the US-based team.

Chevys for Shierson

Doug Shierson has confirmed that his Indycar team will enjoy the use of Ilmor/Chevrolet engines in next year's CART series.

Shierson's Domino's Pizza Lola-Chevrolet T90/00 will be raced next season by Arie Luyendyk, who replaces Raul Boesel in the team. The Dutchman has already tested twice for Shierson aboard one of the team's Lola-Judd T8900s.

Shierson's announcement means that four teams – Penske, Newman/Haas, Galles-Kraco and Shierson – will run Chevrolets in Indycar racing next year.

The team's engines will be maintained by Franz Weis' VDS Engines in Midland, Texas, as are the present Newman/Haas and Galles-Kraco units.

It looks likely that Shierson will oversee a second team next year. This is expected to be based in Indianapolis and will run Lola-Judds for Canadian rising star Scott Goodyear, with sponsorship from Canadian financial services company MacKenzie.

Sears – Aston's fourth man.

Aston's quartet

Brian Redman and David Sears have both signed to drive for Aston Martin in next year's WS-PC, joining David Leslie and Michael Roe.

However, the Proteus team has yet to make a final decision on whether or not it will run two cars in the full World Championship.

Le Mans is a priority for Aston, and it may forego a full two-car season in order to concentrate on a three-car effort in the 24 Hours, in which case it will probably give priority to the Roe/Leslie pairing.

DAMS signs McNish

Allan McNish and Erik Comas are almost certain to form the DAMS Lola line-up in Formula 3000 next year.

McNish himself was in Macau when we spoke to him on Monday evening, the young Scot having flown out in preparation for next weekend's F3 Grand Prix immediately after his McLaren test in Estoril (see separate story). "All I can say at the moment is that I want to do F3000 next year," was Allan's response about a seat with DAMS.

However, DAMS team boss Jean-Paul Driot confirmed that he had completed negotiations with Marlboro and will run two cars in its full livery for Comas and McNish.

"I have already been in England with my team manager to see McNish. He is expected back from Macau on December 3 and he is due here to sign on December 5. We will again have works support from Lola and the only remaining thing we have to do is sort Allan somewhere to live in France."

Comas finished runner-up to Jean Alesi in this season's F3000 series and will start next season as championship favourite. Driot, however, was adamant that his priority is always to turn out identical machinery. "That's why I like to run cars in the same livery. The drivers get the idea that it's done for both of them and it looks good for the team. At GDBA we had the all green cars and at DAMS, the blue and white ones."

Alain Roux will oversee the Comas car next year, and Driot is currently in negotiation with an English-speaking engineer to look after McNish.

"That won't be a problem," he explained. "We will be working closely with Mark Williams from Lola and Neil Brown on the engines. We are an international team."

McNish's signing will end the hopes of the DAMS drive held out by Eric van de Poele, Stephane Proulx and Jean-Marc Gounon.

F3000 entrant Jean-Paul Driot will have Allan McNish under his wing next year.

Lolas for Pacific

Pacific Racing will run Lola chassis in the FIA International F3000 Championship next year.

With DAMS announcing that Allan McNish will join Erik Comas in the team next year (see separate story) , Pacific would appear to have lost the support of Marlboro.

Team boss Keith Wiggins told us earlier this week: "I would very much like to retain the services of Eddie Irvine, but it is a question of him raising a budget."

Canadian Stephane Proulx is rumoured to be close to a deal.

Pacific will continue to use Neil Brown-tuned Mugen engines next year and will have its engineering staff strengthened by the arrival of Roly Vincini and "a top assistant Formula 1 designer".

GRANT ADCOX

A fierce accident in last weekend's NASCAR 500-mile race at Atlanta International Raceway claimed the life of 39-year-old Grant Adcox.

A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Adcox had raced infrequently in NASCAR for many years. Recently he had raced with some success in ARCA (Automobile Racing Club of America) stock cars and had his best year in NASCAR's top league back in 1978, finishing fifth in that year's Talladega 500.

Adcox, driving his own Oldsmobile, died of massive head and chest injuries after striking the wall a hard blow exiting Turn 2.

A sombre Dale Earnhardt paid tribute to Adcox after Sunday's race. "He was a friend of mine, a good man. He worked hard at his racing. This is a very sad thing."

Walter – staying in Germany.

Rohrl plays at home

Walter Rohrl will contest only the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours endurance races next spring, should Audi USA continue the marque's IMSA GTO programme in 1990 (see separate story).

Rohrl, twice World Rally Champion, is no longer interested in extensive transatlantic commuting. The lofty German, who is now 42, will instead head up Audi's development team as it prepares the V8 saloon for the GTCC.

Busby runs a Nissan

Jim Busby's ex-Electramotive Nissan GTP car was tested for the first time at Daytona last week.

Longtime IMSA Porsche entrant Busby has decided to follow the Nissan route after several successful seasons with 962s, and retains backing from Miller High Life and tyres from BF Goodrich. He will eventually receive a second spare car from Don Devendorf's team, and may run both in some races.

As yet Busby has made no decisions about drivers, the team having lost both John Andretti and Bob Wollek to their respective Porsche commitments. The car was tested at Daytona by ex-Electramotive man John Morton, together with John Paul Jr and highly-rated coming man Parker Johnstone.

"It went very well," Busby commented earlier this week, "and we were pleasantly surprised. The Indycar drive is a wonderful opportunity for John (Andretti), but it did catch us a little by surprise. We're scrabbling around a bit to replace him."

Busby will test further new drivers at Laguna Seca in the near future.

Haas confirms Mario

Carl Haas has confirmed that Mario Andretti has signed for two more years with the Indycar team he joined seven years ago.

Haas has also confirmed Michael Andretti's signing for 1990 and '91, along with primary sponsor Kmart.

Haas also indicated that he is serious about offering a supply of Chevrolet engines to AJ Foyt. "If Ilmor and Chevrolet won't do it, I'm prepared to," declared Haas. "I'm lobbying for it and I think they should do it."

Carl – more Andretti.

Roger – circuit hunting.

Penske to Atlanta?

CART and Penske Racetrack officials were at Atlanta Raceway last weekend, investigating the possibility of running a CART race there in 1990.

The demise of the Pocono 500 has left a three-week break in the CART schedule in August and a race in Atlanta would fill this gap.

Roger Penske has shown a longterm interest in the 1.522-mile superspeedway, south of Atlanta, and is considered by many people to be in the process of acquiring the track.

Galmer to join F3000 fray

Galmer Racing is to join the Formula 3000 circus next season.

Alan Mertens, who has spent most of his time in the USA over the last few years, recently working with Al Unser Jr, is to spend more time in England next year, where one of his tasks will be to oversee the F3000 project.

"The whole idea is to increase the awareness of the company in Europe rather than having all our eggs in one basket," explained Mertens.

Galmer already has a 9000 sqft factory and has recently acquired an extra factory unit in Bicester from where the F3000 team will be run. The outfit can boast a wealth of engineering experience, including former works March and Onyx man Bernie Marcus.

Considering the Indycar association with Lola, it is widely anticipated that Galmer will run the Huntingdon manufacturer's cars next year, and it has already secured a supply of Mugen engines.

There is no word on drivers at present, although Mertens is talking to at least six names. The team has yet to take a decision on whether it will run one car or two.

Madgwick tests

Italian Andrea Montermini and Frenchman Laurent Daumet both tested a Formula 3000 Madgwick Reynard at Snetterton last week.

Both youngsters reportedly acquitted themselves well, although Montermini had an excursion at Coram and curtailed the day with a spin.

Madgwick intends to carry out further evaluation tests at the end of the month with Giovanni Bonnano and Claude Bourbonnais both slated for a run.

Hahne – following Hubert.

Armin's BMW deal

Armin Hahne has signed to become a factory BMW driver next season in the German Touring Car Championship.

Hahne, who is recovering from complications to leg injuries sustained in a huge accident at the Nurburgring earlier this year, will be confirmed with the Bavarian manufacturer at this weekend's annual BMW prizegiving in Munich.

Hahne has twice won the Spa 24 Hours for BMW, but he has never been a factory contracted driver. His elder brother Hubert Hahne was a highly successful works BMW touring car and Formula 2 driver in the sixties.

Mexican F2 takes off

Interest in Mexico's new Formula 2 category is growing, despite opposition from two recently announced rival championships.

Michel Jourdain, promoter of the successful Formula K championship, has introduced Formula 2 for 1990 as a logical progression from the current spaceframe cars. The F2 machines will be based on Formula Atlantic specification Ralt RT4s, assembled in Mexico. All cars will have Chrysler engines.

Thus far Jourdain has taken orders for 28 of the cars, many from newcomers to single seaters. In addition, he is allowing owners of Formula K cars to run them in 1990 with F2 wheels and slicks.

Despite this concession, two of the leading Formula K manufacturers have decided to run their own series (see separate story). Mexico will also have an F3 championship in 1990, although it has yet to generate much interest among local competitors.

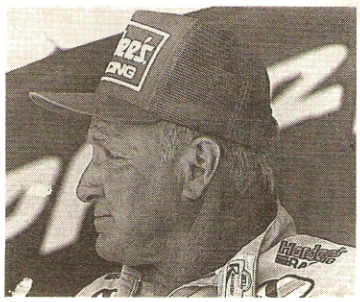
Trickle joins Yarborough

Dick Trickle is to replace Dale Jarrett in Cale Yarborough's NASCAR team next year.

The 48-year old Trickle is known as America's "winningest race driver" after a lengthy career racing stock cars in the upper midwest.

Trickle has run one of the Stavola Bros Buicks this year, standing in for the injured pair of Bobby Allison and Mike Alexander, and has won NASCAR's rookie-of-the-year award.

Trickle will be sponsored in the Yarborough team by TopArtic, an antifreeze manufacturer.



Yarborough – signing Rookie of the Year.

Bowman's lifeline

Bowman Racing has been thrown a lifeline in its quest to help David Brabham claim the British Formula 3 Championship title.

Although the engines used by Brabham and Allan McNish at the British Grand Prix meeting have been declared illegal by FISA, the RAC MSA has granted Bowman a second chance to appeal Brabham's disqualification, something team boss Steve Hollman elected not to do in July. A bulletin from the RAC MSA states that "all parties are reminded of their rights of appeal to the Stewards of the RAC against the above decision".

Steve Hollman of Bowman Racing has registered an appeal.

McNish is provisionally the champion, as a result of West Surrey Racing having appealed his disqualification from the Grand Prix meeting.

A settlement of both of these appeals is not expected now until the New Year. No-one at the RAC MSA was able to comment on the situation as we went to press.

GP tests new Spice

GP Motorsport took delivery of its new Spice SE90C C1 contender last week, and the car will test at Estoril next month, in the hands of David Hobbs and Philippe de Henning.

The Silverstone-based team is planning to run two 3.5-litre Spices in next year's WS-PC, and has been talking to a number of drivers. The cars will utilise 6-speed ADA-built gearboxes, and Coswoth DFR engines.

IS THIS YOU?

AUTOSPORT is looking for a sub-editor. The ideal candidate should have two to three years' experience in newspaper or magazine subbing and a working knowledge of motor sport.

The job requires the accurate handling of event reportage and features, and the ability to work to tight deadlines. Applicants should have a strong eye for detail and the good humour to work lengthy hours with a young and dedicated team.

Curriculum vitae should be sent to The Editor, AUTOSPORT, Haymarket Magazines, 60 Waldegrave Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 8LG.

Audi's German attack

Audi Sport is to develop its new V8 saloon for use in the German Touring Car Championship.

Although no official announcement has yet been made in Ingolstadt, the move is likely to be at the expense of continued factory involvement in the successful IMSA GTO programme.

Herwart Kreiner, head of Audi Sport, suggested last week that the American racing could – after a TransAm title with the 200 Quattro, and a string of IMSA wins – no longer be funded from Germany.

He did intimate, however, that the four tubeframe Audi 90 Quattros would be made available to Audi USA's competition arm, under Jo Hoppen, should it wish to continue.

Walter Rohrl will do much of the test and development driving of the new 3.6-litre touring car.

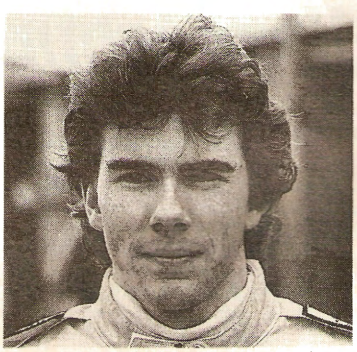
PSR's appeal success

Paul Stewart Racing has won its appeal against Stewart's exclusion from the Donington round of the British Formula 3 series on September 17.

Stewart had been excluded from seventh place when his airbox failed a post-race vacuum test.

However, the RAC MSA's Eligibility Appeal Panel has considered written evidence from Stewart and ruled that the loss of vacuum was due to a leak that occurred due to accidental causes.

Stewart remains disqualified from the race, but no longer faces the 18 point (two maximum scores) deduction that was applied after the race.



Stewart – successful appeal.

New Esso BTCC schedule

The two-class Esso British Touring Car Championship will be contested over 13 rounds next year.

The BBC has again made a commitment to cover the championship and there will be a second one hour race in addition to the usual Donington meeting, although both races will be one driver events rather than two as in the past.

The calendar is as follows:

1990 ESSO BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

April 13	Oulton Park
April 29	Donington Park
May 28	Thruxton
June 10	Silverstone
June 30	Oulton Park
July 15	Silverstone
July 22	Brands Hatch
August 5	Snetterton
August 19	Brands Hatch
August 27	Birmingham
September 16	Donington Park
September 23	Thruxton
October 7	Silverstone

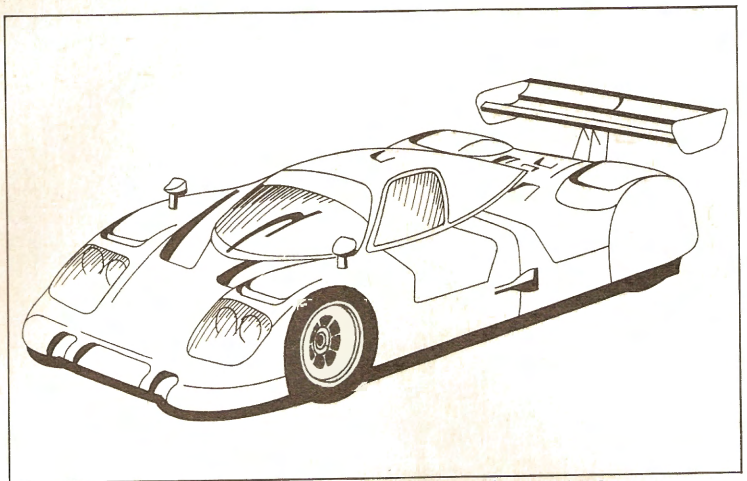
Cheetah WS-PC project

Swiss sportscar constructor Charles 'Chuck' Graeminger is to enter a new Cheetah in next year's WS-PC.

Graeminger pioneered the use of composite monocoques in Group C with his neat Cosworth and Aston Martin-powered cars in the early eighties. He has designed a new car, to be known as the G606, which features aerodynamics by experienced ex-Matra man Robert Choulet, and a chassis built by Anglia Composites in Suffolk.

Graeminger has formed a new company called SACO (*Société des Automobiles de Competition*), in partnership with two Swiss financiers. He plans to run a single works car, with Goodyear tyres and an as-yet-unnamed 3.5-litre engine.

In addition, he has sold a customer car for use in the German Supercup series with a Chevrolet engine.



Chuck Graeminger will run a brand new Cheetah in next year's WS-PC.

Menu tries Mazda

The Mazda Formula 3 engine ran again last week in a test session at Snetterton.

The engine was fitted to one of Racefax's Ralt RT33s and Alain Menu did the driving, getting down to a best of 1m01.9s in 20 laps. "It was only a hack engine," Racefax's Paul Jackson reported on Monday. "Alain was impressed with the unit, though, and felt that a 1m01.4s was possible. But we weren't there to set fast times, merely provide a base line for future engine development."

The engine is from Mazda's 626, but work is progressing on the version from the 323, and this is said to be smaller and lighter. The new unit isn't expected until the end of January.

German street venue

A new German street circuit is planned close to the centre of St Wendel, near Trier. It is hoped that the proposed new venue will host a round of the German Touring Car series.

Plans for the 1.67-mile circuit will be scrutinised by the ONS (the German national sporting authority) within the next few weeks.

Teams and drivers in the German series are keen to see the project come to fruition, Klaus Ludwig commenting: "The circuit is completely suitable for touring car racing."

St Wendel is not entirely new to motorsport enthusiasts. Since 1984 it has been the venue of several motorbike races, and until this year, the annual Rallye Deutschland.

Subject to ONS approval, a September/October date for the new race is anticipated.

Mercedes GpA juniors

Mercedes is to run two young drivers in the German Touring Car Championship next year, alongside its WS-PC junior 'L-Team'.

The chosen drivers are Fritz Kreutzpointner, a 22-year-old who finished seventh in this year's Formula Ford Festival, and 21-year-old Thomas Winkelhock, younger brother of Manfred and Joachim and the 1989 German Formula Konig champion.

Both will drive 190Es for AMG, and will receive advice and tuition from Klaus Ludwig.

BMW tests young hopefuls

The final 10 drivers under consideration for the BMW Junior Team were tested at Silverstone last week.

Sixteen short-listed drivers were whittled down to 10 after a selection day that included mock television interviews, press conferences and physical fitness testing.

Frank Sytner posted a target lap of 1m14.55s as a target time for the day and each driver was given a 12-lap stint around the National circuit behind the wheel of an M3. Kurt Luby (who had new tyres) and Jonathan McGall proved quickest. The fastest lap times were as follows:

BMW Junior Team Test

1 Kurt Luby	1m14.54
2 Jonathan McGall	1m14.83
3 Tim Sugden	1m14.99
4 Warren Hughes	1m15.11
5 Richard Dean	1m15.16
6 Kelvin Burt	1m15.29
7 Niki Phillips	1m15.77
8 James Rhodes	1m16.43
9 Robbie Head	1m16.64
10 Lucy Rogers	1m17.28

Three pointed manoeuvring

The AMG, Snobeck and Mass-Schons teams will continue to represent Mercedes in the 1990 German Touring Car Championship.

In addition to the new junior drivers (see separate story), both Klaus Ludwig and Kurt Thiim will stay with AMG. Dany Snobeck will be taking a managerial role next season, so Roland Asch is moving from Mass-Schons to join Alain Cudini in the Frenchman's team.

The drivers for Mass-Schons have yet to be decided.

Donington show progress

The Motor Racing Show at Donington on February 2-4 is gathering momentum, with 58 companies already committed to the new initiative.

The diverse range of exhibitors will include volume race car manufactures such as Lola, racewear companies, preparation specialist and teams and the organisers are keen to ensure that championship winning cars from a variety of formulae will be on display.

On track action will be run in conjunction with the show, and a competition car sale is already attracting considerable interest from competitors wanting to sell their cars.

Another Mexican Formula

Martiga and CDD Lider, two of the leading Mexican Formula K teams, have joined forces to run a new single-seater series in 1990.

The two companies have decided not to participate in the new Formula 2, and have announced 'Superformula', which will be run for current Chrysler-powered Formula K cars with slicks instead of treaded tyres.

Although several privateers have apparently opted to follow the Superformula route, it seems unlikely that satisfactory grids will be obtained, in the face of opposition from both the new F2 and F3 championships.

BRIEFLY

■ Ferrari race engineer Giorgio Ascanelli resigned from Ferrari on Wednesday of last week, and is expected to begin working for Benetton shortly.

■ We hear that following FISA's announcement that it owns the rights to the visor strips on WS-PC cars, a major manufacturer sent the governing body an invoice for $1m per car...

■ It is rumoured that Electramotive Engineering may run a works Nissan at next year's Le Mans 24 Hours. This season the team's three drivers shared a factory R89C at the Sarthe, and Electramotive's Don Devendorf and Trevor Harris were on hand as observers.

■ Rumours in Italy suggest that Fiat, and a number of other manufacturers, are negotiating to buy Cosworth Engineering

Cerrato – Giro victor.

■ The Alfa 75 Turbo of Giorgio Francia, Dario Cerrato and Giuseppe Cerri won the Giro d'Italia last weekend. The similar car of Nicola Larini/Massimo Biasion/Tiziano Siviero was 20 seconds behind, while Roberto Guerrero came home fourth overall in the third Alfa.

■ Having enjoyed his WS-PC debut in a Spice SE89C at Hermanos Rodriguez last month, Indycar driver Bernard Jourdain recently had a test in a works IMSA Spice.

■ Spice Engineering is to undertake three days of testing at Estoril this week, with Ray Bellm driving. Several new drivers are expected to be given a run at a second test next month. These are rumoured to include Joachim Winkelhock and Bruno Giacomelli.

■ Rumours in Italy suggest that Fiat, and a number of other manufacturers, are negotiating to buy Cosworth Engineering.

■ Damon Hill was due to test a Middlebridge Reynard Formula 3000 chassis on Tuesday of this week.

■ Eugene O'Brien recently managed an unofficial best of 59.6 seconds around Silverstone's National Circuit aboard a CDM Reynard 89D.

■ An unusual sight at the recent Formula K finale in Mexico City was the Batmobile, making its first appearance at a race circuit. The sinister black machine made the trip from Hollywood, courtesy of Pepsi, sponsor of Claus Schinkel's Tiga FK88, and completed a slow lap of Hermanos Rodriguez prior to the race!

■ Gary Ayles and Derek Higgins tested for Alan Docking's Formula 3 team at Snetterton last week.

■ Bernard Dolan is reportedly a likely candidate for a seat in Eddie Jordan Racing's Formula 3 team next year.

PREVIEW: 38TH MACAU GRAND PRIX

Monaco of the east

The entry for this weekend's Macau Grand Prix (the 36th) looks to be one of the best ever.

Among the quality field of 32 entries for the Formula 3 race are Grand Prix drivers Bertrand Gachot and Julian Bailey. The Belgian Onyx and Rial driver will be racing an Intersport Ralt-Toyota RT33 in the colours of Federal Express, alongside Italian driver Alessandro Zanardi.

Former Tyrrell driver, Bailey, will compete in the famed green and white hues of Watson's Water as part of a three-pronged attack. Schubel Rennsport will prepare Spiess-engined Reynard 893s for Julian and German flier Heinz-Harald Frentzen, while Italian F3 champion – and Ferrari test driver (see separate story) – Gianni Morbidelli will carry Watson's Water colours on his Forti Corse Dallara-Alfa Romeo 389. With a line-up of this strength, Watson's Water must be confident of repeating the success they enjoyed in 1986 and '87 when their drivers Andy Wallace and Martin Donnelly won the race.

The drivers from the British F3 championship stand a good chance of glory, with champion Allan McNish being joined in the West Surrey Racing line-up by F3000 star Eddie Irvine, the Ulsterman one of the pace-setters at Macau in 1988.

McNish's former team mate at WSR, Derek Higgins, is part of a three-car Hutchison Telecom squad. Higgins and fellow Englishman Steve Robertson will drive Bowman-run Ralt-VWs, while the third car, a Reynard-Alfa is being driven by Italian F3 runner-up Antonio Tamburini – the Monaco F3 winner this spring. Bowman is also running a Ralt-VW for British F3000 champion Gary Brabham who finished fifth here last year. While the team will also run a similar car for Gary's younger brother, David, these are the colours of race sponsor Kawai Steel.

Kawai Steel will also be sponsoring Japanese driver Akihiko Nakaya. Japan's best hope could be newly crowned F3 champion Masahiko Kageyama who will be driving a Leyton House Ralt-Mugen RT33.

Macau traditionally provides the highlight of the Formula 3 season.

Other British series racers making the journey to the Far East are Mika Hakkinen, the spectacular Finn running with extra backing from Macau doyen Teddy Yip's Theodore outfit. Third place in 1988 went the way of Otto Rensing, and the German driver will be eager to bring success to Paul Stewart Racing after a season in which he has been most frustrated. Team captain Stewart will be looking to show how much he's learnt through 1989. Rickard Rydell was one of the Macau stars in 1988 and he's back for more with EJR.

France's honour will be carried by the ORECA pairing of Jean-Marc Gounon and Eric Helary and the KTR pairing of Laurent Daumet and Christophe Bouchut.

Germany, on the other hand, looks to champion Karl Wendlinger, Michael Bartels and Michael Schumacher, driving for Team Marko, Malte Bongers and WTS Motorsport respectively.

The race's international appeal spreads to South America, as Argentine Nestor Furlan is jetting in from Brazil, squeezing the street race into his tight Sudam F3 programme.

The Guia race

As well as F3, the Macau meeting also offers a classic touring car event; the Guia race.

Heading the 39 car, three class entry is the Andy Rouse Engineering pair of Ford Sierra RS500s for Rouse (Hutchison Telecom) and Tim Harvey (Watson's Water). Rallying specialist Stig Blomqvist will be keen that *he* is the top Ford driver, though, especially as he missed the RAC Rally in order to compete at Macau.

The Ford Sierra may be a bit of a handful around the ups and downs of this street circuit, and last year's winner Altfrid Heger is tipped as a likely victor, with Benetton F1 driver Emanuele Pirro as team mate in the Kamachi BMW team. Both will race BMW M3s.

Toyota is keen for a slice of the action, though, and Paolo Barilla is flying the flag with Team TOM'S Supra Turbo, as is Japanese F3000 champion Hitoshi Ogawa.

There's a further race that is bound to capture the public's attention; the Race of Champions. Driving Mazda's much vaunted new MX-5 Miata convertibles will be former champions Denny Hulme, Emerson Fittipaldi, Jody Scheckter, Alan Jones, Roy Salvadori, Innes Ireland, Hans Herrmann, Tom Sneva, Bobby Rahal, Al Unser, Bobby Unser, Robby Unser, Parnelli Jones, Johnny Rutherford and Geoff Brabham.

The Macau GP will be run in two legs, starting at midday on Sunday.

MACAU GP WINNERS

1979 Geoff Lees (GB)	Chevron-Ford B42
1980 Geoff Lees (GB)	Ralt-Ford RT1
1981 Bob Earl (USA)	Ralt-Ford RT1
1982 Roberto Moreno (BR)	Hayashi-Toyota 228
1983 Ayrton Senna (BR)	Ralt-Ford RT4
1984 John Nielsen (DK)	Ralt-Toyota RT3
1985 Mauricio Gugelmin (BR)	Ralt-VW RT30
1986 Andy Wallace (GB)	Reynard-VW 863
1987 Martin Donnelly (GB)	Ralt-TOM'S RT31
1988 Enrico Bertaggia (I)	Dallara-Alfa 388

German Touring car dates

The calendar for the 1990 German Touring Car Championship includes several changes from last year.

The series has been increased from 11 to 13 rounds, and includes new races at Wunstorf, Salzburgring (after a year's break) and Spa. The latter will support the 24 Hours in July.

A notable loss is the round which had traditionally supported the Nurburgring 24 Hours in June.

The full calendar is as follows:

1990 GERMAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

April 1	Zolder (B)
April 8	Hockenheim
April 29	Nurburgring
May 13	Avus
June 3	Nurburgring
June 17	Mainz-Finthen
July 1	Norisring
July 15	Wunstorf
July 22	Spa (B)
August 5	Diepholz
August 19	Salzburgring (A)
September 2	Nurburgring
September 16	Hockenheim

Denis is Ford's boy

Frenchman Denis Plichet triumphed over 18,000 hopefuls from around Europe to win the Ford-organised Fiesta Formula 1 Nations Cup competition. Fifteen finalists took part in a contest at Boreham last week, under the eagle eye of Jackie Stewart, undertaking exercises including skid control, a rallycross course, a gravel rally stage and high speed circuit driving. Plichet (above), a 30-year-old postman from Rouen, wins a test in a Benetton Formula 1 car, while runner-up and top Brit Mark Smithson earns a run in an F3000 Reynard. Both men also took home a new XR2i...

BRIEFLY

■ Dudley Wood has purchased the ex-works/GP Motorsport Spice-Cosworth SE87C with which Philippe de Henning won this year's German Supercup C1 title. Wood plans to race the car in next year's Supercup and the BRDC Sportscar series.

■ Peter Olsson had his first taste of Formula 3 last week, when he was given a run at Snetterton by Racefax. The Kent-domiciled Swedish teenager ended his day in the tyres at Riches.

■ Jose Luis di Palma is planning to compete in British Formula 3 in 1990. The Uruguayan is hoping to bring across sponsorship from Coca Cola.

■ Daniel Cingolani is looking to compete in the British Formua 3 Championship in 1990. The Argentinian driver is over in Europe, competing in an FF1600 race at Jerez last weekend.

■ John Davis, a former speedway World Champion, is aiming to contest the 1990 British Group N Championship in a BMW M3. As well as experience on two wheels, Davis has competed in Production saloons and FF2000 thus far.

■ Chevrolet's Beretta sports coupé has been selected as the pace car for the 1990 Indianapolis 500.

Louise's WCR aspirations

Louise Aitken-Walker is to make a serious bid for the Ladies Cup on next year's World Championship.

Although official confirmation has yet to be made, Vauxhall personnel spoke about a six round programme starting with Monte Carlo. The second GM EuroSport car will be driven by Malcolm Wilson but only on selected events, leaving Louise to bid for honours on her own.

However, both will have new co-drivers for the season. Louise is to take Christina Thorner – regularly a partner to Mats Jonsson in his Opel Kadett but more recently with Frederik Skoghag in the Group N Lancia. Louise's long-time partner, Ellen Morgan, has yet to be named for any programme next year, although she may be able to take up the spare seat alongside Dave Metcalfe.

Wilson's partnership with Ian Grindrod is over. The shock move came only last week although there have been rumours for some time. Wilson is to have Nicky Grist alongside him on his programme next year.

Louise Aitken-Walker will be co-driven by a new partner, Christina Thorner, in her bid for the 1990 Ladies Cup.

Schwarz thwarted by crash

Armin Schwarz was involved in a road traffic accident on the way to Silverstone on Sunday during the RAC Rally. His 200 Quattro turned right in front of an oncoming car but although there was severe damage to both cars there were no injuries.

The police are taking no action over the incident but Schwarz's hopes of repeating his fifth place of last year were ended. Only the night before he had been confirmed as a works Toyota driver for 1990 (see separate story).

Biasion to miss Race of Champions

The Race of Champions at the Nürburgring on December 2/3 may have to take place without Miki Biasion.

The Lancia team's recent dramas with the new 16-valve Integrale which forced them out of the RAC Rally before it started have now spread into a petty argument over the terms of Biasion's contract. He is supposed not to drive cars other than those prepared by Abarth and therefore, as Lancia is not sending official cars for the spectacular knockout contest between the sport's past Champions, Biasion may be sidelined.

However, organisers Michele Mouton and Frederik Johnsson are hoping that Lancia will take a more sporting view and allow the 1988/1989 Champion to compete.

Changes to 1000 Lakes

Next year's 1000 Lakes Rally will feature subtle changes geared to produce an earlier finish.

A start on Thursday evening, August 30, will see cars tackle a handful of stages before a night halt. Friday will be an afternoon/evening session but Saturday will see a full day's competition.

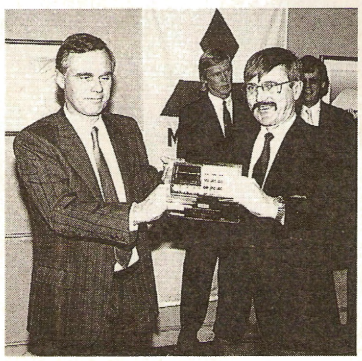
The rally will finish early on Sunday afternoon after 500kms of stages in a traditional 1450kms total route.

Schwarz to Toyota

Armin Schwarz has joined Team Toyota Europe. The German youngster will contest his national series and also a limited World Championship programme, starting with Monte Carlo.

The news, predicted in last week's *Special Stage*, was confirmed at Toyota's pre-RAC Rally party where Bjorn Waldegard was also named as the team's test driver, a Safari outing is also scheduled.

Team boss, Ove Andersson could not reveal the precise details of his programme in 1990, save for the appearance of Carlos Sainz, Mikael Eriksson and Schwarz on the Monte Carlo, nor could he nominate Schwarz's co-driver.



Armin – out of luck.

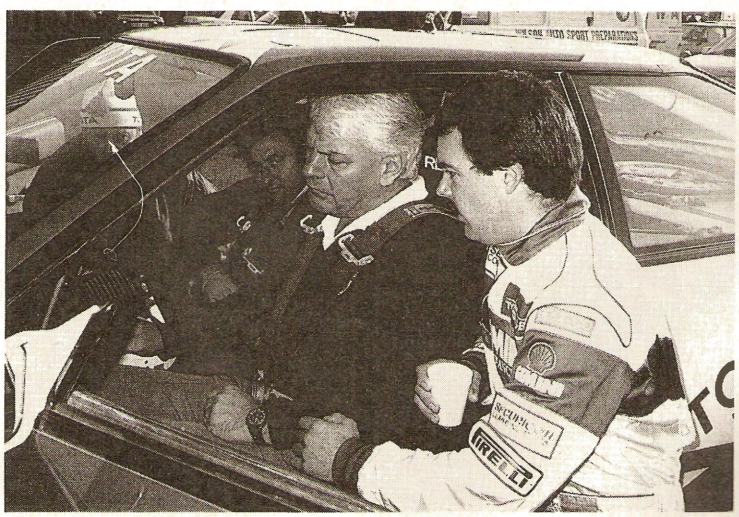
Bourne's Legacy

'Possum' Bourne paid a brief visit to the Lombard RAC Rally last week having seen the Subaru Legacy RS for the first time at Prodrive's Banbury base.

The New Zealander pronounced himself delighted with the new car. "I was expecting to be impressed, and David Richards did not let me down. In fact, it was far better than I imagined thanks to the team's attention to detail. There should be no need to develop as we go, it looks like it could be right from the start."

Homologation inspection passed without drama and a January 1 stamp should now be a formality. The car's papers have been very carefuly written to allow the maximum flexibility and already the Legacy RS is right on the 1100kgs minimum weight limit.

Bourne should drive the car, for the Japanese Koseki team on the Safari, New Zealand and Australia Rallies. Markku Alen's programme with the Prodrive car should include the Acropolis, 1000 Lakes, San Remo and the RAC Rallies plus the Safari with Koseki.



Blast from the past

Roger Clark was in action on the Lombard RAC Rally, trying out one of Toyota Team Europe's Celica GT-Fours. The Leicestershire man first sat in the car at a pre-event press test stage at Donington Park and found it quite a revelation. "When the power comes in, it's quite a useful tool," he confessed. It got even more interesting soon afterwards when Clark discovered the car has a 6-speed gearbox. "That came as quite a surprise!" On the first day of the event, Clark and former co-driver, Tony Mason, entertained the spectators at the Gemini Chatsworth stage as a taster for the BBC *Top Gear* live coverage.

Grounded

Toyota's aerial support for the RAC Rally was brought to a halt early in the event when it was discovered that the operation did not comply with the necessary regulations. Two planes had been flown over from Germany to act as a radio relay station but it appears that the necessary Home Office approval had not been forthcoming.

Berglund's award

Bruno Berglund is this year's Golden Halda award winner. The Swede was presented with the coveted trophy on Saturday night by its instigator, Gunnar Palm.

Recent years have seen the World Champion co-driver collect the award but Tiziano Siviero (winner in 1988) was shunned this time in favour of the man who has guided Ari Vatanen to so many desert successes, drawing on his experience in the United Nations forces some years ago when stationed in the desert during the Israel/Egypt war.

Nissan loses Japanese title

Nissan has been excluded from this year's Japanese National Rally Championship for illegalities in the engines of two cars. The overall title now goes to Mitsubishi.

Mitsuo Ayabe's Bluebird SSS-R won three of the 10 rounds and he would have been champion, while Eiichi Iwashita (son of Nissan's official preparation company chief, Yoshio Iwashita) lost his Class B title with a similar camshaft problem in the March R.

This is the second time that the Iwashita company has been kicked out of competition. He was found to have used an oversized engine to win his class on the 1982 Acropolis Rally. The Japanese are never happy to have engines checked – they are despatched to teams as sealed units and returned after the event – and the official Team Datsun Europe cars were excluded from New Zealand in 1979 after refusing to have the engines opened after the rally.

Ayabe's Bluebird SSS-R in Nissan's Iwashita workshop in Tokyo.

VW gives G60 go ahead

Volkswagen Motorsport has denied suggestions that the G60 Rallye has been delayed.

"We think this is a rumour started in England," said a spokesperson, "for that is where the questions have come from."

Erwin Weber tested the four-wheel drive, supercharged rally car last week and it is expected to make its World Championship debut as early as Portugal next year. However, the Group N version will not be ready until April or May.

Currently, Volkswagen is exempt from the restrictor rules applied to forced induction cars for 1990, but FISA has stated that this is a provisional exemption. The size of restrictor, and its application, may change.

Volkswagen insists that its G60 Rallye programme is running to plan.

Scotland opens up

The RSAC Scottish Rally, round 4 of the Shell Open Rally Championship, launched its 1990 rally prior to the RAC.

There will be two legs to the event, a northern loop on Saturday, June 7 and a southern loop which starts on Sunday, June 10 and finishes in Glasgow at lunchtime on Monday.

Reconnaisance is again permitted in convoy and pace notes may be used throughout this unique forest event.

In order to allow the Esso Scottish Championship to have a qualifying round on this event, the RSAC runs a national class at the rear of the field, thereby permitting non-homologated cars.

Full details are available from RSAC (Motorsport) Ltd, 11 Blythswood Square, Glasgow G2 4AG.

Shell
OPEN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
SUPPORTED BY
AUTOSPORT

Monte is flooded

The organisers of the Monte Carlo Challenge (*Special Stage*, November 9) are receiving a flood of entries.

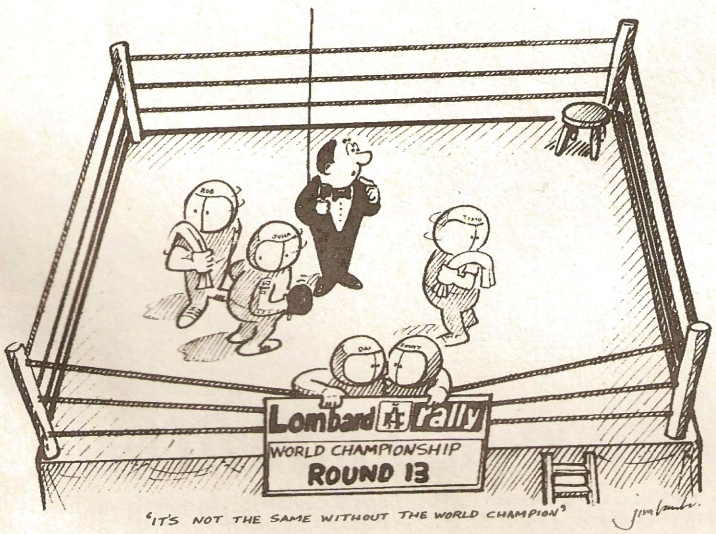
The maximum number is 60 and that will be reached within days at the current rate. Sealink has agreed to help sponsor the event and so outward ferry crossings for driver, co-driver and car will be provided free of charge.

Quenby and Kean.

School's programme

Rally schools are in the news again! The Silverstone-based Rally School, recently had a special couple of pupils to put through their paces when the RAC MSA's new Chief Executive, John Quenby (left in picture) and the Director of Technicl Services, Tom Kean, turned up for the day. No-one was saying how the visitors fared in their assessment, but at least they saw how many newcomers iron out their faults.

Meanwhile in Wales, Jan Churchill's 'Forest Experience and Rally School' has expanded its emphasis. Multi-discipline company days can be had using a variety of motorised transport, while there is still the best forest rally school to enjoy, Jan having a genuine forest stage on which to practice.



BRIEFLY

■ Pirelli introduced a new mud tyre to the Lombard RAC Rally, the 185-70/15 MS90, after proving very competitive in tests recently with Kenneth Eriksson in Wales.

■ The RAC MSA has agreed to let the ASWMC run a standard car class on its championship road rallies next year. Under current technical regulations, many standard cars cannot be used by virtue of their engine configuration or profile of some standard tyres. In most cases, the cars must remain as standard and permitted modifications are few and far between.

■ BP Oil UK Ltd entered rallying in a big way on the Lombard RAC Rally. Ray Cousins and Noelle L'Henaff were backed by BP Supergreen in their Sierra 4×4 to chase the NatWest Environmental award for the highest placed unleaded car on the event.

■ The Mobil 1 Rally Challenge is likely to enjoy a repeat showing over the Christmas holiday period. The successful 'Rallysprint' style event which has been screened on *Grandstand* over the weeks preceding the Lombard RAC Rally, has been considered a success by the BBC and is now expected to become an annual affair. The Challenge is also now to be screened by Sky Television.

Plato pipped at Winfield

Tinseau – star of the future?

Christophe Tinseau won last week's Ecole Winfield Pilote Elf competition at Magny-Cours.

A late burst by the Frenchman saw him pip Briton Jason Plato, who also drove superbly.

Although disappointed at missing the winner's fully-sponsored drive in Elf-Winfield's 1991 Formule Renault team, young Plato confirmed that he will contest the British series.

Philippe Leclercq, the very promising Pascal Lecomte and Thierry Leriche were the other combatants in an exceptional final – reminiscent of the Eric Bernard/Jean Alesi/Bertrand Gachot battle of 1983.

Britons Jason Courage, Christian Baker, Mike Mills and Russell Hicks failed to make the select quintet. Judges included Rene Arnoux, Jacques Laffite and Henri Pescarolo.

Plato – philosophical.

Carcasci sub-record in RF90 testing

Van Diemen's radical new RF90 proved itself effective when it shattered the Snetterton FF1600 lap record in testing.

"Paolo Carcasci was conducting three days of testing for us," Ralph Firman reported at the end of last week. "He was doing a back-to-back with Niko Palhares's Festival winning RF89. Paolo managed a best of 1m08.6s in the RF89, but then achieved a fantastic 1m08.1s in the new car. He said the car is finding this time through the Bombhole and Coram, where it's picking up 300rpm extra."

Development of the sleek newcomer will continue, with a few cars coming off the lines before Christmas.

Testing of the Mitsubishi-engined Formula Mirage has been concluded, with a best time of 1m03s being achieved. A build programme of 40 cars is now underway.

New Tolemans for sprint champions

British Sprint champion Nigel Bigwood will defend his title in a new Elf Toleman-Hart next season.

Ray Rowan is building a pair of chassis over the winter, the other for 1987 Warecrete champ Richard Ames.

The car which Bigwood ran this year – Rowan's pukka Formula 2 TG280 – is to be restored, long term, to its original circuit racing trim, right down to the white, green and yellow BP/Toleman Motorsport livery.

Ames, who won his crown in the TG280H which Ray drove to the national championship in 1985, has commissioned a replica of David Render's Rowan-built T87 version for the Auto Garage/Q8 team's assault.

Richard has sold his ex-Mark Blundell Lola-DFV T86/50 meanwhile, to Scottish circuit racer Ron Cumming.

Rowan is also revising his Roman-Hart in a bid to retain his position as British premier hillclimber.

Cuda to run Renaults

Bill Stone and Paul Jordan have formed Cuda Motorsport, initially to run a two-car team in next year's Formula Renault UK Championship.

Kiwi Stone was March Engineering's first employee in 1969, and subsequently co-founded Sabre Automotive (Reynard Racing Cars) with Adrian Reynard.

Jordan, an Oxford estate agent, also has extensive car and motorcycle race team experience. Formerly with the ATS F1 team, he has engineered F3 and F3000 cars with Eddie Jordan Racing and GA Motorsport over the past couple of seasons.

Cuda was chosen by Jordan, incidentally, without him knowing that former racer Stone had built a Formula Atlantic/Pacific car of the same name in New Zealand.

The duo have set-up the organisation in Bicester, and are "99 per cent certain to run Reynard 90FR chassis." Interested parties may call Jordan on (0831) 415317.

Voigt: TS15

Peter Voigt is to debut his Surtees TS15 Formula 2 chassis on the hills next season.

Voigt, who competed on Sunday's Mike Spence Stages rally (see *Sportscard*) with Gordon Bruce in a Riley 1.5, also intends to build up "father of TechCraft" around its original Brabham chassis frame.

The Lindfield violin maker, whose Konig-powered Renwick Voigt 500 wowed hillclimb fans a decade before the Jedi movement popularised the class, has enjoyed the ex-Roy Lane TechCraft-Buick for many years.

Forward pass

Formula Forward entrants have been issued with chassis bracing kits, following Tony Hancock's unpleasant accident at Brands Hatch last month.

Initial reaction from drivers is that the BHL marketed cars feel considerably stiffer. The modifications should aid handling and thus improve lap times.

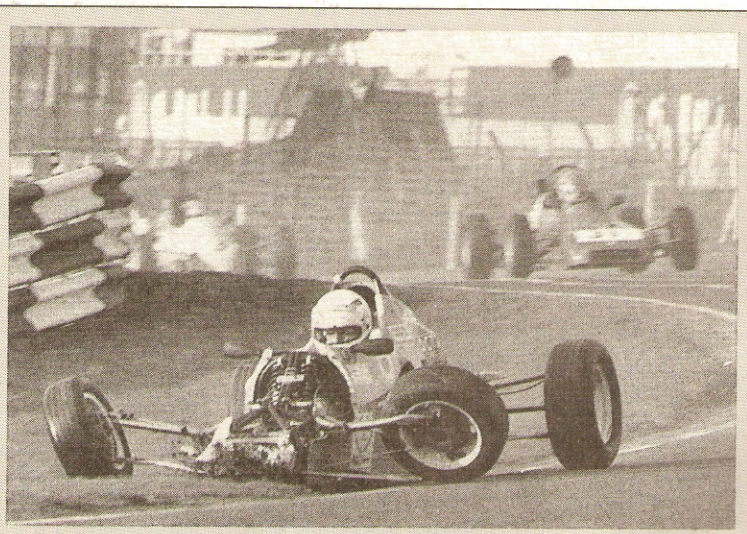
Hancock was overseeing Fast Forward team protege Piers Hunnisett's progress at Brands on Sunday. Tony's leg will be in plaster until January.

FAST 'cross

Formula and Sports Tyres is marketing a comprehensive and competitive range of FAST rallycross covers for 1990.

Following initial testing with John Welch last year, and further trials this season in Scandinavia, the Benelux countries and Germany, Bob Martin is offering competitive rubber in 13in, 15in and 16in fitments.

Full details are available from FAST's Bob Martin on (0902) 324440 or John Cross at Autocross on (0344) 422220.



Verdon-Roe's Swift exit

Bobby Verdon-Roe escaped with bruising at Brands Hatch on Sunday, when his DAD Swift FB89 snapped left at the crest of Paddock Bend, on his second qualifying lap. The car slammed headlong into the barriers, then ricocheted across the track into the opposite wall. It would appear from scrutiny – and John Marsh's dramatic photograph – that the incident was caused by the rod-end pulling out of the lower left front wishbone. Verdon-Roe was taken to hospital, but later released. He still leads the FF1600 Winter Series, albeit jointly with Alan Kelly, but hopes to resume his challenge this weekend. "I'm very glad it was a Swift," reflected Bobby on Monday. "It was one hell of an impact, and they build a very strong car."

Eric's RT3

Eric Humphreys will contest the 1600cc Racing Car class in next year's speed events, with a Ralt RT3.

The Huddersfield flier has bought one of Jeremy Goodman's ex-Formula 3 chassis, into which he will install the QED-prepared twin-cam engine from his ultra-successful Lotus 7.

Trevor Arkell is the proud new owner of the immaculate Modsports car, in which Eric has been a British Leaders front-runner for several years.

Olympians

Olympic Motorsport's Chris Creswell is relinquishing his position with the Oulton Park Racing School to expand his team in 1990.

The organisation is taking over the Jack Brabham Racing premises at Brands Hatch (where brother Rob Creswell has been based this year).

Having retained Chris's Champion of Brands title with Chris Goodwin, Olympic plans to field a pair of FF1600s (hopefully with David Germain staying on), and branch out into Formulae Vauxhall Lotus or Renault.

Martinis for UK

Automobiles Martini will be represented in next year Formula Renault UK Championship, by GT Services of Solihull.

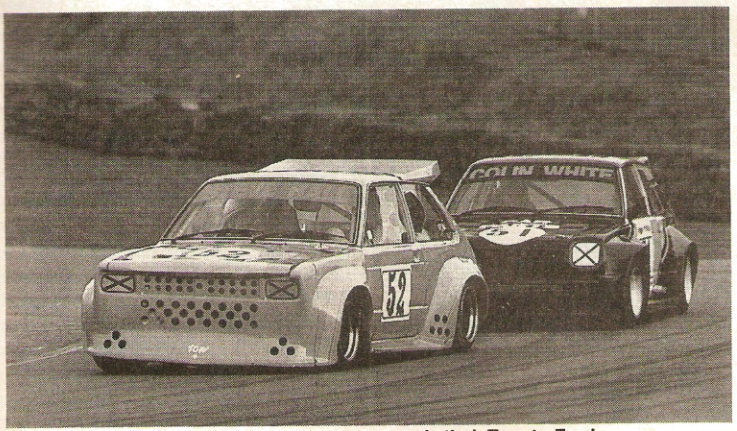
Run by long-time racer Tom Shephard and Richard Shaw, the concern has been appointed sole UK spares agent for the French cars.

"Customers will be able to able to buy cars through us, or direct from Tico Martini at the factory in Magny-Cours," affirmed Shaw on Monday.

GT Services has bought both of Equipe Winfield's Pilote Elf MK57s – raced this year by Guillaume Gomez and Richard Combes – and intends to run them alongside two new cars.

"The idea is to field 'A' and 'B' teams," says Shaw. "The 1990 model has the same chassis, but looks totally different – like a mini F3 car. It's gorgeous!"

Christian Baker, son of Clive, and FF2000 man Trevor Welsh are already aligned with the GT Services Martini effort. Drivers interested in joining them next season should call Shaw on (05646) 3665.



Steve Hall and Colin White enjoyed a great scrap in their Toyota-Fords.

Rod men are GT Starlets

Hot rod drivers Steve Hall and Colin White stunned the Winter Warmer GT contingent with their pace at Brands Hatch on Sunday.

The pair finished third and fourth in their first circuit race, and even sneaked ahead of Dave Sheppard's winning BMW-Chevrolet in the first lap scramble at Druids.

Empress Race Developments converted both Ford-powered Toyota Starlets to RAC MSA circuit spec, having been introduced by Peter Baldwin and Martin Short, whose Metro chassis they set up.

Motivated by 1.7-litre crossflow engines, the Starlets were close to the pace of Robert Bridger's 2.3-litre Ford RS Cosworth-powered version which finished second overall.

BRIEFLY

Russ – Chevron plan.

■ Hillclimb and Sprint Association president Russ Ward is currently hard at work restoring a Chevron-Hart B42 F2 chassis for next season.

■ Minister International's Racing for Spain drivers Jordi Gene and Alfonso de Arenzana tested their Van Diemen RF89s successfully on Portuguese-made Camac tyres at Jerez last week.

■ Harry Nuttall, Richard Reynolds and Bobby Verdon-Roe tested Van Diemen's championship-winning Formula Renault at Snetterton last week. Verdon-Roe hustled it down to a very competitive 1m 07.5s best during his stint, proclaiming it "extremely nice" and "very responsive to minor adjustments."

■ The BARC Yorkshire Centre is planning to develop its scenic Harewood venue. A startline access road, hillclimb extension, sprint course and kart track are under consideration.

■ Margate's Billy Burke, who won this year's Pre-'74 FF1600 championship – a decade after earning the BRSCC Debenhams Ford Escort racing title – has bought Jim Edwards Sr's Renault 5GT Turbo with a view to contesting next year's Renault 5 Elf Turbo UK Cup.

■ Art Markus was excluded from the twice-stopped MG race at Brands last Sunday, after his crew topped-up his Maestro's raditor on the grid during an interval. The motoring scribe failed to realise that *parc fermé* rules applied. As usual, a crop of drivers were also penalised for yellow flag offences.

■ Former BMW and Formula E competitor Stephen Markey – son of former sportscar and ETCC racer John – is planning to tackle the Junior FF1600 championships next season.

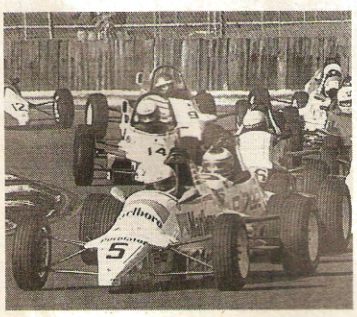
■ Formula First racer Alex Portman tried to go one up on every other competitor at the Playscape charity karting. He jetted in from Thailand on Sunday morning. And then flew back again in the evening... Jet setter!

■ Formula First driver, Simon Steele, recently invested £250 in an engine from a scrapyard, and the princely sum of £5 for the colourful finish on his car's bodywork. The power unit promptly showed 68.2bhp on Brands Hatch's rolling road. BHL report 70bhp to be a very good figure. Rivals on tight budgets might take note.

■ Two Four Sports is organising a general test day at Donington on Tuesday, December 12. Pre-booking is essential, and places can be reserved by telephoning (0332) 810048.

■ First Time Racing's Julian Popple finished sixth in Sunday's Formula First race at Brands on Sunday – from the back of the grid, and with a 10sec penalty. Popple qualified fastest, but was banished for failing to observe a yellow flag.

■ Dave Sheppard broke Nick Whiting's 12-year-old Special GT lap record at Brands Hatch on Sunday. The former MG Midget and Formula 4 man heaved his 600bhp Lola T400-based Titman BMW-Chevrolet M1 round the Indy circuit in 46.3s en route to what he believes to be the Mick Hill-built car's first outright win.



Jordi – Jerez win.

Gené genie

Jordi Gene won the final round of the Spanish FF1600 Championship on Sunday, and left Jerez to start his National Service.

Gene will train as an air traffic controller with the army, but does not believe that this obligation will prevent him racing next year.

Jordi joined Minister/Marlboro/Purolator team-mate Alfonso de Arenzana on the front row of the grid, and dominated the event.

De Arenzana slipped to fourth in the torrential rain, behind Swedish-born Roger Morback and Luis Romero. Champion Victor Lopez retired after numerous spins.

Kiwi capers

Britons Rod Birley and Dave Brodie have sent their hybrid Mitsubishi Starion-Ford to New Zealand for January's Sun Valley International Thundersaloon series.

Backed by fruit juice manufacturer Hansell's, the five-race competition has drawn spectacular entries from all over the world.

The Newman-Sharp Racing Nissan 300ZX turbo from the USA will take a lot of beating, but local men Roger Freeth (Toyota Starlet-Buick), Wayne Huxford (Mercury Capri V8), and Bruce Mann (Ford Escort Turbo) will also have to contend with the Chevrolet Monza of Brett Willis.

Mini Cooper

Steve Cooper and Myk Cable are the Mini Se7en Club's National Mini Se7en and Miglia champions of 1989.

Cooper, as the club's highest points scorer has won Austin Rover's premier prize – a brand new Mini road car.

Steve won five of the 15 races for 850cc cars, and finished in the top three on all but three occasions. He also led sister Tina home for a unique family one-two at one event.

WEEKEND SPORT

INTERNATIONAL RACING

NOV 26, MACAU (P)
Macau F3 Street Race
For full preview see p12.

NATIONAL RACING

NOV 26, BRANDS HATCH (nr Fawkham, Kent)
Grandstand Formula Firsts; Formula Forward; Road Saloons; Special GTs; Mini Sevens/Miglias.
Practice: 0915; Racing: 1230
Admission: £5.00; Children, free
The final round of the Winter Series, and following Chris Creswell's 'off' last time out, the Grandstand *Formula series should go to Andrew Guye-Johnson.*

OFF TRACK SPORT

NOV 26, SNETTERTON (nr Thetford, Norfolk)
West Essex CC Sprint
Phil Price defends his title in the face of stiff competition from fellow Mallock drivers, Keith Payne, and Roger Allen.

TV SPORT

BBC1
Saturday, Nov 25: 1300, RAC Rally Highlights.

BBC2
Friday, Nov 24: 1415, *Sport on Friday* – featuring Pro-Celebrity karting from the London Arena plus Off-Road racing.

SCREENSPORT
Thursday, Nov 23: 0700, Powersports International; 0800, RAC Rally-day 4; 2115, RAC Rally-day 4.
Friday, Nov 25: 0930, RAC Rally-day 5; 1530, RAC Rally-day 5; 2130, NASCAR-Atlanta Journal 500; 2330, RAC Rally-day 5.
Saturday, Nov 25: NASCAR-Atlanta Journal 500; 1830, Powersports International.
Sunday, Nov 26: 0030, NASCAR-Atlanta Journal 500; 0800, NASCAR-Atlanta Journal 500.
Monday, Nov 27: 1100, Powersports International; 1400, NASCAR-Atlanta Journal 500.

EUROSPORT
Thursday, Nov 23: 1230, RAC Rally Update; 1800, Mobil Motor Sport News; 2330, RAC Rally Update.
Friday, Nov 24: 0900, Mobil Motor Sport News.
Saturday, Nov 25: 0930, Mobil 1 Rally Challenge.
Monday, Nov 27: 2100, International Motor Sport.
Tuesday, Nov 28: 2300, RAC Rally Highlights.
Wednesday, Nov 29: 1500, RAC Rally Highlights.

End of an era

The announcement of John Webb's retirement from Brands Hatch next spring will mark the end of an era for the Kentish circuit, for Webb has been a central figure in the development of the track into a topline motorsport venue.

Webb was Brands Hatch's first Press Officer. In 1961 it was he who negotiated a takeover of the circuit by Grovewood Securities and took a seat on the board of directors of Motor Circuit Developments which managed the track. The facility was upgraded and extended and, at the same time, MCD took control of Mallory Park, Snetterton, Oulton Park and much later Cadwell Park.

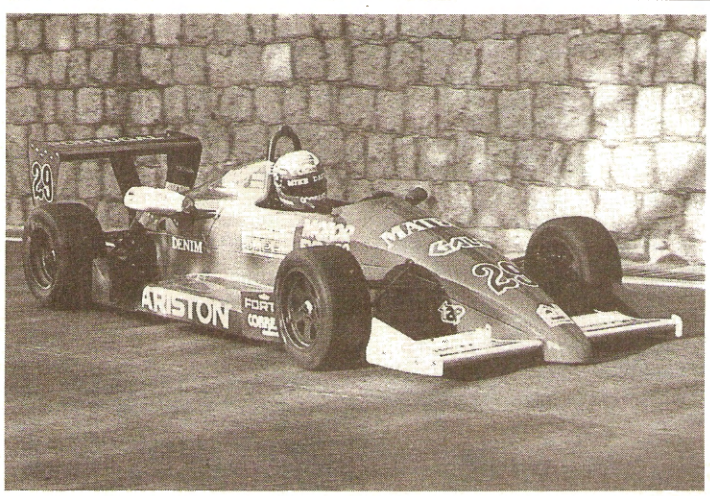
Webb's ambition to run a British Grand Prix was fulfilled in 1964 when the Formula 1 World Championship arrived. From then until the last few years Brands alternated the race with Silverstone.

But John Webb was far more than that, for in all spheres of the sport he was a great innovator. It was Webb who had a hand in the introduction of Formula Ford, Thundersports, Thundersaloons, Formula 5000, Formula Atlantic, Formula First and Formula Forward. It was Webb who brought the Indycars over to Brands Hatch in 1978. He was a great promoter of racing at all levels.

He was always looking for a new scheme to increase interest in motor racing among the general public, with free racedays, combined car and bike meetings and racing schools.

F1 left Brands for the last time in 1986 and since then the circuit's high profile as a venue of prestige internationals has slipped away somewhat. But the venue's prosperity has continued to increase, through an ever-increasing number of circuit users.

Let us hope that the new management will continue the innovative spirit of Webb in the years to come...



NEXT WEEK

Full colour report of the **Lombard RAC Rally,** Britain's largest sporting event – Round the streets action from the **Macau GP** – **Rallycross Grand Prix** preview, track test and coverage from **Cadwell Park** – Plus all our usual news and features.

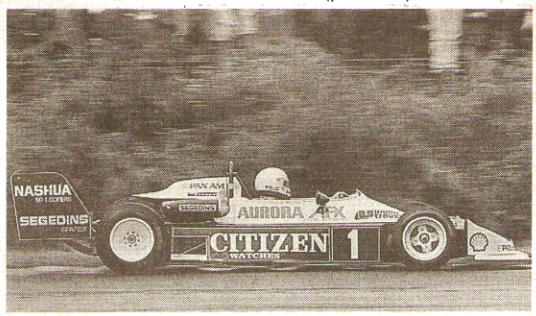
* Items correct at press time.

10

Ten years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, November 22, 1979), Ford was dominating the RAC Rally. Escort RS drivers Hannu Mikkola (Eaton's Yale), Ari Vatanen (Rothmans) and Russell Brookes (Andrews) had forged ahead over the first 38 stages. Tony Pond (Talbot Sunbeam) and Timo Salonen (Datsun Violet) were their closest challengers as we closed for press.

We looked back over the Formula 3 season, tracing Chico Serra's Vandervell British Championship victory with his Ron Dennis-run March-Toyota and Alain Prost's European rout with the works Martini-Renault. Piercarlo Ghinzani, Michael Korten (Marches) and Slim Borgudd (Ralt RT1) won the national titles of Italy, Germany and Sweden respectively. Nigel Mansell, incidentally, finished eighth at home with Unipart's March-Triumph.

Around the world, Richard Petty clinched his seventh NASCAR Winston Cup title with the STP Chevrolet, and Geoff Lees took victory at Macau in Teddy Yip's Ralt RT1. Another RT1, in Formula Pacific trim, was heading the New Zealand series in Dave McMillan's hands (pictured).



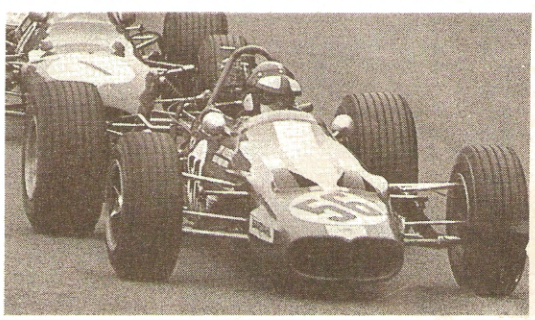
20

Twenty years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, November 20, 1969), Frank Williams announced plans to run De Tomaso's Formula 1 car in 1970. His long-time pal Piers Courage was to be the driver of the Gianpaulo Dallara-designed chassis. In those heady days, it is interesting to note that new Cosworth DFVs were £7500 a throw.

There was much excitement in France, where Chris Amon (who had apparently agreed terms to lead the new March F1 team in 1970) was spotted testing a Matra V12 on the Bugatti circuit at Le Mans. Max Mosley was unaware of the test!

The works Nissan R380 sportscars of Kunimitsu Takahashi/Yoshikayo Sunago and Motoharu Kurosawa/Moto Kitano scored a resounding 1-2 in the Surfers Paradise 6 Hours. Bruce McLaren won his second CanAm title, David Piper his sixth Kyalami 9 Hours, and Emerson Fittipaldi the Thruxton F3 race (pictured).

Derek Bell was all set up to contest the Tasman series in Tom Wheatcroft's ex-works Brabham BT26/4. The F1 car was powered by a 2.5-litre DFW. Tom's single seater collection numbered a mere 31 at the time!



30

Thirty years ago this week (AUTOSPORT, November 20, 1959), the RAC International Rally was underway. Jack Sears got off to a flying start, setting BTD in the preliminary Blackpool autotest with his Austin-Healey. Some 142 cars set out from the Lancashire seaside town. How many would reach Crystal Palace, four days later?

The Monte Carlo Rally organisers had been besieged with entry applications from British competitors. Among the hopeful were Sydney Allard, Gerry Burgess, EW Cuff-Miller, Philip Fotheringham-Parker, John Heppenstall and Peter Procter.

The Chiltern Hills Trophy Trial (pictured) merited feature report status, and proved to be a benefit for Tony Alldred in his JAP-Bassinet.

Theo Page presented his photographic memories of the Turin Motor Show. The sleek Zagato-bodied Lancia Flaminia Sport was heralded as the event's star.

Dan Gurney, a newcomer to European racing in 1959, was profiled. A Ferrari works driver in both Formula 1 and sportscar races, Gurney's profound sporting influence continues to this day in IMSA racing.

Fault finding

The rumours that Ayrton Senna may retire from Formula 1 should not be treated with too much sadness. He may go Indycar racing in America.

I do not think that the British public actually deserves such an outstandingly successful sportsman as Senna. The average Briton cannot bear to see such success without attempting to find fault somewhere.

ALAN PADGETT
SLEAFORD, LINCS

No comment

With all the recent arguments between McLaren and FISA, we don't seem to have had an official statement from FOCA. I realise that FOCA is now heavily involved with race promotion, but I did expect it to have commented on the matter. If this argument gets anywhere near the level of the late seventies and early eighties FISA/Constructors war, McLaren and any other teams that get involved will need FOCA's full support. Is Bernie Ecclestone keeping quiet to protect his present FISA position? I hope not because he is one of the people who can mediate and hopefully sort out the situation quickly.

MARK BARRY
EGHAM, SURREY

Best of British

In last week's interview Nelson Piquet said he was as fast as Mansell. He may be, with a few others, over one lap, but none of them has Nigel's strength and stamina to maintain this pace for a full race.

This flat-out pace plus an unrivalled quickness to see an overtaking opportunity must make Mansell the top racer in Grands Prix today.

E J BARRETT
HAMMERSMITH, LONDON

Short memories

When reading of the goings on at Adelaide, I was astounded at the brevity of some people's memories. Nigel Roebuck hit the nail on the head (as usual) by recalling Pironi's crash that finished his career. And here was Bernie Ecclestone, now a senior official at FISA, pressuring drivers to put their lives at risk in precisely the same conditions.

As a result, we had two virtually identical accidents involving two World Champions, happily without serious injury. And as for Ken Tyrrell's comments, words fail me.

DOUG ELLIS
HORLEY, SURREY

Dead right

In your excellent Lombard RAC Rally supplement, you appear to have made an error. In the World Championship Asides panel on page 7, you claim that the closest finish of the World Championship was the 1976 San Remo Rally and that the second closest was this year's San Remo. Not so...

Unless I am very much mistaken, did not Toyota engineer a dead heat on the 1985 Ivory Coast Rally with Juha Kankkunen/Fred Gallagher arriving at the finish ramp abreast of Bjorn Waldegard/Hans Thorszelius?

RICHARD TOOGOOD
NOTTINGHAM

History man

You announced (*Pit & Paddock*, October 26) that no reader had forecast in the Moët and Chandon competition that Alessandro Nannini would win this year's Japanese Grand Prix. You also couldn't remember when the magnum last failed to be won.

Well, it was in 1979 when Jacques Laffite won in Argentina. It happened twice before also – in 1977; Gunnar Nilsson in Belgium and Alan Jones in Austria.

If any of your champagne winners would like to have a 5-page analysis of the AUTOSPORT competition, could they please approach me. Listed are the names and home towns of the winners, with actual and forecasted speeds and percentage differences.

DAVID HAYHOE
26 BROOM RD, SHIRLEY,
CROYDON, CR4 8NE

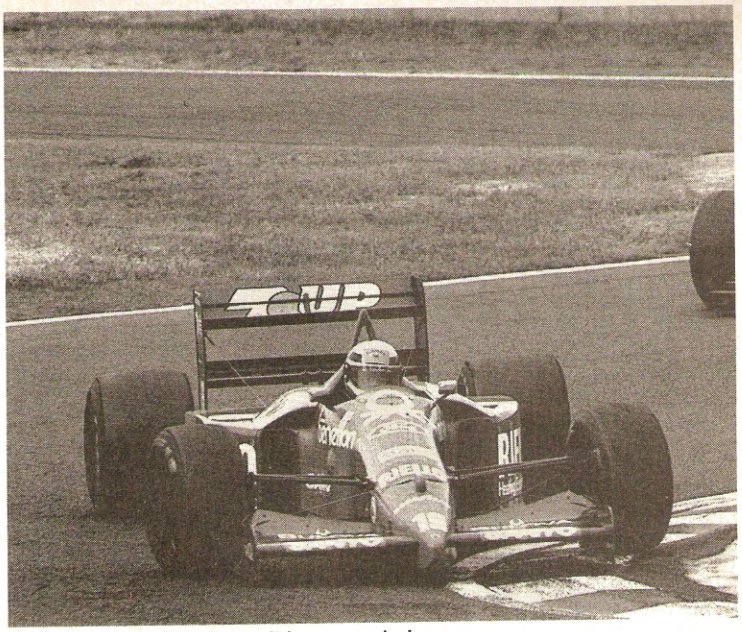
When Irish eyes . . .

Toby Moody commented on the lack of support for Motorsports Day at Motorfair (*Correspondence*, November 2). The best show was held in Dublin on October 29/30 with the Allied Irish Finance Motorsport Show.

There were some incredible historic Mercedes, including Moss and Fangio's 1955 300SLR; a Marlboro McLaren, Lauda or Prost I believe; a Silk Cut Jaguar XJR11, the last Ford RS200 and lots more.

Attendance was over 22,000 and all enjoyed the show. But many of Ireland's major clubs were absent and there were claims that they could not be bothered. And they wonder where the sport is going...

TIM O'HARA
DALKEY, CO DUBLIN



Nannini gave nobody a drink of champagne in Japan.

United Avus?

Now that the Berlin Wall is no more, will the Avus circuit – cut in two by the division of Berlin – be restored to its original 12 miles instead of the current 5.2?

HEDLEY THOMAS
WOKINGHAM, BERKS

Into line

Considering the absence of the works Lancia team from the Lombard RAC Rally, and consequently World Champion Miki Biasion, isn't it about time the WCR came into line with the Formula 1 World Championship and forced competitors to enter all the qualifying rounds?

British spectators have been robbed of seeing the champion car and driver, and TV one of its finest opportunities to give validity to the sport.

For rallying to survive and for the general public to accept and, indeed, understand it, such a ruling must be implemented.

Can you imagine Liverpool winning the Football League with four matches still to play and then not fulfilling their remaining fixtures? The idea is absurd.

Rallying is its own ambassador. It should take itself to the public if it is to survive the modern sporting era.

ARTHUR PYKE-HAMILTON
SWINDON, WILTS

Name game

As any pretence of sport has been formally banished from professional motor racing, it is clearly time for AUTOSPORT to reflect this change of mood in its title.

Perhaps you would consider AUTOSUIT, AUTOBAN, AUTOFINE, AUTOWHINGE (sorry Nigel), AUTOCARP or simply AUTOCRAZY...

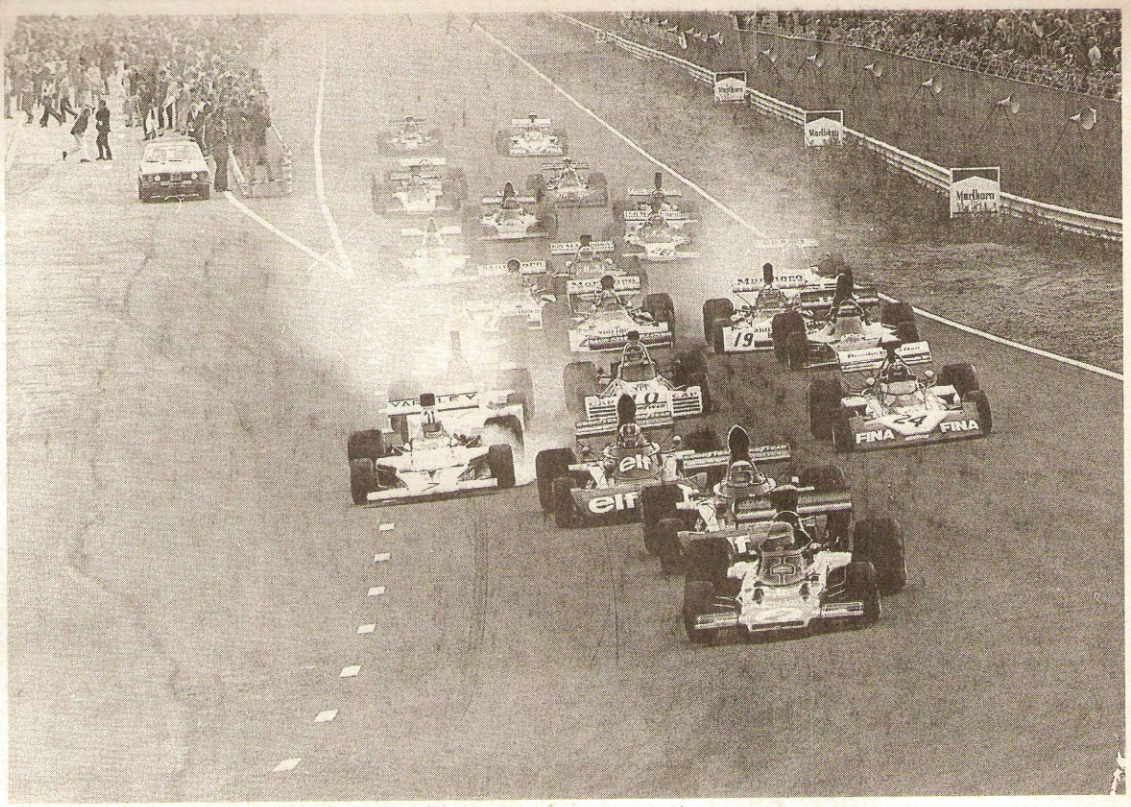
PHILIP CONN
LONDON W12

CATCHPOLE

By BARRY FOLEY

5TH COLUMN

Passing in the night



Ah, the good old days, when late banking in Formula 1 was a skill, an art in itself.

This is always an unsettling time of the year for me, a period of reacclimatisation. Give or take the odd quick trip, I don't have to get on an aeroplane again for nearly four months, and while this is pleasing, it is also unfamiliar, and will remain so a while.

Hand in hand with it goes the problem of sleep. Little by little I'm coming out of it, but even now part of me is on Antipodean time, so that I drift off, sadly, before Fiona Armstrong, and awaken long before Brian Redhead.

Insomnia is, in any case, a part of my life. And nothing works – not even endless repetition of the words "Kenneth Branagh." I believe I could probably keep awake while contemplating Fergie and her wretched excess baggage. To say nothing of Wogan's humour or Geoffrey Howe's rhetoric.

In San Francisco this summer I even bought a sleep-inducing tape of gentle seas. Another dead end: I am now totally familiar with it – indeed fight off sleep as I strain to hear the faint call of the gulls above the lapping waters.

Recently, though, relief of a kind has arrived, and from an unlikely source. I wouldn't have believed a Formula 1 accident, particularly one involving a couple of screaming Honda V10s, could exert any kind of soporific influence upon me, but The Suzuka Affair is having precisely that effect, and increasingly so. Ayrton and Alain are seeing me off nicely just now.

A friend of mine – better not mention his name – had what ought to be the final word on the whole business: "Think of what would have happened if Senna and Prost had driven that corner precisely as they did," he said, "but without the other being there. Ayrton would have gone straight on down the escape road, and Alain would have gone over the right-hand apex with all four wheels. Right?"

Right. As it was, both were present at the time, and interrupted the trajectory of the other. It was the unstoppable force and immovable object, etc, as Creighton Brown said.

The rights and wrongs of Senna's subsequent disqualification will presumably one day be officially sorted out; for now, as I've said before, I believe the fine and threatened six-month suspension on him should be dismissed for the irrelevance they are.

What gives me far more pause for thought these present days is that the Suzuka accident was probably inevitable – and not simply because the championship was at stake, nor even because the two men involved hate each other. No, we are back, I'm afraid, to the besetting problem of Formula 1 in the eighties: the nature of the cars militates against *racing*. Overtaking, in anything like comparable machinery, is so difficult as to make a degree of desperation inevitable. It is a sad fact, yet I believe an undeniable one, that increased efficiency in the cars works to the detriment of motor racing as a spectacle.

Suzuka apart, the nearest thing we have had to a race between the McLaren-Hondas this year was at Hockenheim. Prior to the tyre stops, Senna led narrowly from Prost, and after them it was the other way round. Ultimately the matter was resolved when Alain lost top gear with a couple of laps to go, which let Ayrton through.

"I felt sure to win," Prost said afterwards, "because I knew Senna was in the same position I'd been in early in the race. You get just so close to the other guy, and then it's like running into a wall – you hit the turbulence from his car, and it upsets the behaviour of your own. Through a corner you can't sit right behind him, because your car is robbed of 'clean' air and you lose downforce, get bad understeer, run wide, lose time. So the only chance you'd have would be in a very slow corner – like in the stadium here at Hockenheim – but probably it would mean taking a crazy chance, leaving your braking far too late, because you wouldn't have come off the previous corner right on his tail."

There's another thing, too: braking. In the ground effect era braking distances came down with a wither, drivers reporting that merely lifting off at the end of a straight had the effect of heavy braking – and that was before you touched the middle pedal. When skirts were banned finally, for 1983, and flat-bottomed monocoques were made mandatory, braking distances opened out again, and for a while overtaking became quite a common sight. Braking distances, it seems to me, are the lifeblood of good racing – in company with the odd tight corner at the end of a long straight.

The miracle of carbon-fibre, though, has all but eliminated this most traditional of opportunities to improve your position. In 1980 – the height of the sliding skirts ground effect era – a Formula 1 car needed 250 yards to slow from 185mph to 50; today it gets it down in 110 yards. And in under 2 seconds...

The on-car cameras have added spectacularly to TV coverage of the Grands Prix this season past, especially when mounted on cars central to the action, as with the McLarens in Japan. That day there was also a rudimentary speedometer on the screen, giving some impression of F1 horsepower, and shame it is we didn't have such things for qualifying laps in the turbo years, when people like Mansell and Senna had 1200 horsepower to help them on their way.

Braking distances are the lifeblood of good racing

Even with 680, the McLarens' acceleration at Suzuka was stimulating enough, but far more impressive to my eyes was the way they stopped. Into tight corners Prost and Senna seemed to brake impossibly late, so that the speed read-out on the left of the screen simply tumbled down.

Suzuka, for me, ranks with Spa as the best track in current Formula 1 use. It undulates, and abounds in fast and natural corners; this makes it a magnificent driver's circuit, but unfortunately, thanks to the turbulence problem, renders it one of those places where overtaking – in cars of comparable performance – is barely possible. Except at the chicane.

It is, by any standards, a fatuous chicane, the one at Suzuka, disfiguring a beautiful circuit even more blatantly than Spa's infamous 'Bus Stop'. Installed to keep speeds past the pits down to a manageable level, it not only makes a svelte Grand Prix car look as clumsy as a truck, but might also have been designed specifically for the creation of accidents. Overtaking is polarised at this single spot, which comes at the end of a long straight, and is taken in first gear.

Braking is heavy – remember those figures I quoted earlier – and the chicane is strictly a matter of follow-my-leader. It is physically not possible for two cars to get through side by side. Mansell and Piquet found that out last year.

Therefore, if a driver tries to overtake, the thing can go one of two ways: either the fellow in front backs off, stays wide, gives him room, loses a place (as did Nannini to Senna in the late stages), or he doesn't. Prost didn't.

"It doesn't matter whether or not Alain closed the door on him," argued Jackie Stewart in Adelaide. "The fact remains that Ayrton was in the wrong because he allowed himself to be at someone else's mercy. Once he made his move, the matter was out of his hands: if Prost was prepared to lose the race, OK, he'd be through; but if he wasn't, then Senna was in trouble."

To me, that seemed a little hard, however logical, for I don't see what alternative Ayrton had. Once he had lost the lead at the start, he was always going to try a move on Prost sooner or later, and the topography of the circuit dictated it had to be at the chicane or nowhere. Both drivers must have known that. And, in light of what was at stake, you would have to say Ayrton was putting high call on Alain's sense of charity.

As Mario Andretti said last week: "If I were in Prost's shoes, I would have done exactly the same. And if the situation had been reversed, Senna would have done the same. That's got to be understood, and Senna should have expected that. But I can't fault him for trying. That was the only place he was going to pass..."

This, surely, is the problem. Over a 3.6-mile lap, the chicane "was the only place he was going to pass." In terms of racing, therefore, all those flat-out swoops and climbs and turns were merely window-dressing, to be taken in crocodile formation.

I don't consider myself one of those who thinks nothing is as good as it was. I rejoice, for example, that it's possible for drivers to survive accidents like Berger's at Imola. But I regret that the nature of today's cars means that overtaking has to be an act either of intimidation or desperation. In fact, it's keeping me awake...

NIGEL ROEBUCK

REPORT: KEITH OSWIN – PHOTOGRAPHY: MAURICE SELDEN

This is all the opposition saw of the Toyota team at the start of this year's Lombard RAC Rally.

Juha under pressure

A hectic first day, which saw the lead change time and time again, left Toyota with a seemingly unassailable lead in this year's Lombard RAC Rally. Through Wales and into the Lake District Pentti Airikkala's Mitsubishi stormed up into third place, and when Carlos Sainz took the lead from Juha Kankkunen at Carlisle the scene was set for a final showdown.

When the RAC MSA introduced pace notes for the spectator stages of its rally a few years ago, some considered them to be a gimmick, a token nod towards FISA whose acceptance of the 'blind' format was tenuous to say the least.

But, when the 190 crews crawled from their beds on Sunday morning for the 1989 version of the Lombard RAC Rally, they had reason to be grateful for the innovation. Thick fog greeted them and to try and 'read' the roads from the schematic drawings of the stages had always been difficult – to the point of being impossible.

Now there was a chance that the world's best drivers (less the three-car Lancia team and Stig Blomqvist, all pre-event withdrawals) would be able to give the crowds a real show for their money.

There were crowds and crowds on Sunday. Silverstone may not have had as many spectators as the venue might have wished, but Donington could have spared several thousand. The tail-back of cars trying to gain access to the place had stretched back onto the M1 with two hours to go before the first car. Co-drivers trying to navigate their drivers to the stage had to throw the road book away and resort to the Ordnance Survey maps. "It was like a road rally, plot and bash," said Bryan Thomas who had been drafted in to sit with Mats Jonsson in the Opel Kadett for the occasion. The pick of the day, however, was Chatsworth where a record 21,000 people paid to watch the fun at the picturesque venue.

We knew that the Japanese teams would have the edge after Lancia pulled out, but would it be Toyota or Mitsubishi on the opening day?

Carlos Sainz had the answer at Wollaton Park in the heart of Nottingham, the most congested host city in recent memory. The Spaniard's Toyota led the first stage with David Llewellin next and Juha Kankkunen third, despite flying off the road backwards on the very first corner when the junction loomed out of the gloom quicker than expected. Toyota held the aces and, as the day progressed, no-one else was to get a look in.

A run north to Clumber saw the Welshman take the lead of the event, fulfilling pre-event predictions of British interest in the top places. Media hype it might have been, but the Shell Open Champion was determined to give it his best shot. From Clumber, the route turned west to Chatsworth where two Shell Gemini-sponsored stages, the second televised live by the BBC, offered him a further chance to shine.

But Llewellin's bid hit trouble in front of his sponsors, a rock in the wooded first stage in the Derbyshire stately home puncturing one tyre and producing a slow puncture on another. The flat was changed before the televised stage (with help from Jimmy McRae and Rob Arthur), but the Toyota had to struggle with less than perfect traction in front of the cameras. It was a bold and brave drive, but the lead was gone, Llewellin slipping to fourth at a stroke.

The rock was a problem for many, Kankkunen and Sainz each hitting it and puncturing, the Spaniard also damaging a trackrod end. But Kankkunen now led from Kenneth Eriksson (who left the handbrake on for the first stage!) and Sainz with Llewellin tying for third. "We've four cars in the top three!" joked TTGB boss, David Ewles.

Mitsubishi's challenge was not so successful. Electrical problems kept Ari Vatanen short of power but he admitted to not being fully on the pace himself either. Pentti Airikkala's first day in the Group A Galant also ended with electrical maladies, an alternator needing replacement after Blenheim. But he was a happy Finn for most of the day...

"This car is *fantastic*. It is so much quicker than the Group N car and the brakes...fantastic. They are too good almost, I am always back on the throttle after I have used them, the car stops so quick."

Mazda's fortunes were limited by the lack of outright power from the trio of 323s. Hannu Mikkola was playing a waiting game but well off the pace in reality, while Timo Salonen was only a handful of seconds ahead. Ingvar Carlsson's car needed a new strut after Silverstone when an oil seal to the wheel bearing failed. But the team would need a rally of attrition if it hoped to match last year's second place for Salonen. The best placed driver at the end of the opening day was privateer, Mikael Sundstrom in the Camel/Michelin car.

Louise Aitken-Walker was a favourite with the fans wherever the GM team stopped for service and autographs were highly prized. The team could reflect on the opening day with some satisfaction as all four Astra/Kadetts were running without undue drama. Not so Dave Metcalfe's Nova, however. It broke a diff' casing in Chatsworth, losing a couple of teeth from the crown wheel and having to tackle Donington without reverse gear.

The dark horse of the event, Armin Schwarz, promised much with the big Audi 200 Quattro but was sidelined after a near tragic road accident on the way to Silverstone. Turning right on a blind crest, neither the German nor the two ladies in the car coming the other way saw each other until it was too late. Injuries were fortunately relatively minor, but Schwarz was out of the event. It was little consolation to know that the accident happened at a notorious local black spot.

For Ford, the day was one of frustration. Tarmac might have been the predominant road surface, but the slippery nature of the roads in early winter meant that power was nothing, traction everything – precisely the wrong combination for the Cosworth runners.

Franco Cunico was also having to contend with Terry Harryman's limited Italian for the pace notes ("Being

LOMBARD RAC RALLY LEADERBOARD

After 31 stages (Kershope) at 17.30 Tuesday, November 21

1	Juha Kankkunen/Juha Piironen (Toyota Celica GT-Four)	3h10m55s
2	Carlos Sainz/Luis Moya (Toyota Celica GT-Four)	3h11m01s
3	Pentti Airikkala/Ronan McNamee (Mitsubishi Galant VR-4)	3h12m24s
4	Kenneth Eriksson/Staffan Parmander (Toyota Celica GT-Four)	3h13m07s
5	Timo Salonen/Voitto Silander (Mazda 323 Turbo 4WD)	3h14m24s
6	Mikael Sundstrom/Juha Repo (Mazda 323 Turbo 4WD)	3h14m35s
7	Ari Vatanen/Bruno Berglund (Mitsubishi Galant VR-4)	3h14m37s
8	Ingvar Carlsson/Per Carlsson (Mazda 323 Turbo 4WD)	3h16m58s
9	Sebastian Lindholm/Seppo Harjanne (Lancia Delta HF Integrale)	3h17m06s
10	Per Eklund/Bjorn Cederberg (Lancia Delta HF Integrale)	3h17m26s

able to say, 'Mother is in the kitchen' does not help a lot in these circumstances!") but was hanging on in the Q8 car. Jimmy McRae became involved in Blenheim's pheasant cull, collecting a bird at 100mph, while Russell Brookes's 15th placed car was the best of the marque. Colin McRae's drive was controlled and impressive, despite a spin onto the grass at Blenheim – hardly surprising in the conditions.

The route had been roundly criticised by all the crews, an incredible road section taking drivers from Blenheim to Cheltenham and then north to Weston Park for the final stage of the opening day without any action in between. Russell Brookes expressed a wish that more 'real' stage be included on the opening day for just 35kms on the stages seemed hardly worth the effort of driving for 12 hours or so. But Monday would be a proper day, the Welsh forests a true test of the crews. It was home ground for Llewellin but would he capitalise on that psychological advantage?

Leaderboard after SS8, Weston Park: 1, Kankkunen, 24m38s; 2, Eriksson, 24m43s; 3, Llewellin, 25m00s; 4, Sainz, 25m01s; 5, Airikkala, 25m22s; 6, Sundstrom, 25m26s; 7, Salonen, 25m31s; 8, Vatanen, 25m33s; 9, Eklund, 25m45s; 10, Mikkola, 25m46s.

Wales was not kind to the Welshman. On the first Dovey stage the Toyota blew a turbo, forcing Llewellin to stop and cut off the oil supply to the unit, hopefully saving the engine. The operation cost 7 minutes in the stage and fourth place was history.

But there was worse to come. A new turbo fitted, he charged into the next stage only to have an oil pipe burst. Again he had to stop, this time to crimp the pipe together and maintain the oil flow. A further 10 minutes went by.

The crowd gathered at Dolgellau to watch its hero arrive. Proper service was beyond the time allowed now, merely a 'dash for a splash' and new tyres. The turbo had been damaged by the lack of oil – a bearing had run - and he would have to tackle the 15th stage of the event with low boost before the car could be properly fettled once more. By the time Llewellin said goodbye to his native country, a drive that could have brought an historic victory was now a fight for survival, Britain's Open Champion languishing outside the top 30.

SAINZ: "This is a good experience for me"

Indeed, for the Toyota GB camp, the Dovey stages were a disaster, for Graham Middleton punctured, pulled over to let a faster car past and got stuck forever in the ditch, despite having four-wheel drive. His Group N lead now passed to Simon Stubbings's Mazda, Middleton heading home to Shropshire.

Sunday may have been a quiet day but Monday was shaping up for some real fun. But Ari Vatanen nearly played no part in it. His Mitsubishi had been serviced at Newtown prior to the first stage of the day in Hafren, but a nut had found its way into the turbo system and the unit failed just as he turned off the main road into the restricted areas that had proved the blight of service crews' lives. It would be three stages before the unit could be changed.

However, the weather played into the Finn's hands for a change. Fog still hovered in the forests, making visibility poor and map-reading skills essential. Vatanen pressed on as best he could but the low general speeds of the rest meant that his time loss was not so dramatic.

Up at the front, Toyota still held the aces, the TTE co-drivers making use of their early trip to Britain for some practice on the Ordnance Survey maps. For the first time, the drivers were getting real information from their partners, something normally unheard of in foreign teams. But what a fight it was turning out to be!

Kankkunen and Eriksson tied for the lead after the first stage, Eriksson led after the next and Kankkunen got back ahead by Machynlleth. Carlos Sainz would get his chance later and team boss Ove Andersson was being quizzed about team orders as the team faced its best result for years. "It is too soon for that, but we shall have to see for how long this fight continues," he declared.

Kankkunen and Sainz had both received new gearboxes for the day, Sainz having been worried by a noisy main shaft. A 'box change is 10 minutes, but if the bell housing has to come off to repair further damage, the rally can be run. Ask David Llewellin, for that's what cost him a finish on the Manx in September.

Sainz was fairly happy. "This is a good experience for me in these conditions. Luis is getting better at map reading every time." Eriksson could not trust the maps completely in the 50 metre visibility so dropped some time and even Kankkunen was finding his first taste of the forests on the event something of a culture shock.

Japanese domination wasn't just about the Toyotas, as Mazdas and Mitsubishis were also filling the leaderboard, such as Salonen's 323 Turbo 4WD (top) and Airikkala's Galant VR-4 (above).

Mazda was faring reasonably well although Hannu Mikkola was struggling for power in tight hairpins. But he found himself without a gear later and, turning into the corner in neutral dumped him unceremoniously on his roof. "There were only two spectators to help, so Arne had to get out and push." It was a little unfair, the combined age of the crew being around 95, such is their vast experience. The battered Mazda was hammered back into shape at Dolgellau and the offending gearbox was replaced, leaving Mikkola a long way back on the road as the event moved north towards Coed-y-Brenin. The mechanics had been busy already, changing a turbo on Timo Salonen's car when smoke had been seen coming from it. Mind, that could have been the driver!

Peugeot's Hakan Eriksson was not among the circus. A tricky corner that almost caught out several other crews in Hafren, did the job properly for the young 'toy boy' Swede. Over and out for the 309GTI. However, Chris Birkbeck was going well and ended the day just over minute behind Dave Metcalfe's class-leading Nova (no ill effects from its Chatsworth dramas), while Simon Davison had steadily eaten into Skoda's 1-2-3 in the 1300cc class to lie second to Warren Hunt. Paul Frankland was not entirely happy with his Group N 309 and slipped from third to fifth in the Group N class by close of play, Terry Kaby's Daihatsu holding the edge there from Brian Wiggins.

Malcolm Wilson was on a real charge on Monday morning, Ian Grindrod's head buried in the maps and the Cumbrian heading for 'Top Brit' slot when Llewellin hit trouble. He was still outside the top 10 – just – but had the hammer well down, to such an extent that Michelin's Michel Martin believed him for a second when he suggested that the rear diff' had now been connected.

Tyres were becoming a topic of conversation as Michelin tried to wrest the advantage from Pirelli. The ATS covers available to Mazda, Mitsubishi and Opel were being wheeled out for Coed-y-Brenin, although only Mats Jonsson and Ari Vatanen opted to use them. As it happened, neither the haves or the have nots got a puncture, but the reassurance was there if they had.

"I have been trying two types of tyre on the Mitsubishis," explained Martin. "For Ari I have fitted the F3 which is better for sideways driving, but for Pentti the M3 which has better straight line traction. Ari likes the F3 a lot, but I think Bruno prefers the M3. It depends on which side of the car you are sitting, I think."

Mitsubishi was still struggling to keep its head above water. Vatanen's car required a new set of intercooler pipes after nibbling the scenery and ▶

Clockwise from top: Carlsson in Wales. As usual, Kankkunen did the bulk of the leading. Sainz proved that he isn't just a tarmac specialist; while Wilson hovered just outside the top 10 for Vauxhall Dealer Sport.

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Airikkala's car was down on power. But there was a cloak of secrecy about the affair. "We have been told not to talk to the press," said one crew member who clearly had plenty to tell.

David Richards turned up at Dolgellau, the Prodrive boss having Frank Sytner and James Weaver in tow. "He keeps telling us about what he does when he goes rallying, so we've come to see." What they saw was a very bent and battered R-E-D Sierra crawl into the service area to the groans of the crowd. Yes, you've guessed, Colin McRae.

"I just slid into a ditch," he explained. Meanwhile the mechanics hacked away at the front to prise the valance from the wheel arch and intercooler, took out the few remaining slivers of glass (only two windows remained) and wondered what to do about the 'notchback' design at the rear where a sleek Sierra once lay. This had been a pretty big slide into the ditch, a reverse flip would have been more accurate.

It came as quite a shock to Jimmy, too, for Rob Arthur had moved the 'senior' car out of the way. He stepped from the motorhome and found an identically liveried wreck in its place! Happily, both Colin and Derek Ringer were not hurt ("They are getting used to it," quipped R-E-D's Peter Cattenach) but pride will have taken as much of a pounding.

R-E-D attracted quite a crowd at service areas, a complete contrast to the official Boreham team of Franco Cunico. The Italian was having a steady run with Terry Harryman, no heroics, but steady. But as one observer remarked, "I remember when you couldn't move around a Boreham barge in a service area." Sad really.

Another sad face, this rally had saved its drama until it could dump it on us in one fell swoop, was that of Russell Brookes. Turbo failure, or a blown piston, had sidelined his normally reliable Sierra at Dolgellau. He reckoned he was up to sixth at the time, but that was seen as a tall story by most.

The Welsh forest leg closed with Clocaenog, the forest complex fog bound to add its own surreal character. Trentham and Donington still remained before bed in Nottingham, but the crowds had flocked to the woods once again.

Sainz led when Kankkunen damaged the left side of his car on a log pile, then Kankkunen got the advantage back and Toyota's domination looked sure footed. But a glance in its mirrors occasionally proved worthwhile. Mitsubishi had apparently got its act together at last and it was Vatanen and Airikkala who raced to fastest times in the forests, Pentti still fourth behind Kankkunen, Sainz and Eriksson at close of play but with Ari closing fast after passing Salonen in Clocaenog. "It was very muddy in there, naughty-naughty, but I was happy to have been fastest." Airikkala was looking for-

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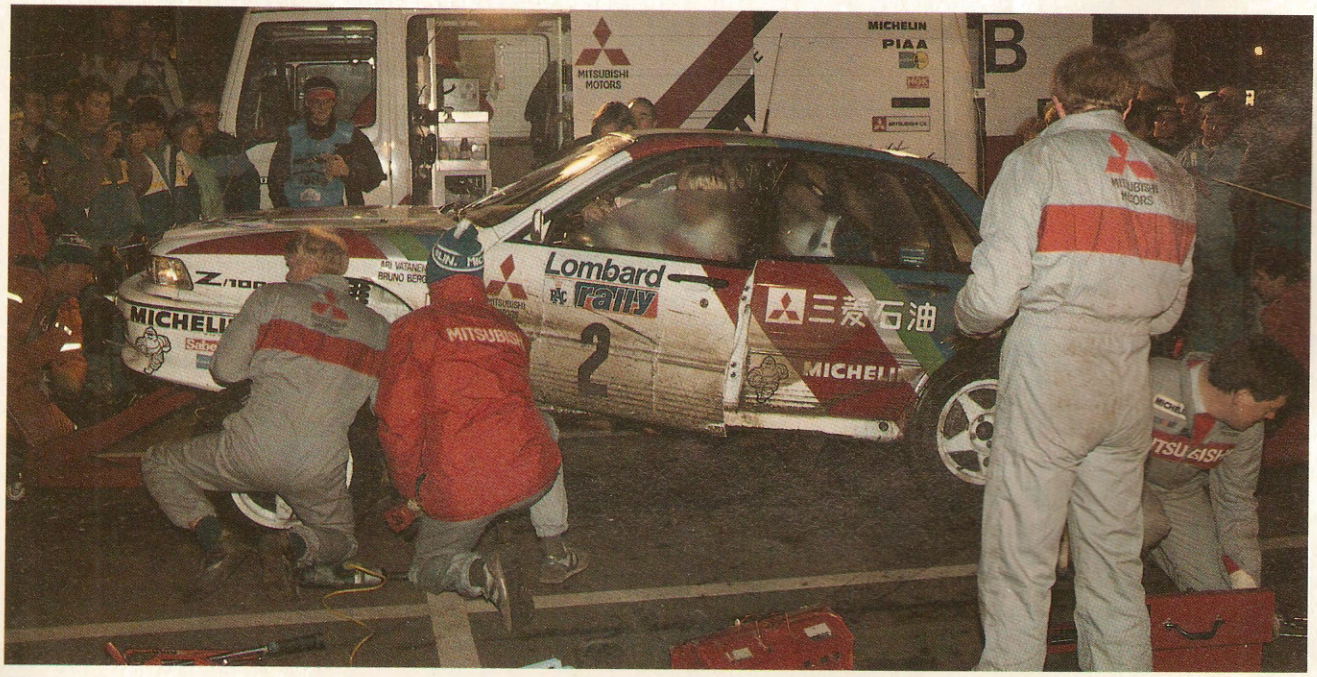


Top: Per Eklund was in flying form in his privately-entered Lancia, lying 10th on Tuesday. Centre left: The Finnish mafia of Hannu Mikkola, Ari Vatanen and Juha Kankkunen share a joke. Photo: Simon Maurice. Centre right: Marshals armed to keep the crowds in check. Left: Vatanen's Mitsubishi Galant in service.

ward to the Lake District and the fast Kielder stages where the power of the car could further threaten Toyota.

Eklund's crew had some work to do after the Lancia suffered a dashboard fire on its way to the Nottingham overnight halt. The engine's brain was damaged, causing a misfire, but all was well by Tuesday.

Tuesday's first three stages passed without any undue incident. The only change coming further back as Mikkola made up places, and the Mazda now hovered just outside the top 10.

Sundstrom had had a new gearbox fitted at Clumber service, and Eriksson was perplexed about tyre choice, for he had no tarmac experience.

If the top 10 was becoming stagnant, Grizedale shook it up a bit. Vatanen rolled, losing 30 seconds, and more importantly fifth place, in the incident. The Mitsubishi sported bodywork damage, and a lack of glass, some of which had cut co-driver Berglund's hand. A further 30 seconds were lost due to poor handling on the second Grizedale, the 15 mile stage amplifying those problems. A new left front corner was fitted.

Mikkola punctured seven miles into the longer Grizedale, and opted to stop and change, losing 3 minutes, while third-placed Eriksson completed the last six miles with a flat tyre – not what the experts opted for! Airikkala, still flying, was now just 7 seconds from third place.

And David Llewellin's RAC Rally finally came to an end on the first Grizedale. The Welshman hit an obscured rock, which broke a driveshaft, and bent the Toyota's chassis as the car nearly rolled.

Stage 30 at Comb saw Malcolm Wilson quickest through the the two wheel drive Vauxhall Astra, a remarkable achievement. But Kankkunen was still in front, and trying hard. He emerged wide-eyed from Grizedale, having put his all into the difficult stages. Tuesday was proving hard, but there was still Wednesday and Thursday to come. ■

The going was tough for some, with Mikkola and McRae Jr (above) rolling.

NOTES ON THE CARS

Toyota

Team Toyota Europe fielded a trio of Celica GT-Fours for Juha Kankkunen (new), Carlos Sainz (San Remo) and Kenneth Eriksson (Australia). Reliability had been the aim and recent testing had resulted in softer suspension to dial out understeer for the blind stages. The transmission set up had not been changed, the hydrolock system enabling the driver to alter the torque split however he felt. San Remo specification engines were used, bringing 285-290bhp reliable power and good mid-range torque.

Toyota GB also had the Shell Open Championship-winning car in the same specification as run on the Audi Sport Rally. Testing recently showed that the high temperatures were due to an inaccurate temperature gauge and not something more serious. Suspension was the same as before and only a disconnected anti-roll bar was planned for the opening day.

Vauxhall/Opel

Four Astra/Kadetts were fielded by the factory on this event plus Dave Metcalfe's giant killing Nova, all largely in familiar trim. Louise Aitken-Walker had her usual British championship car, Malcolm Wilson had the one first used on the Circuit of Ireland, Sepp Haider had his Australian car and Mats Jonsson had the 1000 Lakes example.

All had magnesium gearboxes and apart from Aitken-Walker having a slightly more powerful 'RAC-spec' engine and the others in 'Circuit of Ireland' trim, all were the same.

Ford

Gianfranco Cunico carried the factory Ford banner with the Boreham-run Q8 Team Cosworth. He had used the car on the last Italian national round and it had been reprepared to RAC specification, as had been seen on the Audi Sport Rally. Engine development has all but stopped on the current Cosworth and so it was in familiar trim, the very latest suspension fitted as well.

Peugeot

There was little to report from the Peugeot Talbot Sport camp, with four cars on the list for Hakan Eriksson (309 GTI), Chris Birkbeck (1600cc 205 GTI), Simon Davison (205 Rallye) and the Group N 309 GTI of GTI Challenge winner, Paul Frankland.

All were in their familiar trim as they finished their last rally with no special modifications for the RAC.

Mitsubishi

An ebullient Andrew Cowan confessed that safety had been the prime consideration when preparing the Mitsubishi Galant VR-4s for Ari Vatanen and Pentti Airikkala. The team was concerned to get rid of the reliability problem that beset Ari's 1000 Lakes bid and softened the suspension to make the big car handle better in the British forests.

Power had been increased due to a redesigned exhaust system although precise figures are never available from the Japanese masters. Michelin had spent a lot of time with Vatanen (a reluctant tester at the best of times!) and the team was happy that the best rubber was available.

Weight had been reduced by some 14kgs to around 1254kgs fully laden and with fuel on board.

Mazda

Both Timo Salonen and Hannu Mikkola had their 1000 Lakes cars on the event, Ingvar Carlsson's 323 Turbo being his Australia example, all in the same specification. Each had new viscous front and centre differentials giving a 45/55 torque split.

Generally, the transmission had been strengthened with bigger wheel bearings as an example. Engine development has stopped in Japan and so the cars were still producing some 260bhp at best. The suspension was still in 1000 Lakes trim, harder than might have been expected, but the recent testing showed that it was acceptable. Alternative spring rates were available and a revised setting selected for the opening day's tarmac.

Sundstrom – private Lancia.

THE RETIREMENTS

The road back to Nottingham

The RAC Rally is traditionally tough on cars and drivers, but Belgians Jose Lareppe and Michel Quevrain were struggling with the events prior to the start. After encountering problems which would fill this whole page, the crew failed to make the Nottingham start, and headed back to Belgium with their entry fee refunded.

The first day of spectator stages saw very little in the way of incident, and only 11 of the original 187 starters failed to arrive in Telford. Of these, the most significant was the Audi 200 of German Armin Schwarz who was into the top 10 after the fifth stage, at Donington. The German, who finished a spirited fifth on the RAC last year, had been confirmed as a works Toyota driver for 1990 the night before (see *Special Stage*). His promising showing on this year's event ended on the road between Donington and Silverstone with a nasty road accident. The crew were lucky to emerge uninjured, while the occupants of the other car were taken to hospital, where one was detained overnight, but released the following day.

The others out on the first day were Juha Hamalainen's RS Cosworth (electrics), Stuart Harrington's Peugeot 205 (dead engine), Trevor Godwin's Talbot Samba (clutch), Paul King's Peugeot 205 (radiator) and Swede Fredrik Skoghag's Integrale succumbed to electrical problems.

The second day was predictably harder on the competitors, and on the first stage of the day at Hafren, Hakan Eriksson crashed his Peugeot heavily, briefly blocking the stage. The crew were uninjured.

Enyon Price's entertaining event with celebrity Bill Wiggins on pace notes lasted until the 10th stage with differential failure.

Graham Middleton's hold on Group N came to an end on the first of the Dovey stages, which he had to complete with a puncture. Noticing a faster car catching, he moved over, and his Toyota became stuck in a ditch with no hope of rejoining the track. It was a frustrating way to end a fine showing.

Steve Bannister's event lasted just two more stages. He had been busy getting used to his new Matsubishi Starion in the thick fog, but by Dovey 2 his car had only first gear left. Vince Wetton also left the event on SS14, with his Mazda 323 4WD Turbo suffering all sorts of problems with brakes, fuel pump and turbo pressure.

Russell Brookes had crept into the top 10, but turbo failure in Dovey lost him time. He carried on for a couple of stages without the turbo, until the next service. The unit was replaced, but more damage had been done than originally thought, and retirement came on SS15.

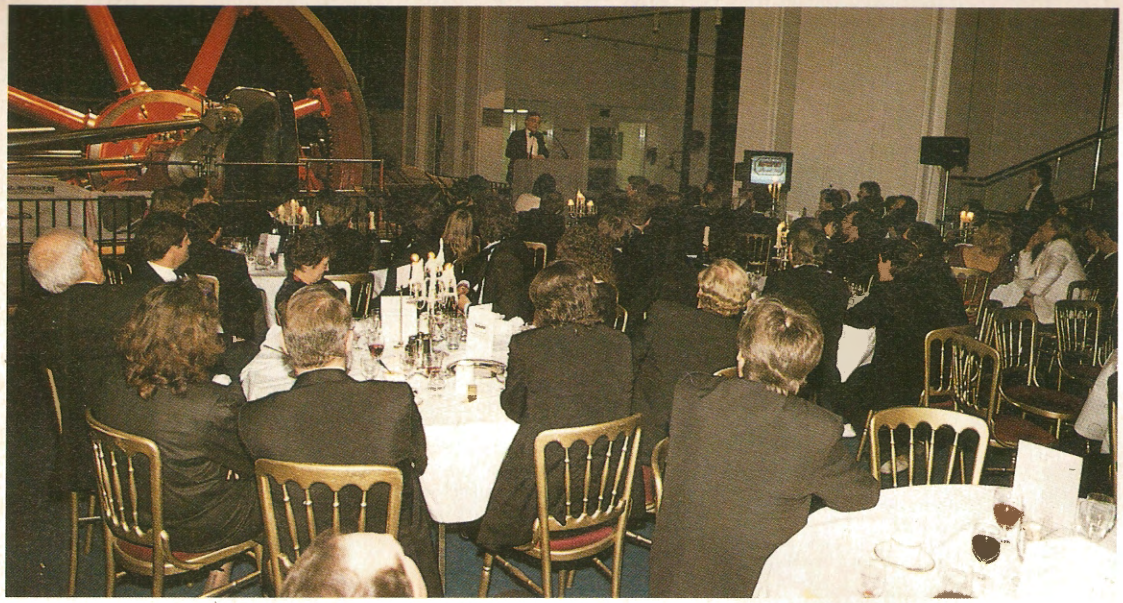
Chris Mellors and co-driver Harold White had to push their Delta 200 yards to the finish of Dovey 1 after a puncture, but their downfall came later when the turbo failed on 14. They continued, but the engine finally cried enough on SS17.

John Milner lost time with a power steering failure on the first day, and a broken cam belt at the last of the Clocaenog stages dropped him further. The Peugeot team advised retirement. Mike Rimmer completed Clocaenog 3 with no lights after a cam belt failure, and attempted Clocaenog 4 with torches strapped to the front. The cam belt problems finally got the better of the Mazda.

Others to fall by the wayside included Ray Cousins's XR4x4 with a seized front wheel bearing; Efgeni Tumaljavichus's Lada Sama which was overheating; Antero Laine's Integrale which had boiled its radiator; Kosho Kanao's Mazda which went off on Penmachno; and Ove Olofsson's Audi 90 Quattro which stopped also in Penmachno.

So, by the time everyone had clocked in at Nottingham on Monday night, 42 cars had retired, 31 of them on that tricky trip through Wales. Three days and 31 competitive stages remained, and many more would encounter trouble before the teams would see Nottingham again.

ANDY HALLBERY



Prize guys

The eighth annual AUTOSPORT Awards will be bigger and better than ever. The 1989 winners will be guests of honour at a gala dinner to be held at the Cafe Royal in London's West End on January 3.

This will be a particularly special year for the Awards. With Cellnet's decision to cancel its presentations (formerly known as the Grovewood Awards), AUTOSPORT's scheme must now be considered the country's premier independent motor sport awards – highlighting the best achievements in 12 months of action.

The AUTOSPORT Awards are unique in that they are a recognition of what our readership thinks, rather than the result of a small specialised committee.

Each year the number of votes has increased dramatically, with 32,780 last year. This year we hope to top the 50,000 mark.

The inaugural awards, in 1982, saw Keke Rosberg, John Watson and Michele Mouton winning the major categories. There were no prizes. It was just a survey without any presentation.

In January 1987 we introduced a gala dinner at Kensington's Roof Garden club with each category winner receiving a trophy.

Last year we moved on to the spectacular setting of the Science Museum and a glance around the tables revealed more star drivers than the previous year. Jan Lammers flew in from Holland to receive his Special Award. This year we hope to have stars galore.

In the National Racing Driver Category you picked Martin Brundle (1983) and Johnny Herbert (1987), who went on to greater things. Last year's winner in this category, JJ Lehto, has in recent months established a fine reputation with the Moneytron Onyx F1 team.

Last year's British Club Driver of the Year, Allan McNish, won the British F3 title and last week had his first runs in a Formula 1 McLaren.

We have also expanded the scheme from the original eight categories. First, there was the John Bolster Trophy for technical innovation in club racing and, last year, we introduced an AUTOSPORT Special Award for outstanding achievements in the sport.

The inaugural Special Award was given to the Jaguar drivers Johnny Dumfries, Jan Lammers and Andy Wallace for their superb victory in the 1988 Le Mans 24 Hours.

We are confident that additional awards will be established this year and in the future.

AUTOSPORT has exciting plans to give recognition to the drivers of tomorrow with a scheme similar to the Grovewood/Cellnet Awards.

It was the Grovewood/Cellnet Awards, dating back to 1963, which helped many young drivers on their way to Formula 1. These included World Champions James Hunt and Alan Jones and others such as Nigel Mansell, Derek Warwick, Jonathan Palmer and Martin Brundle.

We believe that the tradition established should be continued.

We rely on your support and we hope that some of you will take advantage of the opportunity to buy tickets to this exclusive event. ■

The AUTOSPORT Awards are now an established evening of entertainment, with guest speakers such as Stuart Turner (top) and Murray Walker (above). Left: Martin Brundle receives the spoils in 1988.

HALL OF FAME

INTERNATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	Keke Rosberg
1983	Nelson Piquet
1984	Niki Lauda
1985	Alain Prost
1986	Nigel Mansell
1987	Nigel Mansell
1988	Ayrton Senna

INTERNATIONAL RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	Michele Mouton
1983	Stig Blomqvist
1984	Ari Vatanen
1985	Timo Salonen
1986	Juha Kankkunen
1987	Juha Kankkunen
1988	Markku Alen

BRITISH COMPETITION DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	John Watson
1983	Jonathan Palmer
1984	Derek Bell
1985	Nigel Mansell
1986	Nigel Mansell
1987	Jonathan Palmer
1988	Martin Brundle

NATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	Tommy Byrne
1983	Martin Brundle
1984	Johnny Dumfries
1985	Andy Rouse
1986	Andy Wallace
1987	Johnny Herbert
1988	JJ Lehto

NATIONAL RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	Malcolm Patrick
1983	Darryl Weidner
1984	David Llewellin
1985	Mark Lovell
1986	Andrew Wood
1987	Louise Aitken-Walker
1988	Malcolm Wilson

BRITISH CLUB DRIVER OF THE YEAR

1982	Martin Bolsover
1983	Martin Bolsover
1984	Rod Birley
1985	Chris Cramer
1986	Paul Warwick
1987	Eddie Irvine
1988	Allan McNish

RACING CAR OF THE YEAR

1982	Porsche 956
1983	Brabham BT52
1984	McLaren MP4/2
1985	Williams FW10B
1986	Williams FW11B
1987	Jaguar XJR8
1988	McLaren MP4/4

RALLY CAR OF THE YEAR

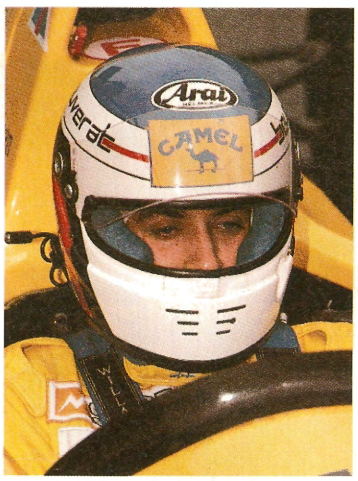
1982	Audi Quattro
1983	Audi Quattro
1984	Peugeot 205T16
1985	MG Metro 6R4
1986	Peugeot 205T16
1987	Lancia Delta HF Turbo
1988	Lancia Delta HF Integrale

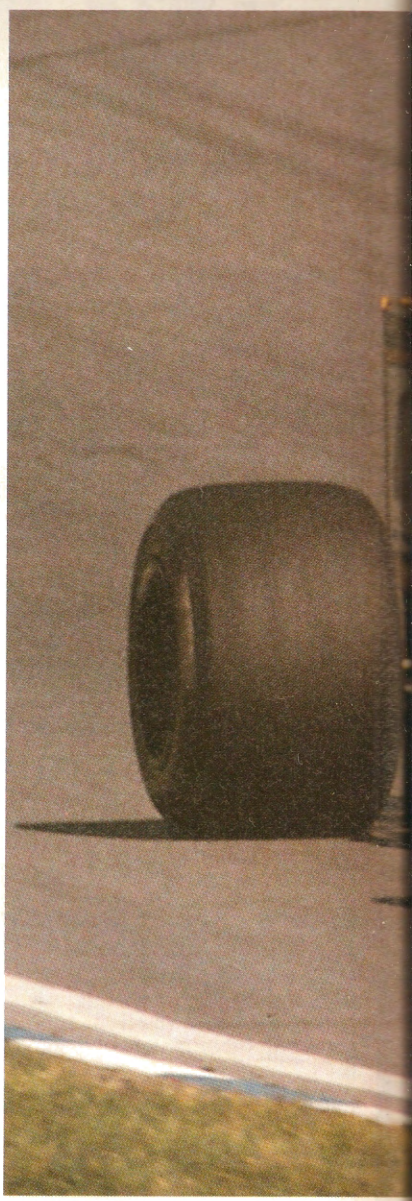
By TONY DODGINS

Transformation

Seven months ago, in previewing the forthcoming Formula 3000 season, I predicted championship success for JJ Lehto, Mugen, Reynard and Pacific Racing. I was, I said, ready to be shot down in flames. I'm still burning.

In reality, this year's championship was a French benefit with a goodly measure of Irish guiding influence thrown in.





Alesi's emergence

Jean Alesi had a rotten 1988 season. He began last year with the French F3 crown and a buoyant reputation. He finished it with four points finishes and 10th place in the final F3000 classification.

At Macau he talked to me about his tough baptism into the international arena. He knew that his Marlboro support was in jeopardy and he wanted to put the record straight. He was aware of sour grapes syndrome, but he thought it worth saying that he hadn't been able to work well with the ORECA engineer assigned to looking after both his chassis and that of team mate Pierre-Henri Raphanel.

The said engineer, having read Jean's words in AUTOSPORT, wrote us a letter to put his case. It was the man's opinion that Jean's "Future team manager, race engineer and mechanics should ask Father Christmas for a load of patience and a degree in psychology: they may need it!"

Alesi was sure that if he was to resurrect his career, then the team and engineer which would work with him in '89 should be English. Jean started to improve his proficiency in the language, leaving behind his Avignon home and fiancée Laurence to head for Oxford and Eddie Jordan Racing.

There was a feeling that he was walking into the lion's den. Martin Donnelly was the man who had forged a tremendously strong partnership with Jordan during the second half of '88. He now had F1 tests, sportscar drives and a matching confidence level.

Alesi, though, was far from overawed. From the moment he arrived in Britain he was smack on the pace in pre-season testing. All the ingredients were there. Eddie Jordan Racing had secured sizeable Camel support for both cars and took early delivery of a pair of Adrian Reynard's new 89D chassis. The team also had the Japanese Mugen engine which was available to the FIA International runners for the first time. It was to be restricted to just four teams, however, and Jordan made sure that his Silverstone-based outfit was one of them by embarking on the initial test work.

The big question was whether or not Jean could cope with his own team mate. Initially, it seemed that he couldn't. Donnelly outpaced him in the opening round at Silverstone but failed to score any points when engine trouble intervened. Jean, meanwhile, brought his car home fourth.

Next time out, at Vallelunga, Martin was in fine form, claiming pole and then winning comfortably after an initial spurt by Marco Apicella came to nought. But now came the decision that was to effectively end Donnelly's championship challenge. His Reynard had been run with a revised nosecone that had not been subject to the formula's mandatory frontal impact test.

An opinion had been sought from FISA Technical Delegate Cecil Mitchell, who said that in his opinion the new nose would pass the test which it was due to have before the next round at Pau. After Martin's win, the EJR car (not the only Reynard to run in such trim, but the only one to score points) was protested by the DAMS team. The relevant personnel and information were not all to hand in Italy, and so it was decided to hear the protest at Pau a fortnight hence.

The French weekend was a bad one for Donnelly, His fine Vallelunga effort was wiped out at a stroke by the stewards' hearing and his team mate won after a gruelling hour and a half around the picturesque street circuit. It was undoubtedly the turning point of the year. The pair qualified together on the second row with times identical to the hundredth and Jean made the better start. Neither could do anything about a flying Eric Bernard, but Martin, running right behind Jean, made a mistake in Parc Beaumont and clobbered a kerb. He ended up in the barrier and Alesi scored a maximum once misfortune had struck Bernard. Donnelly had gone to France with a six point advantage over Alesi and came home with a 12 point deficit.

In Spain the trend continued. Donnelly outqualified Alesi by a couple of slots but then suffered two stops for punctured rear Avons, eventually running wide over a kerb and damaging a damper mounting. No points again. Alesi had his problems too, in the form of an early tangle with Naspetti, but came through to add a further two points to his total, thereby assuming the championship lead.

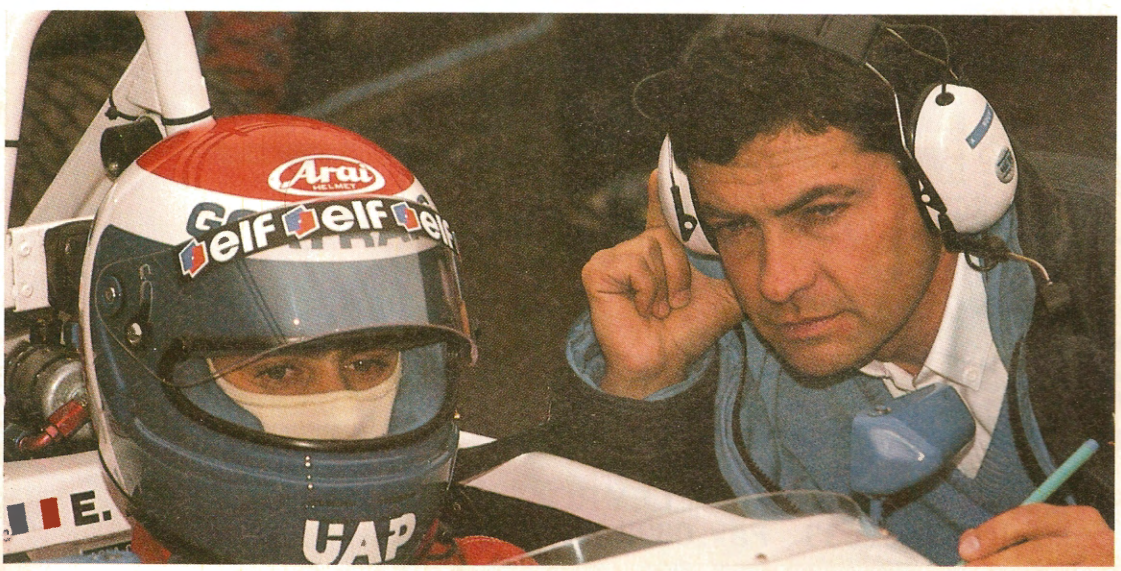
By the time the series reached its mid point, at Enna some seven weeks later, both Jean and Martin had made their Grand Prix debuts in the French GP at Paul Ricard, the Frenchman in place of Michele Alboreto at Tyrrell and the Irishman at Arrows, substituting the injured Derek Warwick.

There were a couple of pointers this year which made me believe that a driver's mental state counts for more than is appreciated. Alesi's Grand Prix debut was nothing short of sensational. He ran second and eventually brought Ken's car home fourth. He was the name on everyone's lips and by the time we arrived at Enna his national press were all over him. His driving in qualifying had that spark about it.

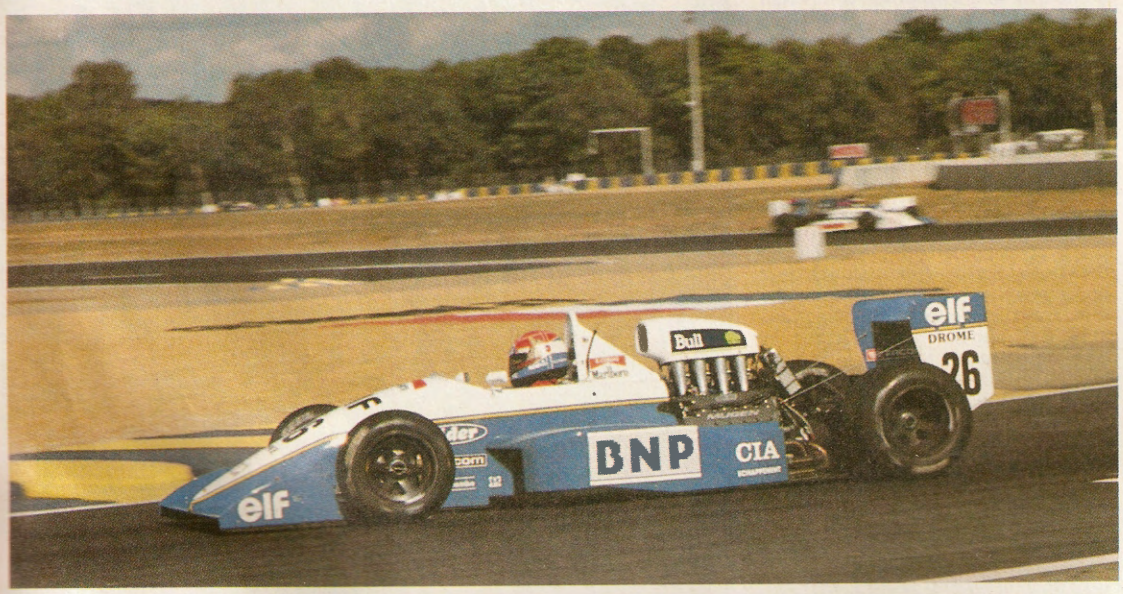
When the Camel EJR cars qualified on the front row together, Alesi fractionally quicker, you just sensed that there would be first corner trouble. Sure enough, as they battled out the Sicilian circuit's bottle neck chicane, Donnelly got it broadside and Jean went off in avoidance. No points for the Frenchman but Martin failed to take advantage by tangling with Danielsson later in the race. A win from Chiesa gave the Swiss-Italian a single point advantage at the top of the championship table, while incredibly, with half the season over, Donnelly had still to score.

By Brands Hatch, Jean had an 18 month Tyrrell contract in the bag. Amazing to think that a few short months earlier he was worried about his future. In Kent, though, he struggled to beat Martin Donnelly. The EJR Reynards were outpaced by both DAMs Lolas in prsactice but drove round the French cars as if they weren't there when the lights changed. Alesi led initially, but Donnelly stormed through a tiny gap between his team mate and a stationary First Reynard at around 170mph. It was very much notice of intent and Martin went on to score a fine win which he was permitted to keep this time. Jean collected six more points for second and moved back into the championship lead.

Then came two hammer blows from Alesi. At Birmingham he was simply superb. Quickest throughout practice, he led the race from start to finish, fending off a threat from Marco Apicella. On to Spa, and he qualified



Far left: Jean Alesi won at Pau, Birmingham and Spa, but at Brands Hatch (left) he was overhauled by team mate Donnelly. Bottom left: Eric Bernard worked well with Alain Roux, but luck was not with them. Below: Erik Comas emerged as a real talent, winning here at Le Mans and also at Dijon.



second to Comas and then got the drop on the DAMS pilot. Comas eventually reeled him in but suffered a gearbox problem and could do little to prevent Jean taking his second consecutive maximum score.

Donnelly, meanwhile, was in the doldrums. A qualifying spin at Brum had seen his race chassis totalled by the following Eric Cheli. He came home third in a hastily built up spare 89D. Then at Spa he had his worst race of the year. Sensitive to suggestions that maybe he wasn't giving it his full attention what with a Lotus F1 contract already signed, Martin blamed a basic chassis imbalance for the 5 seconds which separated him from his team mate, who was some 18 places higher up the grid.

By the time we left Belgium, it was practically all over. All Alesi needed at Le Mans once Apicella had departed the scene, was a single point to thwart any chance that Erik Comas still had. As Moreno had done when in sight of the title a year earlier, Jean drove for that point and no more, wrapping it up with a sixth place before skipping the final round at Dijon in favour of his Tyrrell seat at Suzuka.

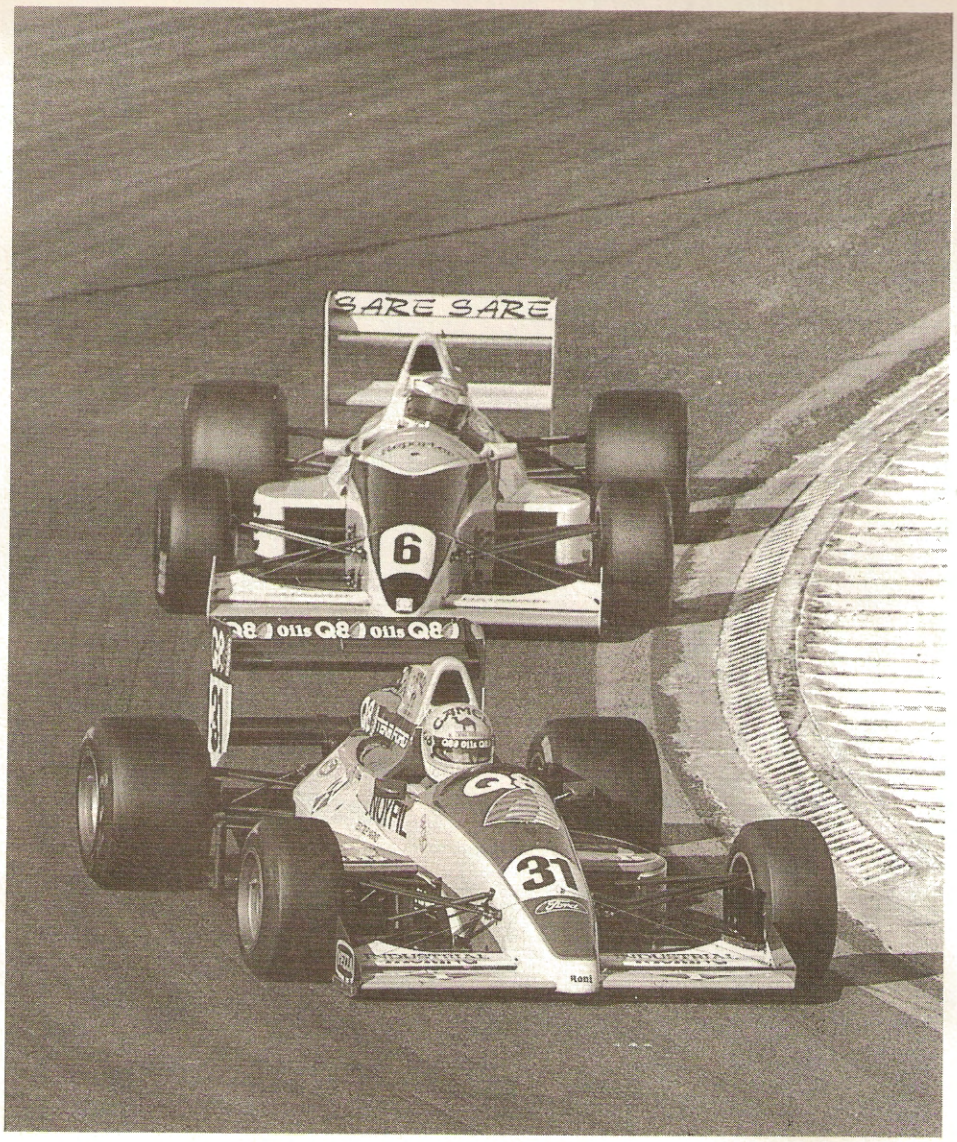
So, EJR got the job done and claimed its biggest championship success since the team's formation. It was also the first major championship success for sponsor, Camel. There were four victories, three pole positions and two fastest laps to celebrate. The team never stopped working to improve its performance. Caught out they may have been by Vallelunga (a second appeal to the FIA against the decision is not due to be heard until December 5), but a Trevor Foster inspired, Paul Crosby executed, shortening of the 89D's sidepods found around three tenths per lap when tested by Donnelly at Oulton Park.

There was far less between the drivers than the the 26 point gap in the championship might suggest. You can find nine at Vallelunga straight away, and potentially another 15 attributable to Martin's errors at Pau and Enna. Add to those another mistake at Spa and you will quickly appreciate that Martin lost the series because in such a short championship (10 rounds), he made mistakes in 30% of the races (40% if you include his troublesome Birmingham practice spin).

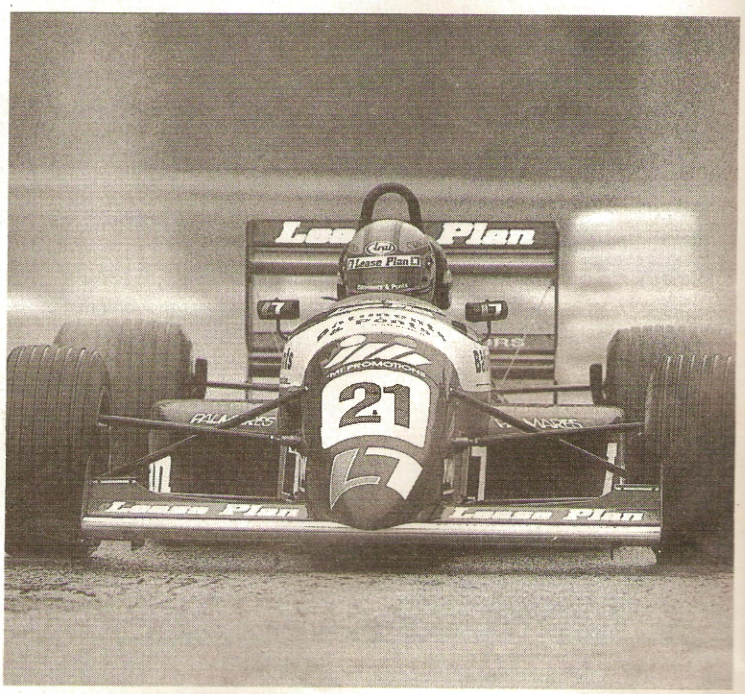
Alesi, on the other hand was very consistent, drove with confidence and aggression – a touch of arrogance may even creep in during future years I would hazard a guess – and got along fine with Paul Crosby. Mechanics Nick Burrows and Andy Stephenson tended the Frenchman's car and no psychology degree was needed.

The DAMS challenge

In vying for the 'top team' title, Eddie Jordan Racing had a very serious rival in the form of the French DAMS team. ▶



Marco Apicella, seen here chasing Andrea Chiesa (left), is still without an F3000 win. Below: Eric van de Poele was a consistent front runner.



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Jean-Paul Driot's equipe was born out of the remnants of the disbanded GDBA team which finished '88 with such a flourish. Over the close season, Pierre Blanchet succumbed to illness and Gilles Gaignault left the team. Driot thus reformed and entered under DAMS (Driot Arnoux Motor Sport).

As the works Lola team, DAMS worked closely with the neat T89/50's designer Mark Williams, and were a threat from day one.

Eric Bernard, if truth be known, could have won this championship very convincingly. At Silverstone, number 33 was conclusively quickest in the warm up and was strongly fancied. Unfortunately, Alesi left the circuit and rejoined at just the point where Bernard happened to be. Exit a battered and bruised Lola pilot. At Vallelunga next time out, Eric encountered a piece of debris in the middle of the flat in fifth Cutting during untimed practice. Then his Mugen failed to fire up in the official session and he could only start from row 6. Again he was fastest in the warm up. Again he failed to finish – transmission trouble this time.

On to Pau, and Eric was disappearing up the road in a class of his own until he encountered some tangled back markers. He chose to go left, the gap wasn't big enough and he stalled, having to sit there while everyone he'd just blown away filed by on the right. Back he charged up to third and then tried to take second from Blundell at a spot where, frankly, it was never on. He could be found red-eyed in the DAMS motorhome later: "Excuse me," he said, trying to raise a smile, "I cry, I'm so angry. I should have known better than to try there." At the time he'd been taking 2 seconds per lap out of Alesi's lead.

Eric Bernard could have won this championship very convincingly

In Spain, Bernard won as he pleased, then at Enna he suffered electrical problems and had to qualify in his team mate's chassis. Third after the first corner fracas, he encountered more mechanical trouble and subsequently retired. Brands next, and Bernard joined Comas on an all DAMS front row (a feat managed four times in 10 races by the team). He made a hopeless start and then had to pit after a handful of laps with a puncture. His recovery was sensational, his fastest lap more than a second quicker than that of race winner Donnelly. But still he got just three points.

You get the picture. By this point you could detect a hint of despondency about the Frenchman. DAMS, by its own admission, was struggling in Birmingham, Bernard qualifying fifth and bringing the car home fourth. He then spun out of what was a challenging second at Spa, claiming braking trouble. Those behind, however, reported that he'd simply blown it.

At Le Mans, Bernard got the pole but made a tardy getaway and was beaten by Comas and van de Poele. He took the pole again at Dijon but again had to play second fiddle to his team mate.

Erik Comas, meanwhile, emerged as the revelation of the season. I remember watching at Silverstone and not being that impressed. He qualified on the sixth row and was then passed by van de Poele and Gary Brabham, the latter aboard a year-old Reynard, in the early stages. Eventually he came home fifth and I suppose "competent journeyman" were the lines along which I was thinking. Yes, I knew he was the reigning French F3 Champion, but I'd also seen him trounced by Alain Ferté in a one-off Martini ride during that year.

Quickly, I had to revise my opinion. He was a stunning fourth from the back of the field after stalling on the grid at Vallelunga. He was second to Bernard at Jerez, he took pole on his first ever visit to Brands Hatch. He did the same at Spa in a wet session despite never having driven an F3000 car in the rain. And then he scored crushing wins at Le Mans and Dijon to finish the year level on points with Alesi, losing out by dint of having one less race win. Consider, too, that both Alesi and Comas managed their 39 points from one less round than most of their competitors, Erik being forced to miss Pau after a practice accident rooted his T89/50.

Comas is naturally quick, fully committed and not averse to using the odd kerb or two when hustling along. If you look at his record, he has won championships in each of the three seasons preceding this one; French Formule Renault Turbo in '86, Superproduction in '87 and F3 in '88. And he damned nearly cracked F3000 this year. I revise my judgement. The man is an ace and he should be in an F1 car instead of some pay merchant. He has nothing more to prove in F3000.

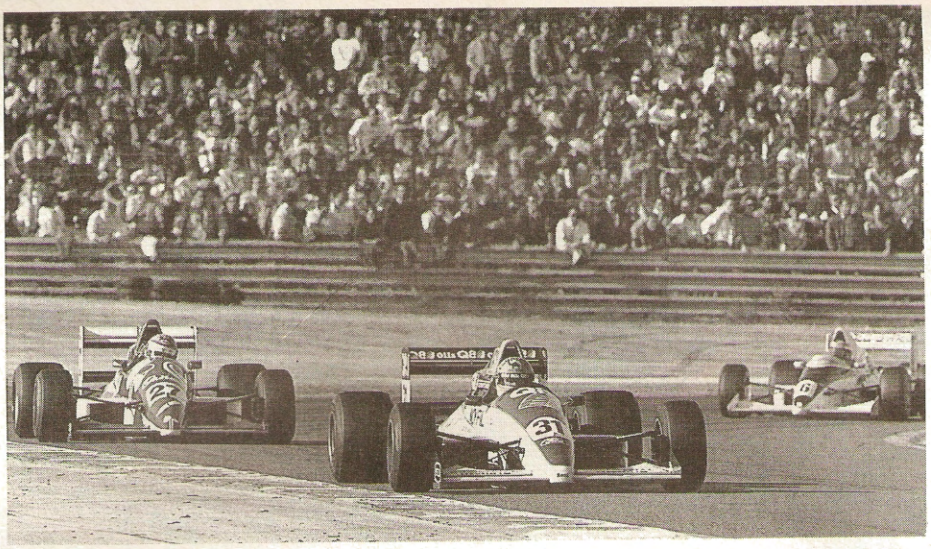
The DAMS haul then, comprised three wins, five poles and six fastest laps. It gave the team second and third places in the championship after a first rate year.

The rest

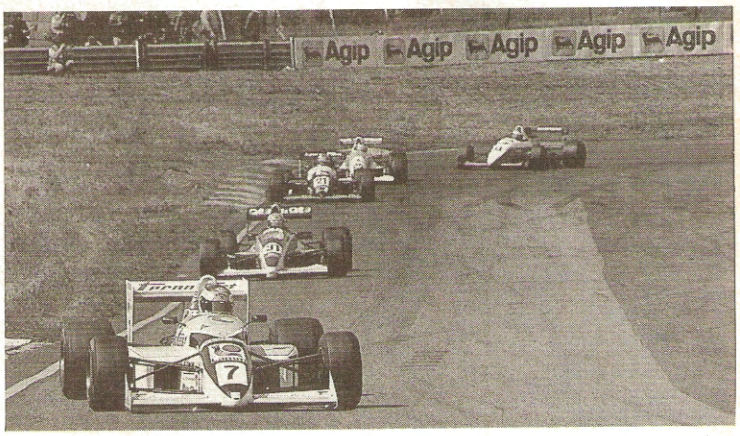
I make no apology for majoring on the achievements of EJR and DAMS. The rest, to be honest, weren't in the same league.

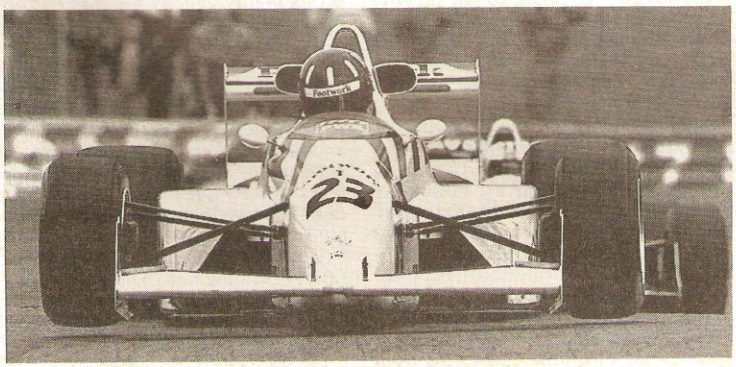
First Racing came closest, Italian Marco Apicella heading up the team's challenge. This was the first year in which Marco drove an F3000 car worthy of him, the 24-year-old hampered in recent seasons by the Dallara 3087 and March 88B. This year, he began with a March 89B (First ordered three such chassis) but had a Reynard 89D in time for round 2 at Vallelunga.

Marco's first run in the Reynard was at Vallelunga, a home circuit, and he



Left: Andrea Chiesa impressed at Vallelunga and won at Enna for Roni. Below: Fabrizio Giovanardi scored March's sole victory at Vallelunga. Bottom: Damon Hill had a real go with the Footwork.





►► qualified on the front row and stormed away into an early lead after what, it must be said, was a very dubious start.

A seized Judd put him in the sand trap, however. At Pau he took a superb pole but was forced to start from the pit lane due to an oil leak which many reckoned to be the cause of a spectacular first lap shunt which stopped the race. Commendably, after the dramas of '88, that was the only restart needed throughout the year. Marco drove a fine race, much of it in close company with a similarly charging Bernard, to finish second. He repeated that performance at Birmingham, had a brace of thirds at Jerez and Spa and a fourth at Enna.

Untypically, lacklustre displays at Brands Hatch and Le Mans were the only real blots on Marco's copybook. He admitted to a dislike of the Kent circuit, but professionals aren't supposed to do such things.

First's other drivers, Fabrizio Giovanardi and Jean-Denis Deletraz were a disappointment. Giovanardi, indeed, was rather more than that, he was totally unfathomable. He failed to qualify for Silverstone's International Trophy and then he won at Vallelunga! That will go down as a victory for the March 89B, although it was gained in controversial circumstances after the Donnelly exclusion. On only two other occasions did the Italian qualify in the first 20 and four times he failed to start, twice through non qualification and twice through accidents prior to the start at both street circuits. Enquiries to Lamberto Leoni about the source of the trouble were met with an "Ah, I don't know; 'tis a Giovanardi problem."

Jean-Denis Deletraz, meanwhile, was a mere shadow of the man who ended up on the podium at Le Mans and Zolder in '88. It made you wonder, just what the GDBA team knew last year that the rest didn't. The best result for the wealthy Swiss this year was a lapped ninth in the final race of the year at Dijon.

Eric van de Poele was by far the most impressive of the four drivers run regularly out of Mike Collier's Andover base. A former BMW Junior Team driver and winner of the Spa 24 Hours, most thought of van de Poele as having missed the single seater boat. At 28, he arrived for his first season at this level and followed up a sixth place at Silverstone with third at Vallelunga. Tended by Dave Morgan, the Belgian brought his car home in the points at Jerez, Spa, Le Mans and Dijon, actually splitting the DAMS pairing to record his best result (second) at Le Mans.

A sponsor incredibly offered Eric a bonus of more than £100,000 if he finished the season in the top five. When he was lying eighth, the company insured its risk. It was good that it did.

Van de Poele, it seems, is almost too nice a guy to make it all the way as a racing driver. He has an ever ready smile, admits it if he screws up and never slags his team.

That is more than can be said for the rest of the GA crew. Philippe Favre started the year with a stunning pole position at Silverstone and was beaten only by Thomas Danielsson in the race. The Swiss always goes well at Silverstone and the form flattered only to deceive. Never again was he in the points and he failed to complete the year, sitting out the end of season French races. Favre pointed fingers at the team organisation and lack of testing opportunities and team mate Goudchaux was quoted in the French press complaining that GA was using second hand DAMS brake discs.

That is only one side of the story. In Goudchaux's case, it is probably fair to say that his problem stemmed from the right pedal and lack of pressure thereupon, rather than an inability to stop. The case was proven when Andrew Gilbert-Scott jumped in the car at Dijon and finished up on the podium. In the case of both Favre and Goudchaux, money was tight and in such circumstances it is difficult to know whether gripes are valid or whether the team is doing a fine job in keeping the show on the road.

Stephane Proulx had a healthy Player's budget and came with good references from Canada. He started impressively at Silverstone, running just outside the points, before ending in the gravel trap just four laps from home. He then went through quite a considerable spell in the doldrums before re-emerging at the end of the year. He qualified seventh on his first visit to Spa and then scored his first points with a fifth place at Le Mans. He intends to come back for another season next year and should be a regular scorer.

At the beginning of the year, Q8's ties with EJR were broken by the Irishman's decision to go the Mugen route, the oil company wanting to retain its links with Ford. The decision was thus taken to support Roni Motorsport, with Emanuele Naspetti and Andrea Chiesa forming the driving strength. In order to combat the Mugen threat, Roni negotiated a deal for development Heini Mader engines.

Chiesa was having his second year in the category and at times there were flashes of inspiration, notably on home soil. He was a fine second at Vallelunga and then won at Enna after a difficult race under pressure. He impressed again at Birmingham, cruelly robbed of a good points finish by a suspension failure within sight of the flag. A serious, intense driver, Andrea thinks about it a lot and could well be a force next year, his F1 aspirations being a touch premature.

Emanuele Naspetti began the year as Italian F3 Champion and was tipped as a man to watch. We watched, but we didn't see much. Vallelunga, predictably, was his best showing, netting a couple of points after Donnelly's disqualification. There were four accidents later on, not all down to Emanuele, and the affable 21-year-old from Ancona seemed to become more and more despondent as the year wore on. Recently he showed a fine turn of speed in an EJR test at Silverstone and could well be a force to be reckoned with next year.

Thomas Danielsson returned with Madgwick after having his '88 season with EJR cut short due to an eye problem. At Silverstone he drove superbly, leading from lights to flag after qualifying on the second row. Everyone knows the Swede is quick but his consistency has always been in doubt. Sadly, the case was proved again.

At Vallelunga Danielsson made a silly error which threw away what was effectively the lead, only Donnelly (later to be disqualified) ahead of him at the time. At Pau he was still a front runner, fending off a determined Lehto by the tiniest of margins to retain his championship lead with a third place.

From then on, Thomas's average qualifying position was 14th, and apart from a sixth place at Spa he was never really a factor. There was very nearly a Mugen installed in his Reynard before Birmingham, but the swap fell through. There was a Rial F1 test for Thomas mid-year, and it's possible that touching the hems of F1 may have distracted him from the task in hand.

In the second Madgwick 89D, Gary Evans played out what is likely to be the full 90 minutes of his racing career. He scored points in the race of attrition at Enna, but upon failing to qualify at Dijon and then becoming a father, he considered that perhaps it was time for the lid to be consigned to a shelf.

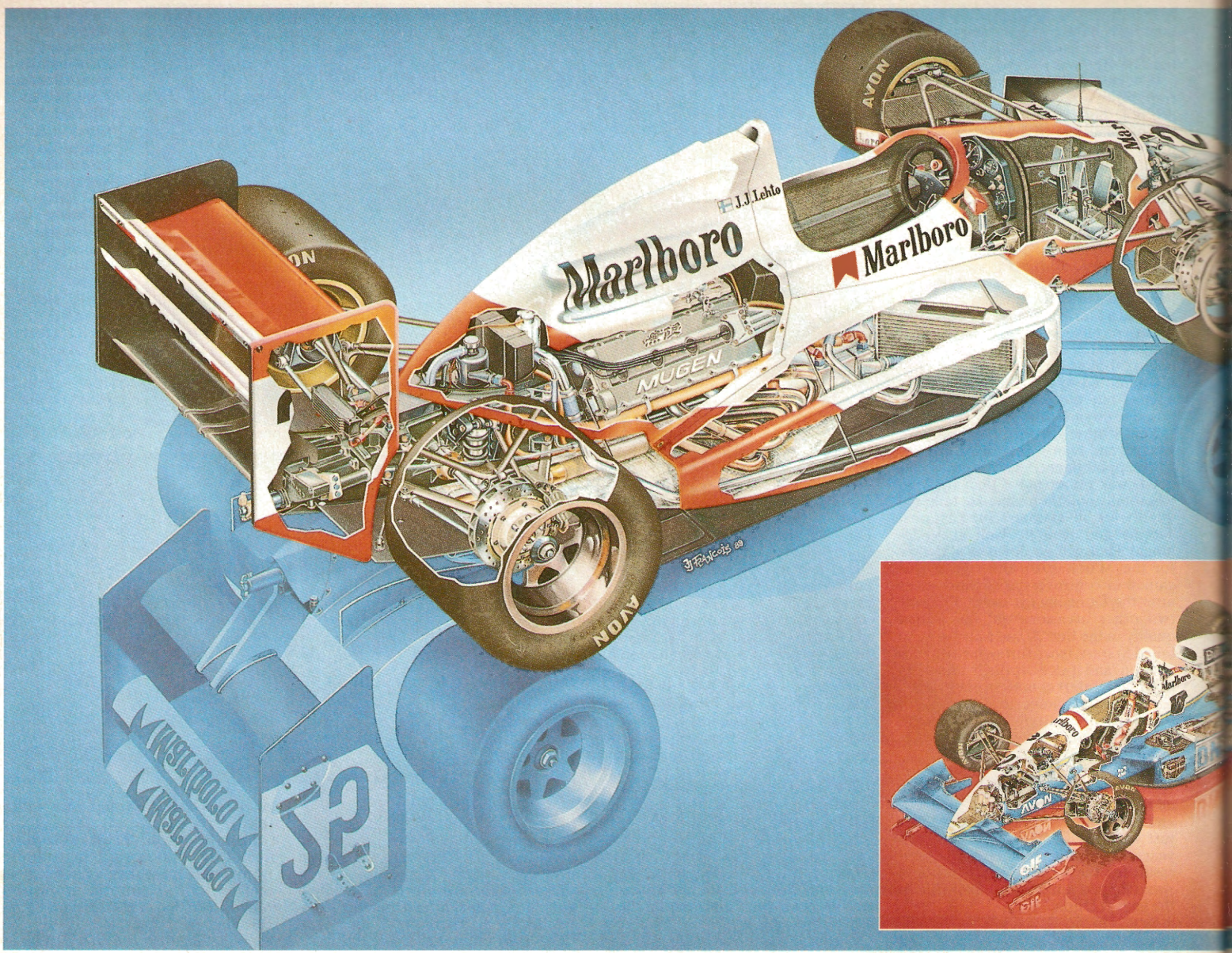
The Pacific question

Pacific Racing came into F3000 with Marlboro support, a pair of Reynards, Mugen engines and a driving strength of JJ Lehto and Eddie Irvine.

Why, with what on paper was a similar degree of potency to EJR, did they finish the championship ninth (Irvine) and 13th (Lehto)?

There are pet theories aplenty. The first is that Neil Brown Mugens are not as quick as Alan Smith ones. The second is that JJ Lehto is not all he is cracked up to be. The third is that Pacific did not have the engineering experience of EJR.

Tackling the engine question first, Neil Brown also prepared the Mugens powering the DAMS Lolas and there was certainly nothing wrong with those. But every installation is different, and sorting the ancillaries on a Reynard presents a totally different set of problems to a Lola. Undoubtedly, Pacific had its worries with the Mugen early in the year, particularly with the oil system and cooling. A knock on effect was that the team was ►



►►

restricted in its ability to run lengthy test sessions. Whereas it ventured into Formula 3 having completed almost a year's worth of testing before the season began, in F3000 it found itself at unfamiliar tracks with no running.

Now the Lehto question. Tougher this. There is no doubt that JJ had a very strong engine during his F3 championship-winning year. Special bits from America were arranged by Neil Brown and there can be little doubt that until Gary Brabham came along with a very quick Spiess, JJ had the strongest engine. The unit incidentally, was the one that John Alcorn used when he was quickest in many of this year's pre-season F3 tests. It then blew up.

"That," says Keith Wiggins, "was a long term winter project which worked well for us. It didn't make him night and day quicker, but probably gave him that little something that as a team you work hard to find." JJ knockers also point to the fact that he was beaten in FF2000 on occasion by Jason Elliott and Jonathan Bancroft. But against that you can point out that Ayrton Senna was beaten on occasion by Calvin Fish...

JJ's record includes just three points finishes; a fourth at Pau, fifth at Spa and sixth at Jerez. But he did conduct the F1 Onyx in none too shabby a fashion. Quite how much he was distracted by F1 is difficult to say. Certainly, he had hoped to miss out F3000 and go straight in. Consequently you can question his commitment. There was Ferrari testing taking up his time, too. Debriefs with Pacific were thus shorter than normal and tended to take place on aircraft.

The engineering point is undoubtedly valid. There are those who say that Reynard's Malcolm Oastler, who oversaw the Pacific cars at the races, is a far more accomplished designer than engineer. As I'm neither, I can't really comment on that, but what should be said is that Malcolm worked at the Reynard factory during the week and was subsequently not an ever-present part of the team in the way that Trevor Foster and Paul Crosby were at EJR. That is something which Gary Anderson, faced with the same task at Middlebridge, considered to be insurmountable. Keith Wiggins, also, is the first to admit that with the benefit of hindsight he should have had two permanent engineers instead of trying to do too much himself.

Eddie Irvine, for his part, did a first class job. He was quick in Formula Ford while running on tuppence ha'penny and in a works Van Diemen was invincible. He felt that the Alfa engine was the reason behind a winless F3 year with West Surrey. Following that, he was thought fortunate to gain full Marlboro support in F3000. In his own mind he felt he could beat Lehto in the same car and relished the opportunity. Happily for him, so long as he outdid his team mate he would be perceived as doing a good job.

The statistics show that Eddie won the qualifying battles 6-3, achieved the team's best result, a third place at Enna, scored a point at Birmingham and then finished the final two races in fourth place, the first Reynard home each time. Not the world's greatest test driver, Eddie is a committed and talented racer who is a potential winner in the right car next year. If a Marlboro budget is not forthcoming, and the word is that the red-and-white money will go to Comas and McNish next year, could it be that a certain Irishman who wears a lot of yellow might just see his next Alesi?

Leyton March problems

Poor Mark Blundell had a stinker of a season. Last year, aboard a Lola Motorsport Lola T88/50, he finished the season sixth in the championship. Every one of that top 10 classification subsequently signed a Grand Prix contract with the exception of Mark.

Faced with another year of F3000, Blundell joined Middlebridge and campaigned with a Reynard-Cosworth. The year started with a third at Silverstone, a retirement at Vallelunga and a sixth after a collision with Bernard at Pau. It then became a disaster. Mark missed Jerez after a crash in the untimed session, had an engine failure at Enna and another accident at Brands Hatch. After an aggressive fifth at Birmingham, he non-started at Spa after an accident on the warm-up lap, spun out at Le Mans and finished with a point at Dijon.

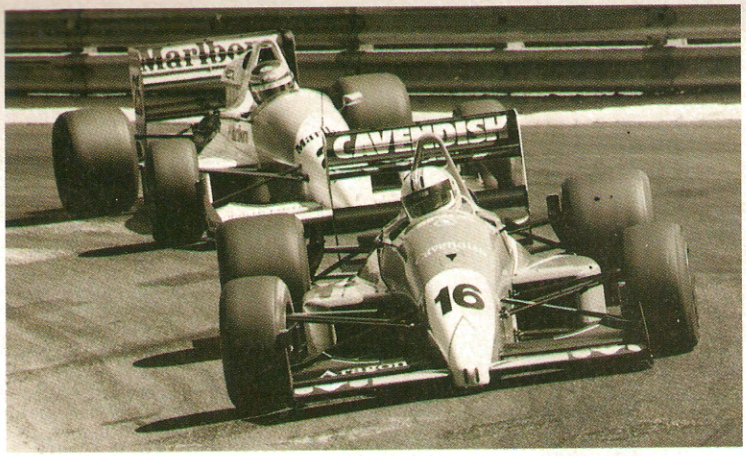
He started the year full of hope, with Gary Anderson (Roberto Moreno's championship-winning engineer from last year) assigned to his car at the events. Gary, though, had the same problem as Malcolm Oastler at Pacific in that he was committed to Reynard during the week: "The likes of EJR are working at it full time, as I did at Bromley last year. It doesn't make it easy, but it's a helluva lot different. The Middlebridge boys did a good job, but when you can't be involved full time it's not an ideal situation. When the first time you confront a problem is at the track, you don't get enough time to think about it."

Anderson was also sympathetic to the efforts of his driver, but there was a hint that perhaps Mark was trying too hard to make up for any disadvantages he had, including the lack of a Mugen engine: "He's as hard a driver as there is out there, with a very high effort level. Often that's good, but it can sometimes be bad."

Mark, certainly was aware that it was an important year for him and there was the odd suggestion of desperation about him, a race win not having come his way since '86. There was also the Nissan WS-PC drive which took up his time. The two will not be combined next year and Mark faces a tough decision over which way to go.

Phil Adams did a most competent job in the second Middlebridge Reynard, missing out on a point by one place at both Silverstone and Birmingham. Only once did he fail to make the

Above: The '89 championship aspirants with their lids off. The Reynard 89D claimed a second consecutive championship for the marque, but the Lola T89/50 (inset) was every bit as good.



Thomas Danielsson won at Silverstone and finished third at Pau (left), but had a difficult time elsewhere. Below: Eddie Irvine did a fine job in a difficult season for Pacific.

cut, at Pau in May.

Claudio Langes, now 29, finished the year 12th in Forti's Mader Cosworth-powered Lola. He hounded Andrea Chiesa all the way to the flag at Enna and also scored a point at Brands Hatch. It is possible that we have seen the last of Claudio in a single-seater.

At 34, we have also seen the last of Alain Ferté in F3000. He scored points in one of Cobra's Reynards at both Vallelunga and Pau. He also qualified in the top 10 at Spa and Le Mans before seemingly losing interest at Dijon. A talented pilot, he excelled for TWR at Le Mans and no doubt has a bright WS-PC future. Pedro Chaves, in the other Cobra car, far from disgraced himself in the huge jump up from FF1600.

Ross Hockenhull had three outings in the British races in place of Ferté, neither having a full budget. Ross achieved a creditable eighth at Brands Hatch but was also the subject of the season's biggest absurdity. After a misunderstanding as to whether FISA's new 'one driver change per car per season' ruling meant one change *per se* or one change of face with the original man allowed back, Ross was forced to sit out Jerez while an empty car sat in the pits. If Jeremy Beadle had appeared instead of FISA's Marcel Martin, the BBC's bleeper machine would have needed a turbocharger to keep up with Colin Bennett.

Gary Brabham also scored points, aboard the Leyton March, finishing fifth at Brands Hatch after he was called upon to replace the personable but accident-prone Mauro Martini. The works effort was managed by first Alan Howell and then Derek Worthington with Mike Smith in charge of the project. Giovanardi had proved the car to have potential and Sekiya went well with it in Japan, but very little progress was made in Europe.

Peter Vennik joined the team at Le Mans, as chief engineer, and will work on the design of the '90 car with Ralph Bellamy.

A recurrent problem was that no matter what changes were made to the car, its corner weights were thrown out, the problem even more apparent with a Nicholson mounted in place of a Judd engine at Dijon. A back-to-back test with another chassis may prove enlightening. Whatever, the March performance was sad for the formula.

Changing faces

The one mildly irritating aspect of Formula 3000, to some it may be an attraction, is that there is no consistency of theme. None of the championship-winning teams seem to figure prominently after their successful season. There is no BS Automotive (Danner), no Genoa Racing (Capelli), no Onyx (Modena) and reigning champions Bromley Motorsport began the year with an underfinanced Gary Brabham aboard an updated Reynard 88D.

Sadly missed this year was a works Ralt representation, Ron Tauranac almost an institution as a leading light in the second string single-seater category. Onyx had moved on to greater things and from the '88 ranks we also lost ORECA, GDBA, Spirit, Lola Motorsport, GEM, Sport Auto and Barcelona Motorsport.

In their place we had new from the already discussed DAMS, Pacific and Middlebridge teams, plus Apomatox, CDM, Footwork and Automotor.

Apomatox is based in Magny Cours, with Dominique Delestre its guiding influence. Dominique appeared in a handful of practice sessions but failed to qualify, while Philippe Gache campaigned most effectively for the team. Eighth semed to be the best he could do, a feat he managed at Jerez, Birmingham and Le Mans.

CDM was pioneered by former AutoWindscreens boss Brian Holmes. Initially, Charlie Crichton-Stuart and Don Halliday were part of the team, but the association soon split up. Humphrey Corbett and much of Jean Mosnier's now redundant Lola Motorsport staff joined the Brackley team, whose first year was a barren one. Frenchman Eric Cheli and Paul Belmondo campaigned the cars but neither ever looked remotely threatening, a 10th place by Belmondo at Spa-Francorchamps being the best achievement.

Footwork campaigned its own Mugen-powered MC041 chassis from a Reading base, managed by former Spirit boss John Wickham. Japanese driver Ukyo Katayama drove initially but he also had a Japanese programme and seemed rather out of his depth in Europe. Damon Hill took over the drive at Enna and should be applauded for unstinting effort in the difficult looking chassis. He never failed to get it into the race and although the best he could manage was 14th at Spa, he was always committed.

The Ravenna-based Automotor team graduated from F3 and had Reynard's Trevor Schumach assisting the effort. Massimo Monti began the year but quit after two non qualifications and an involvement in the Pau shunt. The tardy Franco Scapini then took over, only managing to get the Judd-powered car into the race at Enna and Birmingham. Finally, Alessandro Zanardi had his first taste of F3000 with the team at Dijon.

Of those who didn't complete a full year, Perry McCarthy turned in a fine drive at Spa with Roger Cowman's frugally run Lola, tigering up into seventh place. Given a full season at this level, Pel could go well.

Marco Greco appeared in a GA Lola for a couple of races after an initial run in a Bromley Reynard.

Enrico Bertaggia began the year for Cowman, but quit after a couple of non-qualifications in unfortunate circumstances. Domenico Gitto also had a couple of runs, the Sicilian doing a reasonable job at Brands Hatch.

Didier Artzet drove Racetech's Reynard for the first three races of the year before splitting with the team, while Cor Euser drove the car (run by Bromley) in Spa. Michel Ferté had a one off appearance at Enna, while F3 graduates Allan McNish, Ricard Rydell and David Velay joined the fray at Dijon. FISA's newly-introduced minimum qualifications for F3000 and driver change ruling was thus quite effective, keeping the drivers appearing in the category to 45 as opposed to the farcical 69 of last year. ■

STATISTICS

Advantage Mugen

The big worry as the season shaped up was whether or not the Mugen engine, available in Europe for the first time, would become a prerequisite.

In the final analysis, the Japanese unit won all but three of the races (all but two if you count Donnelly's Vallelunga 'on the road' success).

The Mugen is a smooth revving unit which undoubtedly had a slight advantage lower down in the rev range. What must also be remembered is that the quick drivers had the Mugens behind their shoulders. There are few who doubt that the EJR and DAMS cars would have won races with Cosworths installed.

The Cosworth teams did recognise the threat and the likes of Roni, Middlebridge and Madgwick benefited from development programmes by Mader, Tickford and Langford and Peck respectively. Nicholson also responded with a programme which will be exclusively for the benefit of GA Motorsport next year. Cosworth itself has also worked hard on closing the gap.

The Judd is difficult to evaluate because there was only one truly competitive driver, Marco Apicella, using one. Marco felt himself to be struggling to match the Mugens on acceleration and First intends to switch next year.

On the chassis front, it came down to a straight Reynard versus Lola battle. The March 89B may not have been a bad chassis, but it was never given a serious chance. Problems with First apparently surrounded Ralph Bellamy's Japanese commitments which Lamberto Leoni thought compromised his team's early season programme. Thus he opted for Reynards.

The Footwork gave its driver a hard time, bucking around all over the place. Damon Hill surmised that the car was too big, lacked downforce and had poor weight distribution.

If I had to award a 'car of the year' title in F3000 this year, it would go to the Lola T89/50. Although Reynard won six of the 10 races and led 60% of the season's laps, the 89D was used by 60% of the field.

The T89/50's strong suit was its mechanical grip, the car in possession of a very positive turn-in and tremendous high speed stability. The Lola, it was generally felt, also used its tyres better.

The Reynard, however, was better aerodynamically and the Bicester company did a strong job in terms of support at the circuits. Each Reynard team had a factory man in attendance and it could have been no simple task to service such a large number of cars. That Reynard managed to score a second consecutive title success is testimony to the company's tenacity and its ability to respond quickly to a challenge. The Lola sounded a strong warning at Silverstone despite Danielsson winning, and Reynard was quick to respond with a high speed wing in time for the next round at Vallelunga.

There was some animosity between the two camps early in the season. DAMS (read Lola), protested the Donnelly nose mod at Vallelunga, while EJR, First and Pacific (read Reynard) counter-protested the Lola success at Jerez on the grounds of the gearlever bubble contravening the chassis regulations. This was thrown out, although it seemed to have more than a degree of validity. In actual fact all that was needed to remove any doubt was a small shadow plate.

A greater number of poles and fastest laps proved that ultimately the Lola was probably the quicker all round car, but the Reynard saw more chequered flags. It came down to strength in numbers.

	Races led	Wins	Poles	Fastest laps	Laps led / Laps total = 490	Miles led / Miles total = 1241.61
Driver						
Jean Alesi	4	3	2	1	135 (27.55%)	343.62 (27.68%)
Erik Comas	2	2	2	3	99 (20.20%)	251.32 (20.24%)
Eric Bernard	2	1	3	3	65 (13.27%)	154.86 (12.47%)
Marco Apicella	1	–	1	1	16 (3.26%)	31.97 (2.57%)
Andrea Chiesa	1	1	–	–	39 (7.96%)	119.96 (9.66%)
Thomas Danielsson	2	1	–	–	58 (11.84%)	155.74 (12.54%)
Martin Donnelly	1	1	1	1	47 (9.59%)	112.20 (9.84%)
Fabrizio Giovanardi	1	1	–	–	31 (6.33%)	61.94 (5.00%)
Philippe Favre	–	–	1	1	–	–
Constructors						
Reynard	6	6	4	3	295 (60.20%)	773.49 (62.30%)
Lola	4	3	6	7	164 (33.47%)	406.18 (32.71%)
Leyton March	1	1	–	–	31 (6.33%)	61.94 (4.99%)

Alesi won at Pau, Birmingham & Spa. Set pole at Birmingham & Enna. Set fastest lap at Birmingham. **Comas** won at Le Mans & Dijon. Set pole at Brands & Spa. Set Fastest lap at Spa, Le Mans & Dijon. **Bernard** won at Jerez. Set pole at Jerez, Le Mans & Dijon. Set fastest lap at Pau, Jerez & Brands. **Apicella** set pole at Pau. Set fastest lap at Vallelunga. **Chiesa** won at Enna. **Danielsson** won at Silverstone. **Giovanardi** won at Vallelunga*. **Donnelly** won at Brands. Set pole at Vallelunga. Set fastest lap at Enna. **Favre** set pole at Silverstone. Set fastest lap at Silverstone. Lap records were set at Vallelunga, Pau, Jerez, Enna, Brands and Dijon. The lap record was established at Le Mans-Bugatti.

* Giovanardi won at Vallelunga following Donnelly's disqualification. Result pending FISA Appeal Hearing on December 5, 1989.

FIA INTERNATIONAL F3000 CHAMPIONSHIP 1989

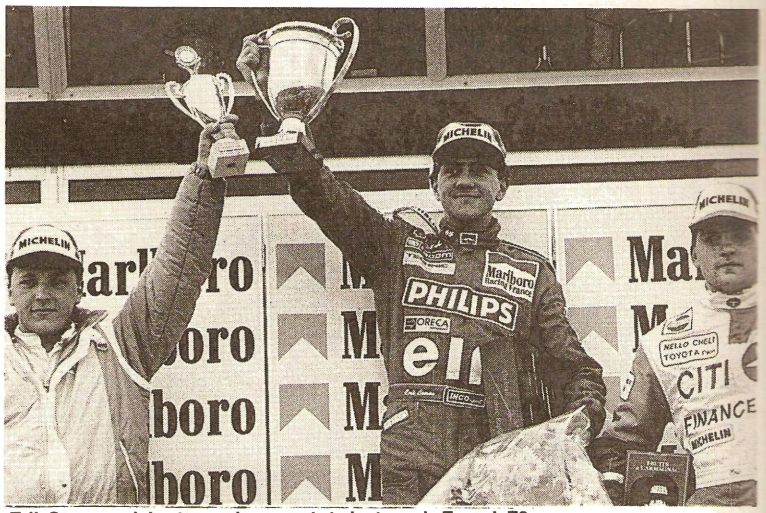
Pos	Driver (Nat)	Team/Sponsor	Chassis/Engine	Silverstone (GB), April 9	Vallelunga (I), April 30	Pau (F), May 15	Jerez (E), June 5	Enna (I), July 23	Brands Hatch (GB), August 20	Birmingham (GB), August 28	Spa (B), September 16	Le Mans (F), September 24	Dijon (F), October 22	Total Points
1	Jean Alesi (F)	EJR/Camel	Reynard-Mugen/Smith 89D	3	–	9	2	–	6	9	9	1		39
2	Erik Comas (F)	DAMS/Elf + Marlboro + BNP	Lola-Mugen/Brown T89/50	2	3	NQ	6	–	4	–	6	9	9	39
3	Eric Bernard (F)	DAMS/Elf + Gcatrans + UAP + BNP	Lola-Mugen/Brown T89/50	–	–	–	9	–	3	3	–	4	6	25
4	Marco Apicella (I)	First/Sare + Reporter + Biting	Reynard-Judd 89D	–	–	6	4	3	–	6	4	–	–	23
5	Eric van de Poele (B)	GA/Leaseplan	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	1	4	–	3	–	–	–	3	6	2	19
6	Andrea Chiesa (I)	Roni/Q8 Team Ford + Noyfil	Reynard-Cosworth/Mader 89D	–	6	–	–	9	–	–	–	–	–	15
7	Thomas Danielsson (S)	Madgwick/Cavendish	Reynard-Cosworth/Langford & Peck 89D	9	–	4	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	14
8	Martin Donnelly (GB)	EJR/Camel	Reynard-Mugen/Smith 89D	–	DQ	–	–	–	9	4	–	–	–	13
9	Eddie Irvine (GB)	Pacific/Marlboro	Reynard-Mugen/Brown 89D	DQ	–	DQ	–	4	–	1	–	3	3	11
10[1]	Fabrizio Giovanardi (I)	First/Panci + Tecnotest	Reynard-Judd 89D	NQ	9	NS	–	–	NQ	NS	–	NQ	–	9
11	Mark Blundell (GB)	Middlebridge/Cadbury	Reynard-Cosworth/Tickford 89D	4	–	1	NQ	–	–	2	NS	–	1	8
12	Claudio Langes (I)	Forti/Assitalia	Lola-Cosworth/Mader 89D	–	–	–	–	6	1	–	–	–	–	7
13	Philippe Favre (CH)	GA/Geneva Supporter	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–			6
	JJ Lehto (SF)	Pacific/Marlboro	Reynard-Mugen/Brown 89D	DQ	–	3	1	–	–	–	2	–		6
15	Alain Ferté (F)	Cobra/Marlboro + Stimorol	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D		1	2					–	–	–	3
16	Emanuele Naspetti (I)	Roni/Q8 Team Ford	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D	–	2	NQ	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
	Gary Evans (GB)	Madgwick/Cavendish	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	NQ	NQ	2
2	Gary Brabham (AUS)	Leyton March Racing	March-Judd 89B	–	–		–		2	NQ	–	–	–	2
	Stephane Proulx (CDN)	Player's Ltee/Autosport	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	–	–	NS	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	2
	Philippe Gache (F)	Apomatox/Maison Bouygues + Convex	Reynard-Cosworth/Mader 89D			–	–	NQ	–	–	–	–	–	
	Eric Cheli (F)	CDM/Quick + Castrol	Reynard-Cosworth/Langford & Peck 89D	NS	–	–	NQ	–	NQ	NS	–	–	NQ	
	Phil Andrews (GB)	Middlebridge/Lucas	Reynard-Cosworth/Tickford 89D	–	–	NQ	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Jacques Goudchaux (F)	GA/Sucre Union + GGVC	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	–	–	NQ	–	NQ	NQ	–	NQ	–		
	Perry McCarthy (GB)	RCR3000/Cavendish	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50							NQ	–	–		
	Damon Hill (GB)	Footwork Formula	Footwork-Mugen/Smith MC041					–	–	–	–	–	–	
	Pedro Chaves (P)	Cobra/Mateus + Castrol	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D	–	NQ	NQ	–	–	–	–	NQ	–	NQ	
	Paul Belmondo (F)	CDM/Quick + Tectis + PMU	Reynard-Cosworth/Langford & Peck 89D	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	
3	Jean-Denis Deletraz (CH)	First/Reporter + Sare	Reynard-Judd 89D	–	–	NS	–	–	–	–	NQ	–	–	
4	Marco Greco (GR)	Bromley/Cercom	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D						–			–		
	Franco Scapini (I)	Automotor/Nova Meccanica	Reynard-Judd 89D				NQ	–	NQ	–	NQ	NQ		
	Ross Hockenhull (GB)	Cobra/Texas Light	Reynard-Cosworth/Nicholson 89D	–			DQ		–	–				
	Cor Euser (NL)	Bromley	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D								–			
	Dominico Gitto (I)	RCR3000	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50					NQ	–					
	Massimo Monti (I)	Automotor/Nova Meccanica	Reynard-Judd 89D	NQ	NQ	NS								
	Enrico Bertaggia (I)	RCR3000	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	NQ	NQ	NQ								
	Dominique Delestre (F)	Apomatox/Maison Bouygues	Reynard-Cosworth/Mader 89D	NQ	NQ	NQ								
	Ukyo Katayama (J)	Footwork Formula	Footwork-Mugen/Smith MC041	NQ	–	NQ	–							
5	Mauro Martini (I)	Leyton March Racing	Leyton March-Judd 89B	–			–	–						
	Didier Artzet (F)	Racetech/Nice + Motul	Reynard-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50	–	–	–								
	Allan McNish (GB)	Pacific/Marlboro	Reynard-Mugen/Brown 89D										–	
	Rickard Rydell (S)	EJR/Camel	Reynard-Mugen/Smith 89D										–	
	Andrew Gilbert-Scott (GB)	GA/APA Group + Cavendish	Lola-Cosworth/Nicholson T89/50										–	
	David Velay (F)	Bromley/Cofam	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D										–	
	Michel Ferté (F)	Cobra/Marlboro + Stimorol	Reynard-Cosworth/Smith 89D					–						
	Alessandro Zanardi (I)	Automotor/Nova Meccanica	Reynard-Judd 89D										–	

[1] Fabrizio Giovanardi swapped from March 89B to Reynard 89D after Silverstone. [2] Gary Brabham started the year with Bromley in an updated Reynard 88D but joined the Leyton March team at Brands Hatch. [3] Jean-Denis Deletraz swapped from March 89B to Reynard after Vallelunga. [4] Marco Greco swapped from Bromley Reynard 89D to GA Lola T89/50 for Le Mans. [5] Mauro Martini drove a Lola Motorsport March 88B at Silverstone before briefly joining Leyton March.

By MARK GALLAGHER

Comas you go

In France these days they say that getting into Formula 1 is as easy as ABC: Alesi, Bernard, Comas... Which is not surprising, for while grand old Professor Prost is battling away against Senna, his position as top French driver could come under threat sooner than he thinks. Jean Alesi's given warning, Eric Bernard's not far behind and Erik Comas, the revelation of F3000, is set to follow.



Erik Comas celebrates a win *en route* to last year's French F3 crown.

The influx of new driving talent into Formula 1 has been very refreshing in recent seasons, but there has been too great a temptation to label each new arrival as a rising star, a man with a future, the next Berger, Mansell, or whoever. The French have been particularly keen to find new heroes, initially pinning their hopes on the Ferté brothers, then Dalmas, Raphanel and Grouillard. However, results have not been forthcoming.

Alesi, Bernard and Comas will put an end to that, having formed a French triumvirate which dominated this year's FIA F3000 Championship and fired warning shots across the bows of those other nations aiming to produce a future World Champion. Of the trio, both Alesi and Bernard have secured F1 drives for 1990, the former following his remarkable performances for Tyrrell, and the latter after impressing Larrousse mid-summer.

Comas, however, maintains that Formula 1 is the furthest from his mind for the time being. "I came into F3000 with the aim of winning a race this year, and I have achieved that. It does not matter that I equalled Alesi's score in the championship because I am not the champion. That's what I want to achieve next year, and I have already talked with Jean-Paul (Driot, the DAMS Lola boss) about racing in 3000 in 1990."

I remember watching the opening round of this year's International F3000 Championship along with Tony Dodgins of AUTOSPORT and Simon Arron of *Motoring News*, and we all three commented on the fact that Comas, the new French wonderboy, did not seem particularly outstanding. He qualified on the sixth row and finished fifth. He was overtaken by Gary Brabham's '88 Reynard and Phil Andrews during the early stages before he repassed Andrews and demoted Eric van de Poele.

Perhaps such criticism was a trifle hasty. "We did not have enough time to test before Silverstone," argues Comas, "and I had a lot of difficulty learning the car and its sensitivity. The circuit there is so long, and so quick, but I became more confident as the race progressed. After that we took our cars to Paul Ricard for a test and I felt much better when we went to Vallelunga."

Lola's relatively late delivery of its highly competitive T89/50 to some extent played into the hands of the Reynard contingent, but it quickly became obvious that the Mark Williams design, and the works DAMS versions in particular, were set to enjoy a good season. "We received our cars on March 15," says Erik, "and the first race was April 9. "I went for two days at Jerez, but apart from another short test that was all our running befor Silverstone...

DAMS (Driot Arnoux Motorsports) was effectively a reorganised and relaunched version of GDBA Motorsport. Jean-Paul Driot worked hard to assemble a competitive package and the Lola-Mugen-Bernard-Comas line-up looked strong. It was not the first time that Comas had found himself teamed with Bernard, for as graduates of the Elf Winfield school they had been team mates in Formule Renault in '85 and F3 in '87.

"Jean-Paul is a very special man," admits Comas, "although at the beginning of the season it was very hard for me since I was used to Hugues de Chaunac (of ORECA) who is very paternal. I didn't really know Jean-Paul, but that changed and it has been no problem to work with him."

Engineered by Vincent Gaillandot, an ex-ORECA man, Comas initially looked like playing nothing more than a supporting role to Bernard: "At the beginning of the year both Vincent and I had a few problems learning the car and making the right decisions. Because it was Eric's second season he was more important than me at the start of this season, but I think the team quickly saw that I was so much faster than him." So much faster? "Sorry, it's my English. I think I mean 'as fast'."

Having qualified on the third row at Vallelunga, Comas stalled on the grid. Perhaps it was a blessing in disguise, for it brought about a sensational comeback drive which saw him finish fourth following Donnelly's disqualification. He also fouled up at Jerez, where he qualified and finished second after having battled to regain ground lost at the start, and the same thing occurred at Brands Hatch, where he took pole, and at Spa.

"Maybe at the beginning of the year I was trying to let out the clutch slowly, to feed in the power gently so that the wheels would not spin. This didn't work, as you know, and it was something I had to adjust to. Brands, however, was not my fault. I started on pole and was fine in first gear, but when I took second the engine died and that slowed me. Starts are important, so I'll practice during the winter."

The first half of Comas's season was marred by these startline errors and a practice accident at Pau which saw him withdraw from the meeting. It was a weekend on which he had been expected to shine. "At Pau we had a problem with the balance of the car and the front to rear tyre temperatures were varying. At Gare corner I had too much braking on the front and when I arrived at Pont Oscar I hit the brakes, and hit the wall. Before we were getting up to working temperatures we were having balance problems. The car was, of course, very badly damaged, and without a spare we could not continue."

The huge split in the monocoque of the Lola raised a few eyebrows that weekend, and it was lucky that the driver had not been injured. "I was very disappointed by this accident, because I like Pau very much and I knew I could go well there. I mainly like fast circuits, but street tracks are interesting too."

Second place at Jerez, where DAMS anihilated the opposition, was the highlight of the opening races, but at Brands Hatch Comas shocked everyone by taking pole position. It was a remarkable performance, for the Kent venue does not suffer fools gladly. He drove Paddock, Graham Hill and Surtees like a veteran and was 0.44 second under Johnny Herbert's F3000 qualifying record. Yet this was Comas's first visit, and it offered some compensation for the disaster at Pau.

> ***"There's no point trying to race in F1 with a bad team"***

"My car was perfect," he says modestly, "because I stopped twice for adjustments. When you do not have a good car you have to take risks out on the track, but when you have a perfect balance it's easy to set a good time.

Other drivers would tell you that they claimed pole through a combination of natural skill, earth shattering bravery and Sennaesque speed. The car? Not bad. A troubled outing at Birmingham gave little indication of what was to follow. In the final three races Comas took two wins, one second, three fastest laps and a pole position. Only a broken gear and the coolness of Alesi prevented Erik from winning at Spa. On a fast drying track the No 26 Lola had reeled in the Camel Reynard, and a dive up the inside at Source hairpin saw Comas take the lead for a few yards. He was forced to settle for second, but at Le Mans and Dijon he led from start to finish, overshadowing Bernard and almost toppling Alesi.

With the champion choosing to miss the final round in order to race for Tyrrell in Suzuka, Comas's nine points for winning in Dijon gave him a championship score equal to Alesi. With ony two wins to Alesi's three, however, the championship belonged to the man from Avignon.

Comas was not disappointed. "I wanted to win a race this year, maybe, but did not think to win the championship. Perhaps with fewer problems early in the year I could have beaten Jean, but I think experience is very important. I did not regard this year as a learning year, and I really was not sure what would happen. I decided that I would stay in F3000 for a second year even if I did win the F3000 championship, because there is no point trying to race in Formula 1 with a bad team. I want to have a lot of experience in F1. We see a lot of drivers who have destroyed their careers by going into F1 too quickly with bad teams, and I don't want to do that."

With so many drivers in their early twenties, or younger, trying to reach F1 yesterday, it is becoming increasingly hard to find people who fully appreciate the importance of experience. Motor racing is not like athletics, tennis or gymnastics. Youth is not paramount, while maturity, both physical and mental, certainly is. Comas is 26, one year older that Alesi, Donnelly and Bernard, and his career to date has been impressive.

A graduate of karting – he was French champion in 1983 – he entered circuit racing in 1984 with an ex-Jean Alesi Renault 5. "It was quite a car," he smiles. "It had many accidents with Jean and also with me, it was not very good. Difficult to set up."

The end of the year saw him win the Volant Elf at Paul Ricard, and for 1985 he was offered a Formule Renault seat as team mate to Bernard. Although he was second on points to Bernard, Comas was forced to accept fourth place because of counting best scores, but he returned to win the championship in 1986.

"It was a good year," he recalls, "because I think there were 13 races and I won eight and was on the podium 12 times. Only Prost has beaten that. He won 12 (eyes raised to heaven). After that I wanted to do F3 but I joined the Elf Winfield team which had been set up by Eric (Bernard). It was really going to be good for me. I was offered the French Superproduction Championship by Renault and I decided it would be good experience to do that well."

During a hectic season Comas won the Superproduction category at the wheel of a works Renault 5 Maxi Turbo and finished fifth in the French F3 series. "There was a fantastic am-

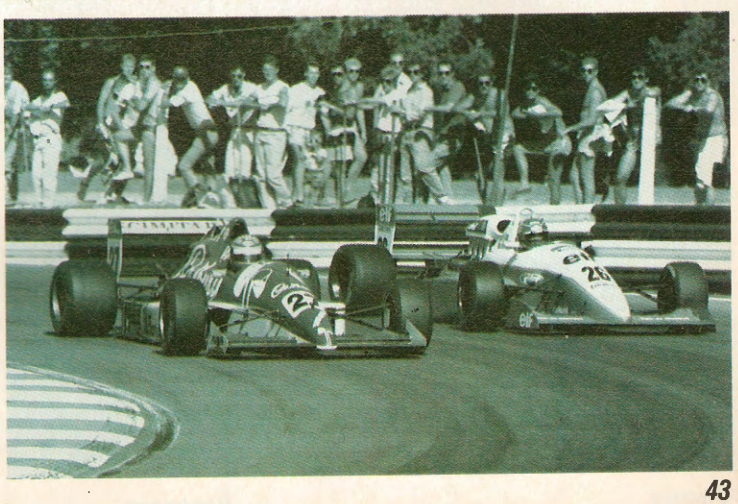
Left: Comas emerged as a real force in the latter half of his debut F3000 year. A pole position at Brands Hatch (below) was one of his many achievements.

bience in Superproduction because there are many famous drivers like Beltoise, Jarier and Jabouille. I liked the car a lot. It had over 400bhp and was very different to drive."

However, lest anyone might think he had turned his back on single-seaters, Comas returned to F3 last year and won the national championship in an ORECA Dallara-Alfa. It was not the usual, run-of-the-mill ORECA walkover, but a closely fought championship which saw Comas notch up four wins to Eric Cheli's three. "We had problems such as trying developments without comparing them to the standard settings, but when we went back to a more classic set-up it was OK." Second at the Monaco F3 race, he finished the year with a problematic outing in KTR's 6-speed Reynard at Macau.

Married to Brunella in March this year, Erik has little to say on the matter of what he does with his spare time. "Je m'ennuie..." What? "Sorry, my English! I get bored when I am not racing." What about golf, or squash? "Rien. Nothing. No, maybe it's not true. I like doing trials riding with my friend Thierry Michaud."

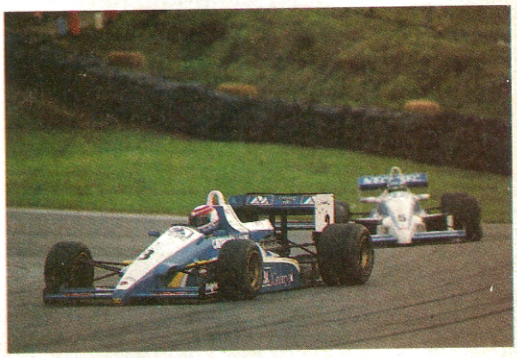
From Romans in the Drome – he races with number 26 on his car as this represents the Drome 'department' in France – Comas is happy with life at present. "I want to do F1 like everyone, but only when I am ready and when there is a good drive offered to me. I have won every championship I have entered as a professional driver, and I want it to be like that in F1." With little to prove in F3000, his arrival in Grand Prix racing is awaited with great anticipation. ■



By MARK GALLAGHER

Left: Gary Brabham clinched the inaugural British F3000 title by scoring his fourth win of the year, at the final round. Below: Andrew Gilbert-Scott, however, had been set to carry off the crown, until he hit the wall at Dingle Dell. Middle: Marco Greco surprised many with his speed. Bottom: Roland Ratzenberger, was, perhaps, the quickest driver in the series.

Small and juicy



Gary Brabham's British F3000 title came at the end of a hard fought season, his Bromley Motorsport Reynard 88D facing fierce competition from Andrew Gilbert-Scott and Roland Ratzenberger. These three provided all the racing you could wish for, no matter what the cynics said.

They say that size is not important, but from the moment that nine cars rolled out to take part in the opening round at Brands Hatch in March, all the uninvolved motor racing 'experts' said the championship was a joke. It was a waste of time, a series for privateers long past their sell-by date and no-hopers who couldn't stand the heat of the kitchen in the FIA series. Hard words, but they were said in earnest and it took nine closely contested races to prove them wrong.

When BHL and the BRSCC called all the potential competitors together before the season, they were led to believe that the inaugural British F3000 Championship could expect an entry of around 15 cars. Which was not too bad. One fictitious team was even going to run four cars...

As it turned out only four teams intended to support every round of the championship: Eddie Jordan Racing, Bromley Motorsport, Madgwick and Spirit, although the latter missed the final race. COBRA, RCR3000 and GA would also join the fray during the course of the season, lending the series a large dose of credibility. However, only the slickly run EJR team was able to field two cars throughout the year.

The rules were simple enough. You could run any chassis manufactured before 31.12.88 but it could only be raced with the same type of engine as that which was used when it competed in the International Championship. All Reynards and Lolas had to use Cosworths, while March or Ralts could also use Judds. As it turned out everyone used DFVs. The engine tuners were as per the FIA series with Nicholson, Langford & Peck and Smith being joined by Bruce Stevens' Merlin Developments.

On the chassis front there were no surprises as modifications incorporating 1989 spec parts were not allowed. "The only difficulty we had was with Bromley," admitted John Symes, BHL's operations director. "They used several parts which had been developed specifically for use on Moreno's car during 1988 and which Reynard later adopted on its '89 design." One example was Brabham's front wing, the team fitting a modified version complete with 'fences' not unlike those used in this year's FIA series. Moreno, however, had run with just such a unit at Monza last year.

At 28, one of Gary Brabham's apparent weaknesses has been his failure to win a championship. He finished an excellent second to JJ Lehto in last year's British F3 Championship, and at the start of this year he had clearly set his sights on the FIA F3000 series. Without the necessary finance, however, he turned to the British Championship with money from NEC. Bromley Motorsport was in a similar situation, for despite the team's victory in the 1988 International Championship, much needed sponsorship had still not materialised. Bromley's Ron Salt got together with Brabham and a deal was agreed whereby they would run an ex-ORECA Reynard fitted with a Smith-Cosworth.

Brabham's championship aspirations took a knock when he finished third in the opening round at Brands, but it had been a race which gave a preview of the year ahead. Gilbert-Scott and Brabham had touched while battling for the lead and the Australian was forced to pit. He wasn't happy to finish third, despite setting a new Indy Circuit lap record, and he certainly ▶

►►

wasn't happy about Andrew's tactics. The duel had begun.

As Brabham's season progressed he showed tremendous racing strength, and this was highlighted by a gritty drive in the second round at Thruxton. Punted off at the Complex on the first lap, Gary stormed through from last to first. It was a race to remember and the on-board camera enabled the BBC to screen a remarkable piece of film. That was his first win, and from then on the championship see-sawed between AGS, the RAT and the NEC Reynard pilot.

A broken fourth gear lost Brabham the chance to win at Oulton Park in April while an engine problem forced him to retire while leading at Donington, but otherwise Tony Morris and the Bromley crew did a good job. Gary drove superbly to win at Brands, and took another victory after a remarkable battle with Gilbert-Scott on the Silverstone National circuit. A misjudgement on tyres cost him the Oulton Park Gold Cup, his wets destroyed on a fast-drying track, but he came to the final round with a one point lead over AGS.

Gary will readily admit that the final race brought him a fortunate win and thus the title, but that is to understate his ability. He may have qualified second and allowed Gilbert-Scott to open up a comfortable lead, but when the EJR Reynard crashed at Dingle Dell and the race was stopped, Brabham knew that he had the title. He won the two-part event and it was a tearful Brabham family that celebrated his championship win.

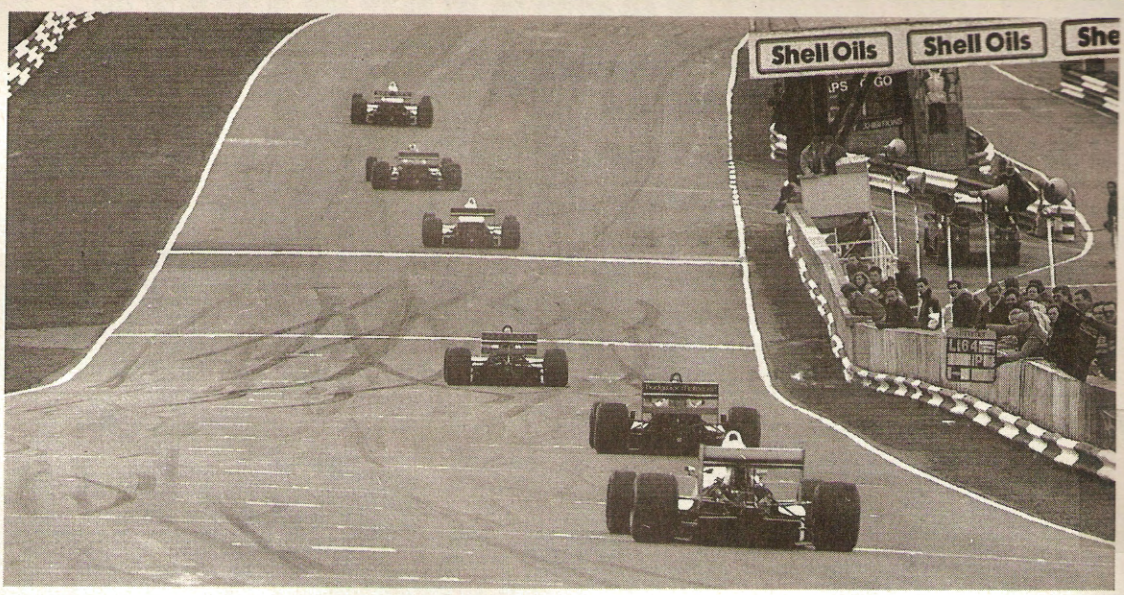
"It's done a lot for me," he said afterwards. "I was just as sceptical about the championship as anyone, but it was bloody difficult and you couldn't let up. Gilbert-Scott and Ratzenberger are as fast as any drivers I have raced against, so winning hasn't been at all easy."

Brabham ran a parallel campaign in Europe, driving the 88D on three occasions prior to being offered the chance to drive the works Leyton House March 89B during the second half of the season.

Gilbert-Scott, an ace in a Formula Ford, came back to racing on home ground after spending two seasons in the motor racing wilderness. Lots of talent, no sponsorship.

With the help of the Tony Aplin's APA Group and John Macknay of Hartge BMW, AGS drove the ex-Donnelly EJR Reynard and he took three race wins en route to finishing runner up in the series. As quick and smooth as he has always been, 29-year-old (again?) AGS strung together a determined assault on the championship. It was an assault which was hampered by engine problems during the mid-season rounds at Donington and Brands, and it came to end when he found the barriers while leading the final round. His race wins at Brands, Oulton and Snetterton saw him lead the championship from rounds 1-4 and 6-7, and his three poles equalled Ratzenberger's total and beat Brabham by one.

One thing Gilbert-Scott certainly achieved, however, was giving the British series credibility in terms of the level of driving. Roberto Moreno once said that you would have to be really flying in order to lap Snetterton in less than 54 seconds in an 88-spec Reynard. AGS achieved that feat during qualifying back in July. Furthermore, at the end of the season he took in the final round of the FIA Championship at Dijon, and his remarkable performance showed just how competitive both he and the British Championship have been. Fourth in qualifying, third in the race behind Comas and Bernard; it wasn't a bad result for the man who had finished second in the much maligned British series.



Many observers feel that Roland Ratzenberger was the quickest driver out there, and that his only handicap was a lack of finance, testing and luck. Despite starting from pole on no less than three occasions, Roly only claimed one race win and that was a fortuitous one following Brabham's retirement at Donington. With four fastest laps – more than anyone else – and four second places, Ratzenberger held onto his championship hopes right up to the penultimate round at Oulton. He started from pole but ended the restarted race in the wall. Neither Roland's patience nor Spirit's sponsorship were able to stretch to the final round.

Brazil's Marco Greco never actually won a race, but his driving improved so dramatically during the course of the season that his return to the FIA series saw him qualify without any problem. With fewer races behind him than most Formula Ford drivers, Greco ran in the ex-Barilla EJR 88D, and his season started with a fine pole position at Brands. Engineered more often than not by Paul Crosby, Alesi's main man in Europe, Greco silenced his critics. "I think Marco is an excellent example of how good the British Championship is," said Eddie Jordan.

It took nine closely contested races to prove cynics wrong

"He came into it with next to no experience and with his confidence badly dented after failing to qualify for FIA races in '88. This year he was often right on the pace with the likes of Ratzenberger and Brabham, and they have a vast amount of experience. I think it is a perfect championship for drivers who need additional experience and confidence." With four podiums to his credit Marco was justifiably unhappy that a race win had not come his way.

Fellow countryman Paulo Carcasci finished fifth in the overall classification despite taking in only three events. On the first occasion, at Donington, he drove for Madgwick Motorsport, qualifying third and finishing fourth. With financial assistance from Canada's Danny Campeau, Paulo was then entered for the Gold Cup, driving a COBRA Reynard. It was an event which saw Gilbert-Scott hampered by a misfire and Brabham slowed by a wrong tyre choice, but Paulo made the most of it and took an historic win.

Above: Fields may have been thin in the series' first season, but racing improved as the year wore on, peaking at Brands Hatch in September. Left: With the championship won, Brabham could afford to celebrate. McCarthy and Greco join him.

Albacete failed to produce the hoped for results, and the only conclusion can be that he was simply outclassed by his rivals. He took part in every round, and later in the season had fellow Spainiard Felipe Machado as his Madgwick team mate, but he was always just that second or so away.

You had to feel sorry for Tony Trimmer. Of all the '88 spec cars to chose from he ended up with the March 88B, perhaps the most unloved F3000 car of all time. To describe Tony's efforts as brave would be a gross understatement. The car would porpoise along the straights, slither through the corners and generally handle like a Heathrow luggage trolley. New tyres were but a distant memory for Trimmer, and when the Bank Manager decided that the British F3000 scene didn't offer much collateral, Tony was forced to stop.

Tony Worswick, Johnathan Bancroft and Perry McCarthy finished the series on six points apiece. Worswick bought the ex-Gachot Spirit Reynard and ran it on nothing more than enthusiasm, even surviving a huge accident at Snetterton. He exemplified the privateers and his championship points were as deserving as his efforts were brave. Bancroft had a difficult time in the GA Lola, taking in five races but finishing no higher than fourth.

And McCarthy? For some reason people who should know better mistake Perry's effervescent character as meaning that he does not take motor racing seriously. Does everyone have to be a Sombre Senna? Perry competed in one race, the final round, and finished second. His subsequent seventh place in the FIA round at Spa-Francorchamps at the wheel of RCR's Lola was evidence, if evidence is needed, that he has plenty of talent.

Damon Hill claimed five points from two outings, but had his Footwork drive to concentrate on, while Desire Wilson took a well deserved fourth on her only outing of the year at Brands. Pedro Chaves, Mario Hytten and Ian Khan also scored, although they only raced once, while Austrian veteran Pierre Chauvet took a couple of points from the final round.

A total of 26 drivers took part at some time or other, leaving one with the feeling that it was a pity they could not all turn up at the same time. A full grid would have been rather nice, but then you have to start somewhere. Next year's series will operate a Class A & B system rather like Formula 3. ■

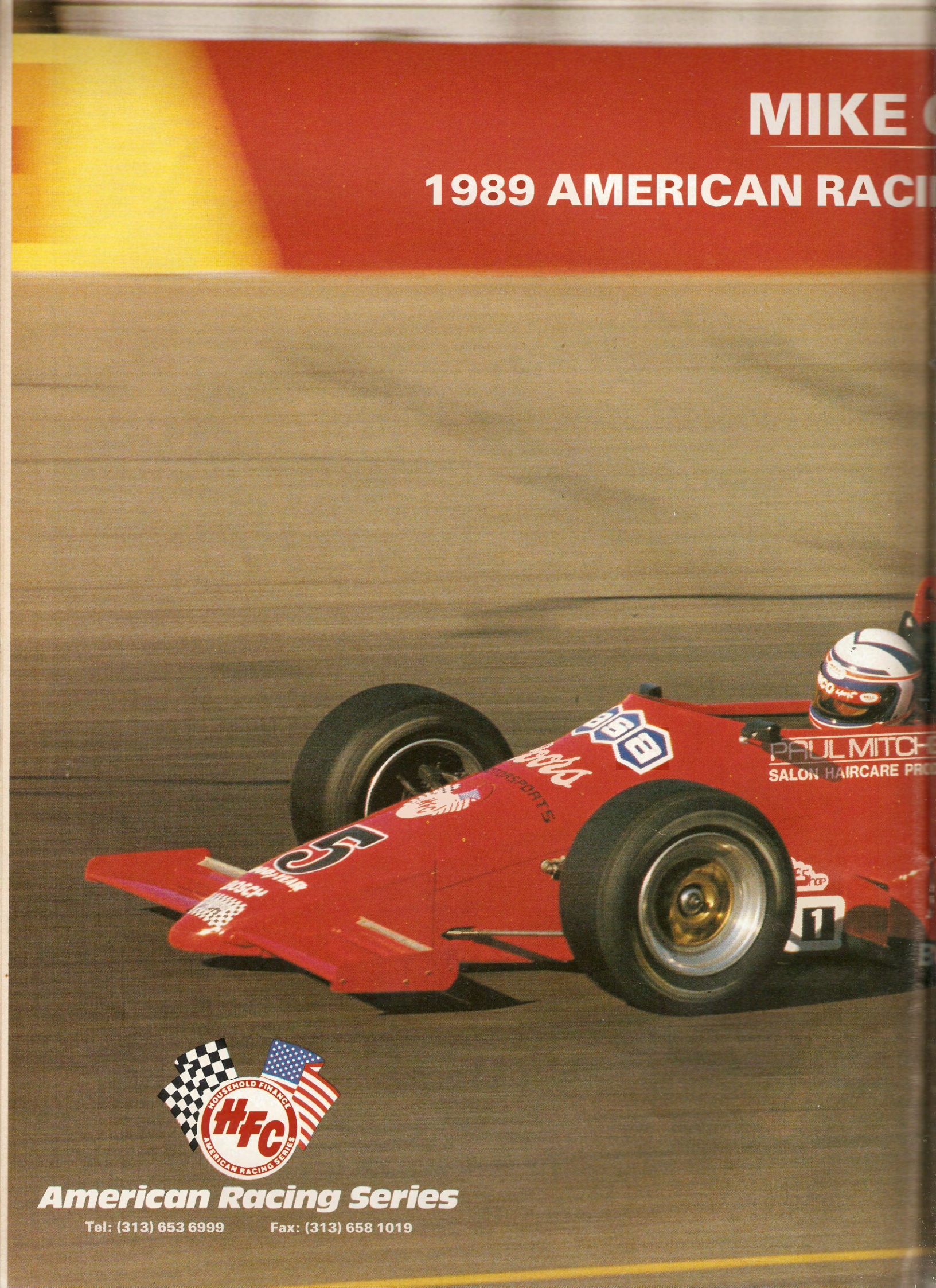
1989 BRITISH F3000 CHAMPIONSHIP

Pos	Driver	Chassis-Engine	Team/Sponsor	Total
1	Gary Brabham (AUS)	Reynard-Smith DFV 88D	Bromley Motorsport	55
2	Andrew Gilbert-Scott (GB)	Reynard-Smith DFV 88D	Eddie Jordan Racing	45
3	Roland Ratzenberger (A)	Reynard-Nicholson DFV 88D	Spirit Motorsport	37
4	Marco Grecro (BR)	Reynard-Smith DFV 88D	Eddie Jordan Racing	22
5	Paulo Carcasci (BR)	Reynard-Merlin DFV 88D	COBRA*	13
6	Antonio Albacete (E)	Reynard-Nicholson DFV 88D	Spirit Motorsport	9
7	Tony Trimmer (GB)	March-Langford & Peck DFV 88B	FORCE	8
8	Jonathan Bancroft (GB)	Lola-Nicholson DFV T88/50	GA Motorsport	6
	Tony Worswick (GB)	Reynard-Nicholson DFV 88D	Worswick Engineering	6
	Perry McCarthy (GB)	Lola-Nicholson DFV 88D	GA Motorsport	6

*Carcasci drove for Madgwick at Donington Park.

MIKE

1989 AMERICAN RACI



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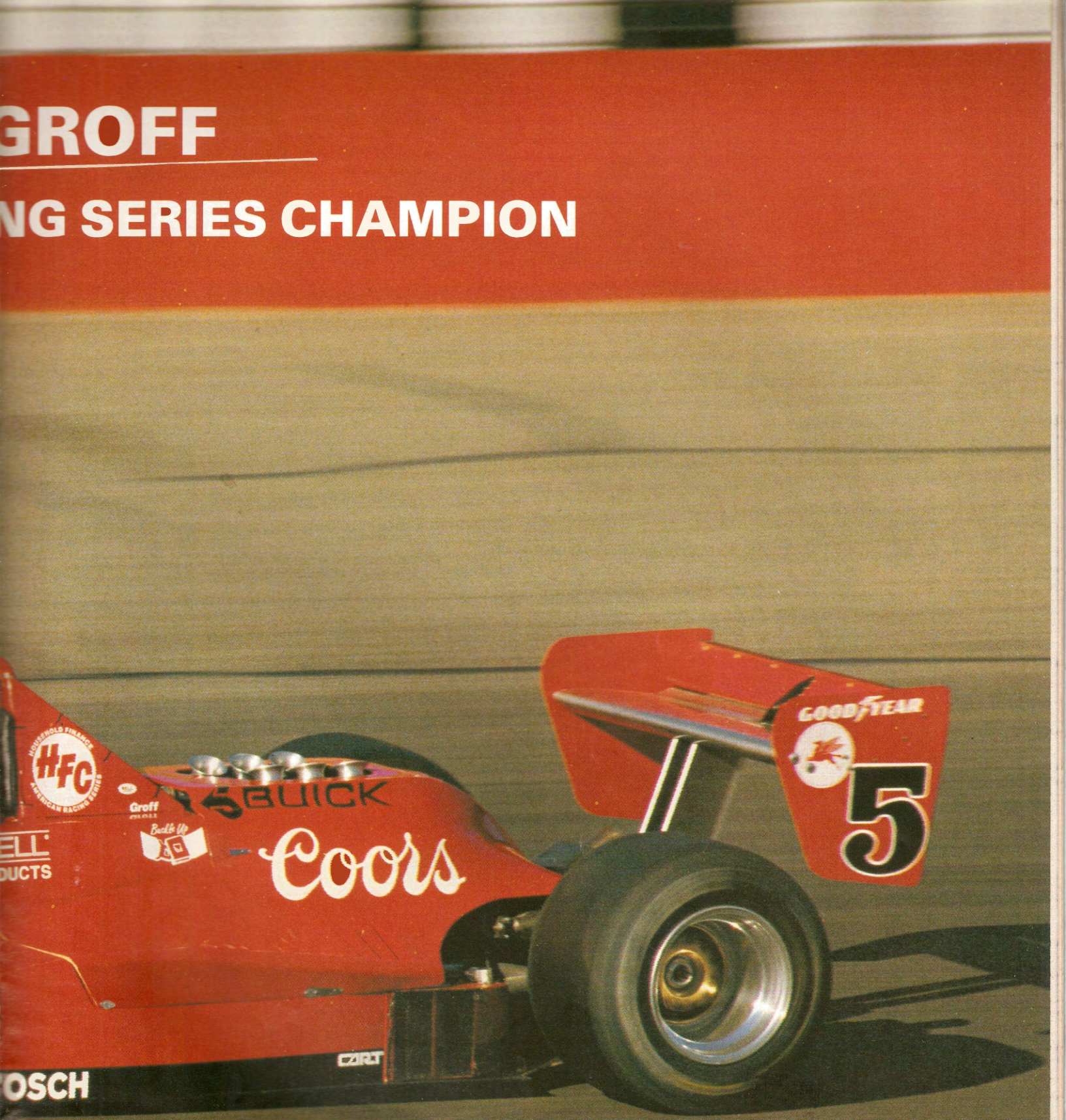
NG SERIES CHAMPION



1990 AMERICAN RACING SERIES SCHEDULE

Apr 8	Phoenix	Jul 22	Toronto
Apr 22	Long Beach	Aug 26	Denver
Jun 3	Milwaukee	Sep 2	Vancouver
Jun 17	Detroit	Sep 16	Mid-Ohio
Jun 24	Portland	Sep 23	Road America
Jul 8	Cleveland	Oct 7	Nazareth
Jul 15	Meadowlands	Oct 21	Laguna Seca

[dates subject to official confirmation]

GLOBE TROTTER

Alternative Adelaide

"The French?" said the loquacious guest on the Australian breakfast television show. "The French are a despicable race. They're all t*rds."

You cannot say things like that on television. Can you? I scoured the papers, looking for news of the arrest of this "top bloke", but there was no word. Perhaps an Australian Court would rule this to be fair comment.

Watching television and reading local papers always provides much of the fun of foreign travel. In Japan Sandro Nannini's victory was put firmly in its place by the *Japan Times* (see cutting).

Sandro, if he understood it, would have found this most amusing. He would not think of sueing the newspaper because it has inferred that he is not capable of winning a race and had to settle for a lucky win. He's a lovely bloke and one who has few enemies, very few begrudged him victory in Japan.

One of the nicest things about him is that he really doesn't care about politics or, come to think of it, about anything which requires more than a few moments of thought. He drives racing cars. Pure and simple. That is a down-to-earth occupation.

Organising and promoting Formula 1 Grands Prix, however, seems not to be that simple. The signs in the paddock pointing out the offices of Bernie Ecclestone and Mal Hemmerling brought all manner of comment.

"Mal sitteth on the right hand of God," mumbled a cynic (very quietly).

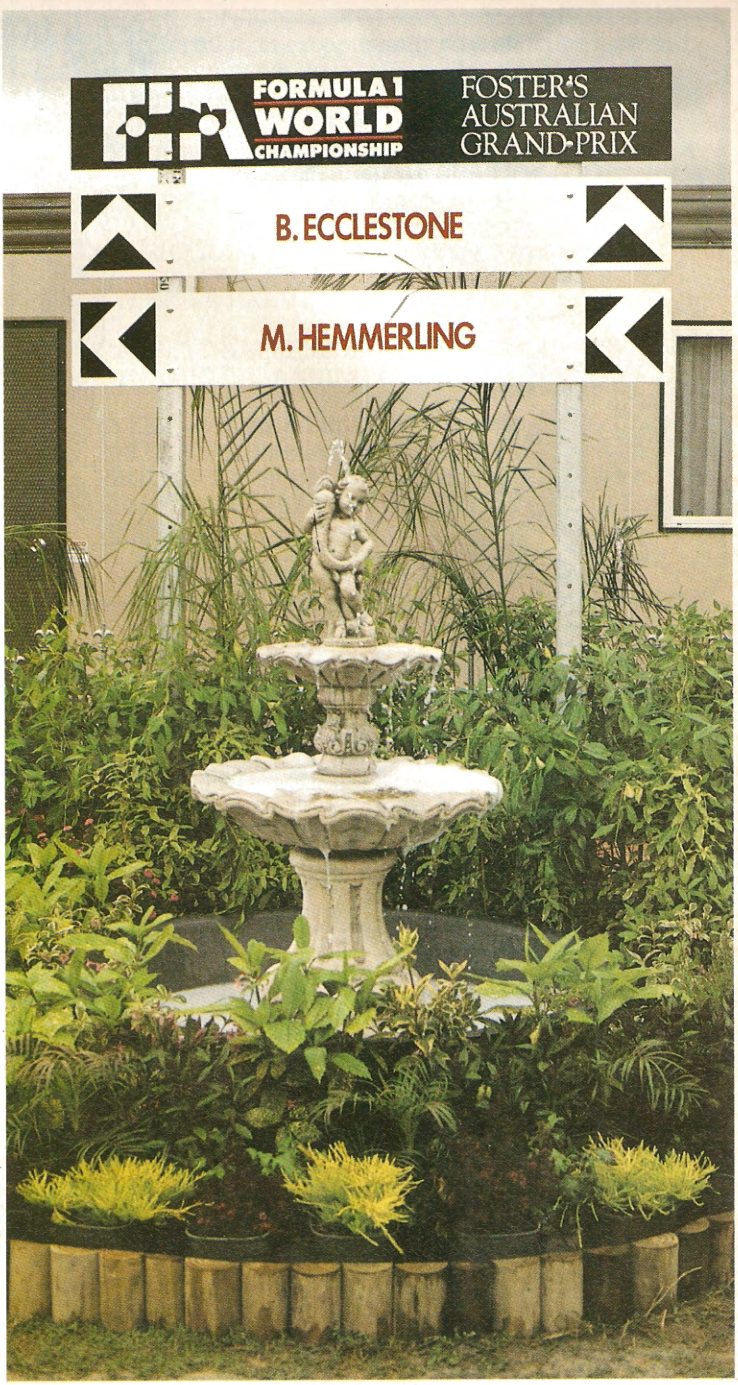
At Adelaide laughter was noticeably absent compared to 12 months ago. Contention was something the F1 folk have had to live with in the last weeks of the season.

The Adelaide race meeting this year had a despressingly flat atmosphere.

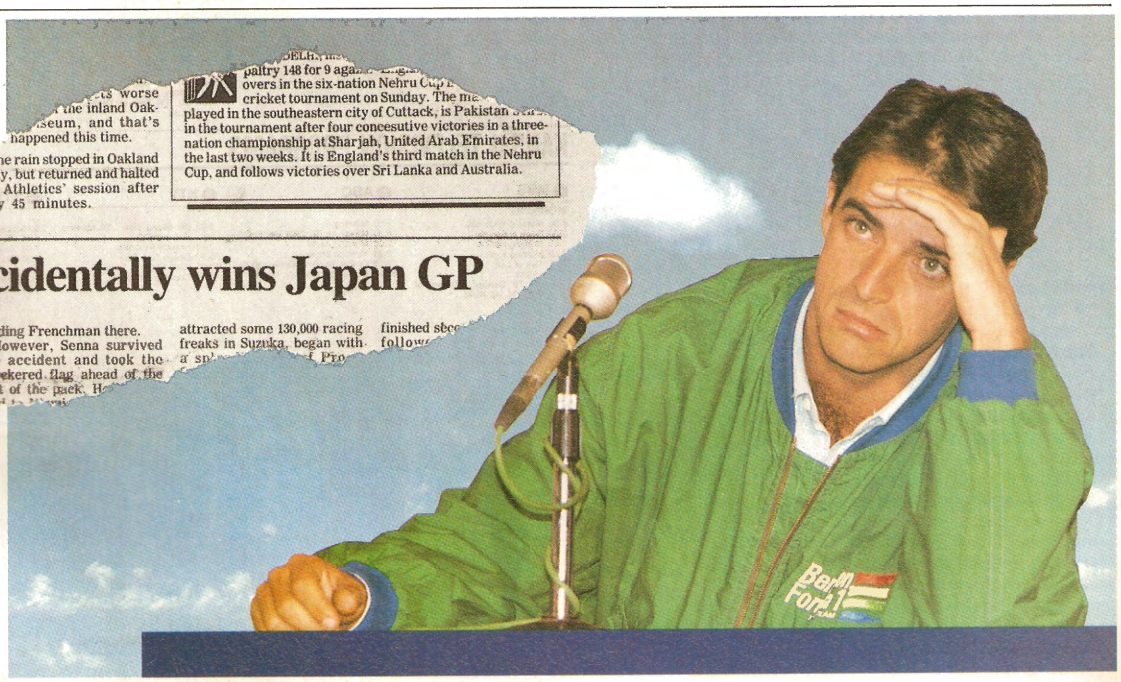
"Are we still the Lucky Country?" one of the locals asked me sadly. It is beset with pilots strikes, horrendous political corruption, collapsing big business and a recession around the corner.

Whatever the problems, however, they still love sticking it to the Europeans. They lapped up the stories when people began to talk about a conspiracy against Ayrton Senna. It was a classic case of the Old World (France) versus the New World (Brazil).

▶



Above: It didn't rain every day in Adelaide, but even the sunny moments were less fun than previous years. Top right: "Mal sitteth on the right hand..."



...worse ...the inland Oak... ...seum, and that's happened this time.

The rain stopped in Oakland early, but returned and halted the Athletics' session after only 45 minutes.

...all, Vincent could be over. ...they have more important things to do than worry about baseball," he

...reer

...nes. But I didn't ...lls on his back- ...lidn't get in well. ...eak his rhythm ...im make a mis- ...rything I did, he ...r." ...14-0 in the first second ...

Nannini accidentally wins Japan GP

By SEIICHI HIRAI
STAFF WRITER

SUZUKA, Mie Pref. — Alessandro Nannini of Italy, taking advantage of the ... of Brazil's Ayr... France ...

leading Frenchman there.

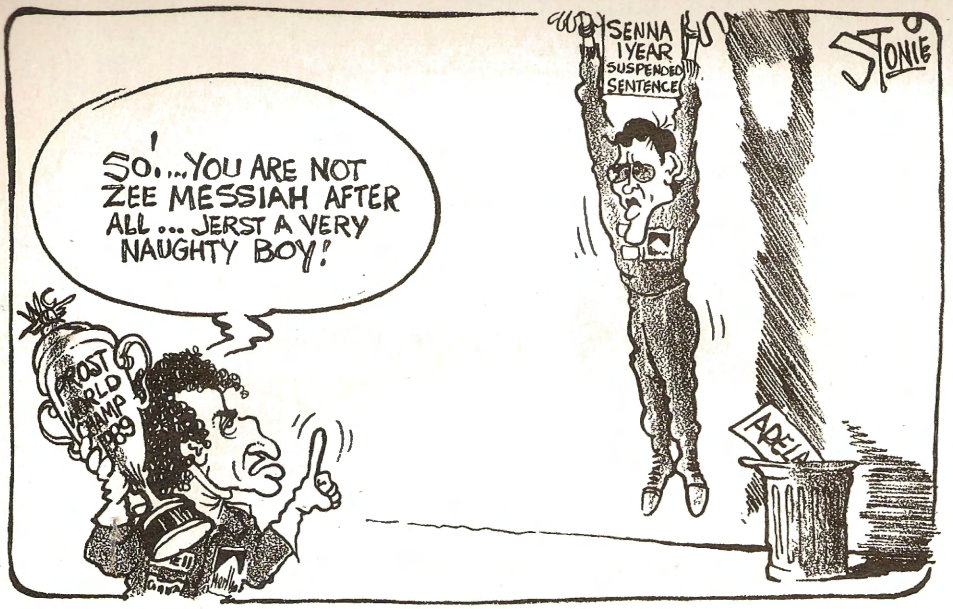
However, Senna survived the accident and took the checkered flag ahead of the rest of the pack. H...

attracted some 130,000 racing freaks in Suzuka, began with a sp... of Pro...

finished sec... follow...

...paltry 148 for 9 aga... ...overs in the six-nation Nehru Cup ... cricket tournament on Sunday. The ma... played in the southeastern city of Cuttack, is Pakistan ... in the tournament after four concesutive victories in a three-nation championship at Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, in the last two weeks. It is England's third match in the Nehru Cup, and follows victories over Sri Lanka and Australia.

The *Japan Times* recorded Sandro Nannini's first GP victory in unusual style. Sandro himself delighted in his win – and made lots of faces...



Adelaide's own cartoonist 'Stonie' took inspiration from Monty Python's Life of Brian. Below: Bamber tries glasnost.

►►

A friend of mine in the local press summed up the way they operate early on Friday after Derek Warwick had shoved his Arrows into the wall.

"Warwick escapes death in high-speed accident," he mumbled.

"He didn't," I replied.

"He will have done when he reads this..."

Perhaps – just perhaps – everyone in the F1 business might be taking it all too seriously.

When you think about it logically, the Senna-Prost *carambolage* at Suzuka, the FISA-McLaren wrangles and the other clotted nonsense of daily Formula 1 tittle-tattle do not have a great deal of significance when you compare them to fact that the Berlin Wall is being pulled down.

Long after Alain and Ayrton have become names buried in the record books, the fact that the Berlin Wall was pulled down will still have some significance.

In the months ahead the two sections of the old AVUS race track, divided by the conquering armies in 1945, can once again be joined. Isn't that amazing?

It is delightful to be able to take a step back, look at such things and allow them to put the whole F1 thing into perspective.

Too much exposure to the ways of Grand Prix racing send people tiptoeing off into paranoia.

Is there really a long-term, planned, French conspiracy against Ayrton Senna? Take cover. We're being dived-bombed by flying pigs.

When the Suzuka business finally died down on Friday, things improved. Saturday was beautiful and peaceful. They talked about a "change from the south" but the glorious weather didn't look like changing.

It did, and we were back in crisis mode again as the drivers tried to have the race delayed.

Personally I believe that the race should not have taken place in the conditions. It was not worth the risks being taken. I have no qualification to say something like that, beyond the fact that whenever I've seen rain like it at a race track, the number of accidents has gone up dramatically.

Adelaide stood out from all previous wet races, however. It was the only race I can remember watching when I wanted it to stop immediately. I was not comfortable watching it. I was scared for the drivers.

"Accidents in the wet are at a slower speed," said the television talking heads. "That means less danger."

It's a lovely theory.

It's all very well for team managers to say: "They should have started it and to hell with the drivers," but what would they have said if someone had been killed?

Well, the fact is that any F1 team manager worth his title, will argue whichever point best serves his purpose at any given point.

If someone had been hurt, they would have dragged Tim Schenken out of his Clerk of the Course cabin and strung him from the nearest flagpole.

Now there are people who might argue that stringing up Tim would be a great idea, but this time he was lucky.

Australians are generally a lucky lot. They are weaned by previous generations on the theory that you *can* get something for nothing, and have an immense love of gambling.

The Grand Prix had its own top 10 lottery. Someone asked me on Sunday morning who to put in the top 10 if it was still raining in the race. Why? Because if you had the correct top 10 at the end (even if there were only eight finishers) and you could become a zillionaire.

The same was true of the Melbourne Cup horse race on the Tuesday after the Grand Prix. Australia stops on Melbourne Cup Day. It is a public holiday in Melbourne – a public holiday for a horse race?

Still, if you could had named the top three in the Cup this year – in the right order – it would have paid 12,000:1.

Out on the road between Adelaide and Melbourne the Cup was played on all radio stations simultaneously. If you don't care about horse racing it drove you mad.

Still the roads were good. Fast, sweeping roads, blasting across country, eating up the hundreds of miles which you don't notice when you look at Australia on a map.

They have absurd speed limits, of course, and bizarre signs exhorting drivers: "Don't drive and sleep".

They are just the kind of roads which could teach youngsters how to drive very quickly. The run down the Great Ocean Road is one of the greatest pieces of the tarmac anywhere in the world. The old Nurburgring with the Southern Ocean right there if you need to cool off.

"I'm surprised there aren't more good top line Australian drivers," I mumbled to my colleague Mark Fogarty – guru of the Antipodean airwaves and the only Australian reporter regularly seen in F1 – as he bounced us along this road, trying to scare me.

"You never see our good drivers," he snapped back, convinced – no doubt – that he is an Ayrton manque.

"The good drivers stay here. Australian sponsors are only interested in winners. They don't want to mess about in the junior formulae."

It was a revealing trip in many ways and pleasant relaxation after the scandals of Adelaide and Suzuka.

We howled along – radar detector at the ready – through country towns and gradually it began to occur to me that we were passing little speedway after little speedway. Grassroots racing in Australia. Dirt cars on grubby little ovals, with the occasional better class of track such as Premier Speedway at Warrnambool and Avalon Raceway at Geelong

It struck me that this was very like the southern states of the USA. Where gradually the ovals were replaced by speedways and then superspeedways. Bob Jane built Australia's first superspeedway at Calder near Melbourne and ever since the world has been convinced that he is a mad man. Yet, you get the feeling that, when a few more speedways are built, he will have been right.

"It won't be NASCAR," said someone a few days later. "It'll be AUSCAR. Australian Fords and Holdens and drivers like Bradley Jones, Terri Sawyer and Kim Jane".

These will become the heroes long after the Peter Brocks and Dick Johnsons have parked their last bath chairs.

It may be some time before that happens, judging by the antics of the touring car men in Adelaide.

As we were watching the wild antics of these gentlemen, bashing fenders and leaping over each other's bonnets, a cynic asked a telling question:

"I wonder if Bernie Ecclestone is watching – to see what he turned his back on when they axed the World Touring Car Championship?"

Yet, I found myself thinking, even in the darkest days of tin-top politics none of it ever came close to the bullshit flying around in the final weeks of the F1 season.

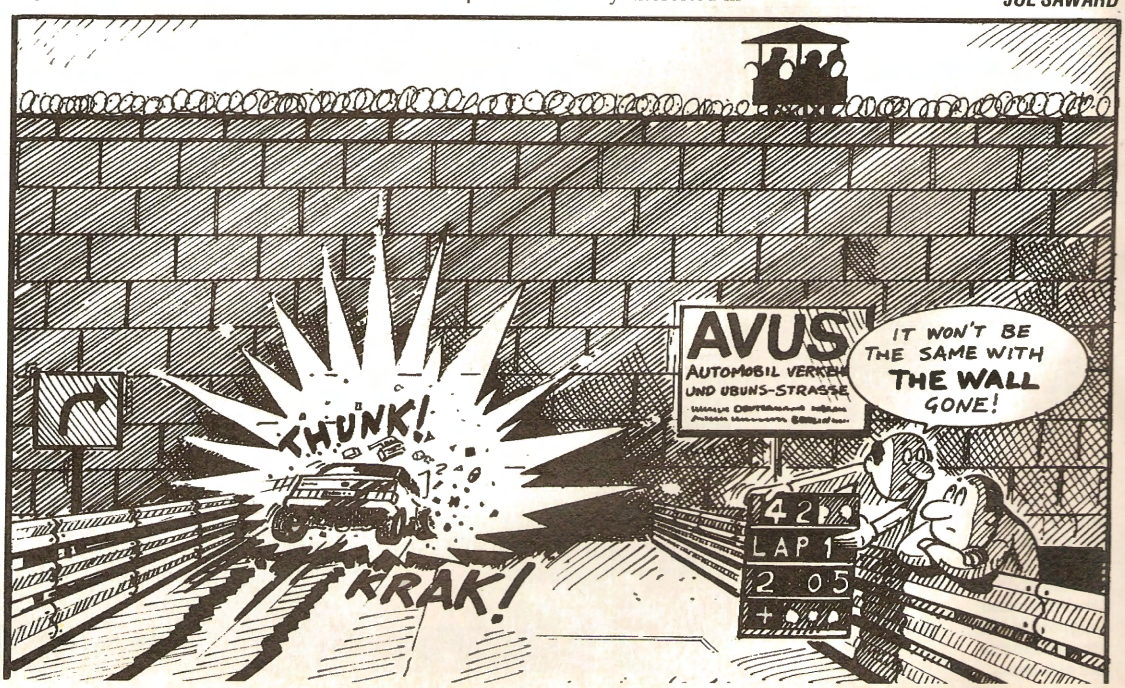
The pair of ear-blasted F1 hacks, survivors of the Great Ocean Road, arrived in Melbourne and began, as night fell, to transcribe the pearls of wisdom of Ron Dennis's Adelaide press conference, combing it for every nuance of possible meaning.

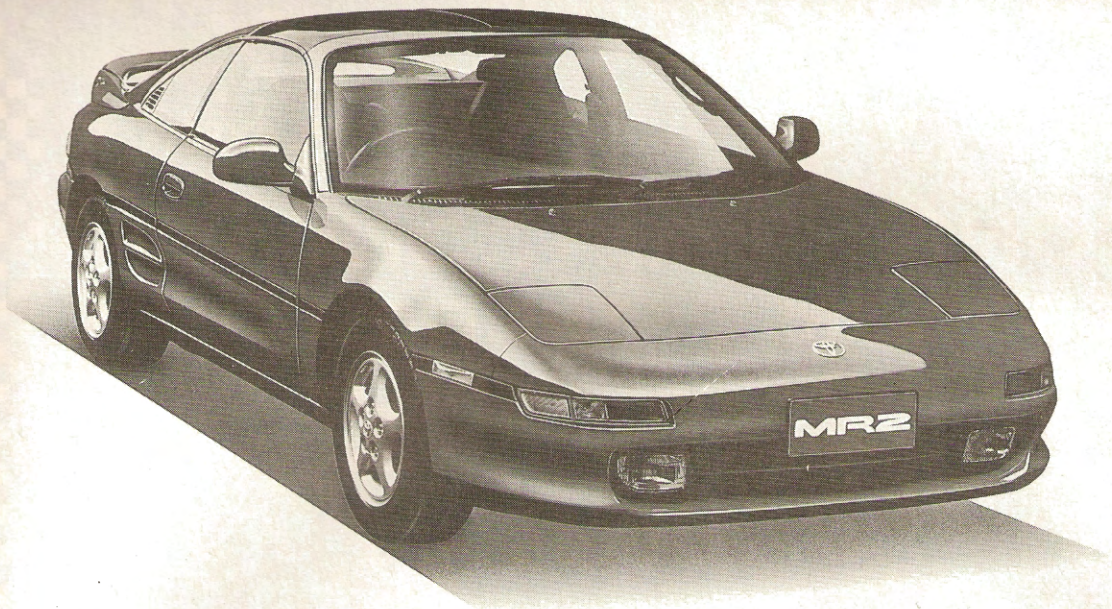
It must have been about 1am when we moved on to Ayrton Senna. We woke up two hours later: the transcripts in both notebooks reading exactly the same.

Senna: "..."

Nothing personal Ayrton.

JOE SAWARD





Toyota's cute, stylish MR2 has reached adolescence. It may have a bigger heart, but it also has a bigger behind. With a twin turbo engine, though, power output is up to 225bhp.

MR2: bigger and better?

Suddenly, it's all change for Toyota's toy-like MR2. The new 2.0-litre Mister Two, unveiled officially in Tokyo in October, takes its place as a faster, upscale replacement for the Midship Runabout 2-seater MR2 that's done so well for Toyota since 1984.

Expected in Britain sometime next spring, this second generation MR2 is a bigger, heavier, smoother car than the cheeky 1.6-litre original, but also more costly, with £17,000-£20,000 a likely ball park price.

For that, you'll get a longer, wider, lower, more powerful version of the current road racer, one that's also better finished and equipped as well as being more practical and refined.

In the new scheme of things, the MR2 looks very different, trading straight lines for curves and a tapered 'aero' profile. Somehow, it doesn't seem to stand out like the first one. Remember the Pontiac Fiero? The new Toyota is very reminiscent of that.

To go with the curvaceous looks (which throw up an improved 0.31 Cd) and rise in status, Toyota has significantly upped the size of the MR2, stretching length and wheelbase by, rsepectively, 8.7 and 3.1ins. Width gros 1.2ins and front and rear tracks are extended 1.2 and 0.4ins. Only the height has dropped, but just 0.4ins. Toyota, concerned to improve the rigidity of the MR2 while taking it upmarket, has increased the weight.

Still, the MR2 has the power to go with its new size Two 2.0-litre engines are offered, both 4-cylinder dohc 16-valve derived from the new Celica. And, as with the previous 1.6, they're transversely mid-mounted, driving the rear wheels, linked to either 5-speed manual or 4-speed auto transmission. The first, codenamed 3S-GE, delivers 165bhp at 6800rpm and 141lb/ft at 4800rpm, whereas fitted with Toyota's new twin entry ceramic turbo with intercooler (becoming the 3S-GTE), power leaps to 225bhp at 6000rpm and 224lb/ft at 3200rpm.

To give an idea of the speed of the new MR2, Toyota is talking of a 0-400m time of 13.9 seconds, which is really cracking on for a 2.0-litre. That's for the MR2 Turbo, mind, which in Japan is called GT. The normally-aspirated version is known as G-Limited.

Well-known foibles of the old MR2 (the limited luggage space, small tank and high noise levels) have all been attended to. Toyota has doubled the size of the MR2 boot but in the front, next to the space-saver spare, luggage space is still on the tight side and inside, stowage space behind the seats remains virtually non-existent. The cockpit is more luxurious too, with new seats, dash, instruments, trim and equipment. The attractive, snug interior features a more modern, curved facia and set of large analogue instruments for the driver. Still strictly a two-seater (offered with either a fixed or T-bar roof), the MR2 now gets plush leather trim in GT Turbo form as standard. Outside, a novel touch is that the MR2's foglamps are steering-actuated, rotating 30-degrees to the left and right in tune with steering movements.

PETER NUNN

TT turbo time

You must admit. Ford's Granada suffers a mite from the hire car, chauffeur-driven image. It's not the first car that springs to mind when the term 'executive express' is mentioned. You can taken one on any time in your 5-series BMW. Be careful, though, if you happen to spot one with discreet TT badges on it.

Those badges indicate that its been breathed on by Turbo Technics, a name that's been mentioned before in this column. They take a mild, inoffensive Granada and bolt on not one but two turbochargers. The result is a maximum speed of 140mph plus, and a 0-60mph time of 7.0s, which makes it quicker in a straight line than any of the 5-series BMWs with the exception of the new M5.

The conversion consists of a pair of Garrett T2 blowers, water-cooled for a longer life and with a built-in wastegate set to pop off at 0.425bar.

On the intake side the compressed air is fed via an air-to-air intercooler, mounted below the car's radiator, to the standard twin-plenum intake. The standard fuel injection system is retained but boost enrichment is incorporated, using two supplementary injectors controlled by TT's own mapped, digital electronic drive unit.

What this adds up to is a 50% increase in power, from 150 to 225bhp at 5500rpm, and a 55% increase in torque, from 172lb/ft to a massive 273lb/ft at 2750rpm.

The one we drove was a manual 4×4, and on first acquaintance, in traffic, it was a typical Granada 4×4. The 2.9-litre V6 may have been given a second wind in the last couple of years, but it's still an old engine, and it shows, it's not particularly smooth – certainly not in comparison with BMW, Jaguar or Mercedes competition – and in standard form doesn't give a whole lot of torque at the bottom end.

Until you need a bit of urge to pass a dawdler. Foot down, and suddenly you're past. Rapidly, and smoothly. There's no gathering of skirts as the blowers wind themselves up, no faint whistle as they go to work – nothing, just a smooth surge. Once you're on a motorway, the effect is even stronger – pull out to overtake at 70mph and very soon you're travelling at super-illegal speeds. TT reckon the 50/70mph time in fourth is 5.8s and 6.9s in fifth.

And that really is the strength of the conversion. Let's face it, a maximum speed of over 140mph is almost academic nowadays, and what is needed in congested traffic is instant overtaking ability, allied to a lack of fuss. With no boost gauge it's also difficult to tell when the blowers start to work, but certainly there's a lot happening from as little as 1800rpm indicated.

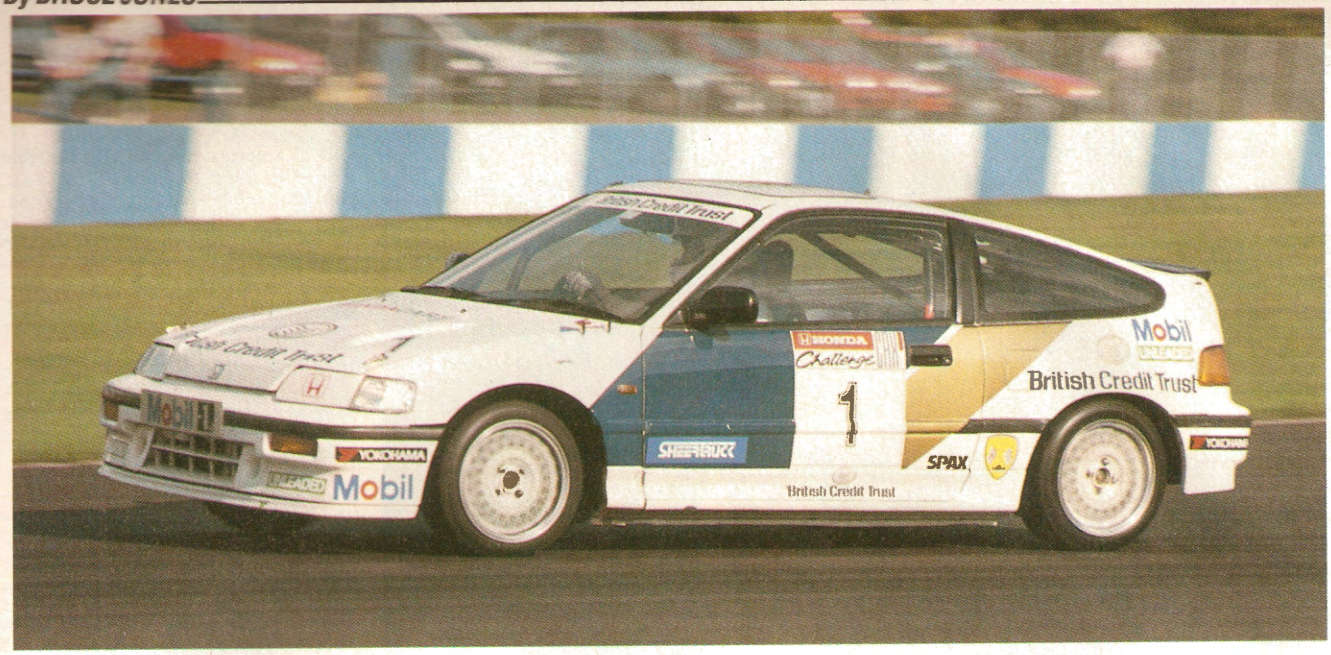
The cost of the conversion is £3250 including VAT, which brings the price of the whole car up to about £28,600, or about the same as a BMW 535i SE. With the TT Granada you get more performance but rather more old-fashioned road manners.

MIKE McCARTHY

A Schnitzer blitzer

The latest modifications to one of BMW's models comes from AC Schnitzer, whose experience is firmly based on a racing background. Using the 535i as a base model, Schnitzer offers a pack of body panels and three-piece alloy rims for its S5 model. However, the most important changes are under the bonnet. Schnitzer has bored out the 3535cc engine to 3.7-litres, pushing the power output up from 211 to 262bhp. This helps the 0-60mph increment down to 7.0 seconds and increases top speed to 160mph. It may not be as quick as BMW's M5, but it's not as expensive, either. For details of this distinctive model, Schnitzer can be reached in Aachen on 010 49 241 5688130.

By BRUCE JONES



Left: The slick-shod CRX handled beautifully, even in Jones's hands. Set-up neutrally, there were no handling quirks. Running on unleaded, there was power all the way to the redline, and beyond... Below: Jason Edmonds of Honda lends a hand. Photographs: John Colley.

Fun, fun, fun...

Sleek and fast, Honda's CRX has always been the best looking car for a one-make challenge. And the racing has been some of the best, too. So, when the offer of a race in one was issued, there was no way I could refuse. Was there?

Setting off before dawn, it seemed apt that Dvorak's 'New World Symphony' was on the stereo. This was a new world ahead of me: tin top racing.

Motoring through the fog in Northamptonshire gave me time to consider the success of those who had occupied the driving seat of the British Credit Trust/Honda UK 'celebrity' CRX before me. The collected F1 talents of Jonathan Palmer, Derek Warwick and Roberto Moreno had failed to yield a win. What chance had I?

Still, with a midweek testing chance at Brands Hatch being cancelled, I was heading to Donington Park with even more of a disadvantage than I'd feared. Still, I knew the circuit, from races in the FF1600 cars of the Jim Russell Racing Drivers School. And the team was going to let me have a run out with the selection of Alfa Romeos running in the first practice session of the day. Just to learn the feel of the car.

Well, that was the idea. Arriving at Donington at the appointed hour revealed two things. Firstly, the fog had turned to glorious sunshine. Secondly, the car was there, but the team was not... Scratch running an extra session.

So, even without a team, the car needed scrutineering. Thus, with the assistance of Clive Gammon – a neighbour of team mate Rick Shortle – I put the car through scrutineering. But, worringly, there was a sticker on the steering wheel that stated, simply "Do not start". But I had to!

So, with the assistance of Olympic Motorsport, the water and oil levels were checked. All seeming to be alright, and with no team to tell me not to proceed, I took to the track for CRX practice. Last of all.

The first three laps were traumatic: 1, watching the gauges with closer intent than ever before; 2, trying to bring the slick tyres up to temperature; 3, checking all the pitboards to see whether one was mine. Fortunately, the engine ran without a hitch, the tyres warmed up, but I didn't have a pitboard, through I saw some proclaiming times of which I would've been proud.

Trouble was, as soon as I'd done this, the quick runners were on me, running sometimes on the track, but mainly on the kerbs and grass, leaving me looking out to avoid joining one of their dusty accidents rather than watching their lines.

And then it was over, after only eight laps. I hadn't even strung a lap together without playing the obliging 'rabbit' at one corner or another. And all this without the aid of indicators! I was relieved that the engine hadn't seized, but I was 26th and slowest, fully 7.71 seconds away from Andy Ackerley's pole. Earth open up!

Much advice was proferred afterwards. You know: take up flower arranging, hang-gliding, etc. However, Peter Morgan offered me the use of his mechanics as I was still without the services of my team: Lee/Asquith Autosport. So, sportsmanship lives on. But then the team arrived, having been held up in their preparations for the Autoglass Tour.

To put my mind at ease, the sticker on the wheel meant nothing.

Then, something novel to me took place: the standing around that afflicts drivers all over. Qualifying was over, but it was hours before the race. At least one could bask in the sun.

The race arrived in due course. I wasn't nervous, surprisingly. I could hardly do worse than I'd done already.

So, I swung into the bare cockpit, now with the seat further back from the steering wheel, giving me more space in which to wave at the massed fans. Perhaps it was the sheer normality of the surrounding driving gear that calmed my nerves. Everything was so much like on my road-going CRX. Mind you, the exhaust note was certainly more rewarding on the racer, issuing forth from by the foot of the door.

Everyone, including Honda's Trevor Elliott, said that I should jump the start. I'd nothing to lose. But, surely, taking the green light level with Ackerley and Paul Taft would be a little precocious, especially if my car ended up being bounced like a billiard ball at Redgate. I wanted to go further than the first corner. Definitely.

As it happened, I goofed the start anyhow. I'd been told to leave the line with 4500rpm. Well, either I fed it in too slowly, or the others were dropping the clutch at 5000rpm.

Everyone said that I should jump the start

So, Redgate was circumnavigated: last. But then I was with them, and was struck by a terrible thought: "What if I gave the car ahead a nudge?" Just to see what it was like. Luckily for Ray Byford, I left his A&B Glass entry alone and, instead, drove on the outside of it as we left Hollywood for the Craner Curves.

And there it was. An overtaking manoeuvre. Simple as that. But then three silly so-and-sos ahead elected to drive off the circuit, with one of them – Mark Hazell – spinning back across the grey stuff before the Old Hairpin. I missed him, but lost ground. And lost my penultimate placing. Aargh.

Mistake followed mistake, with the engine taking a pasting into the chicane on lap 5. Changing down from fifth direct to second was neither intentional nor wise. And the valves were bent open thereafter. Thank goodness the engine was being replaced with next year's V-Tech unit after the race, anyhow. Still, though continuing to keep the revs between 5000 and 7400rpm, there was a gaping power hole. Leaving the chicane was pedestrian after that.

However, I soldiered on, hoping no one was noticing my efforts. A quick spin on the exit of Redgate slowed me slightly, but I continued, only to be lapped by clear winner Taft on his 14th and penultimate lap. I shouldn't have let him through so easily.

However, I set my fastest lap on my final tour, which can't be all bad, and this was rather closer to the pace, being 0.32 second slower than the next man, and 3.95 seconds off the best lap of all. With some testing, who knows?

I may not have set any records. I'd finished, though, and kept my nose fairly clean. But, dammit, I've been hooked. So, if anyone has some spare cash – say £20,000 – I'd like to hear from them. Especially as Honda will be upping the CRX's power output from 130 to 160bhp for 1990. ■

By BRUCE JONES

Left: Making the most of the limelight, Justin tells all after a Barber Saab race. Below: Bell's contemporaries Hakkinen, Brabham and Higgins have tried their luck in F3.

The American way

Justin Bell has chosen to avoid Formula 3. His route from GM Lotus to Formula 3000 is via the American way. Should it work, people will be forced to take notice. Racing in the Barber Saab Pro Series while his contemporaries have competed in F3, Justin has learnt how to handle horsepower and how to win. Another year is planned Stateside before a direct comparison with his contemporaries will be possible.

"At the end of 1988 I'd finished third in the Vauxhall Lotus Championship," explained Justin, "behind Allan McNish and Mika Hakkinen. However, this didn't help me land a front-line F3 drive for '89." In fact, it didn't help him to find *any* drive in F3.

"At the end of the season, I was still relatively inexperienced, but I'd learnt a great deal. In FF1600, I'd crashed a lot, but I was trying to become more conservative and consistent in 1988. And I was pleased not to have crashed in 24 races. However, this didn't find me a drive. I went to see the top teams and they all told me that I really ought to have done F3 before they'd look at me." It was *Catch 22*.

"For some reason, everyone thought that I'd sorted a drive. And I hadn't. Quite simply, with the Camel money having been pulled out, I didn't have the money the F3 teams were asking.

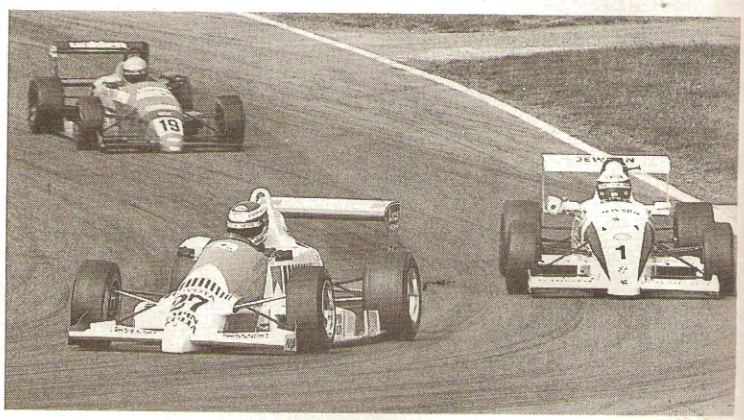
"This went on all winter, with no-one giving me a break, so that at the beginning of March I had no idea what I was going to be doing. People were even starting to tell me that I should give it up and get a 'proper job'. But I said 'hold on, I know I am good enough to have a go at this', and this made my resolve all the stronger."

Choosing the American way

And so Justin crossed the Atlantic for what was to be the first of 17 crossings during the year. "The plan was to go to Miami and race in the SCCA's Barber Saab season opener as a one-off." This went well, and Justin finished third behind Rob Wilson and John Cochran, using the experience he had gained from two Barber Saab outings at the end of '87. And so it was decided to expand the programme to four races, during which time father Derek and Justin would look for backing.

"At Miami I was introduced to a man by the name of Lenoir E Zeiser, who makes wings for Sidewinder missiles. He told me he wanted to watch me at the next race, at Road Atlanta, so I told him which commercial flight he could take up to Atlanta. This he didn't need, though, as he flew up in one of his Lear Jets... Anyhow, I started from pole, had an electrical problem, dropping me to seventh place. But this cleared and I fought back to take the lead with two corners to go. However, the driveshaft broke and I rolled across the line in third. He was ecstatic and agreed that his company, SRI, would pay for 50% of all my racing. Then, with Camel's personal backing, I managed to get by, also being assisted by Jon Finch who allowed me to live in his house in New York state all year. Living with an English family was a big support, especially as my parents had split up at the start of the year.

"However, it was a big decision, as I knew that I was effectively cutting myself off from Europe. But the way I looked at it is that I go racing to do it professionally. And the Barber Saab programme is nothing if not professional with its PR and television coverage. I didn't want to do, say, three races in F3 or F3000 and then have to pack it up and go and work in an office as I didn't have enough money to race properly. I want to race in a complete package." Financially, Barber Saab fitted this bill. F3 didn't.



> *"I knew I was cutting myself off from Europe"*

"Barber Saab offers certain advantages," Justin continued, "the main one is having 225bhp, which is considerably more than F3. However, the cars are agricultural. Looking at the chassis, you wouldn't want to put it on the same stage as F3. Even compared to a Vauxhall Lotus, it isn't as smart, but it fills a gap in American motor sport. It's something we need here.

"In America you have FF2000 and then the jump to Formula Atlantic, and Barber Saab fits neatly in between. This is something that started as a school category, don't forget, as Skip Barber's racing schools, but has become attractive enough to draw drivers from England, Switzerland, Mexico and Colombia, which must say something...

"Barber Saab takes place at some great venues, too, following the IMSA GT circus around." So, there are big crowds, especially at the street races such as Miami.

"And the prize money is excellent. For example, although I missed out on the big one – the $100,000 'career enhancement' prize that Robbie Buhl picked up – I still managed to cover more than half of my costs through the prize fund; about £45,000. Even for finishing 15th or so in a Barber Saab race, you collect more than you would for winning a round of the British F3 series, which is something worth considering...

"So for £70,000, I contested a 12-race series of which 10 of the races were televised, three times each on ESPN right across the States."

Over the course of the year, Justin started from pole four times, winning once and led the title race for the first half of the season. He was only out of the top three on three occasions, retiring in each of these, but ended up third overall behind Buhl and Wilson, being overhauled by the Kiwi at the final race.

"This year taught me an essential lesson about winning. I remember the first race I ever led was in FF1600 in '87 at Birmingham, my first ever street race. I was on pole there by 1 second, and shot off into the lead. But I didn't know what to do. And, on lap 2, I had about a 4 seconds advantage and I spun off. I swore I'd never do that again. So far, thankfully, I haven't.

"If there's a drawback with Barber Saab, it's that setting up the car is fairly basic, and you won't learn as much as you can in F3. Also, it isn't a ground effect car, so I've not got the experience of driving one of these. The car is desperately overpowered for the lumps of wood it has on it. But learning to cope with the delivery of the turbo power is a useful skill. It teaches you to think ahead and be early onto the power.

Spreading his name

Justin's fame spread in 1989, though. Perhaps more so than if he'd found his way into F3. "Dad is well known over in the States, but I've become a person in racing in my own right. So in one year I've achieved an awful lot more

Left and below left: Justin feels the Barber Saab series is a worthwhile option for those who can't afford F3.

than I did in two years in Europe. This is partly because I was winning races and because I was receiving a hell of a lot of air time. It seemed that regardless of the fact that Robbie (Buhl) was leading the series, the men with the cameras and microphones always made for me after a race, as I always had something to say. Also, I helped out with a few IMSA commentaries which helped to get me better known.

"I'd love to come back to Europe and race, at some point, but I know I can't return and join in the F3 rat race because I don't have the finance to do it, and because it's so political. Look at this season, if you ended up driving for a team that had the wrong chassis-engine combination, you had no chance. Take Mika Hakkinen, for example. This is one reason why more drivers don't come across from the States. And there are all the disqualifications. So, to them, F3 is a lot of money for an uncertain outcome.

"Looking at my career, I plan to do the American Racing Series – the American F3000 – in 1990, which will give me the chance to learn how to drive with 450bhp, and then I've been offered an Indycar test next August.

"For '90, ARS will be run with new March chassis with the Buick 3.5-litre engine. And the formula allows infinitely more car adjustment than Barber Saab, so I should learn a lot more about set-up.

"Also, the formula has the attraction of running as a support to the CART/PPG Indycar World Series. So there's plenty of exposure there.

"This year taught me an essential lesson about winning"

"And the budget for a season in ARS is equal to that of a season in F3. However, I think that I will be learning more in ARS than I would in F3, as I will be competing with a horsepower figure that's much closer to F3000. And so it won't be such a big jump in '91 when I want to come back to Europe for the International F3000 Championship. And, as a consequence of being used to the power, I won't waste a year learning about it. I'll be able to give it my best shot from the start, which is very important at this level of the sport, especially considering how expensive it is.

"There's also a possibility, a very exciting one, that Dad and I may be racing together in IMSA next year, sharing a GTP Spice-Chevy. There may still be a stigma in Europe about single-seater drivers racing in sports-cars, but in the States this doesn't exist. Look at Scott Pruett. It won't be my main programme, but it will provide some very useful experience.

His contemporaries

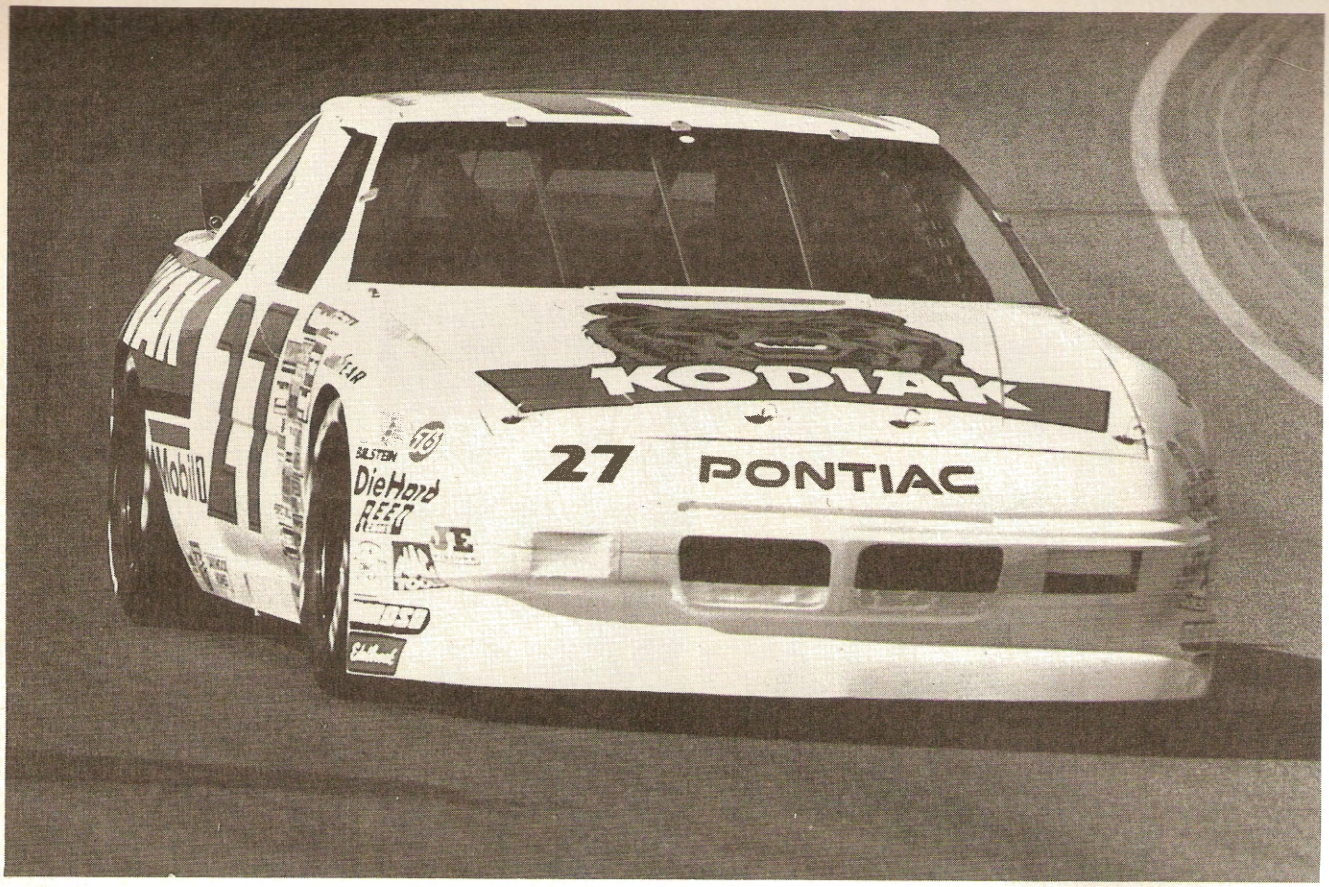
If there's one thing that rankles Justin about missing out on F3, it's the form shown by David Brabham, his team mate at Camel Derek Bell Racing in '88. "In the 12 races we did together, I outqualified him seven times and beat him nine times. That, to me, showed something. Even so, I was one of the few people jumping up and down when he started doing well, as he's probably my closest friend in motor racing. He's changed though, through '89, and isn't so easily mentally thrown off. But I'm pleased he's done well, as it makes me think that there's something there that maybe I can meet.

"I'd ultimately like to end up at the same place as my contemporaries, but maybe I'll go a different way. Maybe this will be a slightly longer route, but I'll be learning different lessons. I hope to end up as good a driver as I would if I'd stayed in Europe. I'll be avoiding what is a notorious bottleneck, too. F3 is famous for weeding out talent if it isn't linked to money. Take Derek Higgins, for example. To my mind, he's one of the best young drivers in Britain, but I don't believe he'll ever make it to F1. He may even have trouble graduating to F3000. And that's wrong.

"I think, like Derek, my face doesn't fit at the moment in Britain. But who knows, if I can develop and get to the level of Indycars in America, there may come a point when there's a need for a British driver in F1 and I'm in the best position to fill the gap.

Justin may be out of sight at the moment, but he's not stopped learning. Time will tell. ■

REPORT: GORDON KIRBY – PHOTOGRAPHY: KENNY KANE



Left and below right: Wallace did just enough to clinch the 1989 NASCAR Winston Cup, coming home 15th in his Blue Max Pontiac. Earnhardt did all he could, winning convincingly in his Childress Chevrolet (right), but losing out by 12 points. Below: Waltrip and Kulwicki.

Rusty nails it

Dale Earnhardt was in magnificent form at Atlanta last Sunday, dominating the final race of the Winston Cup season and winning convincingly by almost a lap. But it wasn't enough to steal the NASCAR title from the grasp of Rusty Wallace who finished three laps down in 15th after a couple of extra pitstops.

QUALIFYING

Driving into Atlanta International Raceway on Saturday morning was an immediate lesson in the immense popularity of NASCAR. At 9 o'clock there was a long line of campers, vans and motorhomes funnelling into the infield of the 1.5-mile high-banked superspeedway. Out on the track the Winston Cup cars were practising, getting ready for the weekend's second qualifying session. And at 1 o'clock there was a 300kms ARCA (Auto Racing Club of America) race with 41 V8-powered starters.

Most Winston Cup race meetings feature a 200-mile NASCAR Grand National race on Saturday afternoon but last weekend at Atlanta it was the midwest's ARCA folks who put on the entertainment. Even for the largely unknown 'ARCA boys' the grandstands were half-full and that line of vans and motorhomes and pick-up trucks kept filing into the infield.

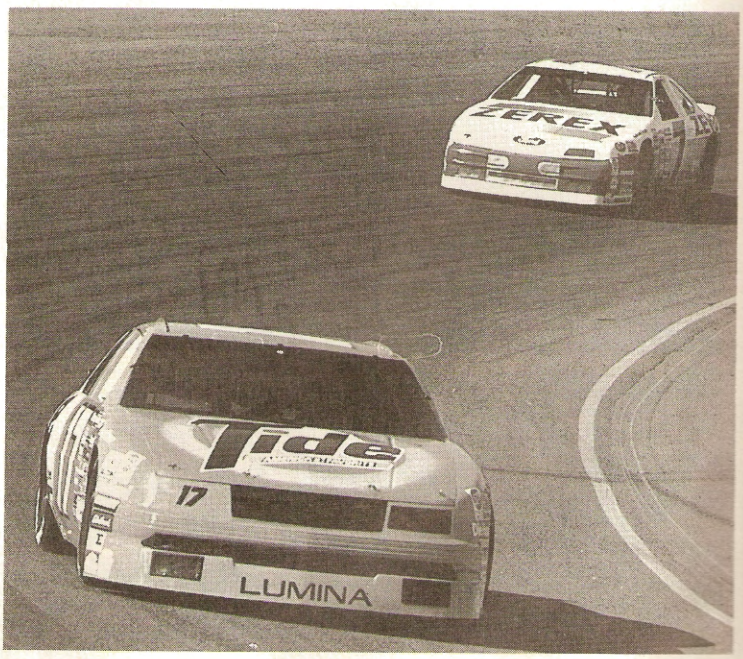
Now you have to appreciate that as far as spectator turn out is concerned, Atlanta Raceway is considered one of the weakest tracks on the 29-round Winston Cup schedule. The series visits 16 racetracks incidentally with 13 of them – Atlanta included – staging two separate races. Nevertheless at this year's season-closing *Atlanta Journal* 500, the place was a sell-out with 80,000 expected on Sunday.

In the garage area on Saturday I came across Carl Haas who was down in Dixie wearing his Road America board of director's hat. Haas was taking the Wisconsin road course's case to NASCAR, hoping to add a Winston Cup race to the track's schedule. He was taking it all in, prowling the garage area, then watching the ARCA race from one of the corporate suites atop the grandstands. Brandishing his ever-present cigar, Haas was in good humour, telling a funny story about making his sponsors understand why he couldn't switch from a Lola to a March chassis back in 1983, the first year of Lola's return to Indycar racing with Mario Andretti and Newman/Haas Racing.

Haas also was clearly impressed with what he saw around him at AIR. "They've really got a lot going for them, haven't they?" he commented. "It's a total happening. We don't have this in CART."

"You know," he went on. "I hear some of these guys complaining that they're having a tough time getting sponsorship. Well let me tell you, if that's true it's only because they're doing a bad job. I mean they've really got a great package to sell."

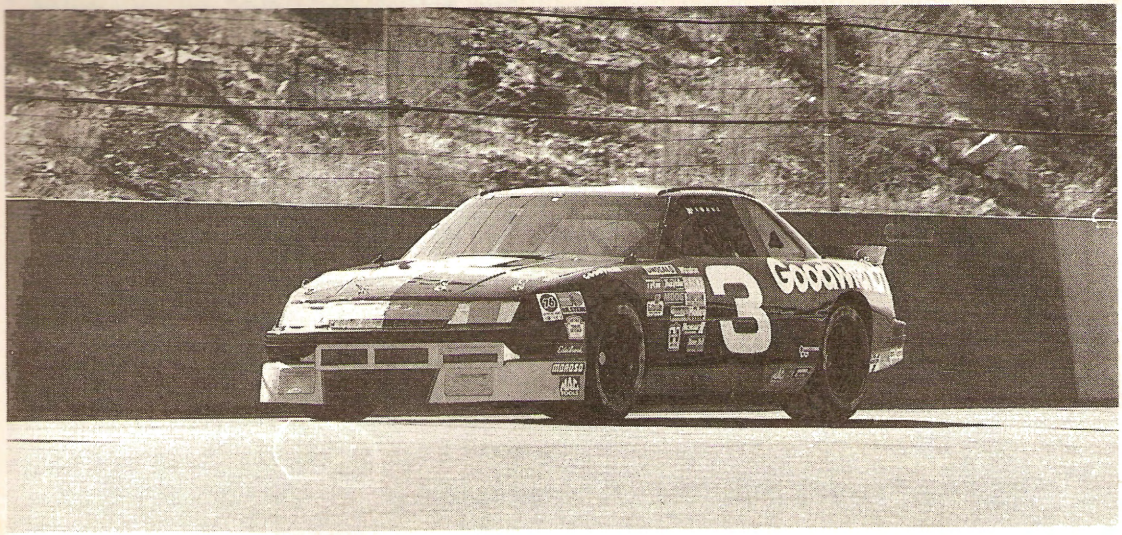
From the USA's most successful racing car salesman and one of CART's biggest boosters, those are words of keen perspective and praise. And of course, Haas is entirely correct. NASCAR is stronger, more directed than any other motor sport.



The best reason for NASCAR's excellent health rests in the fact that the 40 qualifiers (plus two, selected non-qualifiers) at AIR were covered by 1.014 seconds. Championship rival Dale Earnhardt (Childress/Goodwrench Chevrolet) and Rusty Wallace (Beadle/Kodiak Pontiac) were side-by-side on the second row with Mark Martin (Roush/Stroh's Ford) surprisingly off the pace in qualifying, starting from the 10th row. Wallace was the championship leader of course, 78 points ahead of Martin and 79 ahead of Earnhardt. Wallace could take the title by finishing a conservative 18th but nobody, least of all Earnhardt or Martin, expected the supercharged Wallace to lay back and take it easy.

"I don't think he'll goof-off too much," commented Earnhardt about Wallace. "He may be a little conservative to begin with, just to see what's happening, but I feel like he's going to race as hard as he can. He did at Phoenix two weeks ago and I don't see it changing."

Said Wallace: "I'm going to charge to the front tomorrow. That's my style and I'm not going to change it."



Meanwhile Alan Kulwicki was on the pole in his Ford, for the sixth time this year. Kulwicki has not enjoyed the best reliability or luck this season and was 15th in the points going into the race at Atlanta. He was inspired however, by the chance of winning a $410,000 bonus if he were to win the race. Series sponsor Winston you see, was offering a 'skins game'-style bonus to the first pole winner to win a race and because that hasn't happened this year (!) the original figure has ballooned to $205,000 which AIR promised to match if Kulwicki could turn the trick on Sunday...

RACE

WALLACE: "I drove my guts out today"

"I can't believe it," Wallace chattered over the PA system minutes after the finish. "Man! I had trouble with the tyres, then with the lug nuts and I can't believe I missed so bad on the chassis set-up. I'd like to congratulate Dale Earnhardt on winning the race. We're two good friends and it's good to see us both up front."

So went the story of this year's Winston Cup Championship, a form of motor racing entirely dissimilar in so many ways from Formula 1. Earnhardt and Wallace have quite literally 'duked it out this year, fender against fender in some races. Both have had incidents of their own to cope with and recover from as well as a couple of on-track meetings between themselves. But through it all they have remained remarkably good-natured rivals.

When it was all over on Sunday afternoon Wallace had to listen to as many boos as cheers from the always-demonstrative southern fans. They were booing because he's been involved in his share of controversy this year and because he hadn't had a good race and was more than a little lucky to salvage the championship from the day. "I wish they wouldn't boo him," commented Earnhardt. "It's like me. I got myself into some deals and he got himself into some deals. If you run hard you're gonna have some of these problems sometimes. That's the way racing is."

If only F1 enjoyed such philosophers!

After two wintry days of practice, the weather warmed up a little for Sunday. There was a mixture of sun and light overcast and the temperature warmed into the mid-50°sF with a light breeze.

At the first turn of the first lap there was some evidence of this as poleman Kulwicki got very sideways, immediately losing three places. Second-starting Ken Schrader therefore seized the lead in one of Rick Hendrick's trio of Chevrolets but on the second lap the order of the day was established as Earnhardt's black Childress Chevy steamed past Schrader. Right away Earnhardt began to pull away on his own and by the 10th lap it was clear he had the fastest car which he was driving with uncompromising aggression. It was necessary for Earnhardt to win the race and to take the 10 points bonus for leading most laps if he was to have any hope of taking his fourth NASCAR title and he was clearly aiming to do exactly that.

As Earnhardt put his stamp on the race, Wallace steadily fell back. "I got freight-trained at the start when Kulwicki got sideways," Wallace later commented. "Everyone went underneath me and I lost a few places. But the big problem right off was the car was loose." Right away he slipped to fifth and by the time he made his first pitstop after 50 of 328 laps, Wallace was back in 10th place.

Meanwhile Earnhardt was setting a fierce pace which enabled him to lap Wallace when a yellow flag interrupted play during the first round of pitstops. That dropped Rusty back to 16th place and when he had to stop under the green after another 40 laps to inspect a tyre vibration, he tumbled to 33rd, two laps behind Earhardt. "I thought I had a flat right front," Wallace later told the story. "The car started to push real bad and I had to come in. Evidently what had happened was there was some rubber build-up on the tyre and that's what made it lose traction."

Back on the track, Wallace was soon making up places but regaining the two laps lost was going to be difficult. Through the middle of the race he tried to run with Earnhardt, actually passing the leader on one occasion and picking up one of his lost laps. Ten more laps however and Earnhardt came steaming past, the black Chevrolet handling superbly as Dale attacked the high groove.

Then came a bad crash in the second turn when Grant Adcox's Oldsmobile suddenly shot into the wall, striking the barrier hard with its right front. There was a small fire as the car ricochetted into the infield. Adcox was listed in grave condition when he was helicoptered out of the track to hospital in Atlanta. About an hour later he was pronounced dead of massive head and chest injuries.

Shortly after the restart championship contender Mark Martin's hopes went up in a ball of flame. After qualifying 20th Martin made little progress up the leaderboard. Then after some 300 miles a blown engine caused an oil fire from which Martin escaped unscathed.

Martin's demise put the focus entirely on Wallace and Earnhardt. With Earnhardt in total command of the day the interest lay in watching Wallace keep himself in the top 18 places. Although he was never able to match Earnhardt's pace, Wallace seemed sure of making the top 18 only to have a final dose of trouble on his last pitstop. As he rejoined to begin his 280th lap, Wallace felt something was wrong and after five laps he came in for a change of left side tyres. It turned out that for some unknown reason the lug nut slots in his left rear wheel had elongated. After a quick change Wallace rejoined, now three laps down in 15th place. And so he ran to the finish, 1989 NASCAR Winston Cup Champion by a mere 12 points – 4176 versus Earnhardt's 4164.

"I couldn't have asked for anything better today," said Earnhardt. "Richard (Childress) and I really did our homework for this race. We had an excellent test here and the car stayed consistent through the whole race. We did everything we could possibly do but we fell short. The only thing we missed this weekend was the pole. I just drove it with all my heart today. I didn't give up on it for a single lap. I made the race car do what I wanted it to do. Rusty came up and challenged me and I stood up on the steering wheel a little harder and got back around him. But that's the way racing goes. You gotta take it. You can't cry about it."

Before he said these words Earnhardt congratulated Wallace on winning his first Winston Cup title. Asked in the post-race interview whether he thought Wallace had stroked his way to the title, Earnhardt was quick to refute the suggestion. "I wouldn't call him a stroker," commented Earnhardt. "He did all he could. He ran hard with me but he had some bad luck today. Not enough for me to beat him."

By the time Wallace made it to the press box the news had been announced that Grant Adcox had died. Wallace's first words were about Adcox. "I'd just like to start out by saying that I'd like to give my deepest sympathy to Mr Adcox. I wasn't too far behind him when the accident happened and that was one of the biggest hits I've ever seen."

The new champion then discussed his frustrating but successful afternoon. "This isn't the way I wanted to win the championship. I wanted to win the race and the championship. But I drove my guts out today and it's over and I'm very happy. This has gotta be the highlight of my career."

And finally on winning his first Winston Cup title, Wallace rolled his eyes and grinned. "It still hasn't sunk in and it probably won't until I'm sitting in the bar tonight, wiped out!"■

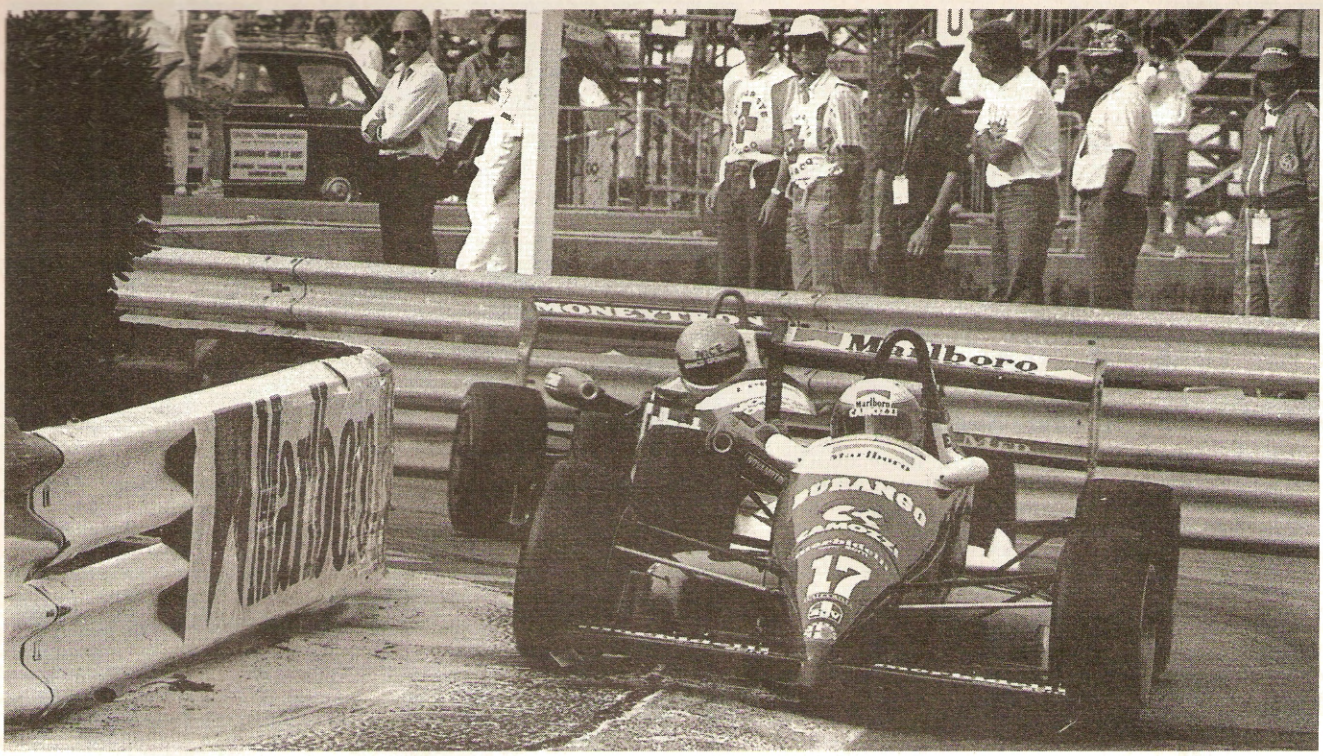
ATLANTA (USA)

NASCAR Winston Cup, 29th & final round, 328 laps – 500 miles

Pos	Driver	Team/Sponsor	Chassis	Result	Qual	Pos
1	Dale Earnhardt	Childress/GM Goodwrench	Chevrolet Lumina	3-33:36	30.818	3
2	Geoff Bodine	Hendrick/Levi Garrett	Chevrolet Lumina	3-34:01	30.976	7
3	Sterling Marlin	Hagan/Sunoco	Oldsmobile Cutlass	328 laps	30.962	6
4	Ken Schrader	Hendrick/Folgers	Chevrolet Lumina	328 laps	30.690	2
5	Darrell Waltrip	Hendrick/Tide	Chevrolet Lumina	327 laps	31.034	8
6	Kyle Petty	Peak	Pontiac Grand Prix	326 laps	31.180	16
7	Bobby Hillin Jr	Stavola/Miller High Life	Buick Le Sabre	326 laps	31.403	29
8	Morgan Shepherd	Rahmoc/Valvoline	Pontiac Grand Prix	326 laps	31.186	24
9	Neil Bonnett	Wood Bros/Citgo	Ford Thunderbird	326 laps	31.258	26
10	Lake Speed	Speed/Bull's Eye	Oldsmobile Cutlass	326 laps	31.083	22
11	Ernie Irvan	Kroger	Pontiac Grand Prix	325 laps	31.090	23
12	Derrike Cope	Purolator	Pontiac Grand Prix	325 laps	31.069	10
13	Alan Kulwicki	Kulwicki/Zerex	Ford Thunderbird	325 laps	30.591	1
14	Ricky Rudd	Bernstein/Quaker State	Buick Regal	325 laps	31.459	33
15	Rusty Wallace	Blue Max/Kodiak	Pontiac Grand Prix	325 laps	30.864	4
27	Bill Elliott	Melling/Coors	Ford Thunderbird	278 laps	31.095	13
R	Greg Sacks	Dinner Bell Foods	Pontiac Grand Prix	257 laps – engine	31.089	12
R	Mark Martin	Roush/Stroh's Light	Ford Thunderbird	224 laps – engine	31.300	20
R	Dick Trickle	Stavola/Miller High Life	Buick Regal	138 laps – engine	31.061	9
R	Terry Labonte	Junior Johnson/Budweiser	Ford Thunderbird	29 laps – engine	30.889	5

Final championship positions: 1, Wallace, 4176pts; 2, Earnhardt, 4164; 3, Martin, 4053; 4, D Waltrip, 3971; 5, Schrader, 3786; 6, Elliott, 3774; 7, Gant, 3610; 8, Rudd, 3608; 9, G Bodine, 3600; 10, Labonte, 3569.

By JULIAN THOMAS



Success in the Italian Formula 3 Championship has helped Gianni Morbidelli to join the elite at Ferrari, with a testing contract for 1990.

Ferrari's new boy

Ferrari has snapped up the services of Gianni Morbidelli. After a super successful season in which he clinched the Italian Formula 3 Championship, scoring six race wins plus the European Nations Cup and two victories in the Italian Touring Car Championship, the 21-year-old Italian has signed a testing contract for the legendary team from Modena, taking over from JJ Lehto.

With five seasons of karting behind him, Morbidelli went straight into F3 in 1987 with the Euroracing team, finishing an impressive sixth. In his second season last year he changed to Guido Forti's top-class outfit and went even better.

One of the pre-season favourites, Morbidelli finished fifth in the championship with 23 points; which included one victory, four top six finishes, two poles and two fastest laps, outrunning his close friend, team mate and eventual champion Emanuele Naspetti on numerous occasion. But it was clear that, after various lapses of concentration and even a couple of mid-season post-race visits to hospital, that 1988 was not going to be the young and inexperienced driver's year.

"I was really concentrating this year, but most of all I had learnt from all my experiences, all the negative results of the previous years," Morbidelli explained. "I think that it is the difficult moments which form the character of a man and, especially in my case, of a racing driver, and so I took stock of all those experiences, tried to notch up the points as quickly as possible and obviously tried not to make any more mistakes, even though it's really easy to make mistakes when you are racing."

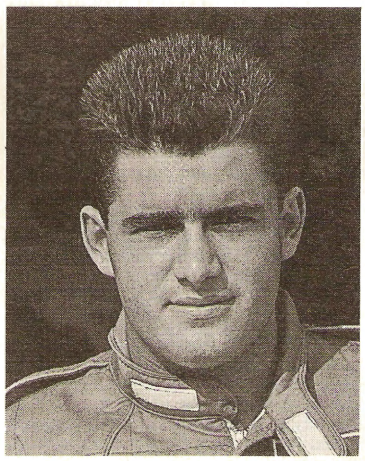
In 1989 Morbidelli made one mistake, his only one – at Vallelunga, the first round of the season. Sitting proudly on pole with the No 1 on his brand new flaming red Dallara Alfa Romeo 389, Morbidelli stalled (although everyone on the spot put some blame on the hesitancy of the Vallelunga starters) and was helpless as three cars piled into the back of him. Not a good start for this year's favourite; and especially not for his team manager, who watched as two of his cars instantly became write-offs.

"Yes, I think I made just one mistake at the first race when I botched the start," said Morbidelli. "I just didn't move. But even so, the start to the season in general wasn't particularly good, I only had a miserable two points after the first two races, compared with Antonio Tamburini's 18; that's a big difference, but we never gave up, we never stopped working, we tried really hard to improve and in the end the results arrived; I think that when you sacrifice yourself, in the end success will come."

"It's really exciting sitting in a Ferrari F1 car"

In fact by round 6, after his first hat trick of victories, Morbidelli had made up the gap, and with his second hat trick, including the two at his home circuit Misano and the prestigious Monza Lottery race, the championship was wrapped up pretty soon after.

"I think that a lot of things went towards making our season so successful. As for the team, I would say that the most important is the relationship between the *tecnico* and the driver, which has to be really good. In our case we have had this good relationship for the past two years. Then a car which is competitive – always; an engine which



is always well-prepared and finally a lot of concentration and even physical preparation from the driver. This year the championship has been highly competitive, and a lot of teams and drivers are now at about the same level, therefore it has been really difficult to emerge. F3 is all like a big puzzle really; if it all fits together, you are successful, otherwise nothing."

This season though, and this is not unusual in the Italian F3 environment, which never ceases to generate arguments, disputes and controversy, Morbidelli, the team, the car or mostly the engine, have been the subject of much behind-the-scenes grumbling. Gianni however just thinks about being competitive and shrugs off the rumours: "I think you get these 'illnesses' everywhere and that wherever you go, you're always going to find controversy."

There was one point in the season, towards the end, when Gianni had really got into the groove, when almost everything he touched turned to gold, or rather in a motor racing sense, every car he drove just happened to be first at the chequered flag. Roped in to substitute for Gabriele Tarquini in the Bigazzi Team's BMW M3 on the Grand Prix weekends, Morbidelli soon gained confidence with the tin-top cars and scored his first win at Vallelunga, following it up with another at the final round of the series, to make his season a successful one on all fronts.

"I'm pretty satisfied with my season," agrees Morbidelli. "I did F3 and I did it well; I also had the opportunity to do the touring car series, thanks to the Monteshell Bigazzi Team, and this was a really great opportunity, especially considering the standard of some of the drivers in the series, and even more so seeing as I was able to win a couple of races."

And 1990? "I'll definitely be doing F3000 with Team Forti; we still haven't decided on which car we'll be using. The situation will probably be finalised sometime in November."

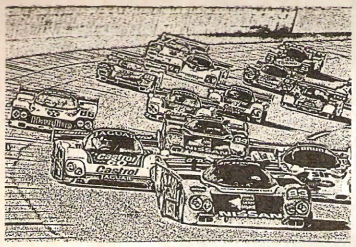
Already Morbidelli, on his first outing with an F3000 car, the Lola T89/50-Cosworth used by Claudio Langes this year, has broken the unofficial F3000 lap record at Misano. He doesn't seem at all worried about the challenge of a new formula, one in which Team Forti has never been able to obtain the same level of results as it constantly does in F3.

"I think I'm just about ready to tackle a season of F3000," says the young driver enthusiastically. "I don't hide the fact that I'll certainly face a lot of difficulties, just like every other newcomer, so I'll just try and see what I can do and try and get as much out of the season as possible.

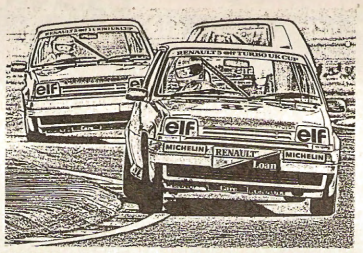
"I'm really pleased with the Ferrari deal, even though I'm slightly nervous about the whole thing at the moment. I'll be driving for Ferrari, even though only as tester; it's a notable success for me and it gives me a great deal of satisfaction."

"It's really exciting, sitting in a Ferrari F1 car, it's a great team; there's a lot of team work going on. They all gave me a good welcome and that also gave me a great deal of pleasure."

"Basically, I'll be taking over the testing job from JJ Lehto. First I have to get used to the car, something which is really important, and then probably I'll be going to Estoril for the Goodyear testing. The programme is rather intense; there's a lot of work to do." ■



INTERNATIONAL RACES



NATIONAL RACING

A race of surprises

TARUMA, Nov 19: Brazilian driver Augusto Cesario put his lone Ralt-Alfa Romeo RT32 on pole at this the 10th round of the Sudam F3 Championship, much to the surprise of the regular frontrunners such as Argentine points leader Nestor Furlan and Willy Kissling who lined up behind him.

The pressure of this unaccustomed grid placing was too much for Cesario, though, and he spun his wheels too much at the start. In an instant his chances were ruined and Furlan grabbed the lead, followed by Luis Belloso, Christian Fittipaldi, Fernando Croceri and the rest of the 19 car field.

Brazilian Leonel Friedrich was sixth at the end of lap 1, but climbed through the order to take the lead by lap 36 of the 48 lap counter. Furlan dropped back to sixth as he encountered handling problems with his Team Sommi Dallara, and this became ninth place when a 1 minute penalty was applied for jumping the start.

Friedrich's win promotes him to the head of the championship, four points clear of Furlan

ANTONIO WATSON

TARUMA (BR)

Sudam F3 Championship, round 10

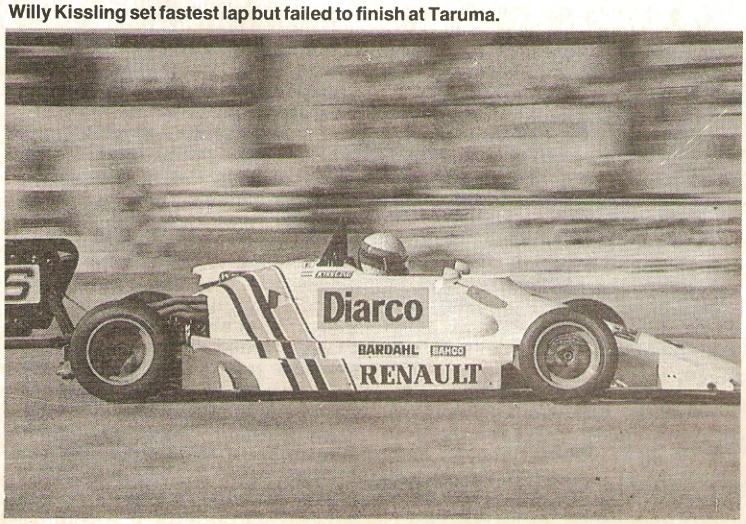
48 laps – 89.9 miles

1, Leonel Friedrich (Reynard-VW 883), 50m57.274s, 105.9mph; 2, Luis Belloso (Berta-Renault Mk3), 51m01.145s; 3, Christian Fittipaldi (Reynard-Alfa Romeo 883), 51m03.554s; 4, Pedro Muffato (Reynard-Tom's Toyota 883), 51m07.573s; 5, Elio Seikel (Reynard-VW 883), 51m11.084s; 6, Renato Russo (Berta-Renault Mk3), 51m24.969s; 7, Vital Machado (Reynard-Alfa Romeo 883), 51m35.013s; 8, Earlo dos Santos (Reynard-VW 883), 51m52.564s; 9, Nestor Furlan (Dallara-Alfa Romeo 388), 47 laps. **Fastest lap:** Willy Kissling (Berta-Renault Mk3), 1m02.545s, 107.8mph.

Championship positions: 1, Friedrich, 46pts; 2, Furlan, 42; 3, Kissling, 32; 4, Fittipaldi, 31; etc.

Next round: Curitiba (BR), Dec 3.

Willy Kissling set fastest lap but failed to finish at Taruma.



Kelly's lucky 13

BRANDS HATCH, Nov 19: Even with a twice stopped MG race, the BHRC had proceedings wrapped up by 3.30pm on a mild and pleasant day. The support races were excellent, Alan Kelly taking the best victory in what was a quite incredible FF1600 race, the Irish driver having started from 13th on the grid.

Tony Mundy's Jamun marque occupied the first three grid spots in the FF1600 round, pole man Chris Hall making the best start to head Len Bull, David Germain and Mark Marchant, though it wasn't too long before Germain had demoted Bull to third. The leading trio ran close with Marchant right behind and Gary Lingham leading the pursuers. The order of the race changed dramatically on laps 5 and 6, Germain ending his race in the barrier at Paddock and Hall tripping over a backmarker at Graham Hill Bend who seemed oblivious of his presence. This left Marchant in front at the end of lap 65 from Bull, Lingham and Kelly. Lingham disappeared from contention on lap 7, the leading trio three abreast along Brabham Straight. Kelly got past Bull on lap 9 and as they completed the lap, poor Marchant had misread his pit signal and was waving with delight only to see Kelly steam past on the run to Paddock. Kelly held on to take his first win at Brands for three years with Marchant just holding off team mate Bull.

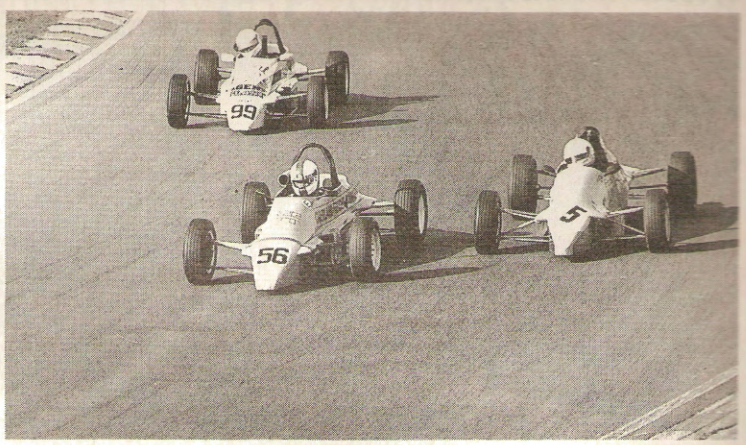
It was the turn of the MGs to misbehave this week, the race being stopped when Mark Ellis spun and stalled at the foot of Paddock Hill. Duncan Drye was again leading when the re-run was halted on lap 2, Neil Cawthorn spinning into an already abandoned car on Cooper Straight. At the third time of asking, Drye just held off a cheeky challenge by Steve Westwood's considerably less powerful Midget.

A huge and classy GT field chased Winter Warmer points and with over 600bhp at his disposal, David Sheppard was uncatchable. Alistair Fenwick led the chasers but his Tiga-based Skoda was hit by broken drive pegs on a rear wheel, and pitted. A first lap spin by third place man Nigel James, at Graham Hill Bend rather split the field and Rob Bridger came home a distant second. Hot rod men Stephen Hall and Colin White were never more than feet apart contesting third, with George Polley the only other unlapped runner, the former world champion hot rodder having lost ground in the opening lap fracas.

The Formula First grid saw the now traditional First Time Racing domination at the sharp end. Team mates Simon Harrison and Philip Bate had a super scrap that included a wheel banging incident along Brabham Straight, Harrison getting the verdict in a photo finish. Stephen Dunn drove another sensible race to take third, with birthday boy Derek Canham next.

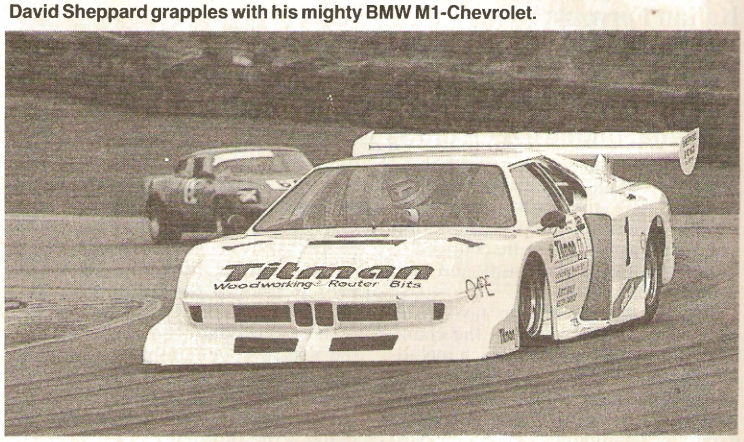
The Italian All Marque race proved to be a crowd pleasing curtain closer. John Day faltered at the start, and was swamped on the run to Paddock. Troy Dunlop grabbed the initiative under pressure from Barry Waterhouse with Piero Pesaro heading the fast recovering Day. Waterhouse finally made the pressure on Dunlop tell at Paddock on lap 6, the Monte Carlo running wide and allowing the Uno to forge ahead into Druids. Three laps later a repeat of the incident saw Waterhouse run wide, the front wheel drive machine coming back and collecting Dunlop who spun. Day took the lead from Waterhouse into Paddock on the last lap and moments later Paul Fasey grabbed second at Druids. Fearing a puncture, Waterhouse settled for third spot.

DUD CANDLER



Alan Kelly (5) passes Mark Marchant and Len Bull for victory.

David Sheppard grapples with his mighty BMW M1-Chevrolet.



BRANDS HATCH — BHRC

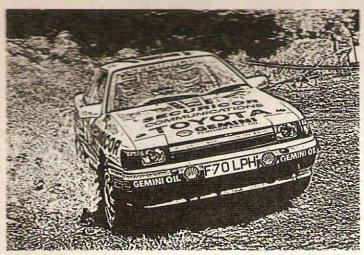
P & O European Ferries FF1600s (10 laps): 1, Alan Kelly (Van Diemen-Scholar RF89), 8m32.7s, 84.54mph; 2, Mark Marchant (Jamun-Auriga M89), 8m32.9s; 3, Len Bull (Jamun-Connaught M89A), 8m33.2s; 4, George Cubitt (Van Diemen-Scholar RF89), 8m34.8s; 5, Clifford Lawrence (Van Diemen-Minister RF89), 8m35.4s; 6, Greg Bush (Van Diemen-Scholar RF88), 8m41.7s. **Fastest lap:** Kelly and Cubitt, 49.5s, 87.56mph.

Brands Hatch MG Challenge (Aggregate 7 laps) – overall and Class A: 1, Duncan Drye (3.9 MGB GTV8), 6m47.6s, 74.43mph; 2, Steve Westwood (1.3 MG Midget), 6m51.5s; 3, Barry Sidery-Smith (2.0 MGB), 7m22.0s; 4, Stuart Musk (3.0 MGC GT), 7m.35.3s. **Fastest lap:** Drye, 55.4s, 78.23mph (**record**). **Class B:** David Ecob (1.3 MG Midget), 7m41.0s, 65.81mph; 2, Harry Linfield (1.3 MG Midget), 7m51.0s; 3, Gren Duffy (1.3 MG Midget), 7m51.6s. **Fastest lap:** Ecob, 60.0s, 72.24mph (**record**). **Class C:** 1, Musk, 66.63mph; 2, Jim Baynam (1.9 MGB), 7m35.4s; 3, George Edney (1.85 MG TB), 7m39.7s. **Fastest lap:** Edney, 61.8s, 70.13mph.

Winter Warmer Special GTs (10 laps) – overall: 1, David Sheppard (7.6 BMW M1-Chevrolet), 8m01.9s, 89.94mph; 2, Robert Bridger (2.3 Toyota Starlet), 8m36.3s; 3, Stephen Hall (1.7 Toyota Starlet), 8m43.4s; 4, Colin White (1.7 Toyota Starlet), 8m44.0s. **Over 2500cc:** 1, Sheppard; 2, Martin Harrison (5.7 Dax Tojeiro Cobra V12), 9 laps; 3, David Fuller (3.0 Ford Capri), 9. **Fastest lap:** Sheppard, 46.3s, 93.61mph (**record**). **1501 to 2500cc:** 1, Bridger; 2, Hall; 3, White. **Fastest lap:** Bridger, 50.3s, 86.17mph. **1001 to 1500cc:** 1, Paul Soames (1.3 Minisprint Mini), 9 laps, 78.45mph; 2, Julie Thwaites (1.1 Davrian Mk 8), 9; 3, Kevin Jones (1.5 Mini Clubman), 8. **Fastest lap:** Thwaites, 53.1s, 81.62mph. **Up to 1000cc:** 1, Alan Harman (1.0 Harman Imp), 9 laps, 76.44mph; 2, Richard Harris (1.0 Suzuki SC100), 9; 3, Steve Harman (1.0 Harman Imp), 8. **Fastest lap:** Harris, 53.34s, 81.16mph.

***Evening Standard* Formula Firsts (10 laps):** 1, Simon Harrison, 8m47.1s, 82.23mph; 2, Philip Bate, 8m47.1s; 3, Stephen Dunn, 8m53.7s; 4, Derek Canham, 8m58.5s; 5, Simon Miles, 9m01.5s; 6, Julian Popple, 9m02.9s. **Fastest lap:** Harrison/Bate/Popple, 51.5s, 84.16mph.

Italian All Marque race (10 laps) – overall: 1, John Day (2.0 Lancia Beta Coupe), 9m37.0s, 75.11mph; 2, Paul Fasey (1.5 AlfaSud), 9m37.9s; 3, Barry Waterhouse (1.3t Fiat Uno turbo), 9m39.9s; 4, Piero Pesaro (2.0 Alfa Romeo Zagato), 9m50.4s. **Up to 1600cc:** 1, Fasey, 75.00mph; 2, Alan Bezzant (1.6 Fiat Strada 105TC), 10m09.0s; 3, Simon Pearson (1.5 AlfaSud), 10m15.9s. **Fastest lap:** Fasey, 55.6s, 77.95mph. **1601 to 2000cc:** 1, Day; 2, Waterhouse; 3, Pesaro. **Fastest lap:** Day, 55.6s, 77.95mph. **Over 2000cc:** No starters.



NATIONAL RALLIES

Victory Vitesse

Nov 19: Triumph Vitesse driver John Wooley won the second annual running of the Historic Car Rally in Weston Park in dramatic style when all 70 crews finished four runs of an almost identical stage.

In what turned out to be a family occasion to remember, his wife Alison, along with Zoe Heritage, took the Spirit of the Rally award in a Standard 10.

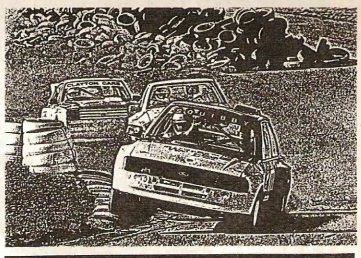
On the opening run several crews found the very slippery conditions extremely embarrassing although non-damaging, and a degree of caution prevailed for the majority thereafter. Early contenders were Charles Smith in a Cortina GT, Ron Gammons in an MGB and Fred Hawkins's Dolomite Sprint. Unluckily Ian Giles's Lancia Stratos was not on its best behaviour and ran near the end of the field on its first run.

The last stage included a half-mile run through a wooded section, and in the trees Smith's Cortina GT caught up the Stratos which had started 30secs ahead. There was nowhere to overtake and Smith probably lost enough time and the event as a result. Woolley, who had his son Edwards alongside for his first event, in contrast had a clear run in the Vitesse and he stormed through to claim the Mike Spence Restorations award for the second time. A special award was given to Nick Lees/Keith Maddison-Roberts who brought along the 1937 Riley Sprite which did the Alpine Rally of that year. All 70 cars made it to the finish including one of the Riley 1.5s which broke a drive shaft on its third run but was back in action on time for the last run.

Historic rally cars entertained the masses at Weston Park.

MIKE SPENCE RESTORATIONS HISTORIC RALLY

1, John Woolley/Edward Woolley (Triumph Vitesse), 9m53s; 2, Charles Smith/Mike Matthews (Ford Cortina GT), 9m58s; 3, Fred Hawkins/Geoff Brown (Triumph Dolomite Sprint) Ron Gammons/John Bridgen (MGB), 10m00s; 5, Cec Offley/Peter Valentine (Mini Cooper S), Phil Edwards/Barry Nicholls (Volvo 142), 10m17s; 7, John Midgley/Brian Robertshaw (Toyota Celica GT), 10m22s; 8, Bodo Linnhoff/Manolis Kotjabasakas (Datsun 240Z), 10m23s; 9, Jim Murray/Lawrence Meredith (Aston Martin DB4), 10m24s; 10, Mike/Gina Barker (Jaguar XK120), 10m25s.



OFF TRACK SPORT

Denis devastates

KIRKISTOWN, Nov 11: Denis Biggerstaff scored his second major Ulster rallycross win on the trot, by outgunning Dermot Carnegie to win the Superfinal at the opening round of the Winter Rallycross Championship at Kirkistown.

Earlier in the day, the roles were reversed as the two Metro 6R4's battled it out in the first of the class finals, the combined class 1 and 2 final, which saw Dermot take the verdict by 5secs with Davy Francis third with his G3 Escort Turbo.

The highlight of the afternoon was the class 3 final, poleman Derrick Jobb taking the honours with his 2-litre Escort, ahead of a frantic pack, which saw Jimmy Stewart take the runners up spot and completing the top three, Andy Orr.

IAN LYNAS

KIRKISTOWN

Winter Rallycross Championship, round 1

Class and final (4 laps): Dermot Carnegie (Metro 6R4), 4m55.06s; 2, Denis Biggerstaff (Metro 6R4), 5m04.62s; 3, Davy Francis (Ford Escort Turbo G3), 5m14.59s; 4, Kenny McKinstry (2.0 Ford Escort), 5m18.33s; 5, Derek Boyd (Mazda RX7), 5m23.52s.

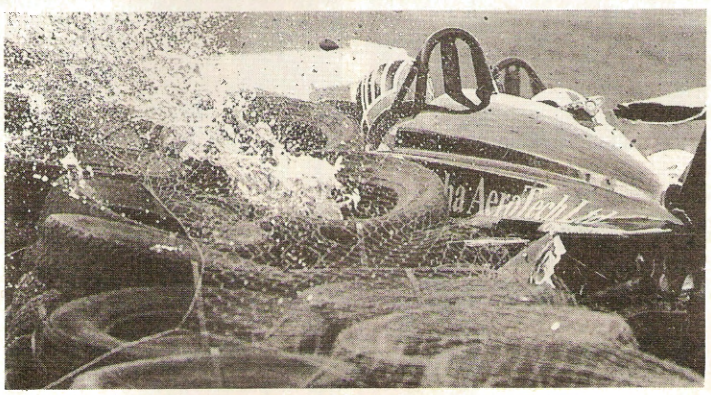
Class 3 final (4 laps): 1, Derrick Jobb (2.0 Ford Escort), 5m29.26s; 2, James Stewart (1.7 Ford Escort G3), 5m31.39s; 3, Andrew Orr (2.0 Ford Escort), 5m36.71s; 4, Philip McCann (2.0 Ford Escort), 5m47.57s; 5, Susan Thompson (2.0 Sunbeam), 5m50.89s; 6, Lorraine Giles (2.0 Ford Escort), 6m14.63s.

Class 4 final (4 laps): 1, Clive Richardson (1.6 Vauxhall Nova), 5m21.12s; 2, Norman Jess (1.6 Metro), 5m24.84s; 3, Lloyd Spendlove (1.5 Mini), 5m24.87s; 4, John Shields (1.5 Mini), 5m28.67s; 5, Karl Cleary (1.5 Mini), 5m32.45s.

Superfinal (4 laps): 1, Biggerstaff, 4m58.04s; 2, Carnegie, 5m00.36s; 3, Francis, 5m17.51s; 4, Boyd, 5m18.77s; 5, Richardson, 5m26.13s; 6, Spendlove, 5m26.51s; 7, Jess, 5m32.66s.

Denis Biggerstaff man of the moment in Irish Rallycross.

BBC GRANDSTAND FORMULA FORWARD CHAMPIONSHIP



End of the road for Piers Hunnisett and Chris Creswell.

Clearway for AGJ

A paltry nine car entry was boosted by three late entries for the midway round of the championship. On a still slightly damp track, Andrew Guye-Johnson claimed pole position just 0.2sec ahead of Piers Hunnisett, the Eastbourne driver keen to open his account having twice finished third. Joint championship leader Chris Creswell was third fastest having borrowed Ben Edwards' engine after his own warped its cylinder head during midweek testing. Brian Saunders, Adrian Wood and Marc Chauveau completed those on the front three rows.

At the start Hunnisett got away to head Creswell, Guye-Johnson and Wood, the latter destined to have his nose fins bent up in an incident at Druids moments later. Wood stayed with the leading trio until lap 5, but gradually slipped back. Creswell tried several times to oust Hunnisett who found the pressure too much, and succumbed at Paddock on lap 5, the black car sliding wide and letting Creswell ahead up the hill. Guye-Johnson so nearly capitalised as well, but Hunnisett wasn't about to surrender that easily and quickly closed the door. Creswell soon eased clear, with Hunnisett unable to close the gap until lap 10 when all three were virtually locked together.

Starting the final lap and it seemed that Creswell's circuit knowledge may just win the day. However he'd reckoned without Hunnisett diving into an ever decreasing gap as they swept into Clearways. Through McLaren, Piers lined himself up inside Chris but even as he started the manoeuvre he was sideways, somehow he was alongside but the car was getting away from him. Inevitably they touched, both cars now spinning towards the outside barrier and retirement. Just behind, Andrew slowed enough to let the pirouetting pair get out of the way and sailed past for a victory that had looked unlikely. Wood thus inherited the runner-up spot with Saunders just behind and clear of Chauveau with the colourful car of Steve Deeks a little way back in fifth.

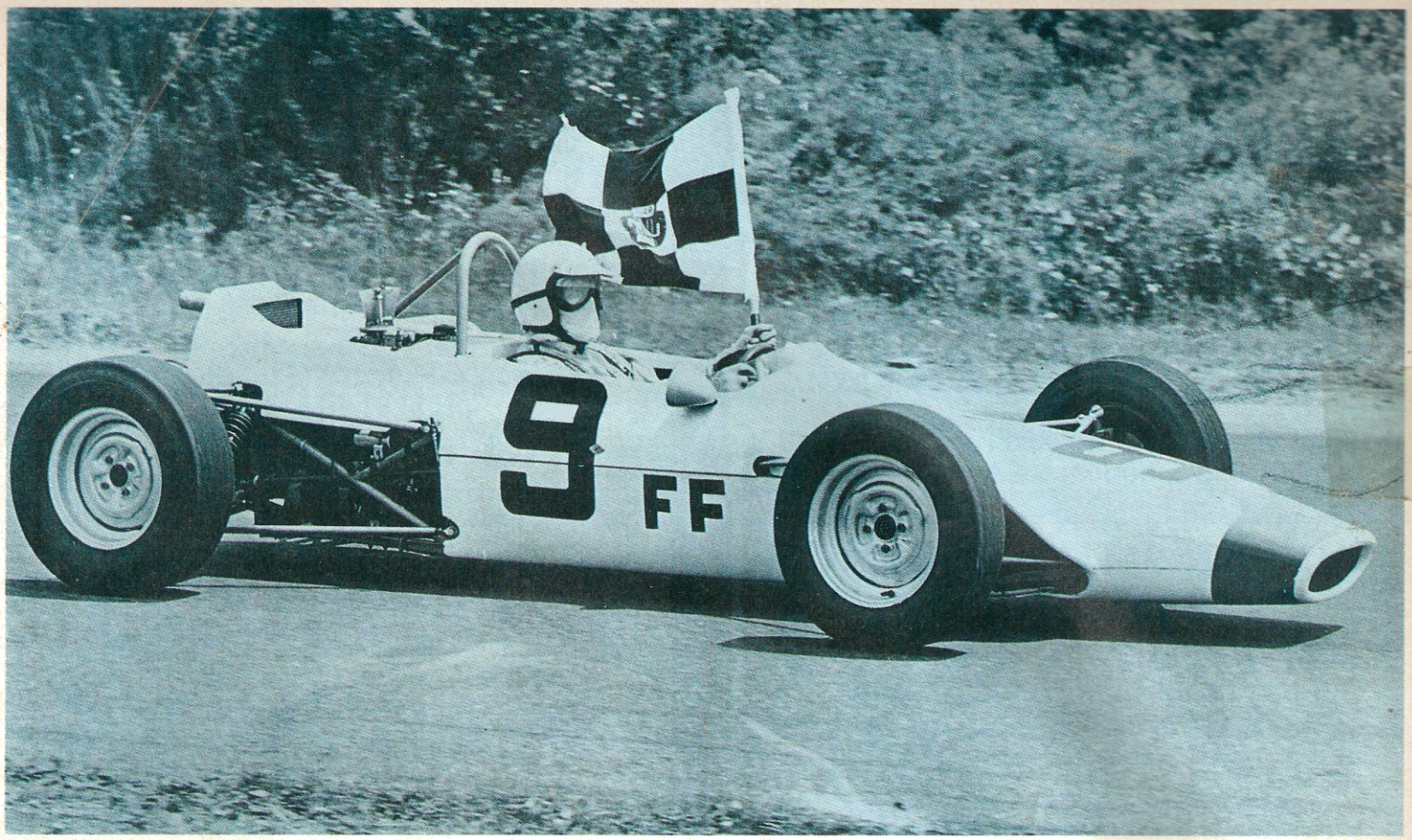
DUD CANDLER

BRANDS HATCH

BBC Grandstand Formula Forward Championship, round 3
12 laps – 14.45 miles

Pos	Driver	Team	Result	Best lap	Qual	Pos
1	Andrew Guye-Johnson	Driver	9:42.2	47.1	48.9	3
2	Adrian Wood	Driver	9:47.2	47.7	49.4	5
3	Brian Saunders	First Time Racing	9:47.5	47.7	49.2	4
4	Marc Chauveau	Driver	9:49.7	47.9	49.7	6
5	Steve Deeks	Performance Eng Services	9:53.5	48.1	53.4	9
6	Alan Mugglestone	Fortec Motorsport	10:16.1	47.6	50.1	7
7	Nigel Payne	Dimedale Group	10:29.4	50.5	56.9	11
8	Mark Walsh	Driver	11 laps	50.4	53.0	8
R	Piers Hunnisett	Fast Forward Racing	11 laps	47.2	48.8	2
R	Chris Creswell	Universal Salvage Auctions	11 laps	47.4	48.6	1

Winner's average speed: 89.33mph. **Fastest lap:** Guye-Johnson, 47.1s, 92.02mph (**record**). **Championship positions:** 1, Guye-Johnson, 24pts; 2, Creswell, 15; 3, Saunders, 10; 4, Hunnisett, 9; 5, Wood, 8; 6, Chauveau, 4; etc. **Next round:** Brands Hatch, Nov 26.



SKIP BARBER

SCCA Formula Ford Runoffs
Daytona
November 30, 1969
Caldwell D-9

The race I'd have to pick would be the SCCA amateur national runoffs at Daytona in 1969, in which I drove a Formula Ford. It's certainly not the most important race I was ever in, and it wasn't necessarily the best drive, but I've picked it because it's such a good example of the tremendous teamwork in racing.

That was the first year of Formula Ford in North America, and all the manufacturers – the British manufacturers particularly – were anxious to build a market. It was very competitive, because everybody ran factory cars.

I ran a Caldwell, which was an American car – a copy of the British Merlyn – and I had won my division, the Northeast division, quite handily. After the second or third race of the year I led every lap of every race and was on the pole for every race. So I went into the runoffs feeling pretty confident.

The field was quite close in qualifying, except I was almost a second and a half ahead of Eddie Miller, in a Merlyn.

At the end of qualifying on the Thursday we did a normal plug check and discovered that one of them was really oily. When we took the head off we discovered that a circlip on a piston pin had come out and destroyed a cylinder. The thing would not have run much longer.

No problem; we had a spare motor. The car owner then explained to me that maybe we shouldn't run the spare, because it was from an unknown source and he wasn't sure whether it was legal or not.

So we were faced with having to rebuild a motor. Again, that's no big deal under normal circumstances – the race wasn't until Sunday – but that year they allowed 10-over pistons which, of course, made no difference but we all thought it was life and death. And I think I had probably the only 10-over motor there was; you couldn't get the pistons. Also, the runoffs were held over the weekend of Thanksgiving.

There was a frantic scramble and we found a guy Thursday night who could get two pistons from Ford in Detroit. He flew one to Boston, where the engine builder was, and one to Daytona – there was no way that we were going to risk losing them both on the same airline.

The guys started Thursday night. They disassembled the motor and gave it to a mechanic's wife who had to make four aeroplane changes to get it to Boston.

To cut a long story short, we got everything back together in time for the warm-up on Sunday morning; and on the second lap, not really having opened the throttle yet, a guy passed me and a rod-end broke on his car and he put me in the wall!

Fortunately, we had a spare car, which didn't actually have an engine inside it, and we just about got everything done in time.

I claimed my position at the front of the dummy grid, and about 5 minutes before the start of the race they moved me to the back. Bill Scott had protested my position, saying I wasn't in the same car I had qualified. They held an instant stewards meeting. I argued that it was the same motor, the same gear ratios, the same wheels and tyres, same seat, same bodywork. You know, *that's* the car! So they moved me to the front, and then as we were pulling out onto the grid for the start of the race, they moved me right to the back again.

I was so fired up and aggravated by then that I just blew everybody away. I think the thing was going almost 700rpm faster that it had ever gone. It was amazing.

Anyhow, I finished the race with the car basically all used up – certainly the crew all used up – and we immediately got protested by half the field. For chassis things: they thought we were using aluminium pieces.

It turned out that the car we crashed had aluminium sway-bar links, which we didn't even realise – and which were illegal then – but the actual race car, fortunately, did not have any of those problems.

About 5 o'clock that afternoon, and many, many beers later, and everybody completely exhausted but still hanging about the race track, somebody came over to us and said: "Gee guys, we're really going to check this car over. Absolutely everthing. But *you* have got to take it all apart yourselves."

So when all the rest of us went off to the big banquet that night, my poor mechanics were busy taking everything apart.

It was a big, big effort. The easy bit was driving the car.

Skip Barber was talking to Jeremy Shaw

"When all the rest of us went off to the big banquet that night, my poor mechanics were busy taking everything apart"

Skip Barber (50) is proprietor of the world's largest racing drivers school. He is also president and part owner of Lime Rock Park race track in rural Connecticut, which serves as one of his school's four main bases. In conjunction with Saab, the Skip Barber organisation hosts a popular and competitive single-seater Pro Series under IMSA sanctioning. Barber is also an accomplished racer in his own right. A three-time national champion, he was a leading light in the early years of Formula Ford and F5000. He progressed as far as Formula 1, competing in five World Championship Grands Prix during the 1971 and '72 seasons with an uncompetitive March 711.

NEXT WEEK
DAVINA GALICA

LOLA

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