

F1 LATEST ZANARDI LOSES DRIVE



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AUTOSPORT

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WILLIAMS
CLEARED
ITS NAME**

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

SENNA **THE** **UNTOLD** **STORY**



For those who'd like to see the back of us.

Meticulous preparation of our two Renault Maxi Méganes gave us a good headstart in the British Rally Championship. An advantage that was driven home by Tapio Laukkanen and Martin Rowe, with the support of a dedicated back-up crew. The result was a win in the Drivers, Co-drivers and Manufacturers' championships for 1999. Sadly, we won't be around to repeat our success next year. So...a BIG thank you to everyone who made this season a memorable one for Renault Elf Dealer Rallying. Champagne anyone?



*FIA 2-LITRE WORLD CUP
FOR MANUFACTURERS
CHAMPIONS 1999
SUBJECT TO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION

The Mégane



RENAULT

December 2
1999

AUTOSPORT

Vol 158
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ZANARDI LOSES HIS SEAT AT WILLIAMS

The team abruptly splits with its driver – with no replacement in sight for 2000. By Andrew Benson

The Williams Formula 1 team has parted company with its driver Alex Zanardi, despite not knowing who will replace him.

The move is said to have cost as much as £4 million in severance pay.

The timing is a surprise. It is a month since Zanardi last drove an F1 car, and the squad now has no partner for Ralf Schumacher in 2000.

Williams has a shortlist of ex-Prost man Olivier Panis, British American Racing's Jacques Villeneuve and ex-Tyrrell driver Jos Verstappen. At least one seems unavailable.

Frenchman Panis committed to a role as McLaren's test driver last week, despite Williams' interest. Villeneuve is the squad's favoured choice, but he would have to be prised away from BAR, where he is in the middle of a two-year contract.

Some at BAR would willingly take Zanardi instead – he is highly rated by team bosses Adrian Reynard and Rick Gorne. However, it is unlikely title sponsor and chief shareholder BAT, the tobacco giant, would approve. Villeneuve is also a close friend of BAR chairman Craig Pollock, who is locked in a power struggle with Reynard and Gorne.

If the unlikely possibility of a switch to BAR does not come off, Zanardi is likely to retire from top-level single-seater racing. He has indicated to friends that he does not want to return to the US-based CART Championship Series.

Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya, who replaced Zanardi at his old Ganassi team and is under a long-



“The move is said to have cost as much as £4 million in severance pay”



Head (left) knows Zanardi had the lion's share of technical troubles

AUTOSPORT SAYS....

Andrew Benson, Grand Prix editor

“The logic of the timing defies me. Surprising and disappointing though it is that Alex Zanardi has not met expectations in 1999, it is a mystery why Williams should wait this long to split with him. The team could have acted a month ago. It is, though, hard to fault the decision. Williams and Zanardi did not gel. Whether the fault lies more with the driver or the team, however, is another matter.”

Adam Cooper, GP editor-at-large

“Alex Zanardi's departure has been on the cards for months. Only his sympathetic personality has saved him from a major media slating. Since 2000 is a learning year, I hope Frank [Williams] is bold enough to

give the job to Jorg Muller, an underrated talent with an extraordinary CV. Like Irvine and Frentzen, he would arrive with a huge amount of experience.”

Nigel Roebuck, GP editor

“Sadness is what I feel more than anything else. With his personality and humour, Zanardi could have been a huge asset in a relatively bland era of F1. Somehow, though, all that speed and flair, apparent in his F3000 and early F1 days, and even more so in three hugely successful CART seasons, failed to come through in a contemporary Grand Prix car. Nothing I have seen in the sport down the years has mystified me more.”



IN THE FRAME

JACQUES VILLENEUVE

PLUS Williams' 1997 champion is top of the list and a proven winner.

MINUS Has pledged to see out his contract with British American Racing.



OLIVIER PANIS

PLUS Experienced – and has no race drive next year.

MINUS Committed to a McLaren-Mercedes test role.



JOS VERSTAPPEN

PLUS Available, experienced and wants to prove himself after poor half-season with Stewart in '98.

MINUS Doubts remain over his ultimate potential.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

PLUS Under long-term contract to Williams and highly rated.

MINUS Contracted to Champ Car team Ganassi until at least the end of 2000. A prohibitively expensive buy-out clause is in place.



TOM KRISTENSEN

PLUS Talented and versatile with BMW links. Tested for Williams.

MINUS Almost no F1 experience and unproven at the highest level.

JORG MULLER

PLUS Official BMW test driver, with wide experience of the marque's test programme and lots of F1 miles under his belt.

MINUS Unproven in F1 racing.

"We're well aware the reliability on his car was poorer than on Ralf's, but we're pretty disappointed" **PATRICK HEAD**

Lawrence/LAT



MSport Images/LAT

Two CART titles in a row boded well for F1

term contract with Williams, appears to have ruled himself out of an early F1 debut. Williams wants him back, probably in 2001, but he pledged to remain in Champ Cars to defend his '99 drivers' title.

Montoya told AUTOSPORT: "It doesn't sound very logical to sack Zanardi. I've heard rumours, but I'm tied to Chip [Ganassi]. I've got a deal with him I can't do anything about. I'm racing in CART next year."

Ganassi is said to have a costly

The Italian seemed to lose confidence after early promise in F1 test sessions

buy-out clause for 2000 in his driver's contract of at least £13 million. This is much reduced if Williams wants him back for 2001.

Zanardi's impressive consecutive Champ Car titles in '97-98 caught the eye of Williams, and the squad had found success in bringing Villeneuve over from the USA.

Villeneuve won a world championship with Williams in '97, but Zanardi has struggled all season. He has only twice come close to Schumacher for race pace – at the Belgian and Italian Grands Prix. Most of the time he has been well behind him.

Williams indicated in June it was concerned about Zanardi. By October its patience had run out. It is not known why it took so long to end the relationship, or which party made the final decision.

Williams refused to confirm the news. Team boss Frank Williams said: "I would prefer not to comment on speculation."

The team's new engine partner, BMW, has denied any involvement. Its Le Mans winner, Tom



Kristensen, and F1 test driver, Jorg Muller, have been linked to the seat.

Williams technical director Patrick Head said: "We're well aware the reliability on his car was poorer than on Ralf's, but we're pretty disappointed. It's sort of still in discussion. I think things will get sorted in the next week or so."

"A contract exists, so it has to be a joint decision. If we wanted to stop and he wanted to carry on, he would be able to carry on."

Zanardi's poor form has been a mystery. After good early showings in testing, he seems to have lost confidence. Williams is notoriously intolerant of drivers not performing, and it seems Zanardi did not find the type of warm environment he thrives on. He couldn't raise his game. ■

AUTOSPORT WEBSITE

Catch the latest F1 news as it happens on www.autosport.com

Lawrence/LAT

Audi weighing up graduation

Audi could become the latest in a long line of motor manufacturers to enter Formula 1 in the new millennium.

The German company is doing a feasibility study to work out exactly what it would take if it gave the green light to a Grand Prix project.

It has approached the Arrows team to ask about its engine programme, according to sources. Representatives are known to have visited the team's base in Leafeld, Oxfordshire, last month.

Audi, which is part of the massive German Volkswagen Group, would be expected to enter its own car if it committed to F1.

A move to the sport's highest echelon would be the next logical step for the company, which is favourite to win the Le Mans 24 Hours next year.

It is spending a reputed £70 million a year on the sportscar classic. This is not that far from an F1 budget, which would easily reach £100m.

A victory at Le Mans would leave it with nowhere else to go other than F1, where it would be competing against German market rivals Mercedes and BMW.

The group looks certain to enter a VW sportscar in the 2001 Le Mans

race, freeing up Audi to go to F1.

However, the Ingolstadt firm denied that it was considering such a programme. A spokeswoman said: "I can assure you that this is a rumour only."

VW boss Ferdinand Piech said earlier this year that he preferred to spend the massive amount of money needed for F1 on improving its road cars for customers.

The German giant has a number of brands with which it could enter F1, including Bentley, although Audi is considered to be favourite.

The group has also been linked to an F1 tie-up with Porsche. The two have ties through VW boss Ferdinand Piech, whose family is the major shareholder of Porsche.

A Porsche spokesman said: "Up to now, there has been no contact or ideas on F1. If there is a partner - a company like McDonald's or Coca-Cola - then we could be in a position to do something for five or six years. If we had a partner, we would think about it."

This is Porsche's stock response to enquiries about its plans.

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Audi's F1 career started with Auto Union back in the '30s, but the Ingolstadt firm could soon make a return to the Grand Prix circus



Minardi in line for Ford engine coup

The Minardi team is expected to make a last-minute deal to use Ford engines for 2000.

The Italian outfit has given up on trying to secure a deal for Renault-built Supertec V10s. It is poised to firm up a surprise deal to use Ford's '99 engine. The US giant said in April that it would not supply customer engines in 2000.

The deal will be a major boost for Minardi, which used the make's customer engines this year. If it does get the CR-1

engine, it will enjoy a power hike of at least 40bhp over this season.



Ecclestone

The motor was admired this season for its power and weight figures, which were among the best in Formula 1.

The deal is said to have been brokered by F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone. Minardi had been struggling to convince Supertec boss Flavio Briatore that it should be supplied with the engine

- the Italian had promised customers Benetton and Arrows he

would only supply three teams.

Minardi boss Gabriele Rumi flew to Spain at the beginning of the week to secure an unspecified sum needed for the Ford from title sponsor Telefonica, the Spanish telecommunications company.

Spaniard Marc Gene will stay on next year, but the team has not decided on its second driver. Telefonica is known to want a Spanish-speaker. He would most likely come from South America. Argentinian Norberto Fontana is believed to be one name on the list.

BAR dual livery to be dropped

The British American Racing team is poised to drop its controversial dual-tobacco livery next year.

BAR is planning to major on just one of the two tobacco brands that it promoted in '99, according to team insiders.

Lucky Strike will be the most prominent logo on the cars of Jacques Villeneuve and Ricardo Zonta, with 555 taking a much smaller role.

The move comes after BAR again fell foul of the sport's governing body, the FIA, over its livery. Its first choice design, revealed in AUTOSPORT (September 2), has been rejected for the same reason that the design it wanted to race in '99 was. The team fell foul of the rule that demands each team race its cars in liveries that are "substantially the same".

Its plan had been for the same general paintscheme to be used on the two cars, but for each to carry different brand identification. This is said to have been abandoned in favour of a livery in which 555 will have only a small position on the engine cover, as well as on the drivers' overalls.

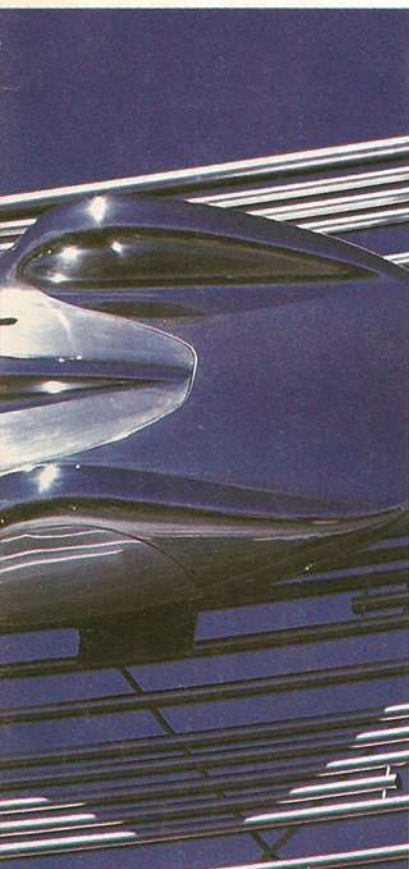
However, 555 will continue to be promoted in F1. It will sponsor the Chinese GP, which could be on the calendar in 2001 (see far right).



Minardi struggled with Ford's customer motor in '99, but the CR-1 engine should prove a big boost



n to Formula 1



AUDI/PORSCHE IN F1

Auto Union – the forerunner of Audi. This giant of the '30s dominated pre-war Formula 1 with national rival Mercedes-Benz.

Porsche – contested 31 Grands Prix with its own car from 1958-'64. American Dan Gurney won the marque's only world championship victory, at the French GP in '62.

TAG-Porsche – teamed up with McLaren to build the seminal engine of the mid-'80s. The tiny V6 twin-turbo was financed by technology company TAG and designed to suit the packaging requirements of McLaren designer John Barnard. It set new standards for power and economy. Won three consecutive world drivers' championships from '84-'86 with Niki Lauda and Alain Prost (twice)

Footwork-Porsche – as big a disaster as the TAG-Porsche was a success. A V12 that had been originally conceived as the marque's next generation sports car engine was overweight and underpowered. The project started with high hopes in '91 but was canned by mid-season.

Silverstone and Haymarket in link

Silverstone Circuits and AUTOSPORT publisher Haymarket Magazines Limited have joined forces to expand their share of the spectator and leisure markets.

The new company will be called Silverstone Haymarket Ltd, according to the circuit's chief executive, Denis Rohan. He said there was considerable scope for expansion in the increasingly sophisticated leisure sector and mapped out the group's opening project, called First Place.

"The new programme will offer clients the chance to visit a range of exciting sporting events," said Rohan, "including major tennis tournaments such as the Stella Artois; golf at St Andrews; racing at Ascot; sailing at Cowes; and equestrian events such as the Burghley horse trials."

First Place will also offer activity-based events focusing on all these sports, as well as working to build on an already formidable position in the driving activities sector.

Eric Verdon-Roe, managing director of Haymarket Magazines, said: "Our relationships with key opinion-forming businesses are the cornerstone for taking First Place to a wider audience. We hope that this will prove to be the first of a number of partnerships between our two companies."

South Korea to revive F1 plans

South Korea is hoping to reignite its hopes of hosting a Grand Prix.

The East Asian country already has plans for a new track to be built, and is hoping to be ready for a Grand Prix in 2002.

Yung Cho Chung, the president of the Korean Automobile Racing Association, told AUTOSPORT that plans were in place for a new track to be built in a location that he would not identify. It is believed to be near the capital, Seoul.

South Korea hosted its first international motor race last weekend. The Formula 3 Grand Prix was held around a new track in the city of Changwon.

Chung said: "We want the F3 race to continue and we already have plans for a circuit that will be suitable for F1. It will not be at Changwon, but we have finished the drawings and are going for approval with the FIA [motorsport's governing body]. We want the GP in 2002 at the same time as the football World Cup."

However, the plans may not win the support of F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone. He is said to still be upset at the failure of its last attempt to run a GP at a new track about 110 miles south-west of Seoul.

This crashed when the country fell into Asia's financial crisis.

China confident for 2001 date

A large-scale injection of funds from the local government could put Zhuhai back on track to host the first Chinese Grand Prix.

The local government in the city near Hong Kong has provided £10 million to bring the facility up to the standards demanded by the FIA, motorsport's governing body.

The track lost its date this year because its facilities did not match F1's exacting specification. There were also communications and logistical problems.

Zhuhai director Joe Lim said the track had looked to the government

when its existing shareholders proved unable to complete the final phase of construction.

"We want to finish everything by February," he said. "Although we have missed out on a slot on the 2000 calendar, we want everything to be ready when the FIA begins to consider the next season."

However, fixture congestion may dash its hopes. There are 17 races on the F1 calendar next year, the maximum provided for in the sport's constitution. Teams would have to agree to more races. They are reluctant to do this.



Lim feels confident that his circuit can earn a place on the Formula 1 schedule in 2001

NEWS INDEX



Head speaks out against crash law



Webber back in single-seaters



New Reynard Champ Car revealed



Wollek: canned Porsche was a flier



Manning takes £60,000 – just



Sainz happy after first Focus test

CLUB AUTOSPORT



Lydden handed racing lifeline



FFord chassis rivals head to head

NEWS IN BRIEF

FORMULA 1

Michael Schumacher's manager, Willi Weber, has won a court case in which a journalist was claiming a cut of the Ferrari star's earnings. A German court ruled against Burkhard Nuppeney, who had claimed he was owed DM5 million (about £1.7m) for helping Schumacher early in his career.

Spain's new Valencia circuit could soon host Grand Prix cars after being approved for testing. Roland Bruynseraede, a safety delegate of the sport's governing body, the FIA, said: "It's a good circuit, and all the drivers I've spoken to really like it." Valencia hosts the Spanish motorcycle GP.

Luciano Burti, runner-up in the British Formula 3 Championship, will be Jaguar Racing's test driver, the team has confirmed.

Former Benetton designer Nick Wirth, who left the team last month, has been tipped to join Toyota's nascent Formula 1 project.

Prost star Jean Alesi finished seventh in last weekend's Rallye di Monza in Italy. It was won by touring car driver Rinaldo Capello. Former F1 driver Ivan Capelli came third. All were driving Subaru Imprezas.

Eddie Jordan raised over £60 million by selling a minority stake in his team to the investment bank Warburg, Pincus, he told the Irish newspaper *The Sunday Independent*. "It's no secret that we got IRE£68 million for a minority stake in Jordan," he said. Previous estimates suggested he sold 40% of his shares for £45m.

A Brazilian model who claims that Ayrton Senna fathered her six-year-old daughter has gone to court to claim financial support from his estate. Marcella Prado is asking for £1,250 a month from Senna's estate, which is reputed to be worth £125 million. Senna's sister Viviane told the Brazilian magazine *Isto e Gente*: "As we have serious doubts, we have to ask for a DNA test, as we want to know the truth without harming the little girl."

Sauber's head of research and development, Andy Tilley, has become the latest engineer to leave the team. He has decided to move back to England.

Midlands businessman and racing car designer Gordon Fowell has died at the age of 62. He worked in partnership with AUTOSPORT contributor Alan Phillips to design two chassis for Chris Amon – the Goral-Tecno E731 with flat-12 Tecno engine, and in 1974 the Cosworth-engined Amon AF1. The cars were technically advanced, but both projects were nevertheless short lived.

Williams boss again

Formula 1 personnel should not be protected from prosecution as a result of serious racing accidents, according to Williams technical director Patrick Head.

The 53-year-old is against the idea of a Europe-wide law automatically protecting F1 employees if a driver or spectator is seriously injured or killed. Head was acquitted last month in the trial arising from the death of Ayrton Senna.

His opinion contradicts that of motorsport boss Max Mosley, who is lobbying the European Union to introduce a 'dangerous sports' law that would stop prosecutions such as the Senna trial.

Head said: "Even within the sport, people carry responsibilities, and I don't see why those should be swept aside. You can argue about the detail of the way it was done, but it was right and proper that there was an investigation into the cause of the [Senna] accident."

Head and his former chief designer Adrian Newey were absolved of blame for the death of Senna in both the initial trial and the prosecution's subsequent appeal, which was thrown out last week. They were accused of the culpable homicide of Senna but the judge ruled that the prosecution had not

proved its case.

Head said: "Maybe a slightly different set of rules have to be applied than if you were, say, designing a bridge for the public, but it is still true that if you are designing a new suspension member to go on a [racing] car, you must take due care of the safety of the driver and spectators."

"I'm not sure there is any real requirement for a special dispensation, only for an allowance to be made for the competitive nature of the sport and the speed with which it moves."

"You can't say there is no accountability because it is a sport."

Other engineers believe an EU-wide law should be introduced because F1 is an experimental arena in which practitioners know the risk. They liken it to the early years of the space programme or jet aeroplane trials.

F1 has learned a lot of hard lessons from Senna's death, Head said. "The reaction has been pretty strong in terms of safety, although there is still a long way to go in circuit safety."

He believes gravel traps do not always do their job properly.

Senna revisited p28



Blohm/LAT

F1 testing ban set for extension

The length of Formula 1's post-season testing ban is likely to be doubled next year.

Top teams are backing a move by F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone to extend the current ban, which forbids testing from the end of the season until the start of December.

The new plan would mean no testing until the new year.

Ecclestone discussed the plan with McLaren, Williams, Jordan and Benetton last week. They are said to have had no immediate objections. It will now be discussed by all teams. The move would save them

at least £500,000 a year, according to one estimate.

Although the idea was presented by Ecclestone it will undoubtedly be supported by Max Mosley, the president of the sport's governing body, the FIA. He has long argued for fewer tests and more races.

However, in the past top teams like McLaren have objected to reduced testing. They have always argued cuts would be a false economy because teams will simply invest millions in simulation machines that will allow them to do the same work in the factory.

April date firmed up for Silverstone

The British Grand Prix organiser has moved to dampen speculation that the race could be switched from its April date next year.

The Motor Sports Association, the sporting arm of the RAC, this week confirmed the April 23 date. The fact that the race would not be moved back to July was revealed in AUTOSPORT (November 25).

There had been moves to swap with Austria on July 16. These fell through when the Austrians realised it would probably be snowing on their track in April.



Blohm/LAT

Racing legend Stirling Moss (right) was presented with the British Racing Drivers' Club Gold Medal last weekend by former team boss Ken Tyrrell (left) at the club's annual dinner. McLaren driver David Coulthard was also present

Hungary secures its long term GP future

Hungary has guaranteed its future on the Formula 1 calendar until 2006 as long as the track is brought up to scratch.

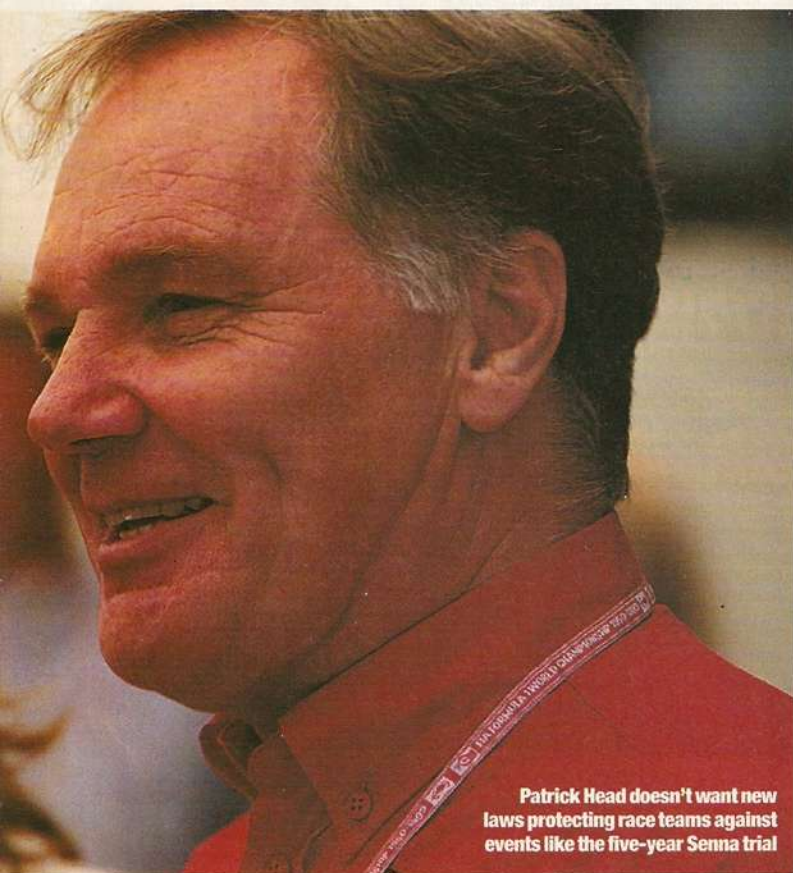
Hungarian Grand Prix officials signed a new contract with F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone on Monday. The deal specified a major overhaul of the Hungaroring track within three to four years.

Ecclestone's requirements for the circuit have not been revealed, but if the Hungarians do not fulfil them they risk losing the race.

The Hungarian event has struggled financially in recent years.



st crash law



Patrick Head doesn't want new laws protecting race teams against events like the five-year Senna trial

Ferrari linked to Schuey change

Michael Schumacher has replaced his press spokesman after problems with his team, Ferrari.

The move comes after Ferrari's dissatisfaction with contradictory statements from Schumacher while he was laid up with a broken leg.

At one point, he tested his Ferrari just a couple of days after saying he was not fit enough to drive the car. It ended with the team ordering him to race the last two Grands Prix against his original intentions.

Ferrari has denied it pressured Schumacher to make the change. "We were disappointed at the

confusion over Michael's return," a spokesman said, "but we did not force Michael to make this change. It is a personal matter for Michael."

Some claim spokesman Heiner Buchinger is a scapegoat for problems caused by Schumacher. Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo wants Ferrari to speak with a homogeneous voice.

Buchinger said: "We have different opinions about press work around Michael. For a long time I had the feeling that I should leave."

He will be replaced next year by German journalist Sabine Kehm.



Formula 3000 drivers Stephane Sarrazin (left) and Franck Montagny starred in the Bercy karting event in Paris last weekend. No Grand Prix drivers ran, most choosing to race Champ Car stars in this weekend's 'Cart explosion' in Cologne

Fosstech to develop 2000 Honda

The builder of Honda's Super Touring Accord has been handed the task of developing next year's car into a championship winner.

Fosstech has taken over winter development from race teams West Surrey Racing and JAS Engineering. Neither team will receive a car until next February.

Honda Motor Europe motorsport manager William de Brackeleer said: "Fosstech wants to deliver a car that has been completely developed by them."

He admitted the race teams are unhappy not to play a part in the 2000 car's development, but he

claimed: "At the end of the day, everybody would like to do the lot, but that way you may end up with three different cars. We have to collaborate. Engineers from WSR and JAS will join the tests to learn and share information."

Fosstech's David Thompson is father of Honda's lead British Touring Car Championship driver James. He said: "A lot of testing has already been undertaken. The first [2000] prototype will be running before January 1."

"We are not going to rest on our laurels. We must make the chassis as good as the engine," he added.

Pinkney makes BTCC return

The ADR Motorsport team will run series returnee David Pinkney's Vauxhall Vectra in next year's British Touring Car Championship.

This year's winner of the Independents' title has done a deal to run the 1999-spec car Pinkney receives for winning the Vectra SRI one-make series this year.

ADR boss Alan Muggleston said: "We helped look after Dave's SRI this year. We have good relations with Vauxhall and Triple Eight [from running a Vectra in 1999], so it made sense. Dave has accepted the car from Vauxhall and wants us to run it."

Muggleston said he was still planning to upgrade his team to a two-car squad for 2000.

"We want to run a second car, but it is still open as to what and how." He said a second Vectra was only one possibility among others.

Muggleston conceded that 1999 Independents' champion Mark Blair was far from certain to stay with the team for a second year.

"Mark looks likely to go to Arena if they get a competitive car. We'd be his second choice."

The Pinkney deal means ADR has shelved plans to move over to the SportsRacing World Cup next year.



Former British Touring Car Championship racers Mark Lemmer (pictured) and Simon Harrison tested a works Honda Accord at Brands Hatch last week. NSCC champion Harrison raved: "The new-shape Accord is really something else."

Trulli tipped as surprise of 2000

Jarno Trulli will be the surprise of the 2000 Formula 1 season, says his new team boss Eddie Jordan.

Trulli's new team mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen emerged as the driver of the year in 1999 - and Jordan predicts that the Italian will make just as big an impact.

"Trulli will be awesome," he said. "He will be as big a surprise as Heinz-Harald Frentzen was this year. Minardi and Prost [Trulli's two former teams] have done a great job with him, but you will see such a different person next year. He will push Frentzen hard, and that will be good for the team."

Jordan believes Frentzen will push McLaren and Ferrari as a regular contender for victory.

"There's no doubting his speed and style, and he's good for Jordan," the team boss said. "He can get pole and win races. I hope he'll move up another gear and be a regular contender for wins."

Jordan also predicted his team would retain its place in the top three of the constructors' championship and may even break into the top two.

Trulli will have his first taste of the Jordan team when he starts testing in Jerez, Spain, this week.



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Webber signs for European

Mark Webber is coming back to single-seaters with the European Formula 3000 squad after being absent for two seasons.

The former Mercedes sportscar star signed up for a season in the F3000 International Championship after impressing in testing at Jerez with the team last week.

European boss Paul Stoddart said: "Mark was always our first choice for a driver. The deal is done - subject only to final sponsorship arrangements."

Webber, 23, came fourth in the

Spanish test in one of European's Lola-Zytek T99/50s after topping the times on the opening day.

Stoddart said: "This was the first time that we have given him a proper run with new tyres and all the trimmings. He responded brilliantly. Mark is going to impress quite a few people next year. He'll be a regular podium finisher."

Webber said: "I've driven the car a few times and things have got better every



Webber

time. I've got to grips with the car now. It's been quite difficult after racing a sportscar.

"I've had a long lay-off from racing and am really keen to race for European. I now feel absolutely ready for F3000."

Webber has not competed since narrowly missing out on the FIA GT Championship with Mercedes at the end of 1998. This year, he was also part of the Three Pointed Star's Le Mans squad. He didn't start the race after his car flipped during qualifying and then in the warm-up.

His links with Mercedes have now been severed.

Tuero eyes return to single-seater racing

Esteban Tuero could launch a single-seater comeback a year after turning his back on Formula 1.

The former Minardi driver tested a Formula 3000 Lola for Durango at Barcelona last week.

A spokeswoman for the Italian squad said: "It was just a test and nothing more at this time. We know, however, that Esteban would like to race again in Europe."

Tuero has raced touring cars in his Argentinian homeland since saying he would never race in F1 again after a disappointing season last year.

Couto to stay with Prost for extra year

Andre Couto will stay with Alain Prost's Formula 3000 team for a second season in 2000.

The Macau man has signed up for his third year in the F3000 International Championship after an encouraging first season with the French team in 1999.

A road accident forced him to miss one race and cope with a hand injury in several others.

A Prost spokesman said: "Despite the accident, Andre showed great promise. He gave us our first podium finish [at Barcelona] and we have great confidence in his ability."

The former sportscar racer topped the times on the opening day at Jerez in a Lola-Zytek



Junqueira tops F3000 test to become title favourite

Bruno Junqueira underlined his status as favourite for next year's Formula 3000 International Championship after topping the test times in Barcelona last week.

The Brazilian was more than half a second clear of his nearest rival at Barcelona in his Williams-affiliated Petrolbras Junior team.

Junqueira's test best of 1m30.900s was described by team boss Paul Jackson as a "stunning lap, probably as fast as it was possible to go. Bruno was on absolutely peak form. It was the last run he'll get this year, and it was

good to finish on a high."

Only three other drivers managed to dip under the 1m32s barrier. Stephane Sarrazin was second fastest with the West squad, while David Saelens (Super Nova) and Mark Webber (European) were third and fourth.

Belgian Saelens said: "I could have got much closer to Bruno if I hadn't made a small mistake."

Justin Wilson was fastest of nine Britons among the 41 drivers at the test. He was in a Super Nova Lola.

"I didn't really get a good solid run on new tyres, but it was

interesting," said the 21-year-old, who also drove for Lukoil Arden.

Other Britons were Dino Morelli (22nd best with Coloni), Richard Lyons (25th, Coloni), Darren Turner (26th, Astromega), Derek Hayes (28th, Fortec), Ben Collins (38th, Nordic) and Damien Faulkner (41st, Lukoil Arden).

Nordic boss Derek Mower said: "Ben settled in far better than his time suggests. The conditions were very tricky for guys new to the formula or the circuit. There was lots of traffic and the sessions were constantly stopped by red flags."

BARCELONA TIMES

1 Bruno Junqueira (Petrobras)	1m30.900s
2 Stephane Sarrazin (West)	1m31.544s
3 David Saelens (Super Nova)	1m31.748s
4 Mark Webber (European)	1m31.994s
5 Tomas Enge (West)	1m32.125s
6 Jeffrey van Hooydonk (ORECA)	1m32.280s
7 Enrique Bernoldi (Red Bull)	1m32.344s
8 Justin Wilson (Super Nova)	1m32.431s
9 Soheil Ayari (ORECA)	1m32.535s
10 Tomas Scheckter (European)	1m32.541s
11 Andrea Piccini (KJR)	1m32.748s
12 Mario Haberfeld (Fortec)	1m32.893s
13 Jaime Melo (Petrobras)	1m32.983s
14 Christian Albers (Red Bull)	1m33.215s
15 Kristian Kolby (WRT/Rafanelli)	1m33.293s
16 Marc Goossens (Gauloises)	1m32.364s



Damien Faulkner (top) and Richard Lyons were among the Brits in Spain



Junqueira raced to the top of the times in the Barcelona test last week

New Reynard Champ Car re

Dominant Champ Car marque Reynard has delivered the first of its new chassis to the PacWest team so it can begin its development programme for next season.

The Reynard 2KI will run for the first time today (Thursday) at the Putnam Park road course in PacWest's home town of Indianapolis. The outfit's newly signed Champ Car test driver, Tony Renna, is scheduled to drive.

This is the second year that the Mercedes-powered squad has been chosen to take the leading role in developing Reynard's new car. It has already begun work on a new

gearbox, which has completed over 1200 miles since August.

PacWest's vice-president, John Anderson, said: "We're very excited to see the 2KI on the shop floor, especially after being involved in the development of the gearbox."

"It looks like it is a major departure from previous Reynards and we're looking forward to some early testing."

The car is very different to its predecessor in its appearance, with heavily revised aerodynamics.

Reynard North America's technical director, Bruce Ashmore, said: "We are very excited about the new aerodynamic package and we are pleased to be involved with PacWest again."

The team's experienced Brazilian, Mauricio Gugelmin, will begin testing this month. He is scheduled to run at Sebring on December 9 and 10 and again on December 20 and 21.

Britain's Mark Blundell will drive the car for the first time on January 10 and 11, also at Sebring. He had a seat fitting on Monday.

"There is no substitute for testing," said Blundell, "and being the first team to receive the new chassis is a bonus. The whole team is hungry to win and we have the package to return to victory lane."



Blundell is fitted for his Reynard 2KI seat



High hopes for new G-Force IRL chassis

The British G-Force marque has unveiled the car it hopes will take it back to the top in the Indy Racing League next year.

The all-new 05-01 chassis has been delivered to the team put in charge of developing the car, Treadway Racing.

The new machine was due for its first major test at the Phoenix oval as AUTOSPORT closed for press.

Last year, Swede Kenny Brack switched to a G-Force chassis late in the season to take the IRL title for Indy legend AJ Foyt's team. This

year, Team Menard's Greg Ray took the championship driving a Dallara.

G-Force director James Morton said: "We're really excited about this car. The rules are pretty tight but this is the sum of a number of refinements. We've been at it for three years in the IRL and we have learnt a lot."

Treadway's chief engineer, Jeff Britton, is impressed by the car's appearance. "The car's overall look is very sexy," he said. "The aerodynamic numbers and the carbonfibre work is G-Force's best

to date. Everyone on the team is looking forward to how it performs on such a challenging track."

This year's top rookie at the Indianapolis 500, Robby McGehee, will drive the car in the Phoenix test. "This is a great opportunity for me," he said.

The car will be run back-to-back with the '99 version, while the new 3.5-litre engine will be fitted. G-Force has sold 11 of the cars so far.

IRL review p77



G-Force has high hopes of being the top IRL team again with the 05-01 chassis

Weber reopens defunct F3 team

The team which helped launch Michael Schumacher on the road to Formula 1 is being reformed for an attack on next year's EURO-C series.

Championship founder Willi Weber is reopening WTS, five years after he shut down the German Formula 3 title-winning team.

Next season he will run F3 graduates Timo Scheider and Steffen Widmann in the one-make series for the V8-engined cars.

He said: "I feel it is my responsibility to let some promising junior drivers race in the series."

Mass plans return to racing in Euroc series

Former Grand Prix winner Jochen Mass will return to racing at the age of 53 in the new Euroc one-make Roadster series.

The former World Sports-Prototype champion is set to contest the full season in a pan-European championship in 2000.

Mass compared his comeback to that of fellow German Klaus Ludwig in the revived DTM tin-top series.

"If it's good enough for Klaus it's good enough for me," said Mass.

The German stopped racing in 1991, although he made a one-off return at Le Mans in '95.



vealed



The 2000 model features heavily revised aerodynamics as well as a new gearbox

Praise for Kyalami organisers

The decision to start last weekend's SportsRacing World Cup finale at Kyalami on a flooded track was given near unanimous support by the teams and drivers.

A torrential rain storm hit the circuit just before the race was due to start, but the teams decided that a shortened race could begin behind the safety car. The event began at 4.30pm with just enough time to complete 90 minutes of racing before darkness fell on the South African track.

Race winner Jean-Marc Gounon said: "The organisers were very clever and very sensible."

Redman-Bright team boss John Bright said: "The situation was handled very well and [series boss] John Mangoletsi deserves a pat on the back."

Pole winner Gounon remained in radio contact with the race officials through DAMS team boss Jean-Paul Driot throughout the opening laps. When the driver considered the track was dry enough to begin racing, the safety car was brought in after just under 15 minutes.

Mangoletsi said: "The situation looked unsalvageable, but by taking one step at a time, we never exposed the drivers to danger."

CART retires Moore's number from racing

Greg Moore's car number has been retired from Champ Car racing as a mark of respect for the Canadian, who was killed at this year's California 500 at Fontana.

Moore ran with number 99 from his days racing karts up to his final season with Forsythe Racing. The decision to retire the number was made by the team owners.

Andrew Craig, boss of series organiser CART, said: "It seems only proper that we assure him a permanent legacy by retiring the number, which became a symbol for his success."

Keen gets Lights test in California

Formula Palmer Audi driver Justin Keen tested an Indy Lights car for the first time last week.

The 25-year-old ran at the Californian Button Willow road course with top team Dorricott Racing. He was engineered by four-time Indy 500 winner Rick Mears. "This was something I needed to do," he said. "I wanted to see how I coped with 450bhp."

Another Briton, Dan Wheldon, tested a Swift Toyota Atlantic car run by PPI Motorsport last week. The test was a prize for winning the US Formula 2000 title.

Merc driver to take step down in class

Out-going Mercedes factory driver Christophe Bouchut is stepping down to the new baby class of the FIA GT Championship.

The former Le Mans and Daytona winner will drive a Porsche 911 GT3-R for the Larbre sportscar



Bouchut

squad after not being retained by Merc for its attack on the new DTM tin-top series.

Bouchut, 33, said he signed for the French team after Merc broke off negotiations to extend his contract in October.

"By then, many drives had gone. I talked with Lister [for which he drove in 1996], but it was too late. Larbre was the only professional team I had a good contact with."

Former Larbre driver Bouchut said he had no qualms about driving in the new class for GT3-type cars, as long as it was with a top team.

"After driving for Mercedes for two years it's not great to drive a GT3, but I'll still be racing for a title."

His regular partner will be Larbre regular Patrice Goueslard. They will make their debuts in the GT3-R in February's Daytona 24 Hours.

Bouchut is also aiming to drive an open-top prototype at Le Mans and in the SportsRacing World Cup.

No GT series ban for factories

FIA GT Championship boss Stephane Ratel has denied that factory teams will be barred from the series starting line-up next year.

The Frenchman said there was no possibility of such a move in "a high-level championship organised by the FIA".

He continued: "You can't stop manufacturers from entering an FIA series. I hope they will support the championship, but I advocate a different approach."

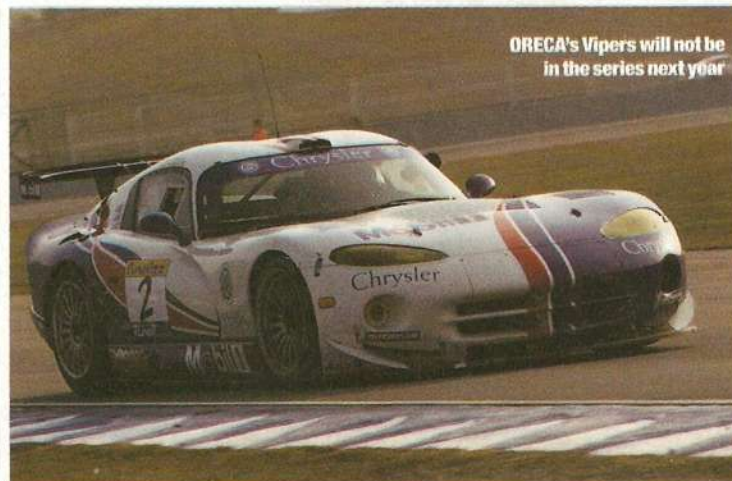
"Rather than a factory entering two cars and maybe dominating, it should give support to a number of customer teams. That could mean

the loan of a driver or support with engines and parts."

Porsche privateer Konrad Motorsport believes factories should be banned from the series, which has lost its only true works team with the withdrawal of the ORECA Chrysler squad for 2000.

However, the rival Freisinger outfit put forward the opposite viewpoint. Team boss Manfred Freisinger said: "The inclusion of factory teams makes any championship more interesting."

FIA GT report p83



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Major names line up for ASI 2000

Among the line-up of exhibitors at Autosport International 2000 are a number of motorsport's foremost teams and sponsors.

Marlboro has long been associated with motorsport, in recent years as sponsors of Ferrari team. Its stand will include the popular Grand Prix Action, which offers visitors the chance to try a variety of hands-on activities. In addition you can see one of the stunning Ferraris that so nearly clinched the F1 world championship this year.

Silverstone Circuits will once again run the popular kart track, situated in Hall 11, in addition to having its own stand. In addition, more details will be announced about the new PowerTour race package, which includes the prestigious British F3 series.

Of the major motor manufacturers, Mitsubishi Motors, will be present with a selection of mouth-watering machinery. Their world rally star, Tommi Makinen, has just clinched a record-breaking four consecutive drivers' titles and is expected to make an appearance at some time before he head to Monte Carlo.

The exciting Rockingham Motor Speedway, near Corby, is expected to open late next year. As part of the build-up to that, the organisers have a stand which will feature all-American racing action in the form of a NASCAR and Forsythe Champ Car.

Team Brask, one of the fastest growing customer preparation teams, runs cars in Eurocars, Legends, Formula Eurofirsts, Renault Spiders and Pick-ups and as part of their growing commitment to support young up-and-coming talent. It also assisted in the prize drive for the Formula Palmer Audi Winterseries. It expects to announce its new driver line-up at the show.

There is still limited stand space and sponsorship opportunities left. For further information contact Chris Speller on 0181 307 2341 or e-mail: chris.speller@haynet.com.

Adult entry on Saturday or Sunday costs £12.50 (concessions £9.50, under-fives free). Entry to the AUTOSPORT Thunderdrome is £9 on the day, £6 in advance (entry is not recommended for under-fives). Call the ticket hotline now on 0121 767 4747 to book your tickets. For further information you can log on to www.autosport-show.com

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ALMS won't come to Britain

The American Le Mans Series will not come to Britain next year thanks to the switch of the British Grand Prix to April.

Silverstone had been pencilled in for the first European ALMS fixture on May 7. That date is no longer viable because it falls only two weeks after Britain's Formula 1 round. Furthermore, the second European ALMS date, fixed for July 9, is too close to the Coy's Festival historic meeting.

Silverstone chief executive Denys Rohan said: "The timing doesn't work and we have other commitments. But if they sort the calendar for 2001, we would consider it. I still like the idea."

Stephane Ratel, co-ordinator of the overseas ALMS races, said: "We've been very unlucky with Silverstone. The new F1 calendar has made the race impossible."

The Nurburgring has now moved into the frame to take over the second European round alongside Spa-Francorchamps, which looks certain to take the May date.

"The idea of [series boss] Don Panoz was to recreate the famous 1000km sportscar events of the past. It's no secret that we are talking to Spa and the 'Ring," said Ratel.

Ratel said an announcement of the European dates could be as early as "a few days". That could coincide with the confirmation as



The FIA GT series will be the only international sportscar event at Silverstone next year

Sepang in Malaysia as the Asian fixture, most likely in December.

Ratel said he was working on bringing an "absolute minimum"

of 15 cars over from American for the May and July races. He expects teams based in Europe to provide about 20 cars for the events.

Konrad tempts Lamborghini

Sportscar stalwart Franz Konrad is trying to tempt Lamborghini to run a semi-factory team in next year's FIA GT Championship.

The Austrian team owner has admitted that he is taking to the Audi-owned marque about developing its new lightweight Diablo GT for the series.

"I have explained my ideas and they

are interested, but I would need the help of the factory."

The team boss said he had approached Lamborghini because of inactivity at Porsche, which is not developing a successor to the 911 GT2 in the short term.

Konrad is also looking at Chrysler's Vipers to replace his fleet of Porsches, possibly for the US Grand-Am series.



The Diablo could be the car for Konrad

Team opts for Lola in favour of Panoz

Konrad has opted for Lola chassis ahead of Panoz Roadsters for next year's SportsRacing World Cup.

Team boss Franz Konrad has decided to stick with the British chassis because Panoz has been unable to tell him if he can have two of its cars for next year.

Konrad has ordered one new B2K/10 and will order a second if he can sell his existing B98/10.

The team will continue to use the Ford V8s it campaigned in 1999.

ORECA's two-car Daytona assault

The ORECA Viper squad looks set to mount a two-car assault on February's Daytona 24 Hours.

The factory Chrysler team began preparations for an all-out assault on the race with a two-day test late last month. The official line, however, is that a Daytona campaign is only "likely".

ORECA sporting director Pierre Dieudonne said: "We're looking into it. If we go, it won't be like this year. We would go with a minimum of two cars."

Last year, Chrysler made a late call to enter the race with one car.



Reigning champions Vincenzo Sospiri (holding cup) and Emmanuel Collard clinched the SportsRacing World Cup title at Kyalami last weekend. The pair finished fourth in the race, despite an injury to Sospiri's shoulder.

NEWS IN BRIEF

TOURING CARS

Honda Motor Europe motorsport manager William de Braekeleer tried an Accord touring car at Brands Hatch last week. His outing ended after three laps, in the Druids gravel trap. He joked: "My right foot was better than my left!"

CHAMP CARS

South American Formula 3

Champion Hoover Orsi will test a Della Penna team Swift-Toyota 010i at Sebring next week. The test at the Florida track is his prize for winning the championship. Also taking part in the test will be four-time SudAm champ Gabriel Furlan who is trying to raise the finance for Champ Cars next season.

FORMULA 3000

Injured F3000 driver Jason Watt has left hospital in Copenhagen where he had been since the motorcycle accident in October that left him paralysed from the waist down. The Dane has now moved to a rehabilitation centre for further treatment.

British Formula 3 race winner Kristian Kolby tested for the Italian World Racing team at Barcelona last week.

Euroseries Champion Tomas Scheckter could line-up alongside Mark Webber at European Formula. The South African tested for the team at Barcelona last week. Team boss Paul Stoddard said it would be a "risk for both sides" if the 19-year-old was to make the jump for next year.

INTERNATIONAL

Outgoing Champ Car racer Robby Gordon's team will join forces with the Irvan-Simo squad for the driver's return to the NASCAR Winston Cup next year. The Californian is scheduled to race a Ford Taurus.

Former Le Mans winner and Formula 1 driver Gijs van Lennep has been voted Dutch racing driver of the century. He beat sportsstar star Jan Lammers and double Indy 500 victor Arie Luyendyk in the vote by motorsport journalists.

German tin-top veteran Klaus Niedzwiedz will make a comeback in the Euroc one-make series next year. Also aiming to take part in the series are former Italian touring car driver Tamara Vidali and ex-Formula 3000 racer Alex Muller.

SPORTSCARS

Porsche Supercup star Sascha Maassen was a late stand-in at the Konrad team in last weekend's FIA GT Championship round in China. The German drove the team's Porsche 911 GT2 in place of Alfrid Heger, who had to stand down for business reasons.

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Canned Porsche was a flier, claims Wollek

Porsche's still-born Le Mans racer for 2000 has been labelled "a flier" by factory driver Bob Wollek.

The veteran said he knew straight away that the new V10-engined sports racer had "amazing potential" after he and fellow star Allan McNish gave it a brief shakedown at the German manufacturer's Weissach test track early in November.

The multiple Daytona 24 Hours winner said: "You can't even begin to compare it to the 911 GT1-98 [which finished one-two at Le Mans in 1998].

"It is lower, lighter and has better weight distribution than the old chassis. The new V10 is a lot lighter

compared with the previous car's turbo engine, but I'm not going to tell you by how much."

Wollek also said the V10 was a big improvement over Porsche's long-serving flat-six twin-turbo unit. "The engine had good power and good torque, and there is definitely a lot more to come," he explained.

The Frenchman expressed regret that the V10 would not race.

"I'm disappointed that

the car won't be there, but I've known for a long time that I will never win Le Mans," said Wollek, who has failed to add the

French classic to his roster of big sportscar wins.

Britain's McNish also said he could feel the car's potential even in the handful of laps he did.

"Porsche had thought about everything on the new car," he said.

The marque's planned return to Le Mans after a year's sabbatical was cancelled early last week. It said it is concentrating its resources on a new sports utility road car.

● Hopes that Porsche could start work shortly on a successor to the 911 GT2 appear to be fading. A car with the looks of a turbo 996 and a new V8-powered chassis have been considered. A spokesman said: "Up to now there are no firm plans for a GT2."



AUTOSPORT broke the Porsche news last week



Wollek (head bowed) showed his emotions after finishing second in the '98 Le Mans

VETERAN IN LE MANS RETURN

Bob Wollek is aiming to return to Le Mans for his 30th attempt on the 24 Hours next year, despite the cancellation of the V10 car.

The 56-year-old said: "It would be nice to say I've done it 30 times. It would look a bit stupid if I only did it 29 times. I don't see why I should not to go to Le Mans again next year."

The Porsche-contracted driver said it was most likely he would race one of the German manufacturer's 911 GT3-Rs for a customer team in the 2000 event.

Wollek said he had no immediate plans for retirement.

"There's no reason why I should retire. I enjoy racing, being at the tracks, the travelling, everything to do with motorsport. As long as people think I'm fast enough and give me drives, I will continue."

This season, he has driven in the FIA GT Championship for the Konrad and Freisinger Porsche teams. With the latter, he finished a competitive fourth in Sunday's series finale at Zhuhai, China.

Coelho considers return to Brazil

Brazilian Formula 3 racer Aluizio Coelho could return to his home country for next season.

He won the 1998 British Formula Renault series, but had a much harder time in F3 this year with Promatecme UK. He has now been

targeted by Brazilian squad Amir Nasr Racing for 2000.

Coelho is returning to South America this month and will begin testing for ANR in January as it gears up for the South American



Coelho

championship's new rules, which for the first time allow contemporary chassis.

"It's becoming difficult to stay in England," admitted Coelho. "Amir is doing a very good job. He's a good team owner and engineer and I trust him. One thing I know is that, for now, this is the best deal."

However, the driver is still talking to teams with a view to racing in British F3. "I would like to go to Manor Motorsport [the team with which he won the Renault title], but the budget is very difficult."

If he does return home, he will line up at ANR alongside ex-Renault rival Vitor Meira, who has signed for a second year with the team.

US F3 to feature on Indy GP schedule

A round of the inaugural United States Formula 3 Championship will take place in Indy on the same weekend as the US Grand Prix.

The race will be run on September 22 at the Indianapolis Raceway Park road course rather than at the new Formula 1 circuit.

Another round is scheduled in Los Angeles on the same weekend as the California 500 in the city.

Two teams have also signed up for the series. Ex-Formula 1 driver Teddy Pilette's squad and an outfit run by an ancestor of the Dusenbergs are confirmed.

Ortelli linked to drive in Lister for Daytona

Former Le Mans winner Stephane Ortelli could race a Lister Storm in February's Daytona 24 Hours.

The Frenchman is in talks with the Cirtek team, which has entered one of the Jaguar-engined GT cars in the Florida endurance.

Boss Rob Schirle said: "We've spoken to Stephane and he's definitely interested. The lead driver will be either Ortelli or [Lister works driver] Julian Bailey."

Squad backer Dave Warnock will also drive, while GT regulars Jamie Campbell-Walter and Robert Nearn are possibles.

Jarier to use Viper in GT title defence

Former Grand Prix driver Jean-Pierre Jarier is switching from a Porsche to a Chrysler Viper for the defence of his French GT crown.

The 53-year-old is lined up to race a new Viper GTS-R with a team run by Chrysler factory driver Dominique Dupuy.

The veteran will share the car with gentleman racer Francois Lafon, while Dupuy will race an ex-factory 1999 car with another amateur, Francois Fiat.

Jarier will also contest the Le Mans 24 Hours and selected FIA GT rounds in the machine.

Top Supercup team in plan to build 'super-996'

Three-time Porsche Supercup champion team Manthey Racing is looking to build its own twin-turbo 996-shape Porsche special.

The German squad is about to release a rebodied roadgoing 911 called the GT-MR. This car will also be built for racing and could be available in turbocharged form for GT2-type competition.

Team boss Olaf Manthey said: "We'll have to talk to Porsche about this, but it's possible."

A normally-aspirated GT-MR won its class in Sunday's FIA GT Championship finale at Zhuhai.



The Manthey car at Zhuhai featured revised bodywork as well as a new rear air dam

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPORTSCARS

FIA GT Champion Karl Wendlinger looks certain to stay with the ORECA squad for next season, despite rumours that he could race in the new EUROCC series. "EUROCC was a possibility, but the discussions I had didn't lead anywhere," said the Austrian. A deal with ORECA was "most likely", he explained.

The Zhuhai track in China could retain its round of the FIA GT Championship, which was due to stay in Europe next year. Series boss Stephane Ratel said: "Zhuhai has expressed interest in having a race, but it could only happen with the consent of the teams."

Chamberlain Chrysler Viper GTS-R driver Christian Glaser looks set to sign up with the German Kremer squad for next season's SportsRacing World Cup. The German was due to test the team's Lola-Ford B98/10 at Kyalami in South Africa this week. His Chamberlain team mate, Christian Vann, had been linked with the team but now looks likely to remain in the FIA GT Championship.

Chamberlain, meanwhile, could run three Vipers in next year's Le Mans 24 Hours. The team already has a guaranteed entry to the classic by virtue of winning its class in last month's Fuji 1000Km under the Team Goh banner.

Double SportsRacing World Cup championship team JB Competition will stick with Ferrari's 333SP for the defence of its crown. BMS Scuderia Italia will also continue to use the ageing Maranello chassis.

The Conrero team is aiming to run either one or two Judd-powered Riley & Scotts in next year's SportsRacing World Cup. The Italian squad has split with Target 24, which is setting up its own team infrastructure for next season.

Italian constructor Tampolli is planning a run of five of its title-winning SportsRacing Lights chassis for next year.

Fred Goddard Racing is aiming to run a two-car Lights team in the SportsRacing World Cup next year. Earl Goddard, son of the team owner, made his series debut at Kyalami, South Africa, last week in a Tampolli-Alfa Romeo.

Ex-Formula 1 driver Arturo Mezario was distraught to find that he had lost one of his trademark Marlboro-badged stetsons. The lost item dated back to the mid-'70s.

Roock is aiming to run two Porsche 911 GT3-Rs in next year's American Le Mans Series alongside at least one 911 GT2.

Manning almost blo

Korean Grand Prix winner Darren Manning admitted on Sunday that he nearly threw away his £60,000 cash prize for winning all four rounds in Korea and Macau.

The TOM'S driver wanted to celebrate his achievement with both hands out of the cockpit as he came to the finish of the second heat at the Changwong circuit.

As he lifted both arms out of his cockpit, he caught sight of rival Jensen Button in the corner of his eye and had to quickly put the car into fourth gear to guarantee the win. The margin was just 0.035s.

"When you get to the last corner

of a two-part race, you think it's all over," said Manning. "I thought I would be able to leave the car in third gear all the way down the straight, but I looked to my side and saw Jensen coming up fast."

The Promatecme driver could not believe that Manning was not powering across the line. "It was a bit annoying because I wasn't pushing going around the final corner and then I saw him lifting off," he said. "I then floored it and as I got alongside him my engine was still pulling. I thought I had to beat him here, because it would have been so funny to see £60,000 go down the drain just like that."

PIT-LANE CLASH

Korean Grand Prix winner Darren Manning accused rival Julien Beltoise of dangerous driving on Saturday after the pair clashed on the circuit and in the pit lane during qualifying.

Manning lost his temper with the Frenchman after he was blocked at the Changwong circuit's chicane. The TOM'S driver tapped the back of Beltoise's car as they entered the

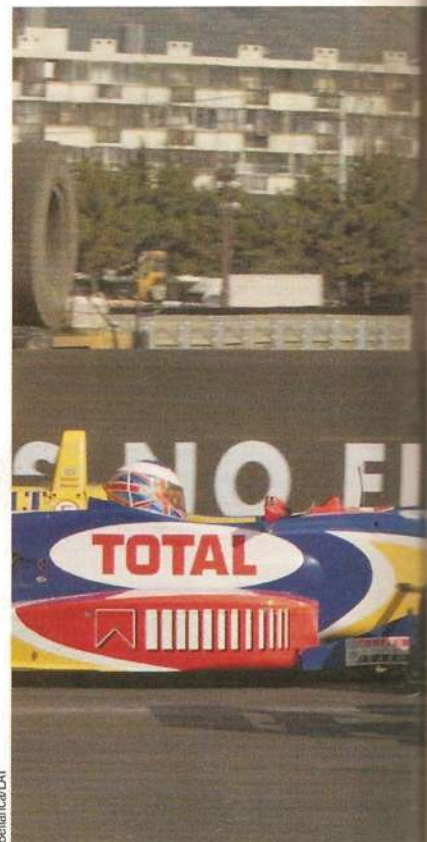


Manning

pits, then argued with his rival out of the car.

"I exited the corner before the straight and could see Beltoise was quite a distance ahead," said Manning. "But as we approached the chicane he came to a virtual standstill. I nearly crashed into the tyres."

Beltoise seemed unfazed. "He hit me as we came into the pits, but it's no big deal."



Beltoise/LAT

Mixed reactions over Korean track

The new Changwong circuit in South Korea was given a mixed reaction by Formula 3 drivers after hosting the country's first international race last Sunday.

The track was said to be a good design but proved too difficult to overtake on, particularly after a late modification. A chicane was added ahead of the tight penultimate corner, which slowed the cars down before a tyre barrier narrowed the track from three lanes to just one.

"The track was okay, but it's a bit tight and twisty," said Andrew Kirkaldy. "That is a big problem

because it's not possible to race. There were no places to overtake. The only way you can get past someone is if they make a mistake."

Indian Narain Karthikeyan, who went out in a multiple pile-up, disliked the slow sections. "It's too Mickey Mouse," said the Stewart Racing driver. "There are too many low gear corners."

Briton Jensen Button was more accommodating. "It is good, very demanding," he said. "I think if we had done all the laps without the safety car it would have been very tiring. Unfortunately, there are no natural overtaking points."



Beltoise/LAT

The circuit was not unanimously liked by the F3 field. Most cited a lack of passing places

Drivers angry at GP pile-up

Leading Formula 3 drivers criticised officials at the Korean Grand Prix, saying their tardiness in bringing out the red flags after an accident caused more crashes.

A shunt between Narain Karthikeyan, Ryo Fukuda and Tsugio Matsuda had all but blocked the Changwong track at the start of the back straight. With waved yellow flags showing, three other cars piled into the wreckage and forced the race to be stopped.

German Formula 3 champion Christijan Albers lost the most when he crashed out of fourth place. "It should have been red-flagged immediately because there was more than one car involved," said the Dutchman.

Karthikeyan's Stewart Racing team-mate, Luciano Burti, spun across the track and into the wreckage. "There were waved yellows when I approached the corner, but it seemed like nothing major. I thought there was maybe one car in the wall," claimed the Brazilian. "I slowed down a bit, turned in at probably 80mph, and saw that the track was blocked. I know the cars must have been there for a long time because the drivers were already out, and it was a big mistake for the officials not to put the red flags out."



ows big prize



Button (left) chased Manning hard throughout and almost inherited the win

Davies in the frame for RC seat

Matt Davies is in the frame to race with the RC Motorsport Benetton Junior Team next year after his first race with the outfit at the Korean Formula 3 Grand Prix last weekend.

The Briton was draughted in as a last-minute replacement for injured Swiss driver Gabriele Varano.

The Englishman injured his left leg in a crash during qualifying, but the team were said to be impressed with his overall pace. He finished 12th on aggregate after gearbox problems slowed him in the first heat.



Davies

"This weekend was a chance for them to see what I could do and for me to see what they could do," said Davies. "They are a good team, they work extremely fast and they should go well in Britain."

Davies raced for Fortec Motorsport during his first F3 season in the British championship this year, partnering Dane Kristian Kolby. However, the ex-French Formula Ford and Formula Renault champion failed to win a race, despite showing a strong turn of speed.



Davies shone on the Korean track for RC and could drive for the team in the 2000 season

NEXT WEEK

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Autosport awards

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Sainz sharpens Focus for

Carlos Sainz says he sensed a "new commitment" at Ford, as he entered his first full week of testing next year's Focus World Rally Car.

The Spaniard got behind the wheel of his 2000 mount for the first time at the squad's Cumbrian headquarters last Friday. Although he described the run as a "drive rather than a test", Colin McRae's new team mate came away encouraged by the basic package, and the determination of key personnel.

"I didn't have much contact with the car," he said, "but everything felt good. I discovered enough to realise that it's well balanced and seems a very comfortable car to drive. Certainly you can feel it's bigger. The Toyota seemed like a go-kart compared to the Focus."

Norwegian Petter Solberg, who drove the Focus in question on the Rally Great Britain, sat alongside Sainz to aid his acclimatisation.

The double world champion's next action will come in the second half of this week, when he tries the car at a range of asphalt test venues near Barcelona.

"We will know much more after I drive later this week," said Sainz. "I was just trying seat belts in England, basically."

Ford's extensive new premises are due to open before the end of this year, highlighting the sort of commitment that the Spaniard says separates the team now from the one he left in 1996.

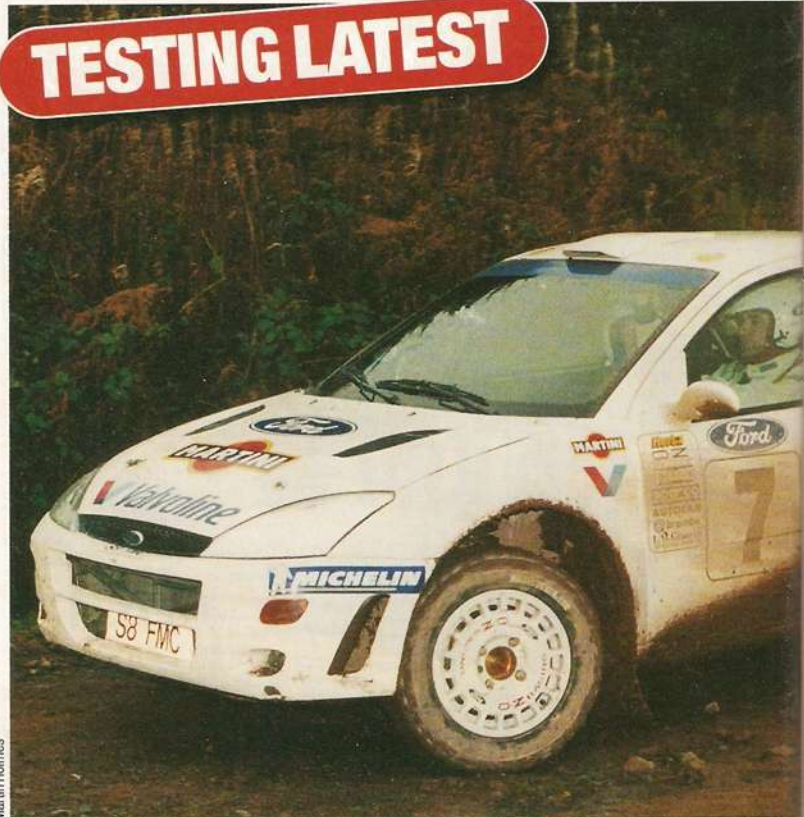
"There is much more commitment from Ford now," claimed the driver. "From Ford, from Malcolm (Wilson), from Martin (Whitaker), everybody. That's more important to me."

"I know the people there very well and it's going to be hard for everybody, including myself. It is difficult to win world championship rallies these days, but already I know that Colin and I will be ready to fight for victories."



Ford men Sainz, Wilson and Whitaker

TESTING LATEST



Martin Holmes



Didier Auriol discusses first impressions of the SEAT with chief engineer Benoît Bagur

Auriol: engine tweaks w

Didier Auriol reckons that engine improvements will boost SEAT's hopes of winning its first world championship rally next season.

The Frenchman racked up his first miles in the Cordoba WRC on Monday. The test took place at Barcelona after a planned test near Torsby, Sweden, was cancelled due to lack of snow.

"The power is good," said Auriol, "but we need to improve the torque. It is an easy car to drive aggressively on gravel, but it's still too early to say very much."

SEAT's four-wheel-drive machine has struggled on slippery surfaces this year, although the lack of a top-line

driver made it hard to gauge potential.

Auriol is satisfied that the car has the ability to win. "I'm pleased with what I've seen," he said. "The Cordoba has a lot of potential on gravel. It can certainly be a winner and I'm very motivated for next year."

"To contribute to the team's and car's development is a real challenge that stimulates me. The people here are passionate. But there are also some French people with whom it is easy for me to come to an understanding. That has not always been the case in the past."

SEAT was desperate to land the services of a former world champion,

Evans ready for Ibiza fun at Italian sprint

Former British Rally Champion Gwyndaf Evans will take part in the Bologna Rallysprint next week.

The 40-year-old SEAT driver will be aiming for a repeat of his victory last year, again at the wheel of an Astra Team-run Ibiza kit car.

The Italian outfit will also run a Cordoba World Rally Car for rising star Toni Gardemeister.

Evans said: "I'll be giving it a good go. It's always nice to win something, and I really enjoyed myself last year."

FIA boss takes Ford rally flyer into the forests

FIA president Max Mosley swapped a desk for a dashboard last Friday, when he drove a Ford Focus WRC at the team's test facility in Cumbria.

After three runs through Lowther Forest with Colin McRae, Mosley racked up more than 25 miles at the wheel of the car.

"It really gave me an impression of what top drivers do," said Mosley. "I would like to have continued for another hour. I couldn't believe how controllable the car was at my modest pace. You'd need lots of confidence to push harder."



Mosley took lessons from Colin McRae before getting behind the wheel himself



r 2000



ll help SEAT

and the team's initial impressions of Auriol are favourable.

"He impressed everybody," said a spokesman. "It's easy to see how enthusiastic he is. Didier's experience will help us to solve any problems we find. We all know that there's a lot of hard work ahead, but we're looking forward to it."

SEAT is also likely to nominate a test driver shortly. Marc Duez is reportedly favourite to land the deal. However, former British Rally Champion Gwyndaf Evans is highly rated by SEAT's chief engineer, Benoit Bagur, and could yet feature in the team's plans.

French series revives Xsara WRC

Citroen will run its Xsara World Rally Car next year after all, thanks to an astonishing move by the French motorsport authority, the FFSA.

The governing body has created an entirely new category, 'France Rally Car', which is essentially the same as a WRC, but doesn't force the manufacturer to commit to a WRC programme.

Citroen developed the four-wheel drive, turbocharged Xsara behind closed doors late last year. Internal conflicts within the PSA group prevented it from competing in the world championship, where it would have faced up to the Peugeot 206.

A proposal to allow Citroen entry to the European Rally Championship was rejected by the FIA World Council, so the team was facing another year with the kit car version of the coupe.

Team boss Guy Frequentin was delighted at the news. "I'm not surprised," he told *Rallyes* magazine, "because it was an official request from Citroen to the FFSA. This is not a specific category just for Citroen, but for all manufacturers who've got two-wheel-drive cars and who want to develop them into four-wheel drive without putting them forward for FIA homologation."

Citroen's plight is said to be the

central factor in the FFSA's decision, but sources also indicate that Renault is showing increasing interest in a four-wheel-drive rally project, too.

Citroen is expected to enter one Xsara 'FRC' for an as-yet-unnamed driver on purely French series rounds. The team's regular pilot, Philippe Bugalski, has been speaking to four-wheel-drive teams, but the new formula might persuade him to stay.

Since the regulations are unique to the FFSA, the new Xsara cannot

contest French rallies that coincide with the world or European championships (Corsica, Antibes and du Var).

The kit car version will be used on the latter two events, but Citroen has apparently scrapped plans for any outings on the World Rally Championship.

Ford team chief Malcolm Wilson said: "I'd be delighted if it works and encourages them into the WRC. Being selfish, I'll also be happy if it means the kit cars aren't doing WRC events."



Citroen's Xsara WRC has been brought back to life by the new French regulations

McRae seeks Champs glory

Alistair McRae will aim to go one place better than last year and win this weekend's Race of Champions in Gran Canaria.

Only his elder brother, Colin, stopped him from scoring a sensational victory 12 months ago, and the 1995 world champion is not attending this time.

"We'll try to give it our best shot," said McRae. "If I can get through the Masters section, then who knows what could happen?"

There will still be plenty of competition for him. To gain entry to the Race of Champions proper he must fight his way past Marcus

Gronholm, Markko Martin, Gilles Panizzi and Armin Schwarz.

The main event can boast four-time world champion Tommi Makinen, Spanish hero Carlos Sainz and SEAT's new boy, Didier Auriol, on its books.

Meanwhile, the newly-created Nations Cup is scheduled to feature motor racing aces JJ Lehto, Yannick Dalmas, Christian Abt, Emanuele Pirro, Marc

Gene and Danny Sullivan.

Among the innovations being brought in for this year's event are night racing and live broadcasts of the action via the Internet.



Alistair McRae

Brundle wants to go rallying again

Martin Brundle's accident on the Rally Great Britain has given the former Grand Prix ace an even bigger incentive to return to the event in 2000.

"I don't give up that easily and it was so disappointing to go out the way I did," he said, after hitting a tree stump in his works Toyota Corolla World Rally Car.

The ITV Formula 1 commentator had completed over half the rally, and was running in 40th place before his accident.

"I loved it, the experience has made me want to do it again," he said. "I'll take a bit of stick, but I don't mind."

Brundle was overwhelmed by the



Race ace wants more special stage fun

interest in his performance: "The support was fantastic. We were waved at on every bridge and roundabout - everywhere."

If he wishes to compete in a Corolla again, Brundle will have to find a privateer seat in 2000. Toyota's impending F1 project has put paid to its rally team, although some Corolla development work will still occur.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SEAT stalwart Erwin Weber has just bought two SEAT Cordoba WRC E2s, one of which was used by Gwyndaf Evans on the Rally Great Britain. Weber, who took SEAT's first world championship class victory with the Ibiza in 1995, will run one car each on the German and Polish championships.

The registration fee for Group N teams wanting to score points on the British championship next year will be in the region of £12,500 per car, plus entry fees. Paul Barrett, boss of Production Cup champion team Barretts Subaru, said: "This is the sort of price that I expected."

Italian team Jolly Club is looking to run a Citroen Xsara kit car on the Italian Rally Championship. This would be driven by 1998 European champion Andrea Navarra if he does not get to drive Ford Italy's new Focus WRC.

FIA technical boss Gabriele Cadringher will take part in January's Monte Carlo Rally driving a Group N SEAT Ibiza TDi. Cadringher has tackled the classic event before: he finished last year at the wheel of a Subaru Vivio.

Mitsubishi has launched a limited edition 'Lancer Tommi Makinen' to celebrate the Finn's fourth world title on the trot.

Rally GB results p113

AUTOSPORT

SENNA: THE FINAL CHAPTER

Patrick Head says this week that new legislation must not remove Formula 1 teams' accountability in the event of an accident. He's right. He's also brave. It must take a lot to retain that belief when the Senna trial has dragged on for half a decade.

One lesson is clear: any future investigations will get further and faster, if they avoid the confrontational element that has marred the Senna inquest.

There are positives to be drawn from the situation. While the Italian legal system dragged its heels, F1 has seen an unprecedented period of safety innovation. As you will see in our article this week, at least five men directly owe their lives to the movement kick-started by the loss of Senna and Roland Ratzenberger.

We have not published the feature in any attempt to create a trial by magazine. Just the opposite. Readers will be aware of the accusations against the Williams team, but will not have heard a detailed explanation of the other side of the story. We want to set the record straight before consigning the whole saga to the history books. For that is where it now belongs.

Five years on we can finally close the chapter on the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Good old rally warped by time

Back in the good old days, the RAC Rally managed to cover England, Scotland and Wales. It also seemed to have around 60 stages – or has my imagination been overcome with nostalgia?

Next year, it sounds like the International Rally Of South Wales would be a more appropriate name for the Network Q.

Are people from the north of the country to be denied WRC rallying forever? Will true fans no longer be able to delight at seeing rally cars at full speed through the likes of Grizedale and Kielder?

I understand the pressures to reduce mileage between stages, but surely it is possible to alternate between a northern base and a southern one and take in the rich variety of countryside that gave the RAC Rally its good name.

Ian Trotter
Berwickshire



As time goes by:
Britain's round of the
WRC isn't what it
used to be



Letter of the week wins a copy of Jim Barber's The Pits 7 cartoon collection, priced £4.99 from all good bookshops or by phoning 01795 414817.

Loyal spectators sold short

Having just returned from what can only be described as the worst Rally of Great Britain I have ever attended, I feel some important changes need to be made for next year.

The organisation for spectator viewing was absolutely disgusting – I have never seen as much chaos on the open roads as I did this year. Colin McRae was correct when he commented that the spectator viewing was the poorest he had ever encountered on a British Rally.

I think the organisers of this year's event should take stock of what happened and learn from it, rather than trying to rip-off loyal spectators with ever-increasing stage car park charges.

J Mason
Droitwich

Dim view of season review

I was disappointed to see the Champ Car seasonal review merit a miserly four pages – the length you normally devote to a single race report.

This year's championship battle was fantastic from the beginning of the season to the very end – to afford it such little exposure and have no interview with either Britain's own Dario Franchitti or the champion Juan Pablo Montoya was a sad state of affairs.

And what about that picture of the title protagonists – a fantastic image, but did you hope we wouldn't notice it was a shot of Montoya and... Paul Tracy?

Brian Audley
Birmingham

The Editor says: We knew you'd notice – it's just a shame we didn't!



The real deal: Hat on or hat off this is definitely Dario. The man flying the saltire in the US gave race fans much to cheer with his thrilling run at the Champ car title this year and we recognise his achievements and now the man himself



Apologies to all for our howler. We originally intended a much longer review but switched plans after Greg Moore's tragic death. Normal service will be resumed soon...

Brands branch out concern

As a motor sport fan and a member of the Woodland Trust, I was disappointed with the attitude of Brands Hatch to the concerns voiced about their development proposals.

The concerned organisations are representing a serious point of view and trying to preserve the countryside for everyone.

Come on BHL, there is more than one answer to this problem. Let's show that motorsport has a conscience and is prepared to respond positively to the concerns of others, rather than ride roughshod over them.

Alan Clark
Redditch

Love, labour and lumber

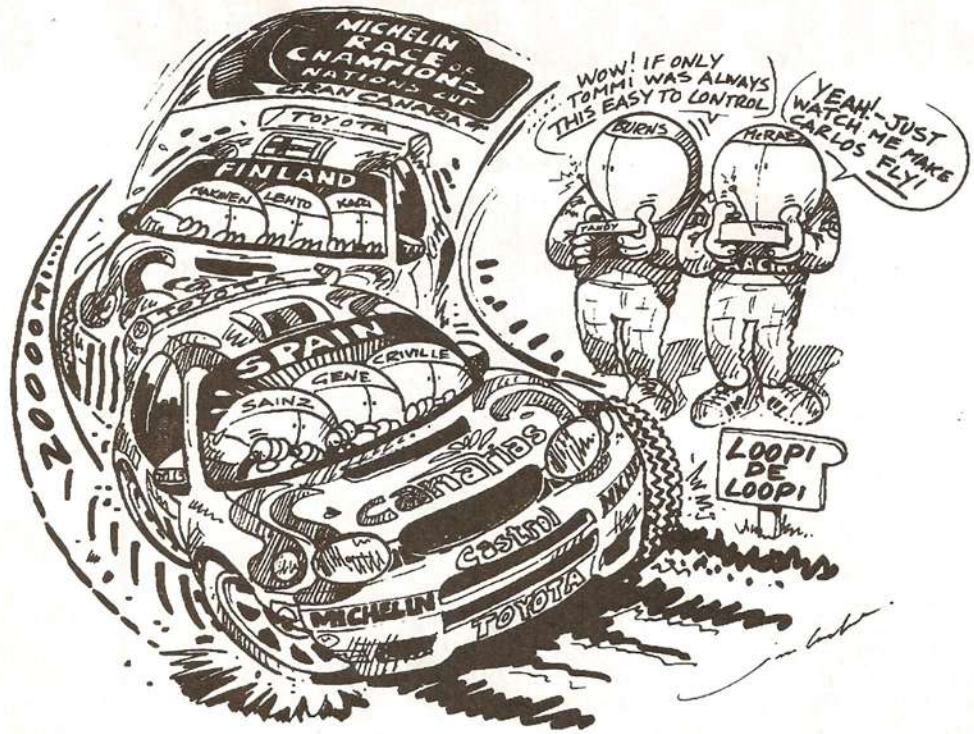
Martin Brundle's valiant effort in the Rally of Great Britain came to an end right in front of me. His Toyota took off over a brow into the trees - taking one clean off at the stump.

Along with a squad of fellow spectators, we eventually got the car back on the road. It was a once-in-a-lifetime moment for all of us to help out a star, but it was easy to see how disappointed he was.

Maybe next year though? Still, look on the bright side, Martin,



Brundle's trip into the scenery could save him money come Christmas



your Christmas tree has already been cut for you – or should we say cut *by* you. It's a nice big, bushy one!

G Holmes
Dorset

Manning's the man

What great results for Darren



Manning in Macau and Korea. Darren is truly one of the best British talents to come along for ages. We can't afford to let the underfunding that nearly ended his career force him into the holding position that is Japanese racing for too long, or he's going to get forgotten. Let's hope that his appeal to the

Formula 1 teams doesn't fall on deaf ears. Come on Sir Frank, your next Nigel or Damon could be just around the corner!

Martin Wells
Buckingham

Black flag authenticity

Nigel Roebuck is wrong to assume that John Frankenheimer incorrectly portrayed the Ferrari black flag in his movie *Grand Prix*.

As soon as I arrived at Culver City in 1966 to record the English voiceover, I read the script and I queried the Ferrari black flag in the pits.

Frankenheimer immediately wired Ferrari for their answer. The reply made it clear that they had done exactly that in similar circumstances at Montlhéry in the 1930s.

The episode was subsequently left in the film.

Anthony Marsh
London



Darren Manning's stock rose in the east

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WHAT THE PAPERS SAY WITH ANTHONY PEACOCK

The Formula 1 stars were conspicuous by their absence from the comics this week. No Hello!-style at-home charades, no "I believe I can be champion (even if I'm a no-hoper)" headlines. Instead we remembered some real action, as the papers contemplated Richard Burns's breathtakingly competent demolition of the Rally Great Britain.

The Independent said that his final day "was no more than a lap of honour. Burns's Subaru team principle (sic) David Richards warned: "You haven't seen anything of Richard yet. People would be foolish to bet against him for the world championship next year."

On current form, it will be a sight to behold. The *Daily Mail* points to Burns's "masterly mixture of tactics and cool aggression under huge pressure," while *The Sun* simply calls him:

"Clearly, this race is about as safe as sword-swallowing"

"Britain's King of the Road."

The Times takes a look at an altogether different type of rally; the Carrera Panamericana. This event, described as "a magnet for oddballs", is a seven day blast through Mexico with the winner being the person who reaches Nuevo Laredo first, or stays alive the longest. "The race was started by Mexico's president in 1950," we are told. "But by the end of the decade the Carrera had claimed so many lives that the authorities put a stop to it." Just this

year, "the Mexican road race champion and his co-driver crashed at 85mph off a 25-metre cliff into a tree, and were killed instantly."

Clearly, this race is about as safe as sword-swallowing and as politically correct as the Nation paper concludes, "world can you follow at 100mph and flash to move over?"

Only slightly less dangerous is the traditional Demolition Derby, loved by road ragers throughout the country. The *Daily Mail* tells the story of a man



Richard Burns was this week's winner in the battle for most column inches

cleared of GBH at one such race, where "hundreds of fans saw him drive his battered Granada 2.8 estate into the central area of the track before turning it round to power straight into the other racers." Oddly enough, he didn't plead insanity.

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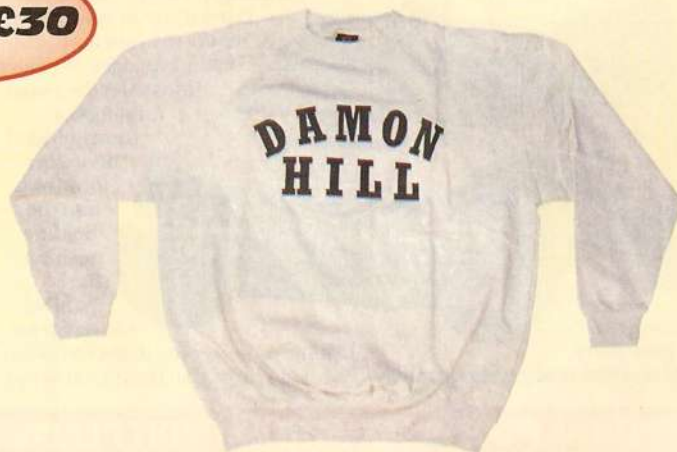
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NIGEL ROEBUCK

The other week, a rumour did the rounds about the world championship schedule for 2000. Word was that Silverstone and the A1-Ring were going to swap dates, that the Austrian Grand Prix would be run on April 23, that the British would return to its traditional slot in mid-July.

My friend, Alan Henry, alerted me to this by means of a fax worded like the old joke: 'All those going to Silverstone next Easter, take one step forward - not so fast, Roebuck!' Thereafter, he added further comments of his own, which are best not repeated here.

AH had communicated with me in this fashion, because my telephone was busy. I was chatting to Keke Rosberg, and related the contents of the missive.

"Don't be ridiculous!" Keke spluttered. "Austria - in April? I've had a house there for years, and, let me tell you, there's a *high* chance of snow in April."

That wasn't a surprise. On April 23, 1967, a Formula 2 race was scheduled at the Nurburgring, and a snow storm on the Friday wiped out practice. That being so, the organisers took the decision to conduct the meeting on the little-used 4.8-mile *Sudschleife*, rather than the full-blown 14.2 miles of the *Nordschleife*. Probably a sound move.

An F2 race it may have been, but back then the Formula 1 drivers did not confine themselves to GPs, and among those on the grid were Jimmy Clark, Jochen Rindt, Jack Brabham, John Surtees, Graham Hill, Bruce McLaren, Jo Siffert, Jacky Ickx and so on. A serious race, in other words.

Motorcycle events started the programme on Sunday morning, and these were run in a blizzard. Fortunately, the snow stopped before the F2 race, but in the early laps the 'line' was easily detected, for elsewhere the track was white! No thought was given to postponement, apparently, nor even to a delayed start time. Rindt won consummately.

Remembering that, we concluded that probably it wasn't too great an idea to run a GP in that part of the world at that time of the year, and I wasn't much surprised to learn later that the Austrian GP would be staying put, in July.

Then I began to think about Britain in April, about an F2 race at Oulton Park in '66. As I reached the

Oh, to be in England

In spring next year, a young man's thoughts will turn to... the British Grand Prix. But will a change of season benefit or damage the country's premier event?



Peter Dinkley's Lotus 72 leads Jackie Stewart's Tyrrell at the International Trophy meeting at Silverstone in 1973 before snow reversed their track positions

environs of the circuit, it struck me as odd that most of the traffic was going in the opposite direction: a snow storm had blanketed the track, the BARC 200 was cancelled.

And what of Silverstone itself, in April '73? I watched the *Daily Express* International Trophy from Becketts, and witnessed a wonderful battle between Stewart's Tyrrell and Peterson's Lotus 72. A cold, cold day it was.

JYS led from the start, but almost immediately picked up a slow puncture, and spun in front of me on the second lap. While Ronnie

we picked out the black of Peterson's Lotus - and that, too, slithered off.

By now warning flags were being waved, but it didn't help much, by the time the drivers could see them, it was too late.

"It was the most incredible thing," Stewart said. "Suddenly, it was as if you were driving into nothing - and at first you couldn't quite figure out why. I mean, you just don't expect *snow* in the middle of an F1 race."

He made it through Becketts somehow, and although Peterson

year between Silverstone and the powers-that-be, has it?"

I somewhat doubt we will be troubled by snow at next year's race, but it would probably be unwise to count on a weekend of perfect spring weather. Six years ago, after all, we had a GP in Britain over the Easter weekend, and the elements were most unkind.

In the end, we were glad of that, for it provided an opportunity to see Ayrton Senna at his very greatest. Had it been a dry day, doubtless the Williams-Renaults of Alain Prost and Damon Hill would have disappeared into the distance, for Michael Schumacher's Benetton and Senna's McLaren were more than a second and a half from Prost's pole position time.

As it was, it rained, and that was always manna for Ayrton. After being edged over a kerb by Schumacher immediately following the start, he backed off, and was also passed by Karl Wendlinger's Sauber. Into Redgate, he was fifth; then he went to work. By the end of the lap he was in the lead, and there he stayed.

It was as mesmerising an opening lap as I have ever seen, if you were there, I have no doubt you feel the same way. If Silverstone next April throws up anything even vaguely comparable, the weather can do what it likes. ■

"You just don't expect snow in the middle of an F1 race" JACKIE STEWART

took over, Jackie set about making up lost places, and duly picked off the BRMs of Niki Lauda and Clay Regazzoni, and the McLarens of Denny Hulme and Peter Revson. By half distance he was into second place, and hard after Peterson.

On lap 32, with eight to the flag, Becketts was suddenly hit by a very localised blizzard - to the point that you could hear cars approaching through Maggots, but not see them. Finally, a ghostly shape - Vern Schuppan's BRM - appeared, and it was spinning. A few seconds later,

got on his way again, and briefly gave chase, even he eventually backed off, for now the snow was spreading round the circuit. At the flag, they were 10s apart, and within a few minutes the whole of Silverstone was white. Getting out of the track that day, I remember, was even more fun than usual.

Quite why the British GP has been moved from mid-July (a position in the calendar it has occupied since '51), no one quite knows, although theories abound. "It has not," one luminary murmured last week, "been a quiet

Ayrton Senna revelled in the rain-soaked conditions at Donington Park in 1993 - Britain's last Easter Grand Prix - taking his McLaren to a dominant win



WHAT'S ON

THE TRACK

SAT/SUN DECEMBER 4/5

Race of Champions - Rally Masters

Gran Canaria (E)

Andros Ice Racing Trophy

Val Thorens (F), round one of eight

THE BOX

THURS DECEMBER 2

SKY SPORTS 2 1800-1830 Formula

Palmer Audi, 2100-2130 Formula

Palmer Audi (repeat), 0000-0030

Formula Palmer Audi (rpt)

BRITISH EUROSPORT

1100-1200 *Start Your Engines*,

1830-1900 *Racing Line*,

2300-2330 *Racing Line* (rpt)

FRI DECEMBER 3

SKY SPORTS 2

1400-1430 FPA (rpt)

BRITISH EUROSPORT

1030-1100 *Racing Line* (rpt)

SAT DECEMBER 4

BRITISH EUROSPORT

1345-1500 *Rally Masters*

SUN DECEMBER 5

BRITISH EUROSPORT

2000-2100 *Rally Masters*, 2100-

2200 *SportsRacing World Cup*

MON DECEMBER 6

SKY SPORTS 2

1900-2200 *World Motorsports*

BRITISH EUROSPORT

1100-1200 *SportsRacing World*

Cup (rpt), 1630-1700 *Car On Ice*

TUES DECEMBER 7

CHANNEL 5

0310-0335 *Motorsport Mundial*,

0335-0445 *Pole Position*

SKY SPORTS 3

1530-1830 *World Motorsports* (rpt)

WED DECEMBER 8

ITV 2 2000-2100 *Chequered Flag*

BRITISH EUROSPORT

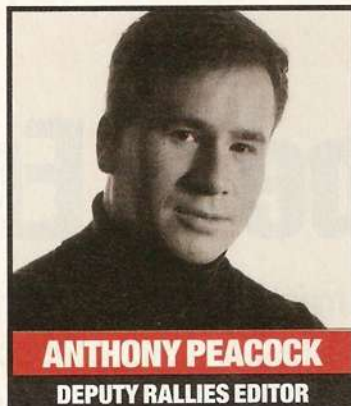
1800-1900 *Start Your Engines*,

2330-0030 *Start Your Engines* (rpt)

CEEFAX See page 360

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ANTHONY PEACOCK

DEPUTY RALLIES EDITOR

Come the millennium, frogs will fall out of the sky, Africa will freeze over and all the world's aircraft will simultaneously nosedive into the Indian Ocean.

Some of the more apocalyptic visions of 2000 make amusing reading, but one thing is for sure - the Rally Great Britain will be radically different next year.

Gone will be Sunday's spectator stages and the Cheltenham race course rally headquarters. In its place will come Cardiff as the new base, with the Sunday spectator stages being replaced by another day in the Welsh forests.

This will fill every purist with delight from his Wellington boots to his bobble hat. The casual punter might not be so sure.

Unprecedented crowds flocked to Silverstone for its swan song Rally GB. There were so many people behind the barriers at the Ford service area that a team member remarked how it felt like tending to the Focuses in London Zoo.

SEAT works driver Gwyndaf Evans said: "I don't really like this, but I can see why it's all worth it."

It's not the general concept of spectator stages the drivers dislike; more the fact that this type of stage has traditionally filled an entire day of the British round. It's a bit like mountain biking in your back garden: not very satisfactory, and a good probability of making a prat of yourself by falling off.

Hence the move to Wales, and a full three days of forest action.

The powers that be claim there is

Welshing on a winning bet

Basing next year's Rally GB solely in Wales makes a mockery of its name and could alienate the fans



Welsh woodland stages are spectacular, but so are English and Scottish forests



Horses for courses: farewell Cheltenham

a greater, not lesser, opportunity to let the (paying) public see some action, as the event will be held over a weekend.

Yet there are some serious flaws to that argument. Colin McRae was among the many who complained of the dangerous behaviour of spectators in Radnor Forest this year. The last thing on most sane people's minds is to stand in a foggy forest at six on a Monday morning, so imagine what it will be like on Saturday, when the only alternative is an another hour at Do-It-All.

Rally GB winner Richard Burns reckoned there were "more spectators than he'd ever seen" in the Welsh forests that Monday morning. Cram in another 20,000 - less than the number at Silverstone this year - and the Motor Sports Association, Britain's governing body, has got a massive problem.

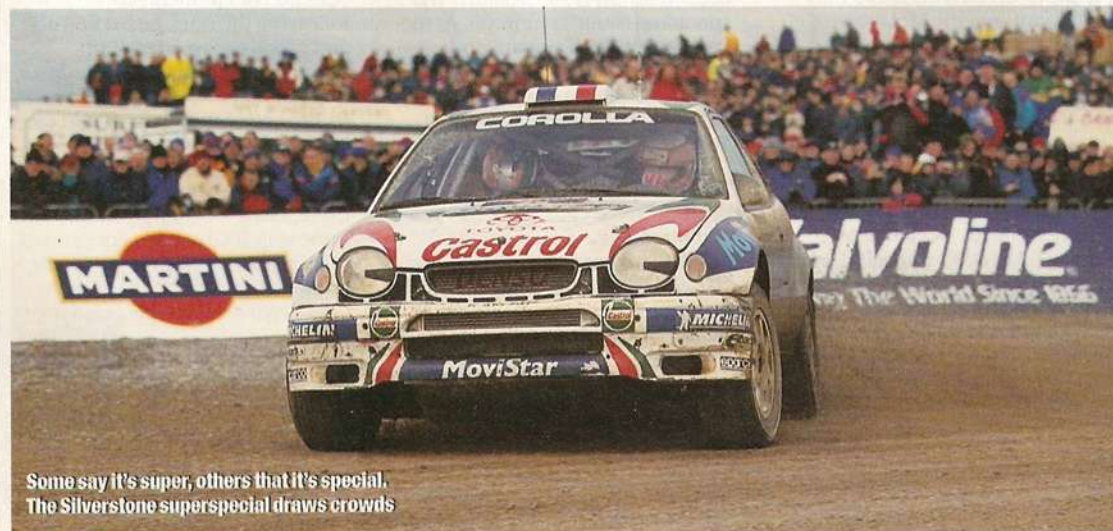
The current trend has been to make rallying as convenient and homogenised as long-life milk: for the greater good of TV, naturally.

Basing the rally in Cardiff next year will mean a lower road mileage and greater accessibility. Yet Wales isn't particularly convenient for anybody living in London, Scotland, or the east of England. Anybody wanting to see Britain's round of the world championship will have to brave the queues and hope they arrive before 9.00pm - because that's when everything closes.

Holding the event entirely within Wales sits awkwardly with the Rally GB's moniker. Granted, some of the mid-Wales stages are as spectacular as any, but it's not as if there are no alternatives. In an ideal world, we'd want stages in Cumbria and North Yorkshire, and a return to the Scottish classics.

The FIA has poured cold water over these potential fireworks by saying any world series rally route can only be varied by a small amount each year. So Wales it is then - with the only token gesture towards the rest of the country removed. Even if the MSA uses the maximum amount of change permitted, we'll be lucky to reach Kielder by the end of the next millennium.

There's nothing wrong with Wales, but it had better prove the perfect host. The lock, stock and barrel export of our rally across the border can't help but leave a few people feeling short-changed. ■



Some say it's super, others that it's special. The Silverstone superspecial draws crowds



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Well, this was either a firefighting demonstration at Brands in '72 or proof that the circuit's early respraying facilities weren't up to much



THEN AS NOW

10 YEARS AGO

Pentti Airikkala was a surprise winner of the Lombard RAC Rally after a late charge in his Mitsubishi Galant VR-4 (AUTOSPORT, November 30, 1989). The Finn's triumph came at the expense of Carlos Sainz, who seemed



Airikkala took a shock triumph on the RAC

destined for glory until his Toyota Celica GT Four broke a propshaft on the final day.

Alain Prost had his first run in a Ferrari 640 at the marque's Fiorano test track. Meanwhile, Gerhard Berger had a taste of Honda power driving a McLaren MP4/5 at Suzuka.

20 YEARS AGO

Geoff Lees beat Riccardo Patrese, Huub Rothengatter and Derek Daly to claim the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix (AUTOSPORT, November 29, 1979).

The Englishman, driving a Ralt RT1 for Teddy Yip's Theodore outfit, was only crowned after a dispute

ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 2: Chris Bristow (b 1937, d June 13, 1960), Andy Rouse (b 1947), David Piper (b 1930)

Dec 3: Bobby Allison (b 1937), Rick Mears (b 1951), Bobby Marshman (d 1964)

Dec 4: Raul Boesel (b 1957), Thomas Danielsson (b 1964), Francois Migault (b 1944), Dave Strickland (b 1937)

Dec 5: Dave Cowperthwaite (b 1960), Jordi Gene (b 1970), Sarel van der Merwe (b 1946)

Dec 6: Rob Arthur (b 1949), Chris Hodgetts (b 1950), Tico Martini (b 1934), Manuel Reuter (b 1961), Keke Rosberg (b 1948)

Dec 7: John Love (b 1924), Helmut Meier (b 1943), Hermanos da Silva Ramos (b 1925), Bob Tullius (b 1936), Charles Deutsch (d 1980)

Dec 8: Gordon Coppuck (b 1936), Michel Ferte (b 1958), Thor Holm (b 1942), Bob Schader (b 1944)



Rouse, 52



Mears, 48



Rosberg, 51

ARMCHAIR ENTHUSIAST

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PC CD-ROM

Published by Actualize, £34.99

If the latest PC magazines are to be believed, Codemasters is working on a sequel to its popular *Colin McRae Rally* game – to be released early next year.

However, after this challenge from Actualize, it had better be good.

Rally Championship is based on the Mobil 1 British series, and comprises all six rounds from this season, with each event offering six testing stages.

Developer Magnetic Fields has taken full advantage of the PC's graphical firepower, so the visuals are stunning. Rain bounces off the screen, sunlight genuinely dazzles the driver and the replay mode is as good as on TV. Better, when you consider that you're the star of the show.

The bottom line of any simulation is the physics engine and

although *Rally Championship's* cars don't feel quite as satisfying to chuck around as those in Codemasters' effort, they're still rewarding enough with practice.

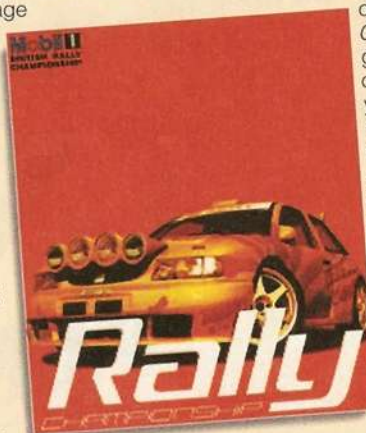
There are other tweaks that give this game the edge: punctures, service area penalties, a choice of co-driver, not to mention extensive details on the 20-odd cars featured.

If you want a quick thrash, then Mr McRae (or his sequel, in a few months) will probably suffice. On the

other hand, *Rally Championship* gives you the chance to immerse yourself in the Mobil 1 season, tweak car settings, gamble on tyre choice and watch the year develop.

There is a host of rally games in the pipeline, but for the moment at least this is the benchmark. PlayStation and Dreamcast versions should follow next year.

John McIlroy



Rally Championship sets a new benchmark for stage simulations



RAC victory went to Mikkola's Escort

concerning the size of the car's valves and engine capacity was thrown out.

Hannu Mikkola led home his works Escort team mate, Russell Brookes, to take an easy victory on the Lombard RAC Rally.

30 YEARS AGO

Harry Kallstrom powered his Lancia Fulvia HF to victory on the RAC Rally (AUTOSPORT, November 27, 1969). The fierce snowy weather accounted for many competitors, including Hannu Mikkola, who retired his Ford Escort after a massive accident.

Al Unser Sr, driving a Lola-Ford T152, scooped the USAC Bobby Ball Memorial 200 at the Phoenix International Raceway.

40 YEARS AGO

Ferrari unveiled its D246 Formula 1 challenger for the forthcoming US Grand Prix at Sebring (AUTOSPORT, December 4, 1959). The 2.5-litre, 'Dino'-engineered machine was put through its paces by Ferrari sportscar driver Richie Ginther.

Meanwhile, AUTOSPORT's editor, Gregor Grant, strongly defended proposals for a speed limit on the recently-opened M1 'motor-highway'.

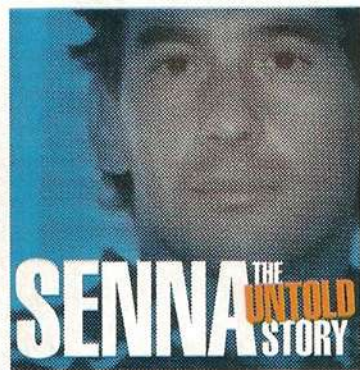
GRAND PRIX





FINAL CHAPTER

It's five years since Ayrton Senna's fatal crash at the San Marino GP. Now, for the first time, the full story can be told of the great Brazilian's last moments and his death's legacy to Formula 1 safety. By Andrew Benson



God, said Niki Lauda, took his hand away from Formula 1 over the sport's blackest weekend, the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix. By contrast the Italian legal authorities have dedicated the past five and a half years to studying the handful of seconds it took for Ayrton Senna to meet the most public death since John F Kennedy.

In that period, theories have abounded – some logical; others outlandish. From the start Williams has refuted the court prosecutor's claim that a broken steering column caused Senna's accident. Its contention has been that a combination of factors caused the Brazilian to crash at Tamburello. What has not been made clear, until now, is how it believes the greatest driver in the world might have lost control at a bend that was usually flat out but far from challenging.

Senna arrived at the '94 San Marino GP absolutely determined to beat Michael Schumacher and Benetton, who had won the first two races of the season. "Our season starts here," he told TV crews as he sought to kick-start a world championship campaign in which he was still pointless after the first two events. Schumacher was the young pretender; worse still, the Brazilian had confided to friends that he believed he was fighting a car that was using illegal traction control – a controversy that was to blow up later in the year.

At Imola, he was affected deeply after witnessing first his friend, Rubens Barrichello, survive a violent shunt in practice, and then novice

Roland Ratzenberger crash to his death the following day.

Senna had told his girlfriend, Adriane Galisteu, on the evening of Ratzenberger's death that he did not want to race. He was more at peace when he spoke to team boss Frank Williams later that night, and much calmer on the Sunday, although he did cry during a minute's silence for the Austrian during the drivers' briefing. Senna's friend and F1's chief doctor, Professor Sid Watkins, who had urged him to quit after witnessing his reaction earlier in the weekend, said: "My unease returned after the briefing. Tears were running down [Ayrton's] face and he was licking them away to try to conceal his distress."

There was tension in the air on the grid, but no more than one might expect, even if observers later reported that the driver had been acting out of character.

More of a problem than his state of mind was a startline shunt, in which Pedro Lamy's Lotus slammed into the back of JJ Lehto's Benetton. The two cars exploded like a bomb, shards littering the grid. At the end of the first lap, Senna and the rest drove through them at racing speed before picking up the safety car partway round the second lap.

There are pictures, produced at the trial, that appear to show him running over a piece of debris while behind the safety car. It is evident on the tarmac in front of him in the first frame, but its position has moved by the time the chasing Schumacher arrives on the scene. If the Brazilian's FW16 did catch some fragments of wreckage – and we will never know – it could have inflicted a slow puncture which lowered the car's ride height.

Either way, the four laps behind the safety car would have reduced the tyre pressures of all the competitors so that when the race restarted, at 2.15pm, every car would have been running lower than normal.



NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE



Adrian Newey woke up thinking about Ayrton Senna every morning for more than a year after the accident that killed him. Williams' former chief designer is no longer haunted by the loss of one of the greatest sportsmen of the 20th century, but the memory lingers on.

"It was such a bloody waste," he says. "I felt so bloody awful. I don't think about it every day now, but it's not something you forget, or something you should forget."

Newey's emotions were shared by the majority of the Formula 1 circus, for whom that weekend and the weeks following turned into what seemed a never-ending nightmare.

Rubens Barrichello was hospitalised by a violent accident on the first day of the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix meeting. Simtek driver Roland Ratzenberger and Senna were killed on consecutive days. Karl Wendlinger was left in a 19-day coma by an accident in Monaco, on the first day GP cars ran in anger after Imola. Ratzenberger's replacement, Andrea Montermini, crashed, breaking his foot in Spain two weeks later, the legend 'For Roland' visible behind his helmet as the car came to rest.

It was frightening for the drivers, some of whom admitted they began to wonder who would be next. Former pilot Martin Brundle recalls: "The younger ones looked like rabbits caught in the headlights when we stood on the grid in Monaco for a minute's silence."

However, most in the sport regarded it as a sequence of terrible circumstances, even though there was concern that the cars were becoming too fast and an acknowledgement that F1 had grown complacent.



Barrichello (above) was lucky at Imola; Wendlinger's crash left him in a coma

"Senna's death was such a waste. I felt so bloody awful"

ADRIAN NEWEY

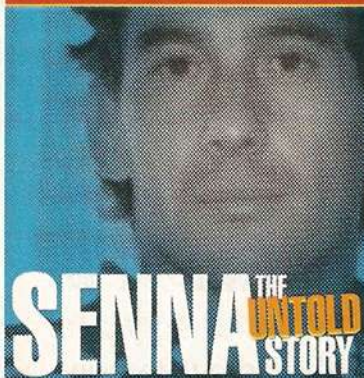
Elsewhere, there was a near-hysterical reaction. On the day after Wendlinger's crash, the French sports paper *L'Equipe* ran a front-page headline saying: "Stop this."

"It was an incredibly dark time," says Newey, "but it brought out the worst in a lot of people who should have known better. It became cheap hype for some journalists."

For a while, the very future of the sport seemed at risk. To safeguard it, and head off some of the criticism, the FIA, the sport's governing body, brought forward rule changes set for '95, despite worries from the teams about the haste.

Nearly six years later, F1 is constantly trying to find ways to make the cars ever safer in the hope that the sport will never again have to face such a harrowing time.

The wreckage of Senna's FW16 at Imola. His fatal crash sparked new safety moves



Tyre pressures drop in safety car period



A startline crash (above) spreads wreckage over the grid. (Below left) While still behind the safety car, Senna appears to run over a tiny piece of debris (below right)



Williams believes the modifications to the steering column demanded by the Brazilian were not the cause of the accident



On top of that, Senna's machine was running lower than team mate Damon Hill's, despite being set up the same. Williams knows this because the underbody skid blocks were later found to be much more heavily worn, as well as pushed back in the chassis. The team does not believe this happened when the car crossed the concrete apron during the accident because there were no marks there.

Through Tamburello on that first racing lap, Schumacher noticed

Senna have a problem. "The car was touching the track at the back quite a lot," the German said. "It was very nervous in that corner and he nearly lost it."

Senna did not lift at Tamburello, and was as much as 10mph faster there than Hill, who was taking a wider course to avoid the undulations on the racing line. The Brazilian had earlier warned his team mate not to run there because it made the car unstable. Both men had complained about the

"Tears were running down Ayrton's face and he was licking them away"

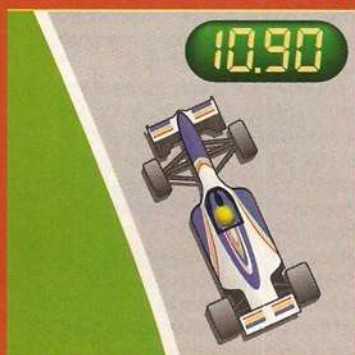
PROFESSOR SID WATKINS

instability of the FW16 over these bumps during the weekend.

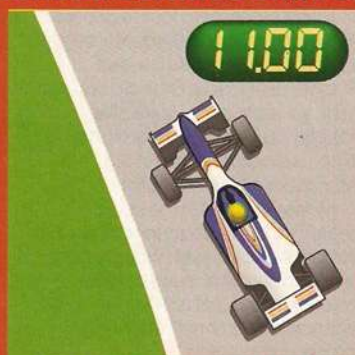
Nor was Hill flat on the next lap. Senna, determined to stay ahead of the closely-following Schumacher, did not lift, and was, at 191mph, slightly faster than before. Until he realised something was wrong.

He entered Tamburello on a tighter line than the previous lap, perhaps to ensure that the car was travelling straighter over the second of the bumps – the one that had caused him a problem previously.

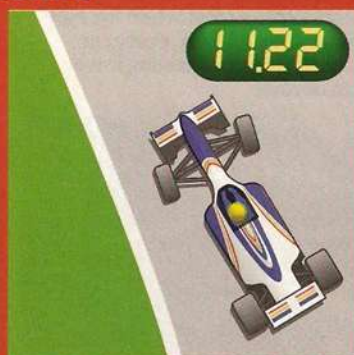
HOW THE TELEMETRY RECORDED SENNA'S LAST SECONDS



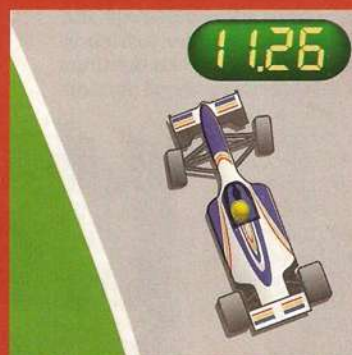
10.9s Ayrton Senna takes a tighter line into Tamburello in an attempt to lessen the impact of a bad bump.



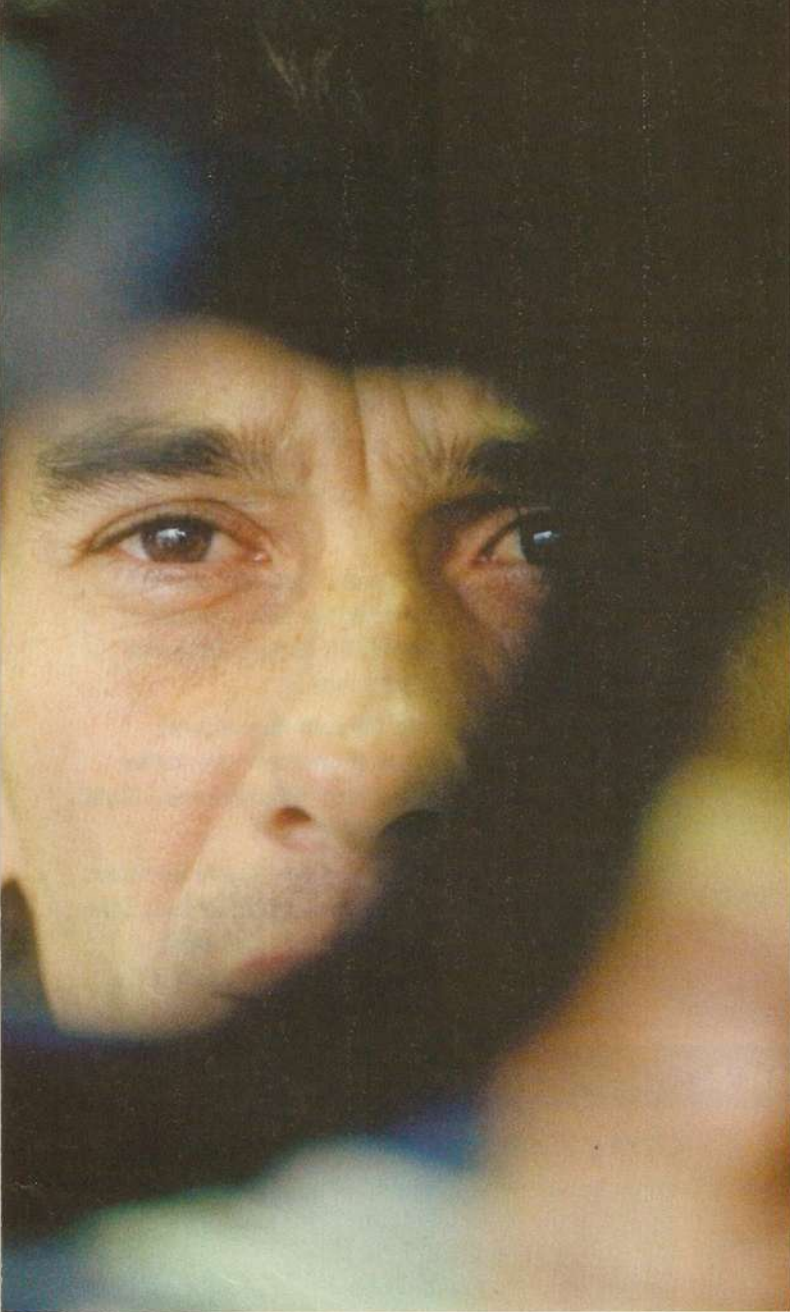
11.0-11.1s The Williams hits the first undulation in the corner and the rear of the car starts to slide.



11.22s The Brazilian lifts off and reduces steering torque – to correct the slide. He is at 40% throttle for the next 0.22s.



11.26s The car bottoms at the front and loses grip, leading it to turn sharply right and out of its driver's control.



NO MORE SECRETS

Williams-Renault FW16, chassis number two, has not moved far since its crash at Tamburello on May 1, 1994. It remains locked up in a police garage in Bologna.

Williams has put in a request for it to be returned. However, the Italian authorities may prefer to wait until the prosecution has indicated it will not lodge a further appeal. Either way, whatever secrets it holds have already been discovered.

Its surviving electronic data has been downloaded, its steering column analysed. When it is eventually given back, it will probably be destroyed. The memories it holds are too bitter for it to be otherwise.

“Had Ayrton survived, he would have won the title”

ADRIAN NEWEY

The things Senna might have achieved in it will never be known, but even though Damon Hill went on to run Michael Schumacher close for that year's world championship, the FW16 will not go down in history as one of Williams' best.

Senna and Hill had struggled with it from the start of the season, and only at Imola had the team begun to have an idea how to sort it out.

“The thing that always bugs me,” says former chief designer Adrian Newey, “is that Ayrton came to Williams to drive the best car, and the 16 as it came out was certainly the worst Williams I designed.”

“It was not competitive at the start of the season. The fact that he put it on pole position for the first three races was a tribute to his ability rather than the car.”

“There were a couple of silly little aerodynamic problems which we were getting on top of by Imola, so it's even more of a tragedy. We were on the edge of sorting it out, and had Ayrton survived, he'd have won the title without a problem.”



Inside the Bologna police's lock-up garage (inset), the carcass of the FW16 (right) lies awaiting its fate. If it is returned to Williams, it is likely to be destroyed

That meant that the cornering forces on the car were much stronger than on lap six – a massive 3.27G instead of 1.5. Consequently, when the car hit the first bump 11.0-11.1s into the lap, the rear stepped out violently. Williams attributes this to a phenomenon called ‘underbody stall’, in which the airflow is disrupted, causing a huge loss of rear grip. The result can be seen on Senna's on-board camera, which suddenly points inwards towards the trees.

At 11.22s, Senna reduced the throttle to 40% to correct the oversteer, at the same time as applying opposite lock. The reaction time of just under 0.15s is what would be expected of a driver of his ability.

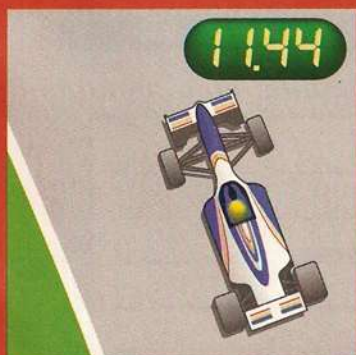
The crucial moment came at 11.26s. The car was oversteering, with little throttle pushing it forward, so the grip of the rear tyres was being applied sideways. The car struck the second bump, bottoming heavily at the front.

Much of the weight of the front was carried by the front skid blocks instead of the tyres, giving a sudden loss of front grip. In combination with the rear grip acting sideways, the car suddenly turned right. Had the steering failed, this would not have happened, the car would have continued straight on.

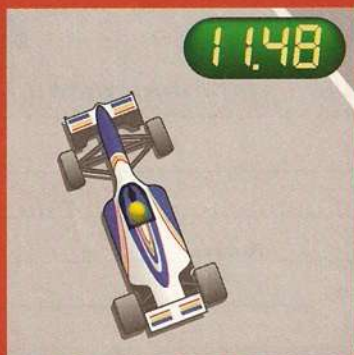
The car shifted trajectory by nine degrees relative to the line of the corner, but the change relative to the car's axis was even greater, because the rear was stepped out in

oversteer. From this moment Senna was in trouble. Williams suggests he would have had no chance to make a correction.

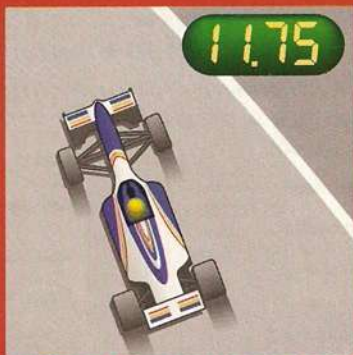
Instead, he braked as hard as he could, with such force that the car decelerated at over 4G while still on the track, losing 60mph before impact. That, at least, allows one of the more wild scenarios put forward to be discounted. Senna did not pass out momentarily because he was holding his breath around a fast corner – we know that



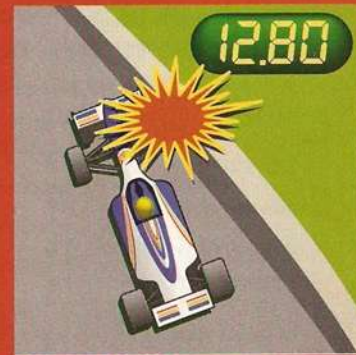
11.44s Senna lifts off the throttle completely as he begins his attempt to bring the car to a stop.



11.48s The Williams FW16 is at zero throttle after the throttle dampener has done its work.



11.75s The brakes start to slow the car down, after a short delay for the pressure to build in the system.



12.80s The three-time world champion runs out of room for manoeuvre and hits the wall.



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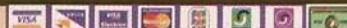
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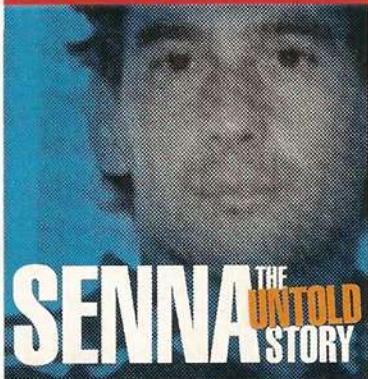
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◀ because he was still operating the controls.

Williams' argument advocates an accident similar to those often seen on American ovals, when a driver applies opposite lock to correct a slide in an ultra-fast corner, only for the car to grip again suddenly and leave him pointing at the wall with no room to escape.

Oval racers in the USA condition themselves to ignore instinct and to steer into a slide, with the result that the car spins down the track, rather than into the outside wall.

The concept of not being able to correct a slide is more alien to F1 drivers, who do not spend so long driving through flat-out corners. Senna's natural reaction, and the usual one, would be to try to catch the car.

This theory might be pretty convincing, but most people in motor racing, and among those who were involved in any of the accident investigations, blamed the steering column.

Adrian Reynard was asked to do a study for the Senna family. He is a

doctor of engineering, as well as the owner of the eponymous racing car company. He has a different view, one that backs up the prosecution's claim that the accident was caused by a broken steering column.

Prosecutor Maurizio Passarini's case was that a modification requested by the driver had been carried out without the necessary care, and that the new piece had fatigued and eventually broke as the driver rounded Tamburello. He argued that the column partially failed, by enough to force the crash,

FIVE LIVES SAVED...

The raised cockpit sides and headrest protection inserts introduced after the spate of accidents in 1994 have probably saved the following five lives:

Jos Verstappen Crashed his Arrows in the '96 Belgian Grand Prix after mechanical failure. Side impact in excess of 40G.

Ricardo Rosset Lost control of his Tyrrell in free practice for '98 German GP. Airborne into tyre barrier with force of 30G plus.

Mika Salo Spun Arrows heavily into barrier at Eau Rouge in Belgian GP qualifying, '98, cockpit sides absorbing much of the shock.

Jacques Villeneuve Strengthened cockpit sides absorbed energy as he rolled his British American Racing car exiting Eau Rouge in qualifying for this year's Belgian GP.

Pedro Diniz Cockpit sides left to take weight of car after Sauber's roll bar snapped off when it flipped on first lap of this season's European GP.



Safety issues reared their head again this year when Diniz's roll hoop broke in this accident at the European GP

"Senna's car was touching the track at the back. It was nervous"

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

but that there was a small part left intact. What was not made clear was when the prosecution thought the failure occurred.

Williams agreed there was a fatigue fracture in up to 44% of the cross-section of the column. This would eventually have led to it shearing, although whether it would have happened before the end of race cannot be known.

However, the team said its data indicated steering failure did not cause the accident. It showed that the column was still transmitting torque up until the moment the car went into the wall. Its own

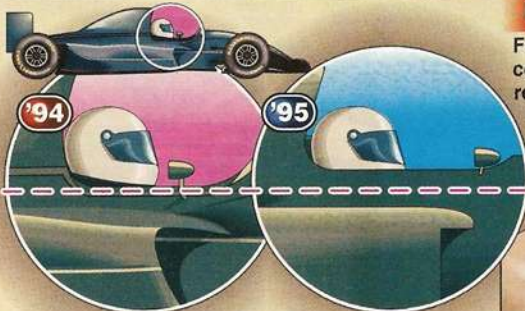
Safety at work

Since the Ayrton Senna tragedy, radical modifications to cockpit design have improved driver safety.

In a nutshell

Following the introduction of 1996 cockpit regulations, a number of refinements has been made to cockpit design and all-round driver protection.

1 Cars must have a minimum of two rollover structures, the first (2) in front of the driver. A straight line taken from this point to the top of the car, behind the driver, must clear driver's helmet by at least 70mm.



1994 Cars sported much lower cockpit sides, leaving driver's head and neck fully exposed.

'95 Cockpit sides were raised.

Following Karl Wendlinger's Monaco accident, Sauber pre-empted the forthcoming rule changes by building higher, padded cockpit surrounds.



High cockpit sides were introduced in 1996. High-density, energy-absorbing foam padding was brought in to 'cushion' the driver's head in case of impact and the cockpit opening was enlarged.

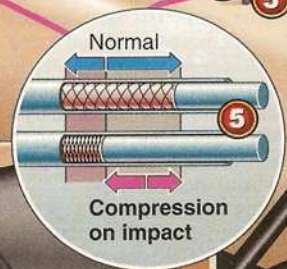


3 ('96) 75mm thick padding (removable without the need for tools). Minimum padded area extended forwards to steering wheel for '98.

4: ('98) Cockpit sides at opening made thicker. Shape and dimensions of cockpit and internal cross-section have been modified since '96 to ease emergency extrication.

5 ('97) Partially collapsible (on impact) steering columns introduced.

6: ('99) Wheel retaining ropes replace the 'controlled break' suspension systems introduced in '97.



Graphic: Russell Lewis

...THANKS TO 'PROF'

Professor Sid Watkins lost a friend when Ayrton Senna was killed at Imola in 1994. That the Brazilian remains Formula 1's last fatality is a tribute to the determination with which the man known to all simply as 'Prof' has led the safety movement.

One of the country's leading neurosurgeons, he spearheaded the expert safety advisory group formed in the wake of Senna's death.

"The sport had fallen asleep," admitted Watkins after Imola. "It's a tragedy that it took the deaths of Ayrton and Roland [Ratzenberger] to wake us all up again."

One of the biggest challenges he faces is balancing the strength of the cars' structure with that of the drivers. "With space-age technology, we can make the cars so strong that they can survive virtually any impact," he says. "But that's no good if the driver is shaken to death inside."



SENNA

THE UNTOLD STORY



The Brazilian ace may be gone, but his legacy lives on

investigation, and one conducted by Alenia, an independent company specialising in aircraft accident investigation, show that the undamaged section of the column was strong enough to get the car around Tamburello.

The team also says the telemetry readings are not consistent with steering breakage. If it had broken at 11.22s, which is when the torque reduces, a natural human reaction time would mean he would not have lifted off until about 11.37s - 0.15s after he actually did.

He would also not have stayed on part throttle for a further 0.22s.

have felt the wheel come loose and feared the worse. It could also correlate with the evidence of a steering failure, and the fact the column was still transmitting torque. The final break, Reynard says, happened on impact. "If the column had totally sheared," he says, "no torque would be seen."

Coincidentally, this analysis of a part-fractured steering column that can still transmit torque is exactly the same as Williams' - it is just that the two have come to differing conclusions about whether this was the origin of the accident.

"Mine is just a theory," says

Reynard. "Williams has one, too, and, of course, there is a chance they are right."

The court in Bologna thought so. While the judge in the first trial acquitted Williams design chiefs Patrick Head and Adrian Newey while ruling that steering failure was the most likely cause, the appeal judge said that the prosecution failed to prove its case.

"I'm glad they got off," Reynard says, "it's good for motor racing." That view, widely-held in F1, is based on the belief that it is an experimental technological arena and things go wrong from time to time, however much people try to ensure they do not (see right).

After five and a half years of investigation, the cruellest irony is that whatever problem did send Senna plummeting off the track, it was a freak chance that killed him, not his impact with the wall.

Senna died because his right front wheel was knocked back towards the cockpit and his helmet visor was pierced by a suspension arm. Had that wheel missed him, he would almost certainly have climbed uninjured from his car. ■

"There was a clear fatigue failure in the top half of the steering column"

ADRIAN REYNARD

Nobody doubts that the steering column broke. How and when are the questions



Williams' tests show that the fracture of the steering column was more consistent with a heavy impact. That might have been made by the right front wheel hitting the steering wheel when it came back into the cockpit as the car struck the wall, or possibly forces transmitted up the column by the crash.

Reynard cannot accept that Senna lost control, because no other drivers have done so without a problem with the car.

"We're talking about Ayrton Senna here," he says. "Losing control there [Tamburello is normally flat out] is unlikely to happen to anyone, let alone him."

Reynard says that metallurgical analysis demonstrated that there was a fatigue-related break in the top, semi-circular half of the hollow steering column brought on by a downward bending force, but that the bottom crescent remained intact until the collision.

"There was," he says, "a clear and well-recognisable fatigue failure in the top half of the column, where it fractured. Any engineer would be able to examine it and agree."

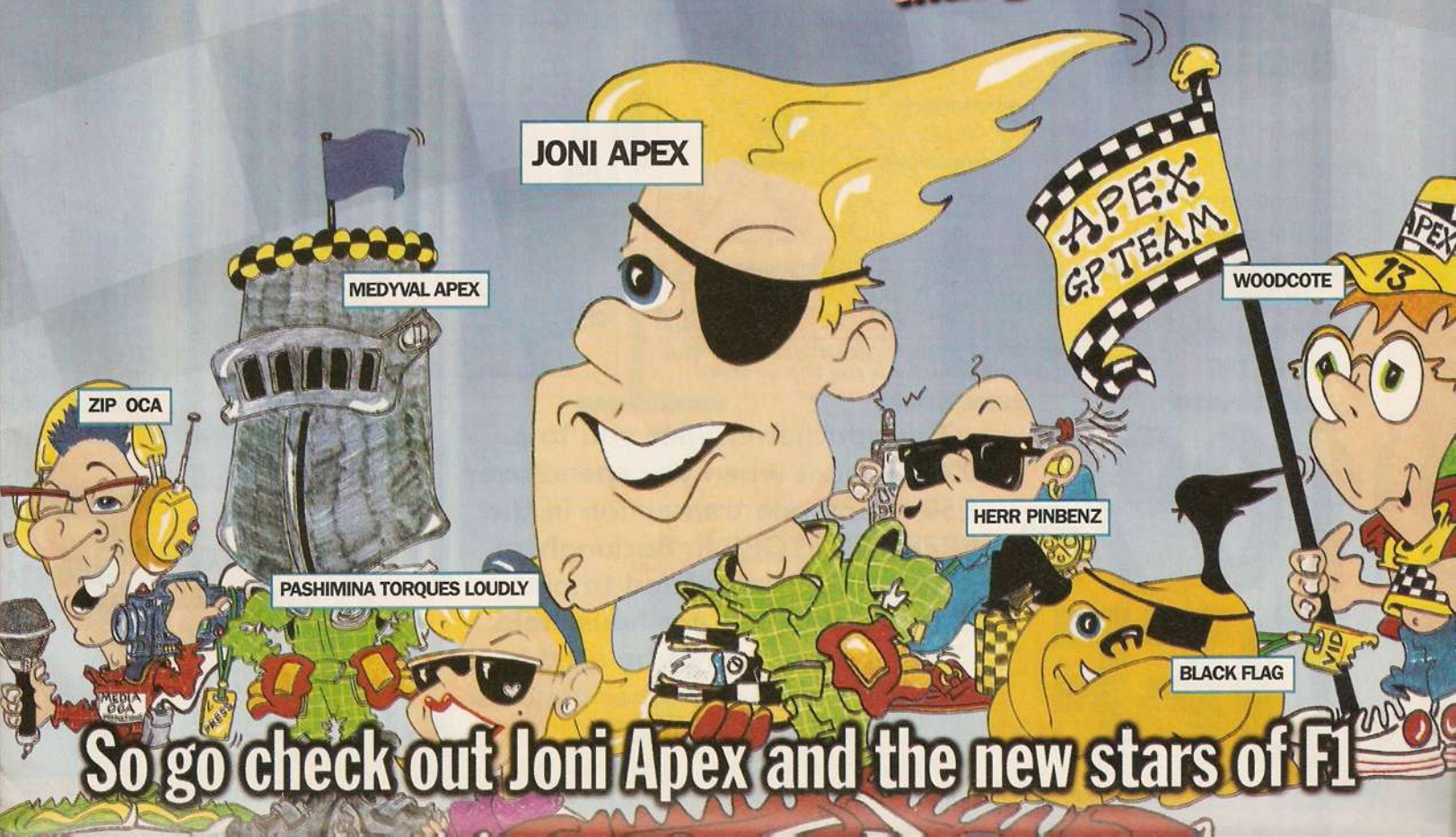
That bending force was probably exerted by Senna as he hung on to the car. This theory would explain why he came off the power and got on the brakes so hard - he would



Many believe, if Senna had lived, he would have tamed the recalcitrant FW16 and won his fourth world crown

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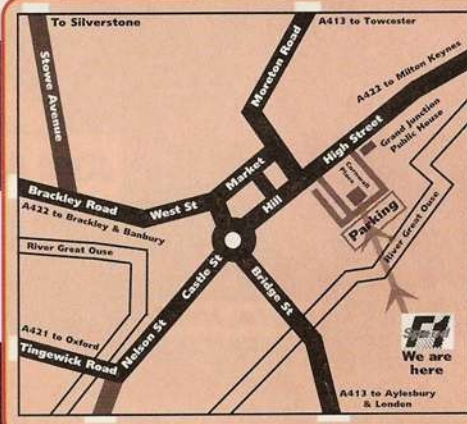
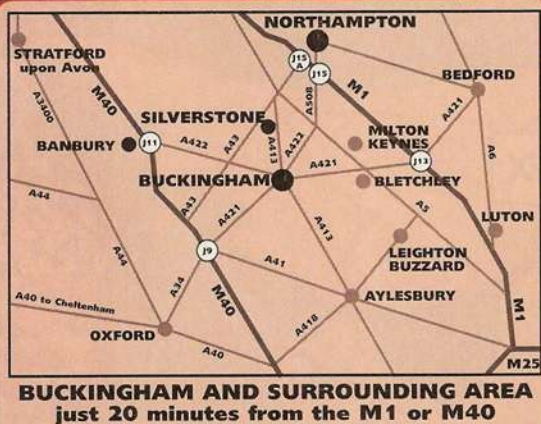
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Young Drivers
Kirkaldy (left) and
Button prepare
to face their
biggest challenge



VSE

As suspense rises in the run-up to this weekend's McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award, two former winners, Andrew Kirkaldy and Jenson Button, enjoyed the fruits of their success—a first taste of F1. By Tim Scott



The empty grandstands look over an eerily quiet Silverstone, the drabness of the grey concrete exacerbated by the sapphire blue November sky. In an instant, the stillness is shattered as an 800bhp V10 Formula 1 engine barks into life in a pits garage.

Many sets of eyes follow the silver car's progress as it growls down the pit lane before turning right and accelerating up through the gears to shriek away towards Becketts. Two young men are more intent than most. Standing on the pit wall, Jenson Button and Andrew Kirkaldy exchange a glance and a broad grin.

The nervous excitement of being moments away from getting behind the wheel of the same McLaren-Mercedes, probably the best racing car in the world, briefly cracks the veneer of calmness.

This first taste of F1 is the biggest day of their motorsport careers, the culmination of years of work, and they're savouring every moment of it. The test is part of their prize for winning the McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award (the next recipient will be announced this weekend). The McLaren team has the Northamptonshire circuit booked especially for the two British Formula 3 racers.

Their temperaments are being put to the test. The chance to

"They're young professionals. We want to give them a day to remember" **DAVE RYAN**

sample one of this year's MP4-14s, as used by world champion Mika Hakkinen to win the Brazilian Grand Prix, is delayed until the track is dried by the winter sunshine. Not the ideal start, but they wait quietly, garnering advice from the cool head of team manager Dave Ryan, as the car is shaken down by the team's test pilot, Darren Turner, himself a former Young Driver award winner.

In Ryan's book, the key word for the drivers' 20-lap runs is enjoyment. "This is their first day with an F1 team and we want them to soak it up and enjoy it," he says. "They're not going for times - we're only on the National circuit, anyway. They're both young professionals who I'm sure will make their mark. We just want to give them a day to remember."

No problem there. When the chance finally comes, they revel in it, first Kirkaldy and then Button. Both went to the team's Woking headquarters for a seat fitting the previous morning, now they climb aboard the stationary car for a familiarisation session. In the cockpit, they switch modes automatically, from excitement to professional purposefulness - ▶



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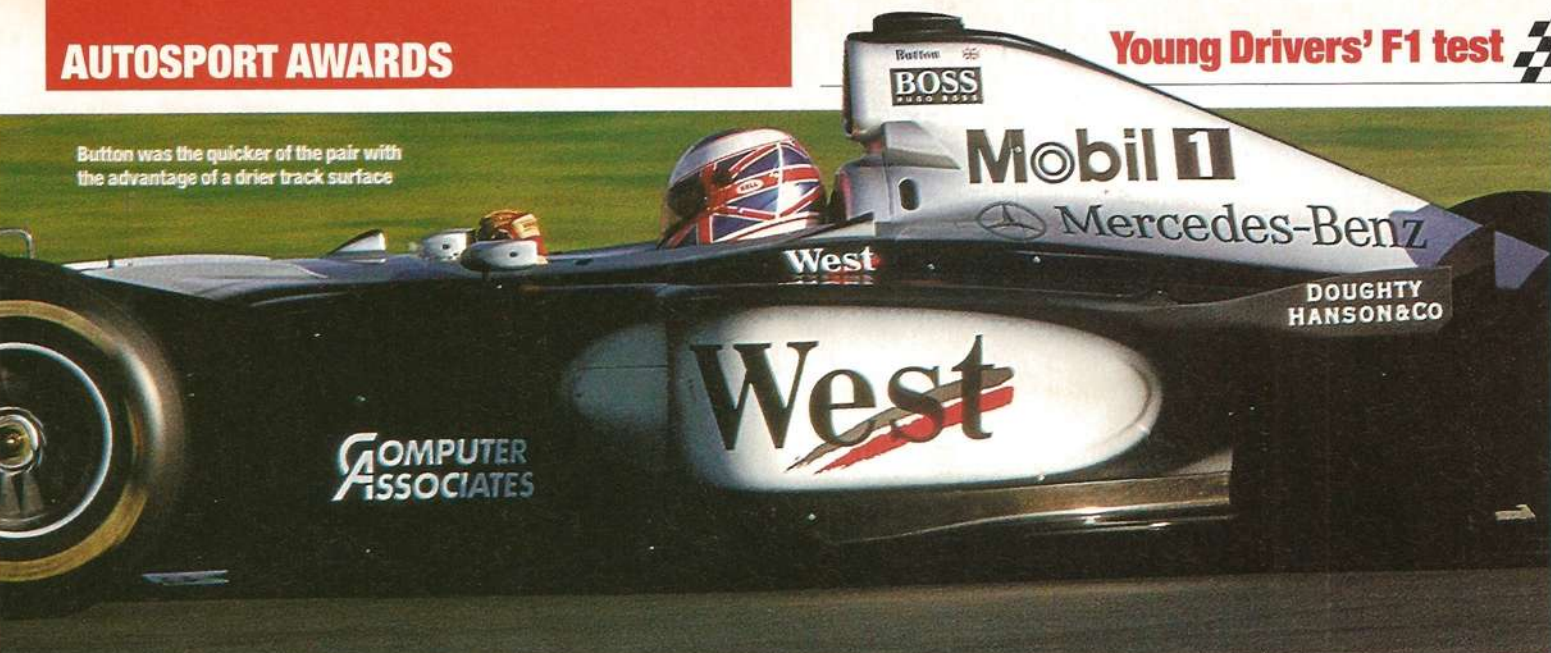
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Button was the quicker of the pair with the advantage of a drier track surface



asking questions, getting a feel for the pedals and instruments.

The racing driver instinct takes over, and for a moment this is just another machine to be understood, and mastered. Both then look up at the people gathered around and flash the smile again - back to the kid in a toy shop look.

The engineers and team members are used to a new driver's apprehension, and expertly keep them calm.

Kirkaldy says afterwards: "The team was excellent in helping to prepare us. They told us how

everything worked and made sure they answered any questions."

The call finally comes for the track action to start in earnest, with Kirkaldy doing his laps first. They go out on wet tyres on the damp but drying circuit, with two segments of 10 laps each, punctuated by a call to the pits for a chat to the engineers.

When the engine fires up in the garage, they have the added challenge of trying to ignore the gathered entourages who have been milling around the pit; parents pacing, managers on mobiles, friends chatting. Button's manager, David Robertson, even has a camcorder for the occasion, and gives a running commentary as his driver is strapped in. To everyone's relief the ignominy of stalling in the pits is avoided.

They say that if you can drive, you can drive - an inane obvious phrase, maybe, but one that rings true. Neither pilot takes time to tiptoe around, they're both straight on the gas, the Scot even kissing the grass as he blasts through Woodcote in a ball of spray on his first lap.

It's dryer for Button's run, and he duly goes 1.4s quicker with a 47.86s lap. He's particularly impressive into Copse, staying on

the throttle very late, flicking down two gears quickly and turning decisively before getting the power down early right from the word go. Kirkaldy is more circumspect - taking his time to build the speed up, but also proving more than capable of going rapidly.

No doubt confidence plays a part in this. Button is on the crest of a wave, two seasons into his career and everything is going well, whereas Kirkaldy has just come off the back of a difficult season in F3. Still, there's room for butterflies. While Kirkaldy is lapping, Button's father, former rallycross ace John, looks at his son and murmurs: "Now I haven't seen that look on his face for a while - he's nervous."

The smiles on the team members' faces show they're impressed,

especially with Button, whose consistency is excellent. By his second run he's talking to the chief engineer over the radio discussing how to save his tyres to get another quick lap in.

When it's all over, their eyes say it all as they're pushed into the garage - adrenaline and joy. When out of the car, they're bubbling.

"It was unbelievable - all I expected from F1," says Button. "It was an amazing feeling coming out of the pits. The sound is a big part of the experience, too, and the power is awesome - you really do feel like you've got five or six F3 engines behind you."

"That was phenomenal," concurs Kirkaldy. "The car has so much power and grip. It's how you imagine an ideal racing car to be - so driveable. Now ▶

STARS' CVs



This season has been the toughest to date for the 22-year-old Andrew Kirkaldy, who won the MCLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Driver Award in 1997. In his first season of British Formula 3, with Stewart Racing, he has struggled. A pole at Thruxton his best achievement.

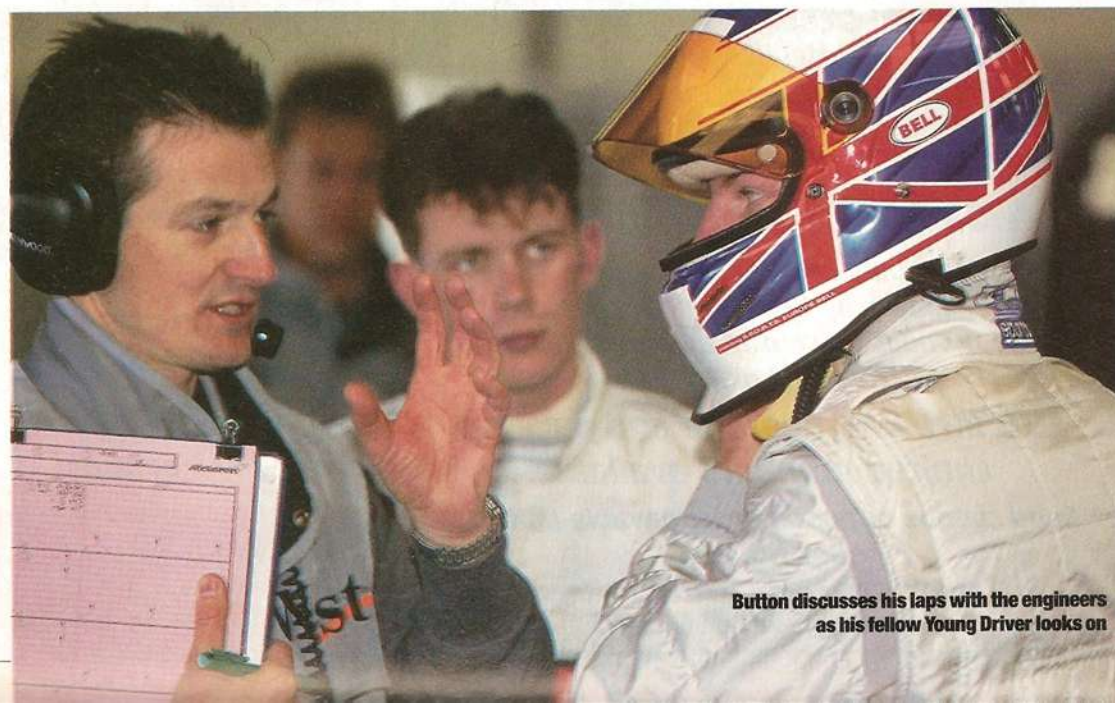
Still, seventh overall in such a series is respectable, and he is expected to return for a second crack in 2000. Was runner-up with Stewart in the '98 EFDA Euroseries after catching the eye the previous season by nearly beating the team's Luciano Burti in FVauxhall.



Things are moving very quickly for last year's Young Driver winner Jenson Button. His first car race was 19 months ago, yet he seems ready to make the leap to the Formula 3000 International series.

Won last year's British and Festival Formula Ford titles on his graduation to cars after a glittering karting career in Europe. The 19-year-old then moved to F3. Three wins, third overall and the top rookie was his reward. If promise turns to results, he will go all the way.

Kirkaldy was stunned by the power and grip of the Brazilian GP-winning car



Button discusses his laps with the engineers as his fellow Young Driver looks on

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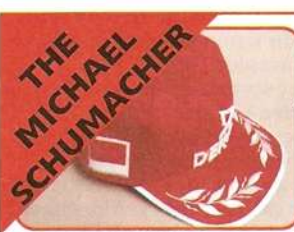


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Safe inside his helmet, Button can concentrate on the job in hand

◀ I'm not saying I had it on the limit, which is when racing cars do the nasty things they can, but it turns in when you want it to and handles the acceleration with ease."

Indeed, their adulation is not just about the pure speed, they marvelled at the car as a feat of engineering, how every mechanism is perfect, and the fact that it copes with the speed so well.

"I haven't seen that look for a while – he's nervous" JOHN BUTTON (JENSON'S DAD)

"The gearchange was so smooth, especially coming down the 'box," says Button. "I was impressed how forgiving the car was, too. When you get it sideways, it allows you to feel you can get it back. User-friendly."

Both drivers are pragmatic enough to know that a handful of tours around Silverstone still leaves them a long way short of being a GP racer – for the moment, anyway. But having proved to themselves that driving an F1 car is something they can physically do, they've still

clambered over an important psychological barrier.

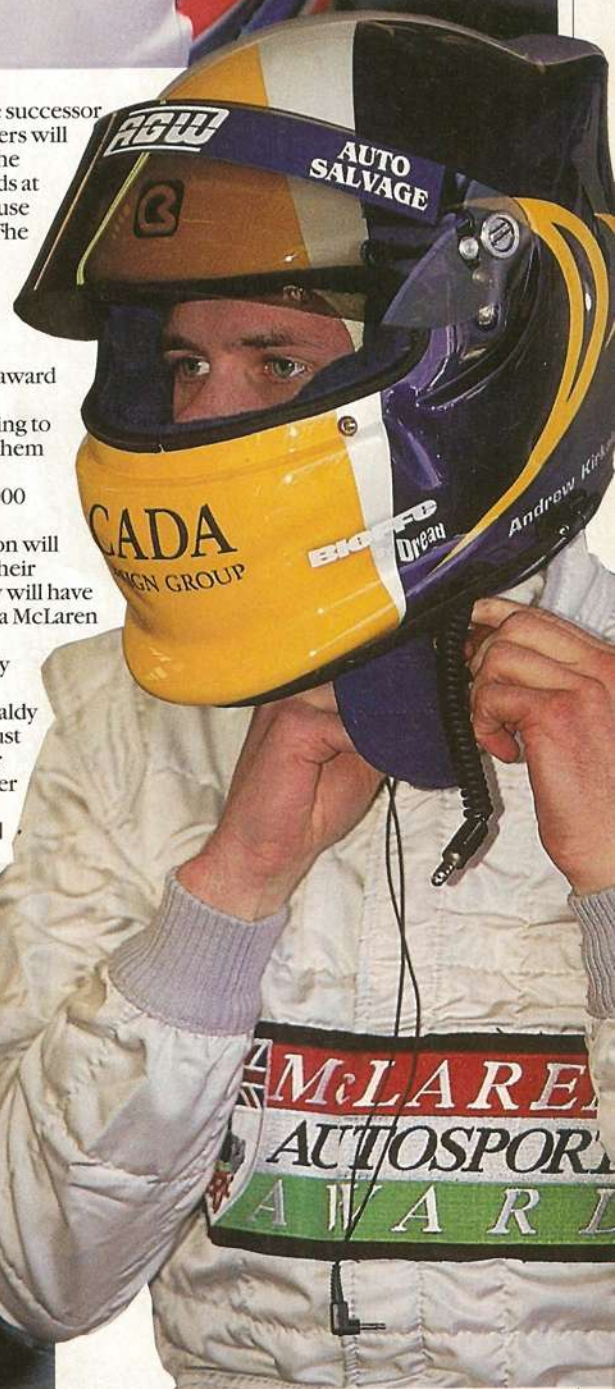
"I haven't come away saying that I'm good enough [right now] to be in F1," Kirkaldy explains. "But I have come away thinking that I'm going to work even harder than ever to get there. There's no better motivation to push your career forward than actually driving one of these cars."

When Button won the award last

year, McLaren boss Ron Dennis said he was capable of getting into the premier category in three years. Twelve months down the line, having driven a car, he feels it is still an attainable timetable. "It's definitely a leap I can make," he says in a matter-of-fact way. "It's still a racing car. It's a big step up [from F3], but you can still get in and drive. It's everything that goes with F1 – dealing with the team, engineers, media and the public – that makes it hard, not the driving fast bit."

This Sunday, the successor to these two winners will be announced at the AUTOSPORT Awards at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London. The six finalists who slugged it out at Silverstone last month for Britain's most prestigious talent award have been left on tenterhooks, waiting to know which one them has triumphed.

While the £50,000 cheque and the associated attention will be uppermost in their minds at first, they will have the chance to test a McLaren soon, too. They'll experience exactly the same rush of adrenaline as Kirkaldy and Button have just done, and another young British driver will take a further step to stardom. ■



WORLD RALLY



Stumped u the next ti



Sunday 0730. A lean, athletic figure jogs down the steps of Toyota's motorhome into November's fresh morning air. It isn't Didier Auriol, and it certainly isn't Carlos Sainz. The physical discipline of Formula 1 lives on with Martin Brundle, veteran of 158 Grands Prix.

He's shorter than you'd imagine, slightly balding - not that you'd notice on TV - and still appears super-fit. On the surface, he looks pretty relaxed. He chats with the well-drilled Toyota Team Europe crew, getting involved in a last-minute repair to his mobile phone. The aerial has cracked, but a tube of superglue comes to the rescue. If the team's radio fails, this little Ericsson might just get a message

"For all Brundle's undoubted talent he is a novice here"

through. Brundle fits in, looking and sounding, like one of the boys.

In 90 minutes, ITV's star F1 pundit will leave the microphone behind, and return to the steering wheel. The 40-year-old will be starting his second Rally Great Britain, in a works Toyota Corolla WRC. Its specification isn't quite as advanced as the Sainz or Auriol cars, but isn't far off.

0805. The Corolla regulars leave TTE's immaculate, yet temporary service area. Brundle's car sits alone on jacks. He's not due to leave for another half an hour. A number 35 starting position reflects his status in rallying. For all his undoubted talent he is a novice here.

While TTE waits for its third car to depart, other works teams dismantle their equipment and hotfoot to Silverstone for the next service. On the other side of the car park at Cheltenham racecourse, a

Sunday market sets up. It's a bizarre scene, where nomadic traders work alongside the best rally crews in the world.

0830. Brundle begins a warm-up in the

All photos: Mickie Lay

ntil me

Martin Brundle's '99 Rally GB ended after a brush with a tree, but he'll be back, says Andrew Golby



Running repairs: the car came off second best when Brundle hit a tree stump (left). The TTE mechanics go to work (above)



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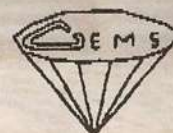
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The TTE crew has 20 minutes to carry out checks, fix any problems and bolt on a new set of tyres. Our dynamic duo take a well-earned break. For Brundle time flies past. Just as he's settling into a mug of tea, it's time to go. Looking harassed, he leaves his drink and jumps in the car.

On the following stage at Blenheim, car number 45 spins in sixth gear (see panel). There's no harm done, but the incident has served as a wake-up call. Finding the trouble spots isn't easy. "The first part of Blenheim had so much grip, and then all of a sudden you arrive at a corner, using the same mentality, and you're just travelling much too fast," says the driver.

This moment aside, the Anglo/Swedish combination seems to have worked well. They wind up 28th after the first day. Our man admits he didn't listen on the first stage ("I had the layout in my mind"), but says he obeyed instructions elsewhere. Arne is satisfied. "We've had no real problems," he says.

Back at the motorhome, Brundle remembers that lost cup of tea. "Yeah it was ridiculous. You cruise along on the road, and arrive with half an hour to spare, genuinely never breaking

◀ motorhome. He's rolling his shoulders, bouncing on his toes and mimicking a fast drumbeat with his forearms, making sure his muscles are ready for the test ahead.

Five minutes later, fellow ITV frontman Tony Jardine arrives. He's driving a Proton in the event. The pair welcome each other with a firm handshake, but don't talk for long. Pit lane reporter Louise Goodman is also on the rally, in a Ford Ka.

At 0840, Brundle buckles up alongside legendary co-driver Arne Hertz. Our hero couldn't ask for a more experienced partner. The Swede has won this rally five times, more than any other co-driver. His first was 28 years ago with Stig Blomqvist, before another four with Hannu Mikkola. If anybody can coax Martin to the finish, it's Arne.

Brundle looks relaxed, but he's full of butterflies. Fear of the unknown is an uncomfortable feeling, and there are 242 miles of special stages ahead. He admits: "The first stage starts with a 70-metre straight and then a sharp left-right. I have no idea how much grip there'll be."

He begins the rally with a similar level of experience in the car as he did in 1996, when competing in a Ford Escort RS Cosworth. This year, he might have had more testing but for a differential failure during Saturday's practice stage. The resulting repairs ate away two hours of further running. Nobody really expects him to finish, which leaves him with an interesting dilemma. Should he go flat out and risk a crash, or drive safely and confound those who said he wouldn't make it to the end?

"When the diff broke, some thought: 'Oh Brundle's off already!' I've got to increase the speed gradually or I'll definitely crash. It'll hurt when I'm two or three minutes slower than the others on longer

stages, but I'm not going to cruise, I'd rather crash," he says.

His performance on the first stage of the rally seems to prove the point. After SS1 at Cheltenham, he's 20th – five seconds slower than World Rally Champion Tommi Makinen, but within a second of recognised talents Bruno Thiry, Markko Martin and Toni Gardemeister. And there were no problems at the first corner.

1245. Brundle and Hertz have

arrived intact at the Silverstone service in 24th place after four stages. The previous two were on a 6.23-mile stage in the grounds of the Northamptonshire track. Brundle improved by almost 11s between his first and second attempts. Rally leader Juha Kankkunen was just 0.2s faster between SS3 and SS4. Reaching near perfection first time out is rallying's blackest art.



Arne Hertz has been in the winning car on five RAC rallies, but would not add to his total this time. Team talk: Brundle tells all to Geid Pfeiffer (chief engineer, left) and Escu Reiners



"It was a pathetic stage for my driving. There was more grip than I expected"

MARTIN BRUNDLE

the speed limit. And all of a sudden you arrive in service, and you haven't got time to eat or drink!"

Monday 0545. It's an early start to a long day in Wales. Radnor, the first stage, passes without incident, but Brundle isn't satisfied.

"It was a pathetic stage for my driving. There was a lot more grip than I expected, I only used it on the last three or four miles. You know the pacenotes are right, but it's difficult to stay flat over the crests. There was a bit of fog as well which was spooky. This is the first time I've got to the end of a Welsh stage, I just wish I'd been a minute quicker."

Getting used to seeing spectators at close quarters is another challenge to overcome. "If they knew how much the car was sliding as I approached them, they wouldn't stand there," he says. It doesn't help that many have their backs to Brundle and Hertz. When you're the 35th car to pass by, half the fans are already leaving for the next stage.

Ford privateer Henning Solberg passes Brundle on the stage, and the Toyota pair elect to take a 10s road penalty to allow Solberg to start the following test ahead of them. Their fair play is noble, but in the event is unnecessary. On SS9, Brundle turns up the wick, armed with a different tyre. Michelin's 'motorcross' rubber is a softer

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◀ compound, and the car feels more stable. He's only a handful of seconds slower than the Norwegian driver.

After SS11, Brundle has dropped to a low 40s position on the leaderboard. He reaches the day's second service at Builth Wells with growing confidence. While he waits to check in, his car is pounced upon by fans, marshals and a couple of photographers.

He sighs and stares straight ahead, hoping for a moment's peace. His support from the public has amazed him, but he needs some space now and again.

"You'd be sitting there waiting to go into a stage and people would just open the door and hand things in to be signed. I guess because I'm on the telly they think they know me," he says.

The well-wishers wait persistently beside his door, undaunted by a less-than-enthusiastic MB. He gives up the 'stand-off', winds down his window, and signs autographs with a smile. After another hurried 20 minutes at service, he heads for the forests, where he'll soon be very grateful for the spectators.

On SS13, the Corolla goes light over a crest, gets slightly off-line and thumps into a tree stump. The damage looks slight, but is to prove fatal. Hordes of fans rush to the Toyota's aid and manhandle it back onto the stage. "They were fantastic," acknowledges Brundle. The car completes Myherin 1, but it's in trouble.

Arne and Martin need to complete 32 road miles to the next service at Builth Wells. A holed radiator is the main problem, and temperatures are climbing fast. In desperation, the pair pull up by a stream. They can't accept aid from others, but they can

On through the night: all the obstacles were cleared on the event's first day



Celebrity status: the nature of the summer job means constant attention

help themselves. Brundle takes up the story.

"We had a torch, and a drinks bottle each. To get to the stream we had to clamber down a steep muddy bank. At one point, I was actually in the stream - it was freezing! We did five trips

between the car and the stream, but on the fifth, we realised the water we'd poured in had already percolated. It wasn't going to work. So we just sat in the car and waited until somebody towed us back to Builth Wells."



Help for a friend: Carlos Sainz showed the new boy the ropes in pre-event training

"People would just open the door and hand things in to be signed" MARTIN BRUNDLE

The agony only became worse, after the car fired up back at service. "It purred away, sounding perfect," Brundle groans.

"I was terribly disappointed. I got a lift back to Cheltenham - the journey seemed to take forever," he remembers a few days later.

Living with defeat doesn't rest easy with him. His recent torment at Le Mans - where he's been a frontrunner without reward - has almost persuaded the '90 winner never to take part again. Rallying is different. "I want to do this again," he says. "I don't give up that easily. People appreciate the spirit with which I entered into this - I'm just having a go, not trying to be a megastar."

Brundle remains honest to the end. It's his down-to-earth, ego-free style that endears him to so many on Sunday afternoons. Those who saw him in on the Rally GB simply watched a motor racing nut enjoying himself. ■

UP THE JUNCTION

After Carlos Sainz and Luis Moya completed SS5 at Blenheim, the Spanish pair radioed Martin Brundle to warn him of three particularly slippery junctions. Unfortunately, our man spun at the first one. This is his explanation to Carlos and Luis.

MB to LM: "What were you throwing out the window as you went along Luis, because when I arrived it was impossible!"

LM: [Laughs] "Yeah sure!"

MB: "At the beginning, it was grippy like hell. I thought, this is fantastic [makes an engine noise, and pretends to be steering]. I came over a crest into a 60 right one, and next thing I was going backwards through the trees - all over the place - and then we hit a straw bale. Then I had to start the engine, turn around. I couldn't believe how slippery it was."

Carlos sees Martin and starts laughing. "Hey! Three junctions.



I told you so: a rueful-looking Brundle wishes he'd listened more carefully to Sainz

That's why I called you, I said, 'please be careful, because it's slipperier than your notes!'"

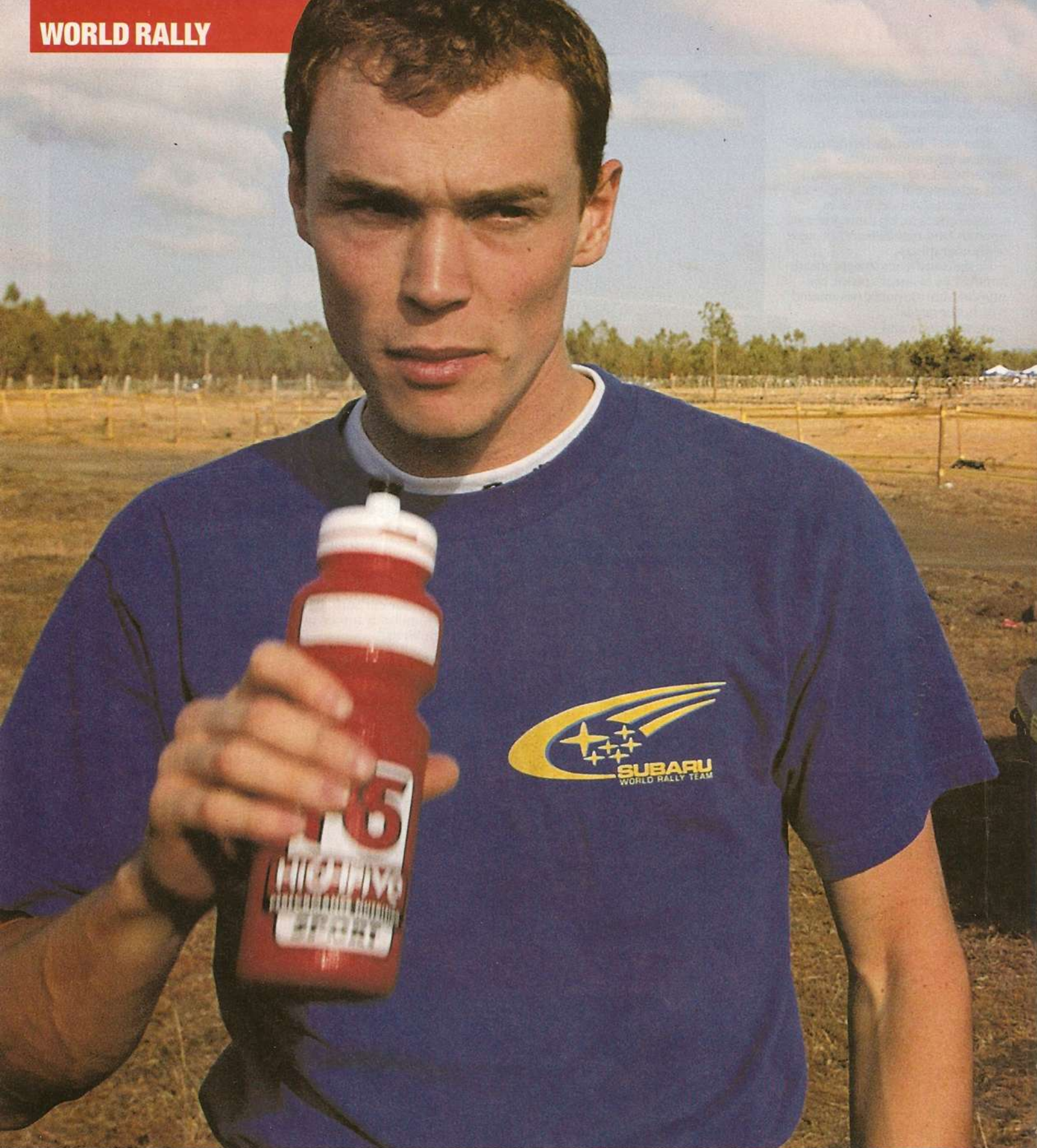
MB: "I missed the first one. I thought of two junctions, one in the mud before the lake, and the one at the end - the really tricky one. I had the other two in my mind. I should have gone through my notes with Arne, and reminded myself of where the junctions were, stupid."

Conversation switches to a pair of fast crests and a sixth-gear jump.

CS: "And the first two crests?"

MB: "Flat, completely flat out, and the jump, flat out no problem! [Carlos laughs] After I asked you for four corners, I thought I was pushing my luck. I thought, if I keep going he's going to say: 'Martin, piss off, drive it yourself!'"

Brundle enjoyed terrific support from the Spanish pair, before and on the event. Didier Auriol and Denis Giraudet also offered lots of advice.



Emotional is not a word you'd normally associate with Richard Burns' co-driver, Robert Reid. Like his pilot, he's a cool character: impassive, unshakeable. Yet 12 months ago, he admits he found it difficult to keep reading the pacenotes as the pair's Mitsubishi sped through Margam Park to their first Rally Great Britain win.

As they repeated the feat for Subaru last week, he kept his composure more effectively and

found the success all the sweeter as a result. "After the Safari and Rally GB wins last year, the victories become slightly less emotional, but more satisfying," he says. "In Margam this time, we were cooler and it was actually more enjoyable. It wasn't really until we were on top of the podium in Cheltenham, with that national anthem playing and air horns going off, that we realised what we'd done."

It was, by any standards, a fair achievement. In short, no one else

looked like winning the rally once it entered the Welsh forests. Juha Kankkunen was a threat, but a weak one. The Peugeots were a distant worry, Colin McRae was nowhere.

This was Burns' and Reid's rally, even if such a dominant position did have its downsides. "It was a nice situation to be in," says the Scot. "We'd pushed fairly hard on those first couple of tests on the second day, but after that it was like we were in command."

"We didn't have to push as hard as

"A lot of it is about confidence. Richard is happy with the car, it seems to suit his style well"



Beside Burns

Robert Reid, the man in a position to know, says his driver could grow into a title contender. By John McIlroy

we did to win in Australia. I guess you quantify that by how many risks we had to take. We were off the road more on the last stage in Bunnings than we were through the whole of the Rally GB."

This despite a final leg which supported the long-held belief that Britain's round of the World Rally Championship is one of its most unpredictable. "When we cleared the finish at Margam," says Reid, "John Spiller (Prodrive's team manager) was on the radio every 30

seconds saying, 'You'll never guess what's happened now...'

"As Britons, we probably don't realise this but the Rally GB is probably one of the hardest events to call in the entire season. Juha said before the start in Cheltenham that the season opens and closes with its two most unpredictable events: Monte Carlo and Britain."

As the man who's sat alongside Burns during both his successes on home turf, not to mention his three other WRC victories, Reid is well

equipped to put his recent achievements in perspective.

His conclusion is that while the driver's style might not have changed, his mental attitude has.

"A lot of it's about confidence," says the co-driver. "Richard feels happy with the car, it seems to suit his style well. I don't think what he does behind the wheel is any different than it was 12 months ago. But when you're confident, you tend to drive nearer the top of your performance window."

"That's what you're seeing from Richard. He's been consistently at the top of his level."

With such a strong second half to the season, Burns has already being touted as next year's world champion so many times it's easy to forget that Tommi Makinen is celebrating his fourth title in a row.

Reid is hardly likely to rule out a championship challenge, but he's retaining some sense of perspective. "You have to look at the way Richard and I have ▶

1, 2, Subaru.

Britain's No. 1, Richard Burns 1st, Juha Kankkunen 2nd.
Rally of Great Britain 1999.

1, 2, Subaru.

Britain's No. 1, Impreza 1st, Legacy 2nd.
JD Power/BBC Top Gear Customer Satisfaction Study 1999.



Subaru storm home in force with their third 1-2 victory in the 1999 World Rally Championship. A year where Subaru set more fastest stage times and won more rounds than any other team. A year that also sees Richard Burns become Britain's No. 1 driver and Subaru all set to roar into a new millennium.



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◀ progressed," he says. "It's always happened in a certain way. This year, we said we wanted to win rallies. By about halfway through the year people were murmuring about winning the championship."

"We said, 'OK, that could happen, but we're still aiming to win every rally.' Next year will be exactly the same. We'll carry that attitude over because if you're fighting to win rallies, and racking up victories, seconds and thirds, then you've got the basis for a challenge anyway."

Unfortunately for Subaru, Burns and Reid, the 2000 season starts with three events from which they drew just two points this time around. While they were, arguably, on route to Safari victory before mechanical failure intervened, the Impreza was hardly a threat to Makinen's Lancer on the Monte Carlo or in Sweden.

"This year, we've fought pretty damned hard for every point"

Reid knows the score, and points out that Prodrive (and Pirelli) are about to launch a full offensive to make sure the situation is reversed. "The next month or six weeks are devoted to giving us the best chance possible," he says, referring to a test schedule that entailed the crew leaving for snow mileage on Tuesday. They return home two days before Christmas.

It's a hard fight in a sport with no closed season, but Reid knows that his man is steely enough to cope. "This year, we've fought pretty damn hard for every second, every point we've scored," he says. "Look at Sweden, or the asphalt rallies. Some people would have just given up because there wasn't a chance of victory. I think you could say Richard put in gritty performances, the type of determination that could be useful next year."

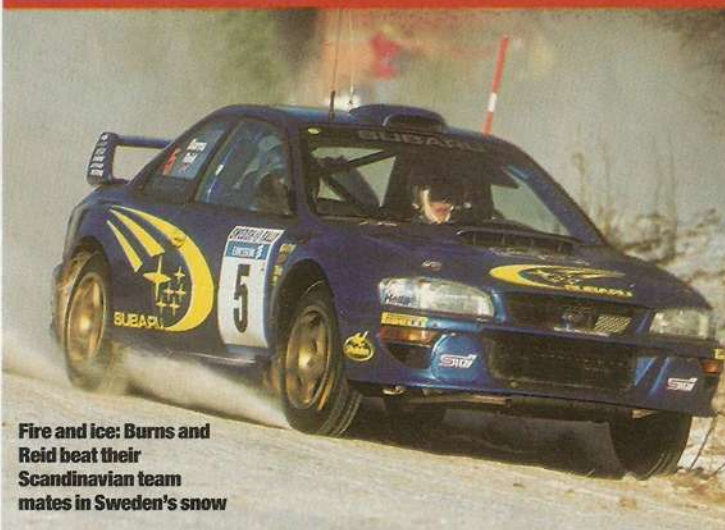
"Of course the championship's a possibility," he admits. "We've enjoyed winning and I don't think we're ready for it to stop just yet." ■

Kings of the underworld: a win in the Rally Australia



Purple haze: the pair have been a blur to most rivals in the second half of '99

REID'S FAVOURITES



Fire and ice: Burns and Reid beat their Scandinavian team mates in Sweden's snow

SWEDEN

This was probably Richard's grittiest drive of the year. We weren't in contention for a win, but we still fought with Juha [Kankkunen], right down to the last stage. And we beat him.

FINLAND

Strange, really, you'd think I'd pick the victories! We'd only driven competitively in Finland twice before, so to be comfortably in second and push Juha all the way was fantastic.

RALLY GB AND AUSTRALIA

I can't really separate these two. We had a big fight in Australia and had to dig deep, but winning back-to-back Rally GBs is special, too. Let's just say the season finale was spectacular.



Pipped at the Finnish: the number 5 car was only narrowly beaten by Kankkunen in Finland

SPECIAL FEATURE





SPIN IN A TWIN TUB

Chip Ganassi is quietly reviving America's interest in slicks and wings by building a two-seater Champ Car and getting Mario Andretti to drive the great and the good. Gordon Kirby hitched a ride with a legend

Motor racing remains a marginal sport in America. It is misunderstood by the country's stick-and-ball-worshipping sports media, many of whom don't consider racing to be an athletic endeavour, and by the general population as a whole. NASCAR has made some recent inroads into America's pop culture, but road racing and single-seater racing lag far behind. The situation has been made worse by a long political war and the subsequent CART-IRL split which has separated the Indy 500 from the rest of American open-wheel racing.

Absent a reunion with the Indy 500 and lacking strong, directed

leadership from CART, single-seater racing has lost position in the fiercely competitive domestic American sports market.

Everyone is wringing their hands about what to do, hoping some oracular being will invent a magical marketing programme to turn things around. Unfortunately, there's only so much that scores of marketing mavens and gales of slick presentations can do.

Amid all this head-scratching, quadruple-champion-team owner Chip Ganassi has come up with CART's best marketing tool in years. Ganassi has quietly built a two-seat Reynard-Honda Champ Car, and while Ron Dennis has been reluctant to run any press people in his much-heralded McLaren two-

seater, Chip is delighted to have members of the fourth estate ride in his car.

Ganassi's team built the two-seat Reynard 98I without any big hurrahs, and to everyone's surprise the machine made its debut in August at his own sparkling new Chicago Motor Speedway. The squad boss plans to continue

"I realised there wasn't going to be any messing about... Mario was into his rhythm"

operating the car in a similar low-key manner in partnership with Honda, running it at a handful of tracks for local VIPs and selected press and media people.

The master stroke was asking Mario Andretti to drive the car. Mario, 59, hasn't raced in five years, but he's the perfect man for the job - totally capable and infinitely experienced. Despite his retirement, Andretti is still America's most famous racing driver. He attends most CART races as a spokesman for Texaco, and the job of driving Ganassi's two-seater has put a new bounce in his step. Of course, a ride at speed in a real race car with Mario Andretti is a memory any motor racing fan will treasure for the rest of their life.

At Laguna Seca recently, I was

able to cajole my way into a ride with Mario. The spectacular California road circuit seemed a perfect place to, in Andretti's words: "experience the sensations we go through". If anyone doubts that physical strength and athletic agility are required in racing, I can assure them they will quickly change their mind after a few laps with the man in Ganassi's Reynard.

I had a similar experience at Laguna Seca many years ago aboard a Shadow CanAm car driven by Jackie Oliver and powered by an eight litre aluminum Chevy V8. There was neither passenger seat nor belts. I sat on the aluminum floor and hung on to the roll bar behind me with one hand and the dash panel with the other.

The first time Oliver took me up to the Corkscrew I was convinced I was about to fly out of the cockpit, off to Salinas and into the afterlife. I hung on grimly, scrunching myself back down against the floorpan as best I could, enjoying the thrill but not taking in many of the subtleties.

This time was much different. Climbing into the cockpit behind Mario and sliding into the seat was like getting into any single-seater. My feet and legs slipped snugly alongside Mario's hips and the seating position fit my just-shy-of-fifteen-stone girth like the proverbial glove. I was amazed!

After Chip's guys belted me in they fitted a stationary steering wheel to the shaft in front of me. I was ready to go, hands on the wheel. "Ready?" Mario asked over the radio. "Yep. Let's go," I



Ganassi's two-seater is a huge marketing coup for the squad with four Champ Car titles under its belt

Paul Webb

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answered. And away we went.

Mario lit up the tyres as we left the pits. He kept it going up through the gears, accelerating hard up the hill and out onto the track. Right away, I realised there wasn't going to be any messing about. He'd been running the car with passengers aboard all morning and had just completed a couple of fresh runs on new tyres. Everything was up to temperature, and Mario was into his rhythm.

Over the brow beyond the pits the car got light for a second or two before we dived down into turn one, the G-loadings already rolling at us. I hunkered down in the cockpit, bracing myself for the ride. For indeed, it's the acceleration and cornering loads that are impressive. Sure, the thing stops on a dime – or less – but I was ready for that.

In fact, I was a little surprised with the braking, believing initially that Mario was braking a trifle early. I quickly realised what he was doing as he got on the throttle early and drove the car to the apex, feeding the power progressively, gathering speed and loading all the time.

There was a little understeer on

“Those laps pushed to new heights my respect for the young men who race Champ Cars”

initial turn-in, but as the power began to come in, the chassis and tyres hooked up. The level of grip was genuinely awesome, and the power delivery and Mario's gear changes were remarkably smooth. I was able to enjoy the flow of it, totally confident in my driver.

Going over the rise on the ascent to the Corkscrew is the most exciting part of a lap at



Fifteen stone of motorsport writer loved the G-whizz racing thrill



Acceleration and cornering loads gave Kirby his most vivid insight into the stresses of Champ Car racing

Dan Boyd

Laguna. It's also the fastest part, getting up to 160mph. The car got light over the brow and my stomach rolled a little as I tried to settle myself for the dive down through the Corkscrew. I was just sitting there, enjoying the ride, but I imagined how easy it would be to clip the kerb as it popped up suddenly on the right.

Two days earlier, Gonzalo Rodriguez had done exactly that,

knocking his foot off the brake pedal and snagging the throttle as he trod back on brake. It had proved fatal for the Penske driver, and it was hard not to think of this tragedy as I hurtled around the track. My speed was bringing home to me the fine line these racers tread each time they take to the track.



Paul Webb

ANDRETTI ON THE TWO-SEATER

“The car has four inches more wheelbase than normal, which means it's not as agile as a normal car, but having said that the long wheelbase makes it a very stable car. I would characterise it as a proper CART Champ Car with fifty-five gallons of fuel.

“That's the best way I could describe it. You have not only the added weight of the passenger but also the added weight of the extra cockpit and so forth. So the car is quite a bit overweight – and it feels like it. I can feel the weight in braking and accelerating.

“Believe it or not, twenty pounds makes a difference. I'll have to adjust my braking points and so forth, but it doesn't do weird things if I have a person who weighs 210 lbs versus someone who weighs 175 lbs.

It's a very nicely balanced car with as safe a feeling ride as I can imagine, so it is fun to drive because of that. I don't feel like I'm taking chances with anyone because it's an enormous responsibility, but given all that and the tyre situation, I drive it pretty damn hard.”

“I adapted to the car immediately. I didn't have the luxury of a lot of running in the car, but right away I was in the swing of things. The first time I drove it on a strange oval, Chicago, the track was slippery and I was one of the first cars out there,



Andretti is taking his new role seriously

but I felt right away that this is very do-able. That speaks volumes for the balance of the car, for the preparation and the set-up they gave me.

“There's a sense of responsibility that I keep in mind all the time, especially in braking. I always give myself plenty of time so that I'm not going to get into a panic situation. I know I can give a good, honest ride without delving into that territory. I feel very confident that every ride is as safe as humanly possible. I want people to come away with a very good experience.

“It's well done and well executed. I have to congratulate the Ganassi organisation. They provide a good group of guys to run the car – very safety-minded. I feel like I'm very productive doing this.”

I focused entirely on Mario's dive to the left, down through the Corkscrew. Rapid changes of speed and direction slapped us hard one way, then the other, right front wheel off the ground for a moment. The descent from the Corkscrew is fast and furious through a series of heavily loaded rights and lefts.

Coming out of the last turn to begin our timed lap, Mario ran the right front wheel into the dirt – just a little. Around we went again, and then a third time, before coming into the pits. My quick lap took 1m15.51s, a 106.70mph average. That was seven seconds off the pole but almost on full tanks (which I most assuredly represent) at race pace. It was the fastest lap Mario gave anyone that day.

Three circuits were fun, but I imagine that after five my neck would struggle to keep my head upright and my stomach would rebel. Ten laps would be an endurance test. Beyond that I'd be wailing over the radio to let me out. Of course, I wasn't driving, pushing hard against the wheel, having to make rapid decisions and motions. My hands, forearms and neck weren't doing any work to speak of.

Those few laps filled me with pleasure and awe. They pushed to new heights my respect for the young men who race Champ Cars. I now know how impossible it would be for me to even contemplate driving an 83-lap race. For anyone unfamiliar with racing, three laps with Mario would be a massive mind-blower, and there's no doubt that the more the media-at-large understand “the sensations we go through” the better for the sport. ■

ADRIAN'S WALL

Bobby Rahal recalls how he gave a young Newey the design freedom he needed to leave Indycars and break into the F1 bastion. Based on extracts from the biography of the Champ Car great by Gordon Kirby

Adrian Newey is recognised as the greatest Formula 1 designer of his generation. That much abused word 'genius' is often ascribed to the man responsible for McLaren's late 1990s revival. In his case, maybe that word does apply.

F1 might be his world these days, but Newey cut his teeth in the USA working in Indycar racing. His career took off at the Truesports team as race engineer to Bobby Rahal in '84 and '85.

In his new autobiography, Rahal acknowledges how important Newey was to his career and explains how the pair got together.

The first thing Newey did for Truesports was modify the March 84C. Newey pointed out that the standard car was oversized and overweight. He tried to reduce its size and modified the bodywork and wings - all without a wind tunnel.

By the end of the season, the Truesports car had been developed to the level of the Lola, which had started the season with an advantage over the March. The inexperienced Newey still had a lot to learn, particularly about oval racing, but the situation with Rahal and

Truesports was an educational environment in which he bloomed.

"The first test I went to was at Phoenix on the oval," Newey recalls, "and it was pretty much an eye-opener. Having done one season of Formula 2, to turn up at a short oval and try to understand how to engineer the car was a very rapid learning experience, and for that I will always be grateful to Bobby in particular, and also to Steve [Horne, team manager], for their patience in allowing me to find my feet."

Like Newey, Rahal and Horne were relatively inexperienced with Indycars and ovals, but they were willing to try the designer's ideas. The openness to fresh thinking might have been a difficult environment to find in a more established team, Newey believes.

"We made some mistakes," he concedes, "but equally we had a fairly adventurous approach to the whole thing, which could bring new avenues and benefits. Certainly, as I found my feet, Bobby and I started to develop a close relationship, which, in all honesty, I probably only ever matched once since - with Damon Hill in '96, where we really understood pretty much what we



Rahal and Newey turned the March into a world beater

wanted out of the car. Bobby was able to explain to me very precisely what the car was doing."

Despite Trueman suffering from cancer, Horne and the team believed that with Newey on board, they had a realistic chance of challenging for the title. For his part, Newey was impressed with Bobby's driving ability and intellect. "He was an intelligent driver," he says. "He would always think out his strategy during a race. He would push when

oval and the Laguna Seca road course. Those races helped him to finish the year third in the points - ahead of Danny Sullivan and Rick Mears, but well behind champion Mario Andretti and Tom Sneva.

"We had turned it [the March] from a truck into a car capable of beating the Lolas," Rahal commented. "That was through Adrian's influence and efforts."

Both Rahal and Newey had shown their talent in '84, and Newey was

"We turned it from a truck into a car capable of beating Lolas" BOBBY RAHAL

RAHAL AND FERRARI

Early in 1985, an experimental relationship developed between Truesports and Ferrari.

At the time, Ferrari was embroiled in one of its many fierce political battles with motor racing's international ruling body, the FIA.

Ferrari was threatening to quit Formula 1 and race Indycars in America instead unless some changes were made in the way the FIA administered F1. It needed to demonstrate at least some intent to switch to Indycars. It did so by co-opting Bobby Rahal and one of Truesport's March-Cosworths for some secret testing at its Fiorano test track. Then it started designing and building an Indycar and engine.

Rahal remembers: "This was right in the middle of the racing season, and I went over there to test in September. We had a skeleton crew over there, and we tried to convince Adrian [Newey] to leave March and design the Ferrari Indycar, but we didn't know March had committed Adrian to Kraco."

There followed an unprecedented time

of secret testing and Machiavellian strategies. Enzo Ferrari's son, Piero Lardi, was put in charge of the project, and CART's series sponsor, PPG Industries, got involved in serious discussions about sponsoring the car. With Newey unavailable, Ferrari decided to hire Austrian designer Gustav Brunner to create its Indycar.

Ultimately, the Ferrari episode came to nothing. Ferrari certainly spent a lot of time and money on the project, making it a political ruse of the finest kind. "In the end," Rahal notes, "Enzo was just pulling everybody's chain."

Four years later, Ferrari's turbo V8 Indycar engine was resurrected and carried the Alfa Romeo nameplate. From '89 through '91, the rebadged Ferrari engine raced in CART and at Indianapolis. It was conspicuously unsuccessful, however, living at the tail of the field despite the talents of top drivers like Al Unser Sr and Danny Sullivan.

Ferrari's Indycar: a political pawn that never ran



he needed to, but would hold back when he could get away with it. He very rarely made stupid mistakes.

The year didn't start too well because Rahal was dogged for a few months by mononucleosis. "In March and April I was in bed," he recalls. "I had no energy. I'll never forget. I would sleep so silently, it was almost like I was dead."

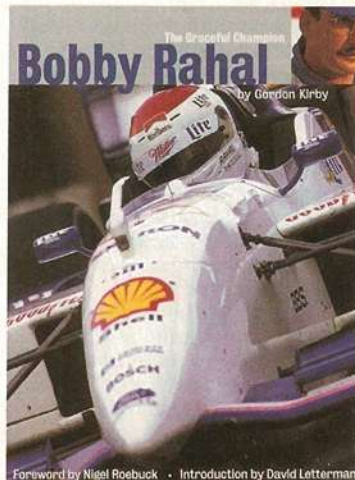
A mixed season ended on a high with victories in the final two races in October on the one-mile Phoenix

duly promoted to chief designer of the '85 March Indycar. As chief designer, he had to define the concepts and oversee the detail design, fabrication, engineering and production of more than 20 cars. The new position made his life busier than ever. He had to handle two jobs: as March's chief designer and Truesports' race engineer.

He was on a rigorous schedule, flying to England for wind-tunnel tests and to supervise the design of the car, then flying back to the States for the next race or test. He believes the design and development of the '85 March Indycar suffered as a result, although it had an edge over the new Lola.

Much like the previous year, the season started poorly. Then things came right at Mid-Ohio, the team's home track. Rahal won from pole. The designer finished the year with a flourish, winning in the Michigan 150 and at Laguna Seca. Again, he was third in the championship.

At the end of '85, much to Bobby's dismay, Newey departed Truesports



Bobby Rahal: The Graceful Champion by Gordon Kirby, David Bull Publishing, £24.99. Distributed in the UK by Haynes



Rahal (left) and Newey worked closely in the Truesport years. It paid dividends

The designer had a major influence on the March 85C. He feels it had an edge over the Lola rival – but he suffered slightly through the constant transatlantic travelling it all involved

to take over the race engineer's job with Maury Kraines' team, Kraco.

He explains: "With Kraco, I wanted to be in a position to move into F1 at some stage in the near future. That meant by the middle of the year I needed to be free to reduce my Indy commitments so I could start concentrating on the

design of an F1 car for whatever team I joined."

So Newey went to work designing the March 86C Indycar and joined Kraco as race engineer for Michael Andretti, who would battle fiercely with Rahal for the '86 title. In the middle of the year, his plans came to fruition: he joined Carl Haas' new

Beatrice-Force F1 team as a designer and race engineer.

Rahal was devastated by Newey's departure from Truesports. "One of the greatest disappointments of my life was when Adrian went off to Kraco," he says. "We ended up winning the championship in '86, but when he left, that was a blow.

"The thing that made Adrian so great to me was his intuitiveness. Yes, he's book smart, but he's the kind of guy that can wet his finger and see which way the wind is blowing and react to it. There are lots of great engineers that are book smart, but I think intuitiveness is what makes an engineer great." ■

CADDY PREPARES

When sportscar privateer Briggs Cunningham took a pair of Cadillac Series 61 coupes to Le Mans in 1950, he had no illusions about the challenge that awaited him.

The team knew that La Sarthe is a stern mistress, one who will slap you hard if you dare to treat her with the slightest contempt.

In the end, 10th and 11th places were a fine result for the cars in their first assault on the daunting 8.475-mile circuit.

Nearly 50 years on, Cadillac is returning to the French track once again, with the all-new sports prototype Northstar LMP. The mood in the present team has the same respectful edge as its predecessor.

Many marques have gone to the French endurance classic with bold ambitions of instant glory, but the US firm appreciates that success might not come as quickly as it wishes – the 24 Hours today is as tough as ever.

It is putting itself on the same playing field as prestigious European rivals such as Mercedes, BMW and Porsche in a bid to garner a higher profile in Europe. It is an area in which parent company General Motors is keen to improve sales. Win on Sunday, sell on Monday, as the saying goes.

"We're looking for that respect," explains GM Racing's executive director, Herb Fishel. "The idea that we'll be somebody to be dealt with. A race as historic and prestigious as Le Mans helps us prove the excellence of our global premium brands by highlighting them in the most demanding of venues."

GM Racing already runs a moderately successful GTS sportscar programme with a pair of Chevrolet Corvette C5-Rs, but you have to be running at the head of the field to get big accolades.

Mercedes,
Porsche,
Toyota and
Nissan



The Northstar V8 was powerful enough to be the pole star at the '99 Daytona 24 Hours



Pointing the way ahead:
Wayne Taylor with GM
vice-president John Smith

have all scrapped plans to return to La Sarthe next year, but it doesn't mean Cadillac's mission to be top of the heap will be any easier.

The Schnitzer team can be expected to run the BMW assault as if it were still a full works effort, and Audi, Panoz and Chrysler will provide equally stern competition.

Cadillac project manager Jeff Kettman also knows there's the daunting ribbon of tarmac itself to contend with.

"We don't have any control over who attends, but it's still a big challenge because it's Le Mans," he says. "You're not racing the other cars as much as the track."

"We're respectful of our competition, and, looking at what teams such as Mercedes, Audi and BMW have done, we realise we're the new kids on the block. It's unrealistic to say that we're going to win in our first year. For sure

winning is what drives us, but we'll be happy if we can just qualify and finish well."

The driving force behind Cadillac's latest assault is the road car-derived Northstar engine. The four-litre, twin-turbo V8 has proved reliable in its first few tests, and has propelled the car to lap times good enough to have taken pole at Daytona this year.

Strangely, though, the make has picked a couple of wild-card partners – Riley & Scott and Pirelli.

While R&S chassis have tasted success at the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours, where well-equipped privateer teams can shine on the rough tracks, its record at Le Mans has been less impressive.

It has struggled with limited funds and privateer-run efforts against the boys with the big bucks in the French enduro. However, Cadillac is confident it can change that (see panel).

Pirelli, too, is not a tyre chosen by top runners at Le Mans. The US make picked it above the likes of Michelin and Bridgestone as it offered a unique opportunity.

"Michelin is probably the number one group to work with, which most teams do," says Kettman. "But Pirelli has promised to develop a tyre specifically for us as its number one programme in sportscar racing. Running something completely different from the opposition could give us that crucial advantage."

Another potential edge is the latest in hi-tech gadgets. A night vision device similar to that in the new Cadillac DeVille road car is expected to be installed, too.

However, Le Mans isn't just about the car you run; you need a top-quality wheelman to get it round the place. A race-bred stallion is as much use as a donkey in a steeplechase when you put Eddie the Eagle behind the reins.

To this end the manufacturer has opted wisely. Heading its driving



Andy Wallace has been snapped up to head the driver line-up



S TO TEE OFF

The US make is about to take a full-blooded swing at next year's Le Mans 24 Hours, but knows rough times lie ahead before it joins victory row. By Toby Waller

“Winning is what drives us, but we’ll be happy if we can qualify and finish well”

JEFF KETTMAN

force is Le Mans and sportscar veteran Andy Wallace – a man who knows every crease, bump and curve of the French road circuit. The 38-year-old won there at his first attempt with the Jaguar XJR-9LM team in '88, and has notched up a trio of victories in the 24 Hours at Daytona and two at the Sebring 12 Hours since then.

His most recent pair of Daytona wins, in '97 and '99, were clinched in the R&S MkIII, so he already knows the marque well.

He has been pleasantly surprised by the new car's sustained grip and improved aerodynamics, but knows victory first time out will be difficult. The challenge is to take the baby and turn it into a man.

“As a driver, you always look for wins,” he says. “It will be hard for Cadillac in its first year, but not impossible. I’ve been with great teams that have won races and there’s nothing different here. The car looks stunning, is beautifully put together, and Cadillac and



The digital age: Caddy uses the most up-to-date technology in the sports racer's cockpit, but a night vision system is still to come



If a Le Mans victory is forthcoming, Cadillac will be in the pink



As well as the sports racer, GM will be campaigning two Corvette C5-Rs in the GTS class

"We've got work to do, but plenty of time to develop the car" ANDY WALLACE

◀ GM are serious about winning. "I know what Riley & Scott can do and they have very talented people. We're a long way forward in the programme, and the car is reliable and fast. We've got a lot of work to do, but we've still got plenty of time to develop the car further."

The team has also snapped up veteran South African Wayne Taylor, who would probably head the driver would probably head the brief list of any team boss after a brief glance at his CV.

The 39-year-old has notched up three World Sportscar titles, including two in the GM-backed R&S Oldsmobile in '96 and '97. Wins at Daytona and Sebring were clinched along the way, but, somewhat surprisingly, he has never taken overall victory at Le Mans. He's hungry to fill that gap.

"I want to complete the book," he says, "but Le Mans is so hard that it will be very difficult to win at the first attempt. Most of the team has experience of the event, so we should be competitive and, with a three-year campaign, we've got three shots at it."

Also in the team is rising star Max Angelelli. The Italian ex-Formula 3 champion is a relative newcomer to the world of sportscar racing, but has already experienced success at

last year's Daytona 24 Hours. There he shared a Doyle-Risi Ferrari 333SP with Taylor and '98 Le Mans winner Allan McNish.

With the rumour mill linking four-time Daytona winner Butch Leitzinger and regular Porsche factory driver McNish to the line-up, it looks like the team has the pedallers and the car to do the job. The long wait until June 18 will seem like another 50 years to the men and women of Cadillac. ■

BELOW PAR?

If you want to win at Le Mans, then picking a Riley & Scott chassis may seem a pretty strange choice. The marque has had success in the Daytona 24 and Sebring 12 Hours, but has struggled in France.

It had Oldsmobile backing for its first Le Mans attempt in 1996, but two other privateer-run assaults have been underfunded compared to the top works teams.

Cadillac is confident that its extra backing, allied to knowledge gained by R&S with its Indy Racing League single-seater chassis and recent buyout by Reynard, should help the firm clinch the third sportscar diamond to add to its racing crown.

An all-new carbonfibre monocoque replaces the MkIII's ageing design, but R&S has kept the car's innovative double-rocker suspension that proved so successful at the gruelling Daytona and Sebring circuits.

"This car is a big departure for us, and we like to think it's state of the art," says R&S chief designer Carl Seaberg. "The MkIII was a good car, but had had its run. We kept the suspension because we saw no reason to change that, but the

monocoque is a big step forward. We learnt a lot from the IRL chassis."

Project manager Jeff Kettman says R&S is the perfect choice. The marque will also benefit from the years of experience that R&S boss Bill Riley will bring to the pit wall.

"They have a good sportscar racing record, and we felt that they had gained technology by working on the IRL cars, as well as Reynard's involvement," says Kettman. "We'd



Day by day: R&S won Daytona's 24 Hours

shared success with the Oldsmobile-powered MkIII at Daytona and Sebring in '96 and '97, and that helped it come out on top.

"This is the first time that R&S has had factory involvement at this level. From the outside it may look like we've taken a risk, but we feel that risk has the opportunity to pay off."



A stunning silver colour scheme will be adopted for the race. It's just as well Merc's absent



2000 Championship Driver Information

IN BRIEF

The new Euro Formula Palmer Audi (EFPA) championship is a 20 race series with events in the UK, Belgium, France and Germany, for 300 bhp single seater cars. It is designed to provide the best preparation for International F3000 and represents outstanding value at just £125,000 + VAT for the season. The overall champion wins a fully funded International F3000 drive for 2001, while the junior class champion wins a 50% funded drive in Euro Formula Palmer Audi 2001.

Formula Palmer Audi is run by ex Formula 1 driver Jonathan Palmer to provide aspiring F1 drivers with the fairest, most affordable series in which to develop and prove their skills, and be rewarded by career progression if they are successful. 1998 champion Justin Wilson went on to be one of the top rookies in F3000 in 1999 with the Astromega team. Richard Tarling is 1999 champion, and has won a fully funded drive in EFPA 2000.

Formula Palmer Audi uses identical Van Diemen chassis and identical engines from partner Audi. Furthermore all race cars are operated by the FPA team from its superb Bedford Autodrome base. Drivers benefit from total equality of equipment and opportunity to perform.

Controlled operation by one single team is the only way costs can be minimised yet equality of car performance guaranteed. The cost reduction is incredible - Euro Formula Palmer Audi is approximately one third of the cost of a conventional, comparable formula such as Formula 3.

The superb value of Formula Palmer Audi also comes from dramatically increasing benefits for sponsors, with great looking cars, superb television coverage, a regular high quality magazine, excellent hospitality and opportunities for sponsor guests to drive FPA cars and ride in the 2 seater car at FPA's own Bedford Autodrome circuit.



THE CAR

The Euro Formula Palmer Audi car is an evolution of the immensely successful, strong and easy to repair UK FPA car, designed and built by Van Diemen. All chassis will be refurbished to as new condition over the winter and modified to EFPA specification by incorporating the following:

- Power increase to 300 bhp race power and around 350 bhp on overboost
- New larger turbocharger
- Increased capacity intercooler
- Revised engine management system
- Evolution chassis structure fully crash tested to FIA standards
- New composite higher downforce front wing assembly
- New composite higher downforce rear wing assembly
- New barge boards
- Tyre size increase to front 250/570/R13, rear 300/600/R13
- New fuel tank with capacity increase from 27L to 42L
- Larger brake discs
- New high strength driveshafts
- New exhaust system without silencer to international championship regulations
- Increased capacity data acquisition system

Engine

The Euro Formula Palmer Audi engine is a 1.8 litre 20 valve turbocharged Audi unit producing 300 bhp at 7000 rpm. Engine reliability is outstanding - no driver has ever had an engine failure in a race during two seasons of racing. Absolute equivalence of engine performance is essential and to ensure this every driver's engine in 2000 will be a brand new unit supplied by Audi and prepared by Audi's RTN operation, who provide technical support at every race and test.

Much greater overtaking opportunity and tactical scope is provided by the overboost mechanism. When the driver presses the steering wheel button, the turbo boost is increased so 350 bhp is available for a six second duration. Each driver has five shots of overboost, which is only operational in the races.



Data Acquisition

The advanced Stack data acquisition system includes a dash display with an analogue rev counter and the ability to scroll through various digital displays including all the normal temperatures and pressures, turbo boost, air inlet temperature, exhaust gas temperature, overboost time left and lap time.

The system monitors a comprehensive range of parameters including wheel speed, engine revs, throttle position, steering angle (now from a rack potentiometer) and longitudinal and lateral G. A unique and extremely valuable feature is the Predictive Performance Meter, which continuously displays the expected lap time as the driver progresses through the lap.

Gearbox

The durable five speed H pattern Hewland FGC gearbox will continue to be used. A six speed sequential gearbox was evaluated but did not improve performance and would have considerably increased costs. Gear ratios are changed by the team to be optimal for each circuit.

Chassis Set Up

The formula provides drivers with a comprehensive understanding of chassis setting up skills with clear, consistent engineering advice and sufficient means of adjustment to optimise high and low speed balance.

To minimise costs, no components may be changed. However, in line with EFPA's role as the ideal driver training series for F3000, an increased range of adjustments is now permitted, which include:

- Front ride height
- Rear ride height
- Front camber
- Rear camber
- Front castor
- Increased front pre-load range from 0 to 6 turns
- Front and rear wing setting
- Front and rear anti-roll bar setting
- Front and rear damper settings
- Front and rear tracking
- Tyre pressures
- Brake balance

THE 2000 CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2000 EFPA Championship is sanctioned by the FIA and will be run by the BRSCC. It will consist of 20 races according to the following provisional calendar:

Date	Circuit	Race
April 2	Donington GP	1 & 2
April 30	Brands Hatch	3 & 4
May 14	Silverstone GP	5 & 6
May 28	Donington GP	7 & 8
June 11	Spa GP	9 & 10
July 9	Nurburgring GP	11 & 12
August 13	Snetterton	13 & 14
August 28	Oulton Park	15 & 16
September 10	Brands Hatch GP	17 & 18
October 1	Magny Cours GP	19 & 20

All overseas races and the Silverstone race will run alongside international professional events. All other races will be run as part of the BRSCC premier package.

The duration of the qualifying sessions has been increased from 20 to 30 minutes in view of longer Grand Prix circuits and also to allow more time for the greater chassis changes permitted.

The approximate length of the races has been increased from 50 kms (30 miles) to 70 kms (45 miles). Race duration will be approximately 30 minutes compared with 20 minutes for the former UK FPA championship, requiring drivers to develop their personal fitness and stamina as well as an understanding of looking after tyres and equipment.

A standing start is used for the first race of a weekend and a rolling start for the second race.

The best 15 race scores count towards the championship, points for which are awarded down to 19th position and will be awarded to all drivers regardless of class in accordance with their overall position, though separate reference will be made to the order in the Junior class.

All drivers will require a minimum of an FIA International C licence.

The Junior Class

Drivers should not progress to F3000 until they are ready. The competition is even more intense and unless a driver makes a strong impression in his first year, his F1 dreams will be over - assuming he hasn't got £1m to fund two further F3000 seasons.

For younger drivers, moving up to EFPA can make a lot more sense than continuing in many junior championships, which are harder to find sponsors for. Drivers will develop faster amidst the more experienced competition and will be better preparing themselves for their season of pursuit of outright championship victory.

Drivers may therefore spend two or three years in FPA, and to promote driver confidence and sponsor exposure a separate junior class will exist for those who recognise their goal is not to be in F3000 in 2001, but 2002.

There will be no difference in the cars, races, cost or any other area between the two classes. Which class a driver runs in is purely down to his own choice.

Media exposure for the Junior class winners will be maximised by specific coverage in the results, press and television programmes, while separate podium presentations and driver interviews for the overall and junior class will occur after every race.

EFPA cars will display fluorescent red numbers with front wing and rear wing end plate flashes unless they are in the Junior class, when these will all be fluorescent yellow.



The Prizes

The 2000 EFPA championship winner (provided he is not in the Junior class) will win a fully funded season in the 2001 FIA International F3000 Championship, or the US Indy Lights championship, if the driver prefers.



The championship winner of the EFPA Junior class will win a 50% funded drive in the 2001 EFPA Championship.

At each race the first three drivers in each class will receive a trophy. No prize money is paid for individual races.



OPERATIONAL BASE

The Formula Palmer Audi team comprises approximately 100 personnel, of whom 60 are full time.

The team has two operational bases. The office at The Old Post Office in Southwater, Sussex is where Jonathan Palmer is based along with the sales, administration, graphics and finance departments. This office is also responsible for these areas for the Palmer PromoSport corporate event programmes.

The race team is based at Palmer PromoSport's superb new Bedford Autodrome facility, six miles north of Bedford. A complex of 4 different circuits totalling nearly 5 miles of new track on the 400 acre site provides Formula Palmer Audi with the outstanding and unique advantage of enabling cars to be run virtually any day for shake down or promotional purposes, as well as for some official EFPA tests.



No other race team in Europe, Ferrari included, has such a facility, where the race cars can be literally driven out of the workshop onto the track, which also feature new pits buildings and hospitality accommodation.

The massive benefits of this extend to providing driver sponsors with the opportunity to drive FPA cars on the circuit and ride in the 2 seater.



The extensive FPA facility covers 40,000 sq feet, and includes the enormous main workshop together with ancillary offices, driver briefing rooms and hospitality accommodation. Drivers, family, friends and sponsors are welcome to visit.



CIRCUIT OPERATION

At the UK race meetings, apart from Silverstone, EFPA will have the use of the garages, which can include presentational walling for driver sponsor branding.



At other events the EFPA team is set up as a spectacular village that dominates the paddock, each awning accommodating 4 cars with the FPA race centre hospitality unit in this complex.

Each driver's car is looked after by his own mechanic for the duration of the season. The chief mechanic and other senior floating mechanics are available to assist in the event of difficult problems or accident damage repair, for example.



The Head of Engineering, Alastair Macqueen, is responsible for endeavouring to ensure absolute equivalence of performance and 100% reliability with highest standards of preparation. He also trains and oversees the operation of a team of part time engineers who are present at all tests, qualifying sessions and races. These track side engineers, one per four cars, provide consistent and effective analysis of problems and recommendation of changes to assist the driver in achieving an optimal set up. The engineers are rotated after each such event to eliminate the possibility of any benefit being derived from any differences between engineers.

Before each test or race event, a driver may either request that his engineer applies a good initial set up, or he may specify his own. Any set-up a driver evolves will be kept confidential to that driver. Drivers will have full access to their set up and lap sheets, unlike many other teams who protect their knowledge, thus depriving a driver of total understanding.

A new set of slick tyres is provided for the first qualifying session of each race weekend. These tyres will be used throughout that race weekend and for the next test. In the event of a puncture, a tyre will be replaced with one of similar condition. When wet tyres are required they will be provided in good and equal condition, though not necessarily new.

Data Acquisition

Data is downloaded from cars throughout tests and race events. At the end of every session each driver is supplied with a data print out overlaying his best lap of the session with the fastest, including the parameters of speed, revs, throttle, turbo boost and time differential.



Such data overlays are an extremely valuable facility in Formula Palmer Audi and provide drivers, uniquely, with precise information about the performance of themselves - and their car - compared with the fastest. No other championship provides drivers with such valuable information to see exactly where they must focus their efforts to improve. Drivers can also be given their own data on disk.

Testing

Testing in EFPA is designed to provide extensive mileage (approximately 2200 miles or 3500km), to provide testing before each race at that circuit and to maintain absolute equality of testing opportunity. There are specified FPA tests for all drivers and no further testing is undertaken to ensure no driver can derive advantage by being able to afford more testing.

Tests are exclusive to FPA and for the whole day, except when limited by available circuit time. Distance is limited to a maximum of 150 miles (240 kms), which helps drivers learn to use laps effectively.

All drivers are provided with five exclusive days' testing before the start of the season after which there is one test day for each event at that circuit.

DRIVER DEVELOPMENT

An important objective of FPA is to provide drivers with the best all round learning platform. In addition to the track side engineering, improved technical training will be provided. The Head of Engineering will evolve a syllabus of technical subjects and will arrange teaching sessions covering these before the first race. Drivers will also have training seminars on the following topics:

- Training and fitness
- PR and presentation skills
- Understanding motorsport administration
- The motorsport media

Driver Employment

During 2000 Palmer PromoSport will run some 400 corporate event days, each requiring around 25 instructors. If they are interested, priority is given to EFPA drivers, providing the required standards are met, after training, who can expect at least 100 days work.

SPONSOR AND PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Formula Palmer Audi ensures that sponsorship provides value for money, regardless of results, with:

- Great looking, F1 style, cars
- Extensive advertising space, with the base colour and 80% of the space on the car available to the driver
- Superb television coverage
- Outstanding hospitality within the Formula Palmer Audi Race Centre
- High quality magazine produced covering each event
- Brilliant opportunities for sponsors and guests to enjoy hands on experience by driving FPA cars and having 2 seater rides at Bedford Autodrome

Superb Television Coverage

Television coverage in 1999 has been extensive, with 64 hours of coverage through the dedicated weekly 30 minute Formula Palmer Audi programme on Sky Sports. For 2000 coverage is planned on Sky Sports, Eurosport throughout Europe and Speedvision in the US, as well as distribution to many other countries throughout the world.

Outstanding Hospitality



The Formula Palmer Audi Race Centre has set new standards and is for use by drivers, their families and sponsors. The facility will be at all events including those overseas and can accommodate up to 350 guests, with:

- Each driver having his own dedicated table with sponsor branding
- Superb all day catering provided including breakfast, lunch and tea
- Jonathan Palmer hosting, and interviewing drivers
- FPA television coverage continually screened on large TVs
- EFPA's own podium for winners' presentations
- Superbly enjoyable ambience of excitement, friendliness and prestige



FPA Magazine

Our highly acclaimed Scene Formula Palmer Audi magazine has made a major contribution to the promotion of the Championship, its drivers and its sponsors. Produced by FPA's own in house graphics department, the magazine will be printed monthly in 2000 to cover every event. The distribution list for the 5,000 magazines print run includes all Formula 1 teams, Formula 3000 teams, race circuits and media.

Sponsor Driving Events

Within the contract price every EFPA driver has the immense benefit of 5 free drives in an FPA car and 5 free EFPA 2 seater SuperRides for his sponsors and guests at Bedford Autodrome.



Palmer PromoSport also runs the best corporate motorsport events in the UK which are of course available to drivers for their sponsors, potentially linking into the race car sponsorship with workshop tours and driving guests in the superb 2 seater car.

Show car use

A driver's EFPA car can almost always be available for occasional shows, or for more regular promotional activities, a dedicated show car can be built and leased to the driver.



MARKETING SUPPORT

Formula Palmer Audi has its own Graphic Design and Media departments which undertake:

- Entire production of FPA magazine
- Car livery design
- All sponsor branded signage
- All promotional literature
- Full Press and PR service
- Maintaining the FPA website, www.formula-palmer-audi.com

THE COST

Formula Palmer Audi operates on a fixed price contract. Every driver pays the same fee to compete in the full EFPA championship. This fee of £125,000 + 17.5% VAT (which businesses may be able to reclaim) is for the advertising and promotional services provided by competing in the championship.

The payment schedule is as follows:

On signing	£5,000 + VAT
1 January	£10,000 + VAT
1 February	£10,000 + VAT
1 March	£15,000 + VAT
1 April	£15,000 + VAT
1 May	£15,000 + VAT
1 June	£15,000 + VAT
1 July	£15,000 + VAT
1 August	£15,000 + VAT
1 September	£10,000 + VAT

The contract fee includes the provision the car newly painted in the base colour of choice together with all testing and racing. Any accident damage is excluded and it is recommended that insurance is taken out. This can be provided at an estimated £9500 for the season with an excess of £1000.

INTERESTED IN EURO FORMULA PALMER AUDI?

Only 20 cars will be available for the 2000 EFPA Championship. Driver Contracts are now available. Chassis numbers, race numbers and mechanics will be allocated on request when drivers confirm. To secure a drive please contact any of the following:

Rachel Williams

DRIVER ADMINISTRATOR Tel: +44 (0)1403 733233
Fax: +44 (0)1403 733222
Email: rachel.williams@jpalmer.com

Robin Webb

DRIVER INFORMATION Tel: +44 (0)1234 332407
Home Tel: +44 (0)1787 310899
Mobile: +44 (0)410 935539
Fax: +44 (0)1403 733233
Email: rwebb54321@aol.com

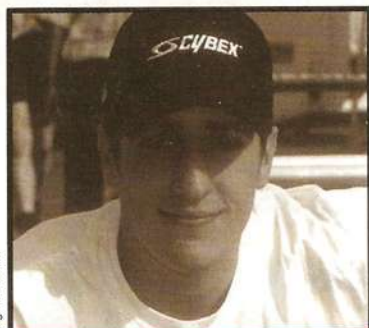
Jonathan Palmer

MANAGING DIRECTOR Tel: +44 (0)1403 733233
Fax: +44 (0)1403 734444
Email: jp@jpalmer.com

SPONSOR ENQUIRIES

If you are a sponsor and would like to know more about sponsorship opportunities in Formula Palmer Audi please call Jonathan Palmer, as above.



**TOMAS SCHECKTER**

EFDA EUROSERIES CHAMPION

I'm just hanging on the telephone

After winning the EFDA Euroseries, Tomas Scheckter has got more offers than he knows what to do with – but he is still waiting for that call of his dreams

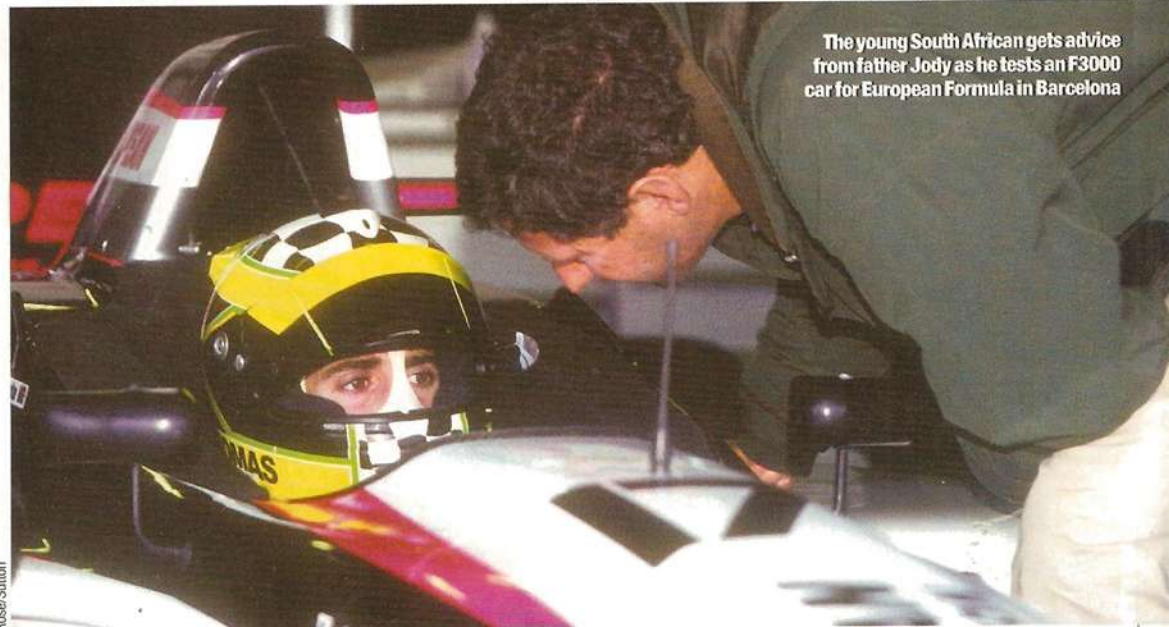
This has been a really good year for me. I've learned so much, and it's put me in a great position, with a number of really good options for 2000.

For a start there was my win in the EFDA Euroseries. I go into every series wanting to be champion, but I only started winning halfway through this season. From then on I didn't stop. I got seven wins out of the 11 races, and at one stage I had four wins and four pole positions in a row – both of which are records. It went well, but you expect results if you are putting a good effort in.

A weekend of Formula Nissan at the end of the season was also extremely encouraging. The cars are unbelievably quick. They've got ground effects and are pulling 3.3G in corners where a Formula 1 car would register only an extra 0.2G. Vergani Racing, an opposition team in Formula Opel, offered me the drive. I thought I may as well do it just to learn a quicker car. They said it would be amazing if we finished in the top 10. I was on pole twice, won one of the two races and was second in the other!

That gave me something to think about. I'd done one FNissan test and not only got used to the car but also made positive changes and was tuning the car. If I can do that with a fast car – and at some tracks the Nissan is quicker than a Formula 3000 machine – I thought maybe I could jump into F3000.

I've now done F3000 tests, and it seems to have gone pretty well. At Donington in Martello's car from the Italian series, I was 1.2s under the pole position time. In the car from the international series it was a



The young South African gets advice from father Jody as he tests an F3000 car for European Formula in Barcelona

"I'm waiting for one other call. If it works out, I'll most probably do F3000 next year"

bit different – the competition there is unbelievable. At the Barcelona test with European Formula, I was ninth quickest in the morning of the second day with new tyres and fourth quickest in the afternoon when everybody was on old tyres.

It's a bit of a lottery, because you get one and a half to two laps when

the tyres are a second quicker. For me it was bit odd, but these guys are used to it. If I'd gone a couple of tenths quicker on new tyres, I'd have been fourth, and if I'd had another set, that would have been no problem. I'm confident I can be right up there, but I need to be in the right seat to handle the jump.

The next thing is to get into the right team. I've been getting calls, and I'm talking to a couple of top teams, but I'm waiting for one other call. If it works out, I'll most probably do F3000 next year.

If the right F3000 deal doesn't come through, though, I'd be really happy to do Formula 3. I want to do anything, I don't really care. I'm going to be excited whatever I do. If you put me in Yugoslavian rallying, I'll want to win it. I've got British F3 possibilities with Promatecme, Fortec and Stewart, plus some F3000 options, but I've still got some thinking to do. I'm well aware that F3000 can ruin you. There's very limited track time to set the car up and qualify, and the level of competition is unbelievable.

I do all the deals myself. I don't go around with 10 managers and three lawyers. I speak to everyone myself. If people call my dad [1979 world champion Jody Scheckter], he gives me their names. I always call him, though, and he advises me – which is a great help.

It's just possible I might end up racing my older brother, Toby, in F3.

It seems a bit odd, because he's always been a formula ahead of me. If we do race against each other, it won't be easy. I'd have to forget about it and get on with my job. We're quite good together, but for brothers separated by two years it would be tough. We're definitely both competitive.

I can't wait to get a deal done and start focusing on next season. If it all gets sorted out before Christmas, I'll be happy. ■



The younger Scheckter delights in taking the podium's top step in his FNissan debut

FACTFILE

Name Tomas Scheckter

Age 19

Titles EFDA Euroseries Champion 1999

● Youngest son of '79 Formula 1 World Champion Jody Scheckter and brother of fellow racer Toby.

● Finished third in Formula Vauxhall Junior series in '98 after switching teams five times!

● Won the EFDA Euroseries at his first attempt with crack Dutch team AR Motorsport.

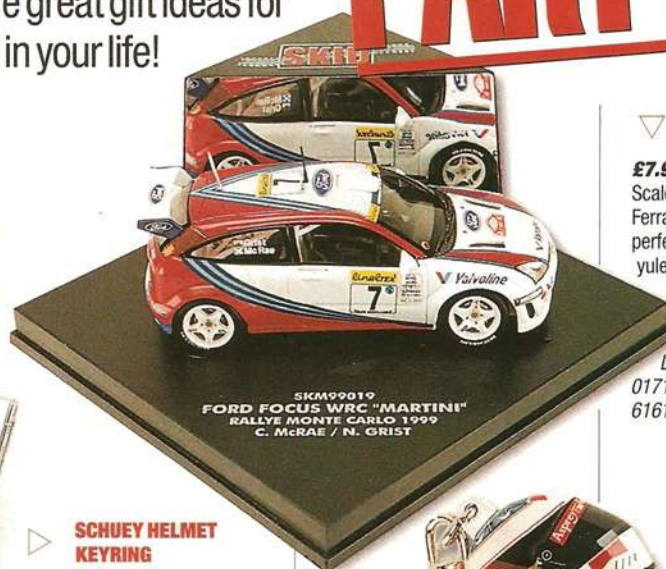
CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

PART TWO

It's that time of year again, and here are some more great gift ideas for the racing nut in your life!

FORD FOCUS £24.99

Colin McRae's Ford Focus doesn't stay pristine for long. Help someone preserve the memory with this replica of the Blue Oval's 1999 charger. Alex Reade International, 0207 4373686, www.alexreade.net. Grand Prix Legends, 0171 6161900



SCHUMACHER FIGURINE

£7.99
Scaled to stand by his die-cast Ferrari, the strutting German is perfectly captured. It's the ideal yuletide gift for anyone who loves or loathes Captain Scarlet. Altar/pins not supplied. Grand Prix Legends, 0171 6161900

SCHUEY HELMET KEYRING

£6.99
Absent-minded fans of the great Schumacher will never lose their keys again if they are given this crash helmet key ring. And at this price it will keep a lid on anyone's Christmas spending! Alex Reade International, 0207 4373686, www.alexreade.net. Grand Prix Legends, 0171 6161900



SEGA DREAMCAST £199.99

Sega's new console is the fastest games machine of its kind. Expect a barrage of realistic new games for Christmas to add to the old favourites *Sega Rally* and *Official F1 Racing*. Buy this for the kiddies – then settle down and and revert to childhood until New Year. HMV, Virgin Megastores and all good electrical stores



FORMULA ONE PACK

£29.99
This book is an inspirational work for any youngster who is longing to learn more about the top level of motorsport. Full of inventive pop-ups and clear, precise text, this is a fantastic Christmas present for any child aged between six and 60. All good bookshops



GOODWOOD VIDEOS

£14.95 + p&p

Relive all the excitement of the 1999 Festival of Speed and reminisce over Goodwood's post-war glory days with this two-pack time machine of video goodies. Goodwood Motor Circuit shop, open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 01243 755098

GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED

18-19-20 JUNE 1999

F1 RACING CALENDAR

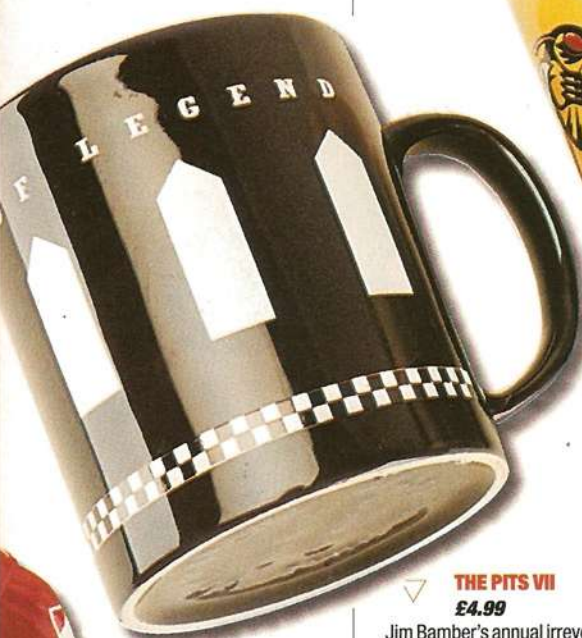
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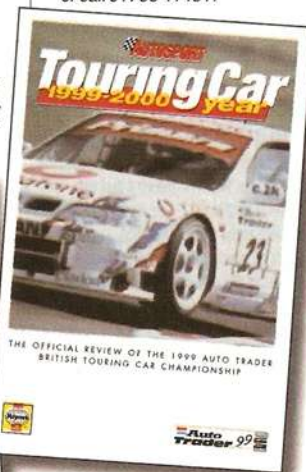
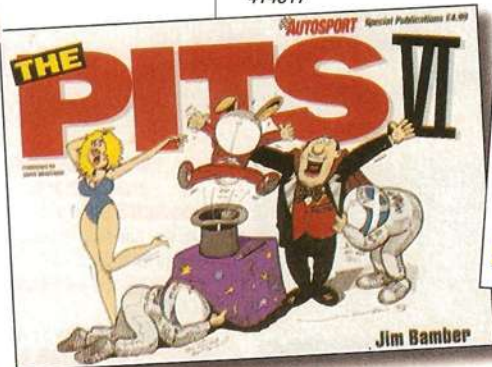
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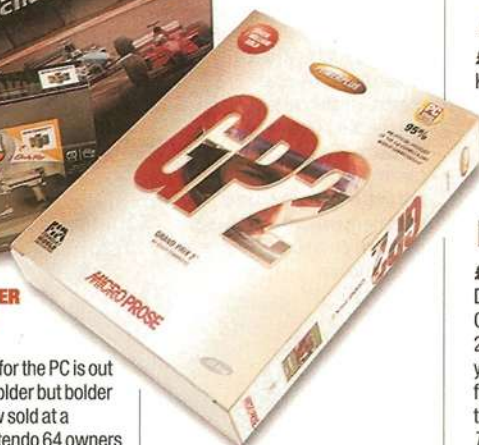
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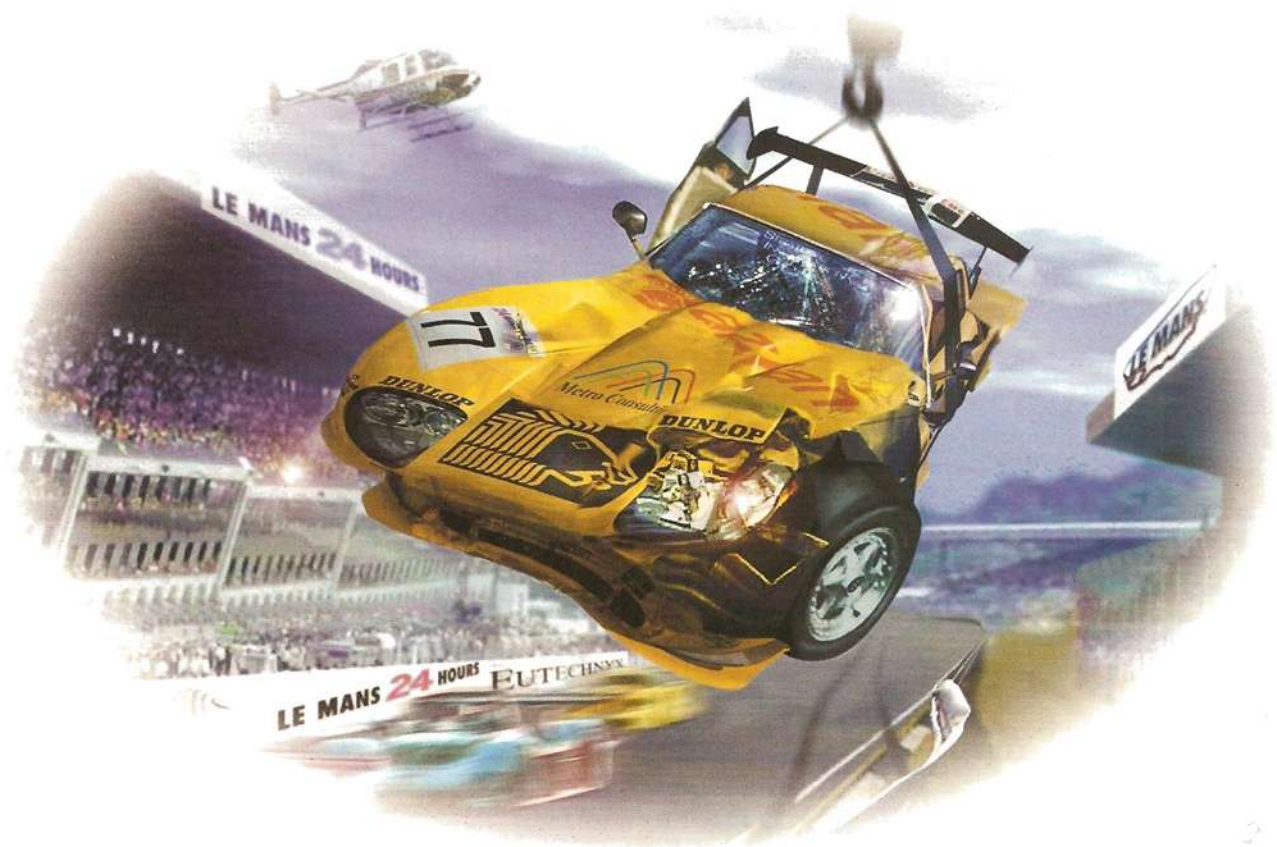
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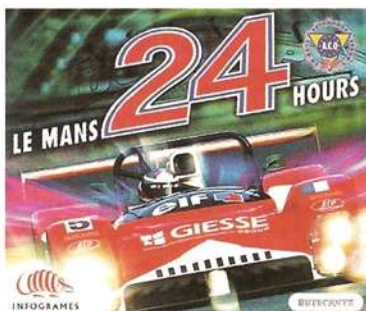
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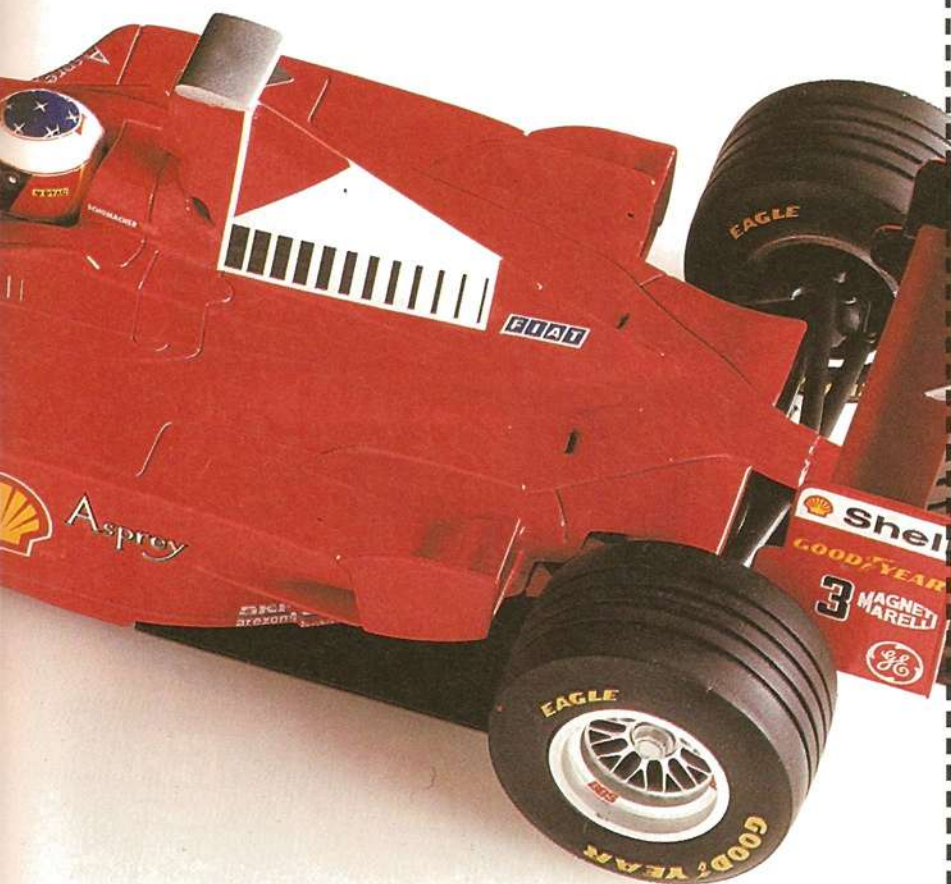
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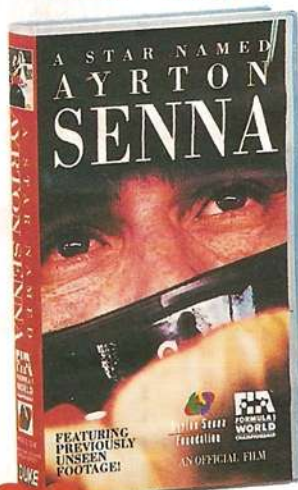
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Jarrett proved that (not too) slow and steady wins the race, or, in his case, the title

Dale of the unexpected

In a season of breakthroughs and records, Dale Jarrett ended up as the surprise victor. By Jonathan Ingram

Jeff Gordon led the Winston Cup in victories for the fifth consecutive season with seven, but it was the consistency of Dale Jarrett that claimed the championship.

The champion, son of two-time titleholder Ned, failed to score a podium top step in the final 14 events. Instead, he finished in the top 10 a total of 29 times en route to four victories and his first title at the age of 42.

In a year of firsts, engine builder Robert Yates earned his maiden championship as a team owner and Tony Stewart won a rookie record three races.

The latter indicated that he may become the best antidote to the winning ways of fellow former Indiana resident and three-time champion Gordon by taking two straight firsts in the Pontiacs of Joe Gibbs Racing.

Stewart's team mate, Bobby Labonte, hectored Jarrett from a distance after Hendrick Motorsports driver Gordon fell out of contention by failing to finish seven times due to mechanical problems and one accident.

The younger Labonte recorded only one DNF, but took one more victory with five. He had five poles

to Jarrett's zero, but finished 24th or worse seven times, which killed his championship aspirations.

Mark Martin is still looking for his first title at the age of 40, and this year he fell victim to injuries. He scored consistently as usual, but broke a knee, a wrist and aggravated an old back injury in a practice crash at Daytona.

He recovered enough to take a second top spot at Dover, but could not put pressure on Jarrett when it counted, even though the autumn schedule featured some of his favourite tracks.

His finishes helped Ford win the manufacturers' title with a total of 13 victories, six from Roush Racing team mate Jeff Burton. However, the latter's failure to qualify well hurt him far more in the drivers' points than three DNFs.

Chevy had only three drivers who won races, which proved the primary cause for its downfall in the factory chase.

Dale Earnhardt rejuvenated his career with two wins at Talladega, but also angered his critics when he collided with fellow Chevy driver Terry Labonte on the last lap at Bristol. The clash restricted the latter to one triumph in 1999.

Gibbs Racing led the resurgence of the Pontiac marque. The team became the first



Burton (99) qualified badly, whereas Gordon (24) suffered car failures

"Ricky Rudd ended his 16-year streak of taking at least one win per season"

potent two-car Grand Prix entry with the addition of Stewart to the line-up alongside Bobby Labonte. On top of that, it was using a factory-backed engine programme and bigger spoilers mandated by NASCAR.

The team's eight victories reflected the Pontiac's stability on high-speed tracks and greater downforce on the flat ones. The Gibbs squad's victory totals were the most for GM's 'other' brand since Penske Racing South scored 10 in '93.

John Andretti gave the marque its ninth win. More accurately, he manhandled it away from the field at Martinsville after falling a lap behind and then snatching back the lead through a two-tyre pit stop late in the race. The former Indycar driver generally had miserable luck otherwise in a season of 10 DNFs. It was summed up when Kenny Irwin

smashed into his car on pit road in the final race of the season.

One long-standing tradition came to an end, though. Like all other single-car entrants, Ricky Rudd missed victory lane and ended his 16-year streak of at least one win per season. Unfortunately, he also sounded the death knell for owner/drivers by disbanding his team to take a seat alongside Jarrett at Robert Yates Racing for 2000.

Of the lone-car outfits, Pontiac driver Ward Burton fared best in the standings. The Bill Davis Racing star was the only one in the final top 10, but suffered because of his smaller budget, reduced testing and lack of chassis information.

That said, nobody suffered at the bank. Before year-end bonuses were awarded, a total of 37 drivers had earned over \$1 million (£625,000) in purse money.

The top earner was Gordon, who took home \$5.3 million (£3,312,500), as well as the cachet of leading the league in victories, poles (eight), miles led and laps led. His wage packet included a record payout of \$1.2 million (£750,000) from his second Daytona 500 win. All this despite losing legendary crew chief Ray Evernham to Dodge's new NASCAR programme with seven races to go. ■

Rookie Tony Stewart rocked the NASCAR establishment





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Adverse conditions

Accidents and poor gates left the IRL struggling in 1999. Bruce Martin reports

The Indy Racing League concluded its fourth year of competition with a high-octane mix of triumph, adversity and tragedy.

Kenny Brack and Greg Ray enjoyed the greatest triumphs the series has to offer. Brack won the Indianapolis 500, and Ray the \$1 million series title in his first year racing for team owner John Menard.

Typical of the IRL, adversity was easy to find. Despite outstanding competition, it continued to struggle for public acceptance in the United States. The Indy 500 remains the largest one-day sporting event in the world, with over 400,000 there on the day, but attendance was so poor at some of the other venues that several have been dropped for 2000.

The smallest crowd of the season was at Dover in July when less than 8,000 endured 100-degree temperatures and high humidity to watch Ray brave the elements and score an important victory on his way to the title. However, the small turn-out ensured that Dover, along with one of two ill-attended races at Colorado Springs, will not be on the calendar next year.

The IRL also experienced the indignity of losing an event from its schedule without it even being run. After the CART series increased its sanctioning fee, promoters of the Cleveland Grand Prix arranged for the IRL to compete in its event from 2000 to 2004. However, Cleveland mayor Michael White withdrew his support and forced the promoters to strike a deal with CART.

The worst tragedy in the



Tony George continued to go his own way



Brack's the way; the Swede bagged the Indy 500 to go with his 1998 series title—in 2000 he jumps ship to CART

“There's interest from CART to want to come back to Indy”

TONY GEORGE

category's history occurred on May 1 at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Stan Wattle crashed into the fourth turn wall, which broke off the right rear wheel. This went across the track to where John Paul Jr's car hit it, launching it into the grandstand. The wheel killed three spectators and injured several others. Although track general manager Humpy Wheeler said the fatalities were not the reason he was dropping the race, outgoing IRL executive director Leo Muhl believes the local media simply would not allow the series to return without bitter criticism.

Conversely, the tragedy also created an opportunity to make the sport safer. The IRL quickly mandated tethered wheels for its cars prior to the next race, the Indy 500. These worked well in the remaining rounds, proving that something positive can come out of a very dark situation.

At Indianapolis, Brack gave veteran driver and team boss AJ Foyt his first win in the 500 as an owner when he stretched his fuel mileage to the end.

The Swede's win was his greatest since he started racing, but that didn't stop the 1998 IRL champion from leaving the series and joining Team Rahal in CART, where he will replace Bryan Herta.

Ray hitched up with Team Menard at the beginning of this year to replace Tony Stewart, who left to become the greatest rookie in NASCAR Winston Cup history. Ray quickly matured into a championship contender, winning three races and giving Menard his second title (Stewart provided the first in '97).

On the political side, series founder Tony George spent much of the summer listening to offers from CART to unite the two categories, but decided to steer his own course and keep the IRL separate. CART teams may still be coming back to Indy in 2000, as it has become increasingly obvious that they must to satisfy sponsors.

“There is a genuine interest on their part to want to come back,” said George. “The IRL teams are fine with that and are looking forward to the challenge. Our goal is to make sure everyone feels welcome and is treated the same. Hopefully, they will have a good experience and one that will encourage them to keep coming back and to participate in other events.”

“It's a big commitment to invest in the equipment to come to one race. They are businessmen in partner with their sponsors and, hopefully, they will see some benefit to running in some other League events at some point.”

With the arrival of two-time Indy 500 winner Al Unser Jr, who is moving from CART to the IRL, George's championship appears to have momentum for the 2000 season. That may provide triumph over adversity once and for all for the IRL. ■

Ray-gun: Greg Ray landed the title for Menard



MANNING SCORES £6

Darren Manning scooped the jackpot by winning both heats of the Korean Grand Prix following his double win in Macau last week. By Jonathan Noble

Darren Manning had to fight all the way for his win in the Korean Grand Prix. At the equivalent event in Macau the week before, luck and a power advantage gave him an almost lonely run to the flag. Korea was a different story.

Jenson Button was a threat from the moment practice began on the Changwon Circuit. The pair were separated on the grid after mixed fortunes in qualifying. Manning took pole with Button fourth. On Sunday, though, it was a two-horse race down to the final centimetres.

HEAT ONE

Manning's fears about Button were confirmed at the lights when the Promatecme driver forced his way up to second on the run out of the first corner. Front-row starter Toshihiro Kaneishi had made a poor

start, and to avoid a collision with Button he jinked at the first turn and squeezed fourth-fastest qualifier Christijan Albers close to the wall.

In no time, the British duo were dominating at the front, never much more than a second apart. Kaneishi could not match their pace, and by lap eight he was seven seconds adrift, with Albers permanently in his slipstream.

The gaps mattered little, though, when a multi-car pile-up brought out red flags on the same lap. Narain Karthikeyan was spun out of ninth by Julien Beltoise at the fast corner leading onto the back straight. His car struck the barriers and was collected by Japanese drivers Ryo Fukuda and Tsugio Matsuda.

The three cars were spread over the track under yellows. Manning, Button and Kaneishi got through, but those behind didn't. Albers

"This result is a dream come true, especially after Macau" DARRÉN MANNING



Cochet holds a charging Hynes at bay

skidded into the wreckage slowly; Luciano Burti spun into it at about 80mph as he tried to avoid the mayhem. Beltoise, who played a part in the initial accident, came upon the scene much quicker and smashed head-on into Fukuda's machine. The officials had no choice but to red-flag the race. Some drivers claimed the reds should have come much earlier (see *Pit & Paddock*).

The restart was followed by 15 laps, with the two parts of the race aggregated. Manning again got



All photos: LAT Photographic

away cleanly with Button in his tracks. They enjoyed a battle royal. On the last lap, Button tried to pass at the hairpin. He tapped the leader and both ran wide, but it was not enough to change their positions.

Behind them, Jonathan Cochet and Benoit Treluyer got the jump on Kaneishi and held on to the flag, but the Prema Powerteam driver's advantage from the stopped race was enough to give him third.

Tiago Monteiro claimed sixth after Marc Hynes was spun at the hairpin by Prema's Peter Sundberg. Andrew Kirkaldy came 15th after a spin on the first lap. Matt Davies was 19th after gearbox problems slowed him in the closing stages.

HEAT TWO

The prospect of clinching £60,000 was clearly at the top of Manning's mind before the second heat, but he was not about to let the pressure get to him. Another perfect start saw him get away cleanly, while Button's afternoon nearly came apart.

Treluyer got the jump on him on the run to the first corner, and it seemed Manning now had the perfect opportunity to wrap up victory and the prize for winning all four races in Macau and Korea. On lap two, though, Treluyer let Button through at the hairpin, concluding that he could not make up the 30s deficit from the first leg. Button was soon on a charge.

For the first few laps he was right under Manning's rear wing in the middle section of the track, but he would lose out to the TOM'S Toyota power up the back straight to the chicane. On lap nine, though, Button appeared to make a mistake and lost ground. Many thought it was all over.

Then Albers, who had started at the back of the field after his first-heat disappointment, spun his car in the middle of the track at the first right loop, and Bruno Besson crashed at the chicane - forcing out the safety car and negating Manning's advantage.

After four laps behind the safety car, which Manning felt was driven too slowly, Button got it right at the restart. Once again, he was challenging the TOM'S at the hairpin - but by the end of the lap Manning had again put clear air between them. However, the

KOREAN CULTURE SHOCK

After the Korean Grand Prix, we should put the Prema Powerteam and Paulo Montin alongside Pavarotti in Italy's list of singing stars.

The weekend in Changwon was an eye-opener for everyone, even after the excesses of Macau. The drivers were treated like superstars from the moment they landed - greeted by flowers, girls and TV cameras. There was no end of functions, and the local dignitaries told everyone how grateful they were for our visit to their country.

You tended to wonder whether the functions missed the point, though. We were shepherded on coaches with police escorts to strange places, had food rushed down our throats, and were driven back to our hotels.

It wasn't exactly rip-roaring action,

but the culture shock of Korea produced a great team spirit between all the Formula 3 teams and nationalities. On one coach journey, a section of the British press joined the Italian teams and drivers, hijacked a microphone and starting a rowdy, raucous sing-song.

The whole coach joined in, much



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Manning (right) had his work cut out dealing with Button right to the flag

The winner celebrates with delighted members of the TOM'S team



TOM'S driver was to have his advantage taken away yet again.

Myung Mok Lee and Nicolas Stelandre made contact at the corner before the back straight, and Andre Couto went off backwards into the tyre barriers after contact with Paulo Montin at the first left-hander. The safety car returned. Manning simply could not believe his bad luck.

At the restart, on lap 21, he got away brilliantly. Despite another tap up the back at the hairpin on the following lap, he held on to take the win - even though he failed to accelerate hard enough to the line and nearly threw away the £60,000 (see *Pit & Paddock*).

“Manning failed to accelerate hard to the line and nearly threw away £60,000”

“I wanted to make it exciting,” he said. “This result is a dream come true, especially after Macau. It has been a week of winning.”

Button was not disappointed to finish second overall, while Treluyer grabbed third after a good showing in the second race. Hynes enjoyed a strong run to fourth at the flag after taking a few cars in the closing stages, but it was only good enough for seventh overall. Davies finished 12th in the race and overall. ■

RESULTS

November 28, Formula 3 Korea Grand Prix, 2 legs, 1 x 21 laps (39.72 miles), 1 x 25 laps (47.28 miles)

Pos	Driver (Nationality)	Team	Chassis/Engine	Qual	Grid	Result	Best lap
1	Darren Manning (GB)	TOM'S	Dallara F399-TOM'S Toyota	1m12.861s	01	1h04m41.805s	1m13.466s
2	Jenson Button (GB)	Promatecme UK	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m13.705s	E2	1h04m42.882s	1m13.660s
3	Benoit Treluyer (F)	Signature Competition	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m13.676s	04	1h05m17.104s	1m14.589s
4	Jonathan Cochet (F)	Signature Competition	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m13.724s	E3	1h05m20.736s	1m14.719s
5	Toshihiro Kaneishi (J)	Prema Powerteam	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m13.820s	E1	1h05m24.296s	1m14.379s
6	Tiago Monteiro (P)	ASM Formule 3	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m14.084s	E5	1h05m30.573s	1m14.959s
7	Marc Hynes (GB)	Manor Motorsport	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.037s	07	1h05m31.238s	1m14.738s
8	Yves Olivier (B)	JB Motorsport	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m14.382s	E7	1h05m44.576s	1m15.558s
9	Toby Scheckter (ZA)	Speedsport	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.726s	E10	1h05m49.229s	1m15.442s
10	Michele Spoldi (I)	RC Motorsport	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m15.434s	014	1h05m55.010s	1m15.664s
11	Alan Cho (AUS)	Indigo	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m17.795s	015	1h07m06.272s	1m17.569s
12	Matt Davies (GB)	RC Motorsport	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m14.736s	E11	-1 lap	1m16.211s
13	Daisuke Itoh (J)	Speed Skill	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m15.194s	012	-1 lap	1m15.715s
R	Soiji Ara (J)	TOM'S	Dallara F399-TOM'S Toyota	1m15.182s	E12	40 laps-spin	1m15.506s
R	Alex Yoong (MAL)	Alan Docking Racing	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.693s	E9	40 laps-acc	1m15.628s
R	Jungsoo Kim (ROK)	Eagle Racing Team	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	-	-	40 laps-slow	1m27.858s
R	Nicolas Stelandre (B)	JB Motorsport	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m15.211s	013	35 laps-acc	1m15.513s
R	Paulo Montin (I)	Carlin Motorsport	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.242s	08	35 laps-acc	1m14.478s
R	Myung Mok Lee (ROK)	Carlin Motorsport	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m19.121s	E13	33 laps-acc	1m19.123s
R	Peter Sundberg (S)	Prema Powerteam	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m13.611s	03	30 laps-acc dam	1m14.842s
R	Bruno Besson (F)	Promatecme	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m14.254s	09	29 laps-acc	1m15.513s
R	Andrew Kirkaldy (GB)	Alan Docking Racing	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.255s	010	28 laps-wheel	1m15.610s
R	Andre Couto (MAC)	Bertram Schafer Racing	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m14.502s	E8	15 laps-acc	1m15.597s
R	Christijan Albers (NL)	Bertram Schafer Racing	Dallara F399-Spiess Opel	1m13.511s	02	10 laps-acc	1m15.092s
R	Luciano Burti (BR)	Stewart Racing	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m13.731s	E4	6 laps-acc	1m15.190s
R	Narain Karthikeyan (IND)	Stewart Racing	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.025s	05	6 laps-acc	1m14.939s
R	Julien Beltoise (F)	ASM Formule 3	Dallara F399-Sodemo Renault	1m14.031s	06	6 laps-acc	1m15.269s
R	Tsugio Matsuda (J)	Nakajima Planning	Dallara F399-Mugen Honda	1m14.244s	E6	6 laps-acc	1m15.163s
R	Ryo Fukuda (J)	La Filiere	Martini Mk79-Spiess Opel	1m14.420s	011	6 laps-acc	1m15.510s

Leg 1: 1, Manning, 26m19.354s; 2, Button, +1.042; 3, Kaneishi, +26.385s; 4, Cochet, +29.117s; 5, Treluyer, +30.308s; 6, Monteiro, +38.665s; 7, Hynes, +42.961s; 8, Sundberg, +46.029s; 9, Olivier, +51.892s; 10, Scheckter, +53.459s; 11, Itoh, +59.783s; 12, Spoldi, +1m01.684s; 13, Ara, +1m02.286s; 14, Besson, +1m04.816s; 15, Kirkaldy, +1m14.780s; 16, Stelandre, +1m20.159s; 17, Cho, +1m55.291s; 18, Montin, -1 lap; 19, Davies, -1 lap; 20, Lee, -1 lap; Did not finish: Kim, Yoong, Albers, Burti, Karthikeyan, Beltoise, Matsuda, Couto and Fukuda. **Winner's average speed:** 90.54mph. **Fastest lap:** Manning, 1m13.466s, 92.69mph. **Leg 2:** 1, Manning, 38m22.451s; 2, Button, +0.035s; 3, Treluyer, +4.991s; 4, Hynes, +6.472s; 5, Cochet, +9.814s; 6, Monteiro, +10.103s; 7, Olivier, +10.879s; 8, Spoldi, +11.521s; 9, Scheckter, +13.965s; 10, Yoong, +14.641s; 11, Davies, +15.979s; 12, Kaneishi, +16.105s; 13, Cho, +29.176s; 14, Itoh, -1 lap; 15, Kim, -2 laps; Did not finish: Ara, Couto, Montin, Stelandre, Lee, Albers, Sundberg, Besson and Kirkaldy. **Winner's average speed:** 73.93mph. **Fastest lap:** Manning, 1m13.884s, 92.16mph. 0 = qualifying position, odd number car; E = qualifying position, even number car.

Sospiri and Collard won a second successive World Cup by the skin of their teeth at Kyalami behind race winners Gounon and Bernard

Frenchmen Jean-Marc Gounon and Eric Bernard won the final international race of the millennium in the DAMS Team's Lola-Judd, but a hard-earned fourth place was just enough for Vincenzo Sospiri and Emanuele Collard to retain their SportsRacing World Cup title in the number one JB Giese Ferrari 333SP.

Sospiri was nursing a painful shoulder after surgery, so he was keeping his laps to a minimum all weekend and the combo made it by the skin of its teeth. The rules permitted series rival Christian Pescatori to jump ship from his regular BMS Scuderia Italia Ferrari to bring team mate Marco Zadra's version home second. He wound up just three points short!

The SR2 drivers' series also went to the wire. No fewer than five entrants arrived at Kyalami with a title chance. In the end, Angelo Lancelotti retained the crown in his works Tampolli-Alfa Romeo, but only after erstwhile leader Pierre Bruneau was heartbroken when his Debora-BMW shed a wheel on the final lap with Art Merzario at the helm. The class was won by the Redman Bright Pilbeam, after an early excursion by owner Peter Owen inspired a sensational charge by Mark Smithson.

The race very nearly didn't happen. A tropical storm whipped up, caused chaos in the preceding Supertruck event, and refused to die down. Lightning sizzled around the highveld, and many of the 38,000 spectators broke for home. The race finally started more than two hours late and ran for just 90 minutes with the consent of the entrants. Those who went home missed a superb tactical event with eight changes of lead.

Qualifying was largely uneventful. The V10-engined DAMS Lola was the class of the field – as it had been in every unofficial session. No real surprise: it won three races on the trot mid-season. Gounon sat on pole for most of the 40-minute session, with Grant Orbell initially closest in the Kremer



All photos: John Brooks

Holders cling

brothers' Roush Ford V8 stockblock-engined Lola.

Having watched the Ferraris demote Orbell, whose partner John Nielsen was making his circuit debut, Gounon rubbed his advantage home with a quicker time still as the chequer fell. His 1m34.49s was a fraction inside the lap record. This took the wind out of Collard's sails, because he had dug deep to usurp Pescatori for the other front-row slot a couple of minutes earlier.

A scant 0.7s covered the four Ferraris in Gounon's wake, with Orbell a further 0.2s shy, and Caffi sixth, less than 2s from pole despite a gear selection problem, remedied on race morning. The unwieldy turbocharged Gebhardt of George Fouche and Terry Moss was suited neither to the circuit nor altitude, but it claimed best of the rest along with the Dutch National Team's Ferrari.

Massimo Monti claimed the SR2 pole for

Angelo Lancelotti took the SR2 crown in his Tampolli

Tampolli. It was almost a second up on the sister car of Lancelotti and Denny Zardo, which was flown in following its Vallenga Gold Cup triumph in the same hands the previous weekend. Smithson wheeled the silver Pilbeam to a strong third, pipping title challenger Martin Henderson's Schroeder version and the pretty Debora.

The third Tampolli was crewed

Gounon led for a further eight laps, limiting his Judd engine to 6000rpm to avoid dramas. He was then passed by Alex Caffi in the Target 24 Riley & Scott and Orbell's torquey Vodacom Lola-Ford. Both of the Goodyear-shod cars were at an advantage in the wet, so Gounon eagerly dived in for Pirelli slicks at the first sight of a dry line. He immediately started to erode the

“Those who went home missed a superb tactical event”

entirely by South Africans thanks to generous backing from Vodacom. It was qualified well by Donovan Roscoe. Further down, MMP Motorsport ventilated a Nissan V6 engine in its Pilbeam. Following dramas with the replacement, the car did well to start on its series debut.

Rivers were running over the circuit in two places and a break in the weather was imminent when Gounon, Mauro Baldi, Nielsen and Bruneau conducted an inspection in a road car. It was decided that the event would be started behind a safety vehicle with all competitors on wet tyres. The crocodile continued in formation for five laps before it was set free.

deficit by four seconds every circuit and was back ahead by lap 24.

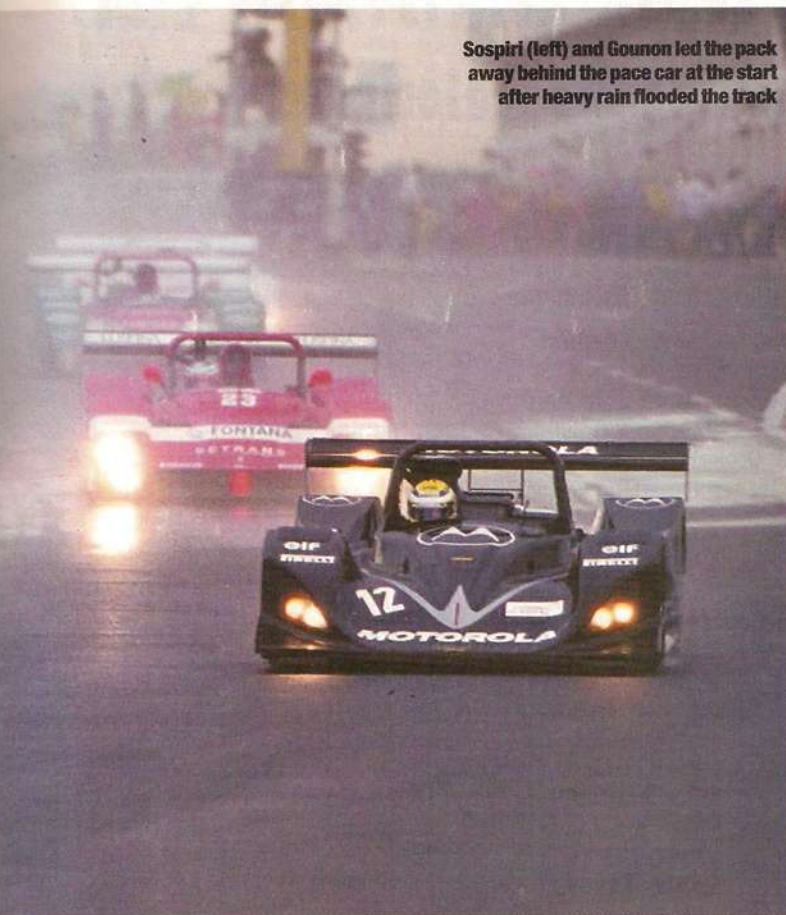
Marco Zadra's BMS Ferrari took up the pace in the interim. Pescatori handed over to Fabio Moncini, then leapt into the better-placed sister car in his quest for vital championship points. Rival Sospiri also took a turn at the front as the stagger unwound and the order stabilised.

A late splash-and-dash saw the black Lola, by now with Bernard aboard, scream to victory with fastest lap on his slate. The Zadra/Pescatori Ferrari was only 17s adrift at the end of the thriller, with Larini a similar distance behind, four seconds clear of Collard. Team mates Baldi/Jerome Policand were

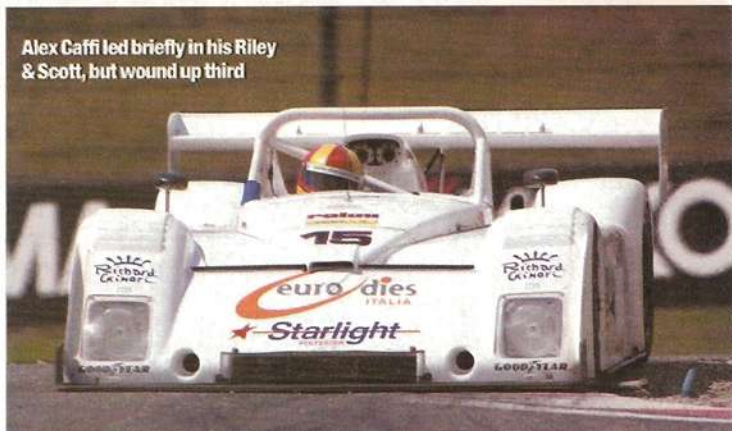




Sospiri (left) and Gounon led the pack away behind the pace car at the start after heavy rain flooded the track



Alex Caffi led briefly in his Riley & Scott, but wound up third



Vincenzo Sospiri clinched the series title with a solid drive to fourth place in his Ferrari

to title in Africa

next, the former bemoaning a lengthy stop that cost him the drivers' title – even though JB Giesse still won the team accolade.

Gounon and Bernard were ecstatic at their win. Lancelotti was

similarly overjoyed as he was embraced by car builder Raffaele Tampolli – their respective SR2 drivers' and constructors' championships secured.

The drivers' section was

particularly tight. Had circumstances been different, it could have gone to Henderson or Giovanna Amati. Prior to the decider, the fiery Italian lady had a row and switched cars from

Tampolli to MMP's Pilbeam. She might have won the grudge match but for a wheel-changing problem that cost dear. After the race, wheels were not a happy topic in poor Bruneau's presence, either. ■

RESULTS

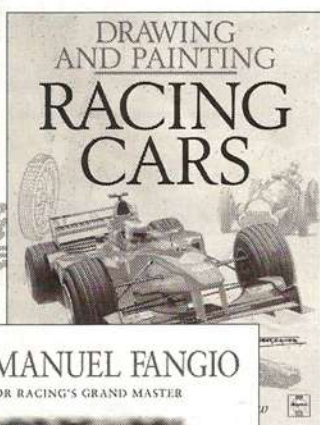
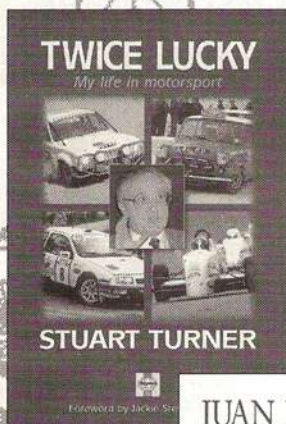
November 28, SportsRacing World Cup, Kyalami (ZA), round 9 of 9, 46 laps – 121.8 miles

Pos	Driver (Nationality)	Team	Car	Qual	Grid	Result
1	Jean-Marc Gounon (F)/Eric Bernard (F)	DAMS	Lola-Judd T98/10	1m34.49s	1	1h31m03.49s
2	Marco Zadra (I)/Christian Pescatori (I)	BMS Scuderia Italia	Ferrari 333SP	1m35.36s	4	1h31m20.89s
3	Alex Caffi (I)/Nicola Larini (I)	Target 24	Riley & Scott-Judd MkIII	1m36.43s	7	1h31m37.42s
4	Vincenzo Sospiri (I)/Emanuele Collard (F)	JB Giesse	Ferrari 333SP	1m35.03s	2	1h31m40.63s
5	Mauro Baldi (I)/Jerome Policand (F)	JB Giesse	Ferrari 333SP	1m35.71s	5	-1 lap
6	Christian Pescatori (I)/Emmanuele Moncini (I)	BMS Scuderia Italia	Ferrari 333SP	1m35.29s	3	-1 lap
7	Grant Orbell (ZA)/John Nielsen (DK)	Kremer	Lola-Roush Ford T98/10	1m35.97s	6	-1 lap
8	George Fouche (ZA)/Terry Moss (ZA)	G4 Team Gebhardt	Gebhardt-Audi G4/1	1m40.00s	8	-2 laps
9	Peter Owen (GB)/Mark Smithson (GB)	Redman Bright	Pilbeam-Nissan MP84	1m44.73s	12	-3 laps
10	Dick Waaijzenberg (NL)/Alexander van der Lof (NL)	Dutch Racing Team	Ferrari 333SP	1m40.40s	9	-3 laps
11	Angelo Lancelotti (I)/Denny Zardo (I)	Tampolli Engineering	Tampolli-Alfa Romeo RS2	1m43.58s	11	-3 laps
12	Massimo Monti (I)/Renato Nobili (I)	Tampolli Engineering	Tampolli-Alfa Romeo RS2	1m42.60s	10	-4 laps
13	Martin Henderson (GB)/Pierre Merche (B)	Schroeder Motorsport	Pilbeam-Nissan MP84	1m45.18s	13	-4 laps
14	Riaan Bothma (ZA)/Donovan Roscoe (ZA)/Earl Goddard (ZA)	Tampolli Engineering	Tampolli-Alfa Romeo RS2	1m46.35s	15	-4 laps
15	Hennie Groenewald (ZA)/Nicke Blom (S)/Giovanna Amati (I)	MMP Motorsport	Pilbeam-Nissan MP84	1m49.80s	18	-5 laps
16	Alan Eve (ZA)/Colin Frost (ZA)/Francois Gerber (ZA)	Mark Bailey Racing	MBR-Rover 972	1m48.08s	16	-6 laps
17	Mike Catlow (GB)/Alan Craggs (GB)/Neville Jordan (ZA)	Grove	Grove-Rover MkII	1m53.28s	20	-10 laps
NC	Pierre Bruneau (F)/Marc Rostan (F)/Arturo Merzario (I)	R Bruneau	Debora-BMW	1m46.31s	14	40 laps - lost wheel
R	Ranieri Randaccio (I)/Stefano Sebastiani (I)	SCI	Lucchini-DFV	1m48.58s	17	20 laps
DSQ	Clive Kennerley (ZA)/Careca (A)/Robin Smith (GB)	Simpson Engineering	Matrix-Nissan XP	1m49.83s	19	7 laps - outside assist

Winner's average speed: 80.41mph. Best lap: Bernard, 1m36.75s, 98.72mph. Final points drivers, overall: 1, Sospiri, Collard, 104; 3, Pescatori, 101; 4, Moncini, 92; 5, Baldi, 85; 6, Gounon, 80; etc. Teams overall: 1, JB Giesse Ferrari, 121; 2, BMS Scuderia Italia, 107; 3, DAMS, 80; 4, Target, 24; 5, GLV Brums, 51; 6, Autosport Racing, 48. SR2 drivers: 1, Lancelotti, 82; 2, Henderson, 77; 3, Amati, Bruneau, 73; 5, Merzario, Palo Maccari, 55; etc. SR2 teams: 1, Cauduro Tampolli Team, 122; 2, R Bruneau, 73; 3, Schroeder Motorsport, 57; 4, Siliprandi, 43; 5, Lucchini Engineering, 23; 6, Mark Bailey Racing, 22; etc. First named driver started the race.

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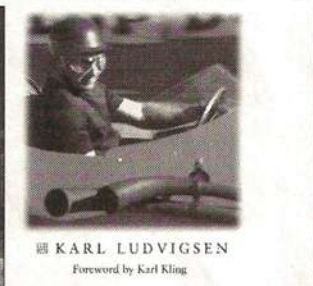
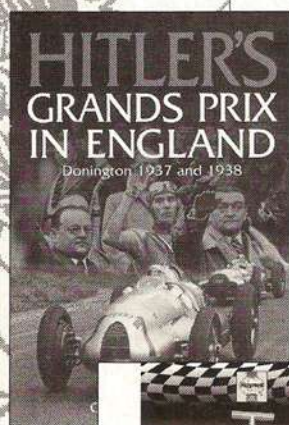
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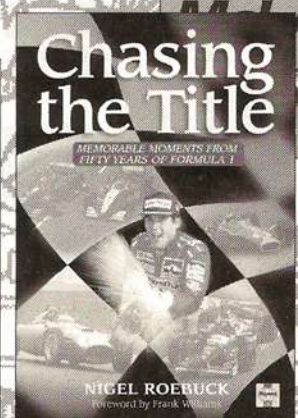
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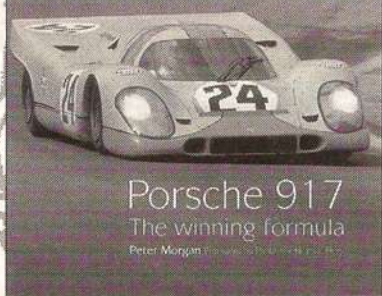
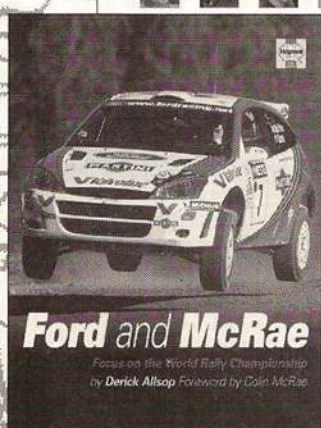


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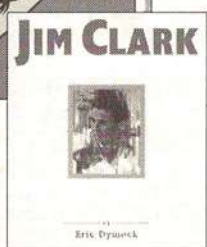
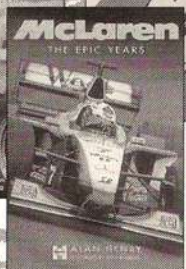
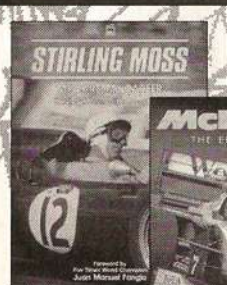
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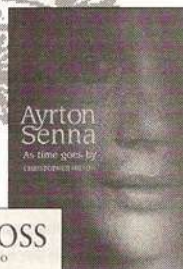
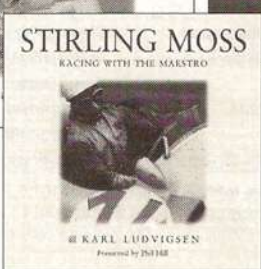
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ORECA Viper makes it six

Karl Wendlinger and Olivier Beretta took a sixth and final FIA GT victory in China. By Gary Watkins



Christian Vann and Christian Glasel were the surprise stars in second place at Zhuhai

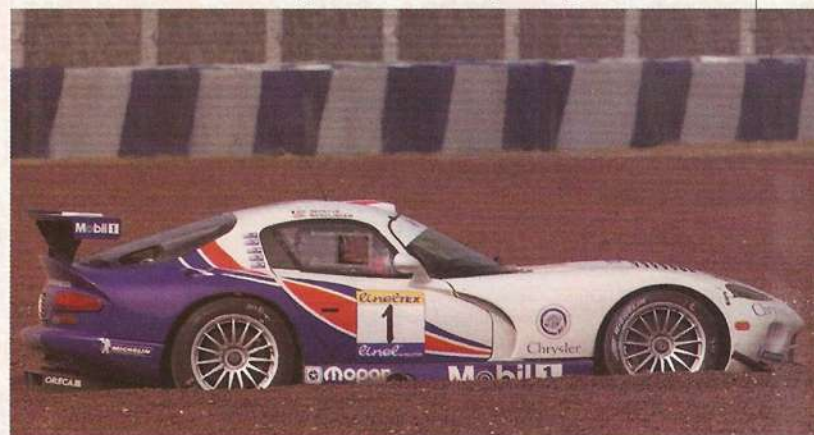
FIA GT Champions Karl Wendlinger and Olivier Beretta notched up a sixth victory in the series at Zhuhai on Sunday, but this was a race that should have been won by Porsche.

The factory Chrysler aces took the laurels by a narrow margin from the surprising Chamberlain Viper of Christian Vann and Christian Glasel, yet the real hero of the series finale was Wolfgang Kaufmann. Unfortunately for the Freisinger Porsche driver, he was also the

villain of the piece in China.

The German stunned his rivals with a lap good enough to knock Sascha Maassen's more highly-developed Konrad Porsche 911 GT2 off the top of the qualifying times. Kaufmann converted pole position into the race lead, but halfway around the opening lap, his 911 GT2 left the track and beached itself in the gravel.

His hopes of victory may have ended there and then, but that didn't stop the 35-year-old and co-driver Bob Wollek from mounting a



Beretta went off briefly in the ORECA Viper, but he and Wendlinger held on to take the win

stirring comeback that brought them to within a couple of seconds of a podium finish. Kaufmann was pulled from the gravel in the safety-car period that followed his off and resumed a lap and a half down on the leaders.

With Wollek at the wheel, the car began to make headway back into the top 10 during the second hour and shortly after half-distance, the Frenchman was up into sixth. After retaking the wheel, Kaufmann moved ahead of the number one Chamberlain Viper when Michel Ligonnet spun off after 72 laps and then claimed fourth from the ailing ORECA car of Jean-Philippe Belloc with 10 laps to go. The third-place Belmondo Viper driven by Dominique Dupuy was also in trouble, and the Porsche crossed the line for the penultimate time just five seconds behind it.

Kaufmann had problems of his own. He had been forced to make his first pitstop early because of a flat-spotted tyre, and the knock-on was that he was now running short of fuel. The German didn't make it across the line, but was classified fourth, so far behind was Belloc.

Kaufmann's disappointment was obvious. "I'd prefer to forget the first lap," he said. "I made the kind of mistake you make once in five years. We could have won: the car was perfect, the Dunlop tyres were brilliant and Bob did a great job."

Even with the Freisinger car effectively out of the equation, it wasn't all plain sailing for Wendlinger and Beretta, whose GTS-R was carrying the 100-kilo maximum in success ballast. Wendlinger had to sit behind Maassen for the first 35 minutes and then later on needed to build enough of an advantage over its rivals to make an extra splash-and-dash fuel stop in the final hour.

By that time, the Konrad car couldn't be counted among them. Team boss Franz Konrad had been forced to retire from an increasingly distant second place with a damaged fifth gear after 47 laps.

Nor could the second ORECA car, which Belloc shared with team newcomer Vincent Vosse. The former had gone off on the first lap and then damaged his front-end bodywork after a collision with a slow Porsche a few laps later. At the end, he was just coasting as he fought to conserve brakes and his rapidly diminishing supply of fuel.

Belloc's problems left Vann and Glasel to pursue the lead factory car. An ultra-quick pitstop spat Glasel back on to the track in third place after Vann had run fifth through the first hour. The German then maintained the runner-up spot during the second third of the race following Konrad's retirement.

When Beretta went off after misjudging his braking and then pitted with an hour and 10 minutes to go, Chamberlain briefly got the scent of victory. The British team knew that Wendlinger would have to stop again, but Vann was just unable to stay close enough to the leader to have any real chance.

Dupuy and team boss Paul Belmondo were never contenders thanks to a brake balance problem and third place wasn't enough to make Belmondo the top privateer in the series. That honour went to Vann and Glasel, who got the nod over long-time points leader Kaufmann on a tie-break. "I can't believe we're the first of the privateers," said Vann. Neither could Kaufmann. ■

FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 10 OF 10, ZHUHAI (PRC), NOVEMBER 28, 105 LAPS 1 Karl Wendlinger/Olivier Beretta (Chrysler Viper GTS-R), 3hr00m52.807s, 93.056mph; 2 Christian Vann/Christian Glasel (Chrysler Viper GTS-R), 3m01m10.495s; 3 Dominique Dupuy/Jean-Philippe Belloc (Viper GTS-R), 104 laps; 4 Wolfgang Kaufmann/Bob Wollek (Porsche 911 GT-R), 103; 5 Jean-Philippe Belloc/Vincent Vosse (Chrysler Viper GTS-R), 102; Yukihiro Hane/Marcel Jurasz (Porsche 911 GT2), 101; 7 Andrea Garbagnati/Mauro Casadei (Porsche 911 GT2), 101; 8 Gerold Ried/Christian Ried (Porsche 911 GT2), 100; 9 Adam Topping/Ugo Colombo/Rob Schirle (Porsche 911 GT2), 97; 10 Michael Eschmann/Patrick Spadacini/Paul Hulverschied (Porsche 911 MR-GT), 96; etc. **Fastest lap** Maassen, 1m33.761s (102.590mph). **Final points** 1, Beretta, Wendlinger, 78; 3, Belloc, 53; 4 David Donohue, 25; 6, Glasel, Vann, Kaufmann, 21; 9, Belmondo, 19; 10, Vosse, etc.



Kaufmann started from pole, but threw away victory with a first-lap trip into the gravel trap

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Dixon exploits outer limits

Kiwi teenager pulls off 'impossible' move to clinch Tasman race. By Wayne Munro

A stunning move around the outside of Teretonga's notoriously difficult 120mph sweeper got young New Zealander Scott Dixon past co-favourite and countryman Simon Wills for victory in last Sunday's Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy Race on the opening meeting of the Formula Holden Tasman Cup series.

The brave move caught Wills by surprise: "I didn't think it was possible," admitted the 23-year-old. It put the 19-year-old Indy Lights frontrunner Dixon into the lead after he had dogged Wills' Reynard 94D early in the 35-lap race.

The Kiwi pair then continued to battle through the rest of the race, ahead of a class field of 16 starters. Dixon held off all the challenges from Wills, the current Australian drivers' champion in the class, to win by a narrow margin of 0.59s.

"I had to go for it, and we've been really quick through the loop all weekend. I'm glad it stuck," said Dixon of his passing move.

Wills' Australian team mate Brenton Ramsay was five seconds back, echoing his third in the prelim race, and newcomer Jason Liefing



Scott Dixon (left) and Simon Wills starred in the Tasman Cup opener

withstood massive pressure from Australian V8 Supercar champion Craig Lowndes and his team mate Matt Halliday for a standout fourth. Lowndes had been second in the earlier race but spun out of fifth place on the last lap of the second and let past Halliday, Kiwi Formula Palmer Audi racer Andrew Booth and Japanese F3 man Yuda Igarashi.

Dixon's win made up for a troubled prelim race outing, when a misfire in the warm-up forced him to start from the pit lane. He forced his way to sixth by the flag. ■

TASMAN CUP FORMULA HOLDEN SERIES, ROUND 1, TERETONGA (NZ), NOVEMBER 28, 25 & 35 LAPS

Prelim 1 Simon Wills (Reynard 94D), 22m01.72s; 2 Craig Lowndes (Reynard 92D), 22m14.24s; 3 Brenton Ramsay (Reynard 94D), 22m18.86s; 4 Matt Halliday (Reynard 94D), 22m18.92s; 5 Andrew Booth (Reynard 96D), 22m21.81s; 6 Scott Dixon (Reynard 92D), 22m22.57s; 7 Yuda Igarashi (Reynard 94D), 22m43.87s; 8 Kevin Bell (Reynard 91D), 22m54.59s; 9 Paul Dumbrell (Reynard 94D), 10 Peter Hill (Reynard 92D), 24 laps. **Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy** 1 Dixon, 30m41.41s; 2 Wills, 30m42.00s; 3 Ramsay, 30m47.05s; 4 Jason Liefing (Reynard 95D), 31m05.10s; 5 Halliday, 31m05.65s; 6 Igarashi, 31m18.51s; 7 Booth, 31m25.76s; 8 Lowndes, 34 laps; 9 Chris Murchison (Reynard 95D), 34 laps; 10 Daynom Templeman (Reynard 92D), 34. **Championship points** 1 Wills, 35pts; 2 Dixon, 30; 3, Ramsay, 24; etc.

Guerra grabs maiden win in Super Tourers

Miguel Angel Guerra scored his first Super Touring win in his privately entered Peugeot 406 when the South American Championship visited Olavarria in Argentina.

The Argentine former Osella Grand Prix driver started the race on the front row and out-dragged polesitter Oscar Larrauri's Alfa Romeo 156. From then, Guerra and Larrauri were neck and neck to the flag with Guerra always ahead.

BMW's Ingo Hoffman and Flavio Figueiredo took turns in third, with Figueiredo ceding the place to give Hoffmann the points lead.

Peugeot's top title hopeful Emiliano Spataro had a nightmare weekend, spinning on the first lap, along with team mate Carlos Bueno. Spataro fought back to sixth but has dropped behind Hoffmann in the points. The race for the title goes down to the wire.

Tony Watson

SOUTH AMERICAN SUPER TOURING CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 11 OF 12, OLAVARRIA (RA), NOVEMBER 28, 33 LAPS - 62.79 MILES

1 Miguel Angel Guerra (Peugeot 406), 39m09.460s, 96.24mph; 2 Oscar Larrauri (Alfa Romeo 156), 39m10.236s; 3 Ingo Hoffmann (BMW 320i), 39m11.144s; 4 Flavio Figueiredo (BMW 320i), 39m16.728s; 5 Diego Menendez (BMW 320i), 39m17.815s; 6 Emiliano Spataro (Peugeot 406), 39m18.136s; etc. **Championship points** 1 Hoffmann 138pts; 2 Spataro 137; 3 Bueno 132; 4 Lopez 95; 5 Figueiredo 79; 6 Larrauri 72; etc. **Final round** Mar del Plata (RA), December 19.

Martinez doubles up for Civic pride

Reigning TC2000 Champion Omar Martinez rekindled his 1999 title hopes in the stifling heat at Parana with two dominant wins.

Martinez's Pro Racing Honda Civic was chased all the way to the flag in the first race of the day by the VW Polo of Walter Hernandez. Daniel Cingolani pipped Ford team mate Henry Martin to third.

In race two, the flying Martinez Civic had to put up with initial pressure from points leader Juan Manuel Silva's sister car who then dropped back. Esteban Tuero brought his Polo home second.

Tony Watson

Vos and Briggs divide up finale victories

Duncan Vos took his BP Nissan Primera to his second win of the season in the penultimate round of the 1999 Bankfin Touring Car Championship. In the process he secured second place in the points standings behind team mate Giniel de Villiers. In the second race, Michael Briggs had his first win of the season in his last race for the Sasol BMW team.

Vos earned his laurels after trailing de Villiers and Shaun van der Linde (BMW 318i) for the first eight laps then moving into second

when de Villiers slowed with an engine misfire. The BMW driver pitted on the penultimate lap with driveshaft problems - leaving Vos to take the chequered flag.

Briggs fought off a determined challenge from Shaun Watson-Smith's Opel Vectra to take a hard-earned second place just 0.2s ahead of Watson-Smith. Anthony Taylor (Audi A4) came fourth ahead of team mate Terry Moss. De Villiers set the fastest lap of the race on lap two and finished sixth.

Briggs led the second 12-lapper

from start to finish and fended off a determined challenge from 1999 champion de Villiers. Although it was Briggs' first win of the year, it gave BMW the distinction of winning the opening and closing events during the 20-race season.

Terry Moss had trailed the two leaders throughout the race in his Engen Audi and finished third ahead of Duncan Vos. Mark Peters (BP Nissan) came fifth. Marco dos Santos was the top independent, coming sixth in his Nissan Primera.

Dos Santos will take over the BMW seat vacated by Briggs, while Audi stalwart Chris Aberdein had his last race - having decided to hang up his helmet after 13 seasons as a works Audi driver.

Colin Windell



Duncan Vos two-wheels his Nissan to a strong touring car victory at Kyalami

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUNDS 19 & 20, KYALAMI (ZA), NOV 27/28, 2 x 12 LAPS, 64.05 MILES

Race 1 1 Duncan Vos (Nissan Primera) 23m02.75s, 84.37 mph; 2 Michael Briggs (BMW) 23m05.93s; 3 Shaun Watson-Smith (Opel) 23m06.16s; 4 Anthony Taylor (Audi) 23m06.73s; 5 Terry Moss (Audi) 23m08.08s; 6 Giniel de Villiers (Nissan) 23m09.05s; 7 Deon Joubert (Opel) 23m09.36s; 8 Mark Peters (Nissan) 23m15.29s; 9 Chris Aberdein (Audi) 23m27.17s; 10 Byron Botha (Nissan) 24m04.98s. **Fastest lap** De Villiers, 1m53.40s. **Race 2** 1 Michael Briggs (BMW) 23m07.47s, 82.93mph; 2 Giniel de Villiers (Nissan) 23m08.46s; 3 Terry Moss (Audi) 23m08.09s; 4 Duncan Vos (Nissan) 23m11.30s; 5 Mark Peters (Nissan) 23m11.78s; 6 Marco dos Santos (Nissan) 23m12.29s; 7 Shaun van der Linde (BMW) 23m13.06s; 8 Deon Joubert (Opel) 23m14.93s; 9 Chris Aberdein (Audi) 23m37.54s; 10 Cliff Wilkinson (Nissan) 24m22.24s. **Fastest lap** De Villiers, 1m54.175s. **Final points** 1 De Villiers 241; 2 Vos 174; 3 Van der Linde 142; 4 Dos Santos 139; 5 Briggs 125; 6 Peters 114; 7 Taylor 97; 8 Moss 91; 9 Deon Joubert 89; 10 Watson-Smith 82.

REPORTS IN BRIEF

Ex British Formula 3 racer Mark Goddard finished fourth in the Renault F99 Spider one-make series race at Zhuhai. The winner was Frenchman Patrick Friesacher.

Johan Smith (Swift 92) finished the South African Formula 2000 Pro Series season the way he started - comprehensively winning the two heats to bring his tally for the year to 19 out of 20 wins.

Robbie Henderson took his first New Zealand Formula Ford win at Teretonga on Sunday and followed it up with another soon after.

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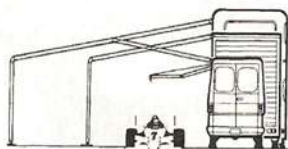


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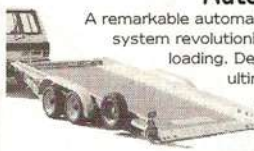
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D

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F

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J

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CLUB AUTOSPORT

ALL THE NATIONAL RACE, RALLY & HISTORIC NEWS PLUS FULL RESULTS ROUND-UP

EDITOR TIM SCOTT ASSISTANT EDITORS TOBY WALLER, ANTHONY PEACOCK EDITOR-AT-LARGE MARCUS PYE

Lydden handed new racing lifeline

EXCLUSIVE

Racing could continue at the Lydden circuit if talks between its owner, the TAG McLaren Group, and Dover District Council come to fruition.

The future of the Kent track has been in doubt since the parent company of the successful McLaren Formula 1 team revealed it plans to use Lydden as a test track for the new Mercedes-Benz SLR sportscar, which it is building in conjunction with the German marque.

Early talk suggested that the move

would have required extensive modification of the one-mile circuit and would have severely restricted its ability to play host to race meetings.

An end to racing was expected to come when development of the site started at the end of 2002.

The TAG McLaren Group and Dover District Council are currently discussing plans for the circuit, though, which include the topic of whether racing can continue at the track.

Both parties have declared that

they would have no objection if racing were to continue at the venue in the future.

McLaren managing director Martin Whitmarsh said: "If the council permits us to develop Lydden, and to retain racing, we will. After all, we bought it as a racing circuit and appreciate its importance to drivers on the national scene."

A Dover District Council spokesman added: "It's not a question of us wanting to stop racing at Lydden. We simply want to ensure that there is no Formula 1 testing at the circuit."

"We are asking for certain guarantees that the track will not be

used for that purpose."

The South Eastern Motor Sports Enthusiasts Club uses Lydden as its base and runs many of the local championships that the circuit hosts.

SEMSEC's Ken Greenfield has welcomed the news. He said: "I always knew there was a reasonable chance that racing could continue past 2002."

"McLaren has supported club racing for a number of years and we're supportive of that."

"If they continue to have a circuit then we hope that racing can continue there. We'll be lobbying all parties to achieve an agreement that secures the long term future of motorsport at Lydden."



Whitmarsh

Racing could continue at the Kent circuit if talks between the TAG McLaren Group and Dover District Council are successful



Kerry Dunlop

PLANNING HISTORY

- 91** ● McLaren assumes ownership of Lydden with plans to develop it as a Formula 1 test track
- 94** ● The squad is granted a time extension by Dover District Council to submit detailed plans
- 96** ● It submits plans for an R&D facility and museum, which are approved by DDC
- 99** ● Further revised plans are submitted to develop the site as a production base for a Mercedes road car

Volkswagen unveils single-seater concept car

German motor firm Volkswagen has unveiled a concept car for a one-make single-seater series that could race in Britain in 2001.

The carbon fibre monocoque has been built by German engineering firm Zato as a prototype for a slicks-and-wings series that VW hopes will fill the gap between the junior categories and Formula 3.

The Formula Concept chassis will be powered by the four-cylinder 1.6-litre engine used in the Polo road car. It is expected to develop 165bhp when fully tuned.

VW Motorsport chiefs have no firm plans as yet for the series but have said they are considering either a pan-European championship or national series that will link up for an end of season knock-out event.

VW Motorsport boss Andre Van der Watt said: "There is no clear step between junior formulae and F3, and F3's cost is out of reach."

"Regional series fit in with the grass roots policy better than a Europe-wide programme. If that means national series, then fine."



Volkswagen's Formula Concept will train drivers for Formula 3

P108 FFORD RIVALS FACE OFF **P110** STRETTON WINS TGP FINALE **P113** RALLYSPRINT GEARS UP **P118** NATIONAL REVIEWS

HUMBLE PYE

Thoroughbred Grand Prix cars thrilled the South African crowd

The bark of three-litre Ford Cosworth DFV engines in full song never fails to stir the blood.

For a start, 11,000rpm is a lot more comfortable to listen to than today's earsplitting V10s, but the most successful Grand Prix engine of all time also conjures up nostalgia for many who hear it.

In Kyalami's thin air last Sunday, the FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix boys wove their magic, stirring the memories of many who remember local boy Jody Scheckter's famous victory in 1975 in a Tyrrell.

Jody's fans never saw him race one of Derek Gardner's radical six-wheelers – he was still in the 007 in the spring of '76 – but racegoers saw Patrick Depailler finish third in one of the years. This year, Martin Stretton went two better in its sister car.



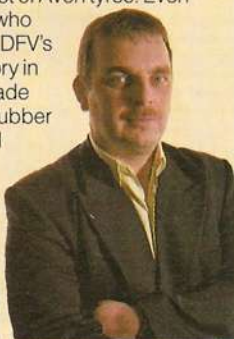
The roar of V8s stirred old memories

Apart from the all-time great cars – Lotus 72, Williams FW07, and Brabham BT49 to name but three – it is the depth of the TGP series which never fails to fascinate. That a typical field also contains Ensign, Fittipaldi, Ligier, March, Hesketh, RAM, Surtees and Trojan cars tells the 1970-'84 story in an entirely representative way.

The TGP circus hit a landmark 50 cars this season, and with many others under restoration in Europe – as well as a Kojima in Japan – it is still growing. With careful nurturing, and slots at quality meetings – a place at Silverstone's Coys Festival is merited – it will continue to thrill ever larger crowds.

The cost of being a frontrunner is way beyond the clubman, but simply being there doesn't have to be. German stalwart Erwin Derichs ran 17 TGP races without an engine rebuild in his March 701 – and used the same set of Avon tyres. Even Jim Clark, who scored the DFV's debut victory in '67, and made one set of rubber last several races, would have been proud!

MARCUS
PYE



FFord rivals closely matched

Britain's two top Formula Ford teams were evenly matched after the first head-to-head test of their new chassis last week.

The works Van Diemen team and Haywood Racing Mygale outfit both tested at Croft, the first time they have run at the same time.

Van Diemen regular James Courtney did the running for the Norfolk-based team, while FFord runner-up Craig Murray shared duties at Haywood with Formula Vauxhall champion Gary Paffett.

In mixed conditions at the 2.1-mile Yorkshire circuit, both teams finished up with fastest laps just 0.2s

apart. Van Diemen had the advantage with 1m24.24s to Haywood's 1m24.43s.

Both teams played down the significance of the times.

Van Diemen team manager Jonathan Lewis said: "We have the advantage Mygale had last year. Our car works and now we can refine it."

Haywood team boss Jim Warren added: "In the wet we were seven tenths of a lap quicker. We know we've got a better car."

The works Swift Cooper SC2000 is expected to join the pair at Silverstone as the magazine went to press on Tuesday. FVauxhall racer Stefan Hodgetts is tipped to drive.

DRIVERS' MARKET

The three remaining seats in Haywood Racing's Formula Ford team have become hot property as drivers bid to join the reigning champions for next season.

Van Diemen has already filled two of its three seats for next year with current ace James Courtney and new signing Peter Gray.

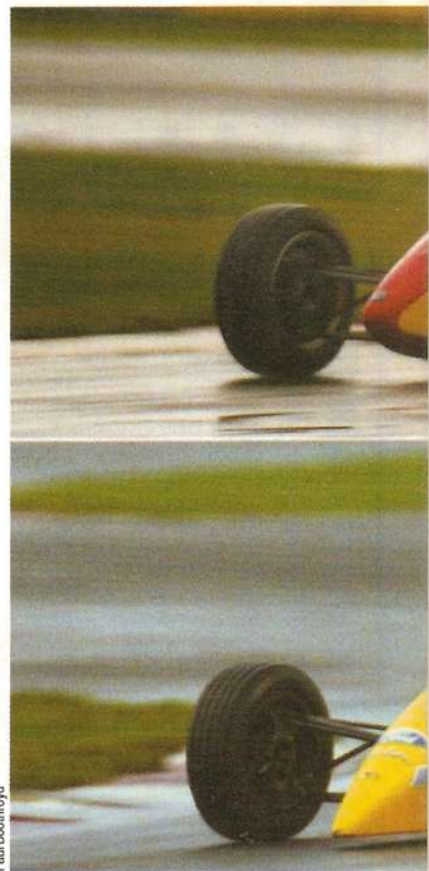
With the winter series over, the annual silly season has reached fever pitch. Several star names have been linked to Haywood in the last few weeks, including Formula

Vauxhall champion Gary Paffett. He impressed the team in the test of its new car at Croft last week.

Formula Palmer Audi racer Jamie Pickford, Irish racer Robbie Coleman, and Gary Catt (see below right) have also tested with the team which also runs cars in Formula Renault.

Current signing Ricardo Megre and FVauxhall racer Danica Patrick have been linked to the team.

Team boss Jim Warren said: "The driver line-up will come together in mid-December."



Paul Boothroyd

Team DFR to run FFords in 2000

Single-seater outfit Team DFR will run a pair of Formula Fords alongside its Formula Renault 2000 team in next year's TOCA package.

The Formula Vauxhall team has bought two Van Diemen chassis to contest the single-seater category next year. Formula 600 champion Lewis Carter will head the line-up.

Team boss Dave Forster said: "Lewis will be hot property and will win races."

He denied that the move spelt the end of the team's participation in the FVauxhall championship.

Marcos rivals plan GT step

Marcos Mantis Challenge racers Charlie Butler-Henderson and Shaun Balfe will renew their rivalry in the British GT championship's GT3 class next year.

Butler-Henderson is likely to be joined by Ginetta racer Chris Ryan in a Marcos GT3, after Ryan impressed in a recent test at Snetterton.

Balfe, who was pipped to second place in the Mantis series by Butler-Henderson, is also stepping up to GT3. The 26-year-old former Caterham racer is debating whether to upgrade his Mantis to GT3 regulations or switch marques.

He will be partnered by regular

co-driver Nigel Taylor. The pair have shared Balfe's Mantis car twice in the British GT invitation class this year.

Ex-Proton Coupe champion Stephen Stokoe also tested Butler-Henderson's Mantis and is set to race it next year.



Butler-Henderson will graduate to GT3

Mick Walker

Vauxhall classes receive new backing

Formula Vauxhall organisers have announced plans for the series that will see it support both the British Formula 3 and the British Touring Car championships next year.

Vauxhall bosses pulled the plug on its support of the one-make single-seaters, along with the sister tin-top Vauxhall Vectra series, earlier this year. Both received a further blow when the winter series were scrapped due to a lack of interest.

Vauxhall has given the FVauxhall a new boost, though, by supplying a £15,000 prize fund for next year.

The winner of the 2000 series will also win a fully-funded drive in a

round of the US F2000 series. Avon Tyres has added a £6,500 tyre bonus.

The new 13-round calendar boasts four events in the British Racing Drivers' Club's PowerTour package, and will support the BTCC at Mondello Park. It is also set for a double-header at Zolder in May.

The move fills a short-fall of support races for the BTCC's trip to Ireland. Both Formula Renault 2000 and Renault Clio will miss the event, along with new Lotus one-make series. That left just Formula Ford and Ford Fiestas as supports.

FVauxhall team boss Tim Sugden said: "It's nice to have some dates. This is the boost it needed."

As predicted in last week's AUTOSPORT, the Vauxhall Vectra championship will run as a class in next year's Formula Saloons series.

The FVauxhall series receives a £15,000 prize fund boost



Mick Walker



ched in Croft test



Next year's Van Diemen (top) and Mygale chassis were tested back-to-back at Croft last week. The cars recorded near-identical times



Blochman/LAT

French FFord team to try out FRenault

Top French Formula Ford team Graff Racing will expand into Formula Renault 2000 next year.

The team will run a three-car squad in the French championship that uses the same Tatuus chassis as in Britain, Germany and Italy.

Renaud Derlot, a runaway champion for Graff in this year's French FFord series, is likely to lead the attack. He should be joined by FFord team mate Sebastien Foglicni and a frontrunner from the junior French Formula Campus series.

The team previously ran sportscar ace Emmanuel Collard in 1989. Team boss Jean-Philippe Grand said: "FRenault has really improved and is very affordable."

Graff will still run the all-conquering Mygale-equipped FFord squad. The promising Julien Melis, who raced into the top 10 in last month's Festival, will line up alongside Jeremie de Souza to lead the team's campaign.

BARC F3 team to move to GTs

Single-seater team Viper Motorsport will make its British GT debut next year with a Dodge Viper GT2.

The ex-Formula Ford constructor, which races a quartet of Reynard cars in the ARP Formula 3 series, has run the Chamberlain Motorsport-owned car in several Spanish GT events this year with drivers Luis Sala and Ni Amorin.

The team plans a full season in the British series, but hopes to contest international events such as Le Mans and Daytona. Drivers are currently being considered by the team.

Catt parts ways with Aztec team

Formula Ford racer Gary Catt has split with Aztec Group Motorsport after a test with the rival Haywood Racing Mygale outfit last week.

The 19-year-old is now locked in a dispute with Aztec boss Rob Kemp over the terms of a contract the team feels he has broken.

Kemp said: "He wasn't just a driver, he was the reason I set the team up. The fact money is involved makes it all the more disappointing."

Catt said: "We believe we owe him nothing at all. It has been blown out of all proportion."

Lotus unveils definitive car

British sportscar marque Lotus has unveiled the final version of the car that will star in its one-make 'arrive-and-drive' series.

The Lotus Sport Elise fills the gap left by Formula Vauxhall and Vauxhall Vectras on next year's British Touring Car Championship support package.

The definitive car has a central driving seat layout, upgraded suspension, and 10bhp power hike.

A full calendar for the championship has also been released. The series supports every BTCC round except Knockhill, Ireland's Mondello Park and the

September Oulton Park race.

It will also run in the night rounds at Snetterton and Silverstone and support the SportsRacing World Cup at Spa on May 20/21 and Magny Cours on September 30/October 1.

A date for a race at the Nurburgring has not been set.



Elise supports next year's TOCA package



Man in the middle: The Lotus Sport Elise has a central driving position, upgraded suspension parts and a 10bhp power increase

NEWS IN BRIEF

Formula Ford Festival winner Ricardo van der Ende has had his first taste of the US F2000 single-seater series. He tested a Primus Racing works Van Diemen outfit at the 0.75-mile Lakeland oval and with Cape Racing at Sebring last week. He is expecting a decision on his plans for 2000 in January.

Formula Renault 2000 graduate team Paul Birch Racing is currently considering its driver line-up for next year. Two of the drivers in the frame are up and coming Formula Ford racers Lee Taylor and Gary Jones. Both are seeking sponsorship in order to move up to the one-make slicks-and-wings series.

Formula EuroFirst frontrunning team Aztek Race Engineering is planning to run a Formula Ford team alongside its Formula Renault 2000 outfit next year.



Blochman/LAT

The British Racing Drivers' Club hosted its annual prizegiving last weekend. British GT champions Julian Bailey and Jamie Campbell-Walter (above) were among those picking up the awards.

Formula Ford team Martin Donnelly Racing will test Robbie Coleman and Tom van Bavel at Silverstone this week. The team's current signing, Hideki Mutoh, will also be at the test.

Vauxhall Vectra racer Matt Turner is currently considering a move to the TOCA-supporting Lotus Sport Elise championship, or British GTs.



Bryn Williams

Daniel Eaves scooped his first race victory on foreign soil at Zhuhai in China on Sunday. The 24-year-old won the China Touring Car event (above) in a Peugeot 306 GTi that Bowman Motorsport has built for the WK-Longman team to race in next year's series.

Knockhill Circuit will host a meeting to discuss the future of the Scottish FFord Zetec championship on Wednesday, December 8. Representatives from Ford will be attending and all teams and drivers are welcome. Contact Graeme Brunton on 0131 666 1705 or 0378 169 512 for more information.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Next year's 10-round Eurocar

calendar has been confirmed: Donington Park, April 2; Pembrey, April 16; Mallory Park, May 1; Lydden, May 29; Knockhill, June 4; Brands Hatch, June 25; Snetterton, July 16; Oulton Park, August 19; Castle Combe, Sept 24; Mallory Park, Oct 15.

Justin Sherwood sealed the Europa Cup winter series at Croft last Saturday after winning all four rounds of the championship.



Sunday's combined Ford XR2 and XR3i race at Anglesey saw three members of the Demon Tweaks Minshaw family compete together. Son Guy took second position – beating father Alan and daughter-in-law Sarah (above).

Europa Cup winter series racer Ryan Walker was named 'Man of the Championship' after taking two class wins at Donington and a second at Croft last Saturday.

A training day for new potential T-Cars drivers will take place at Castle Combe on December 7.

Historic racer John Young has set a new speed record for the Jaguar XK120. His speed of 183.92mph, beats the previous standard of 172.36mph, established by Norman Davis in 1953.

The 750 Motor Club's Sports 2000 series will undergo major changes for next season. New engines will be permitted while success ballast will be added to certain cars.

Special GT racer Robin Harvey will end a lengthy sabbatical from the 750MC's Sports 2000 series next year when he will race a Ray Stiletto fitted with a 1700cc Ford engine.

Classic Formula Ford racer Frank Barnard plans to run the Orbit Motorsport Renault Spider of Mark Cole in selected 750MC events.



ARP F3 racer Steve Allen (above) came seventh on his TGP debut with a March 761-8 last Sunday.

Four six-hour races for pre '65 GT and Touring cars could be run at Kyalami in December 2000. Organisers of the annual Eifel Klassik are studying the proposal.

Stretton wins TGP finale

Former Tyrrell designer Derek Gardner watched Martin Stretton drive an ex-Ronnie Peterson six-wheel Tyrrell P34 to victory in the Thoroughbred Grand Prix finale at Kyalami last weekend.

The 67-year-old, who engineers the car for owner Simon Bill, had been present at the South African track in 1973 and '75 to see Tyrrell drivers Jackie Stewart and Jody Scheckter take wins for the team.

"The circuit has changed since I was last here 20 years ago, but winning races is still just as exciting," said Gardner, who uses original set-up sheets.

The event was dominated by Tyrrells. German Ralph Moog hounded

poleman Stretton in the early part of the 25-lap race, and briefly took the lead in the 009 development chassis which Didier Pironi and Jean-Pierre Jarier used in 1979.

"It was a fantastic feeling to lead," said Moog, who graduated to the series from an F3 Ralt RT1 this year. "Martin was too quick, though."

Michael Schryver, the '96 TGP champion, was driving an ex-Alan Jones Williams FW06 for a one-off.

He said: "Being eight years newer, it does everything my old Lotus 72 didn't. It was a privilege to race such a superb little car."

In fourth was ex-Euro F2 Cup champion Rob Hall in the debut race of Philip Walker's ex-Rupert Keegan Hesketh 308E. "The whole experience of driving where my father worked as a BRM mechanic has been magic," he said.

Frank Bradley qualified the James Watt



Rob Hall gave the Hesketh 308E its debut

Automotive Lotus 81 in third place, but dropped to the rear of the field after grabbing third gear at the start. His recovery drive was acclaimed as one of the best of the season.



Martin Stretton dominated the South African TGP race in his Tyrrell P34

Hines formula is set for 2000 start

Karting ace Martin Hines is confident that his junior formula will run next year after a successful first test for the car.

The 1.4-litre Ford Fiesta engined-machine has yet to receive bodywork, but ran for a trouble-free 15 laps on the Stowe circuit.

Hines expects a complete car in two weeks time, and is confident he will have 24 cars ready for next year.

He said: "The shakedown went well. There will be a series next year, but it will probably start a bit later than other championships."

Donington Park improves safety

Donington Park has begun work on improvements to its gravel traps for next year.

Circuit officials were unable to confirm the exact details of the changes, but it is believed that they will focus on Coppice, Redgate and McLeans. Work was expected to begin on Monday of this week.

Sources suggest that the barriers could be extended by up to 25m.

Marketing director Dave Fern said: "The circuit won't close, but work will be carried out in the coming weeks. It's safety related."

Hillclimb to keep new look in 2000

The British Hillclimb Championship will keep the twin run-off format used for the first time in the series this year. The move followed a survey amongst competitors in both the concurrently-run British and Leaders series.

Series organiser Tony Fletcher said: "There was a resounding vote to retain the new system."

The pressure on the top British competitors will be increased next year with an extra point up for grabs for breaking the outright hill record during a run-off.

Win Percy returns to Jaguar for AMOC revival

Multiple touring car champion Win Percy will race a Jaguar in the Aston Martin Owners' Club's Group C Invitation series next year.

Percy, who has notched up British Touring Car titles with Mazda and Toyota, drove for the TWR-run Jaguar Le Mans team in its XJR8 chassis in 1986 and '87.

The 56-year-old tin-top veteran will race one of three modern Jaguar sportscars owned by marque enthusiast Don Law.

He missed out on a potential drive in the Le Mans-winning XJR9 in '88 when he swapped to Nissan for its touring car and Le Mans programme.

Percy will have a chance to reunite himself with the XJR9, which he tested but never raced. He could also race an XJR10 or XJR16.

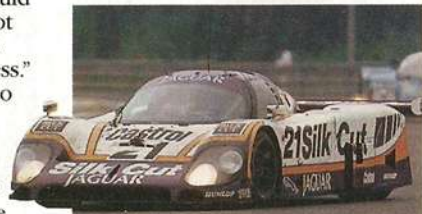
He said: "I'm over the moon. It never rankled me that I missed a chance to win Le Mans, but I would dearly love to race the car. I've got Jaguar stamped through me. I'm glad to have had shared its success."

"The opportunity for people to see and hear these cars racing again is great. It was a fabulous era for sportscars."

Percy, who races Law's Jaguar XJ220 in the AMOC Intermarque series, will also drive a Lotus 15 in

the British Racing Drivers' Club's '50s Sports Car series next year.

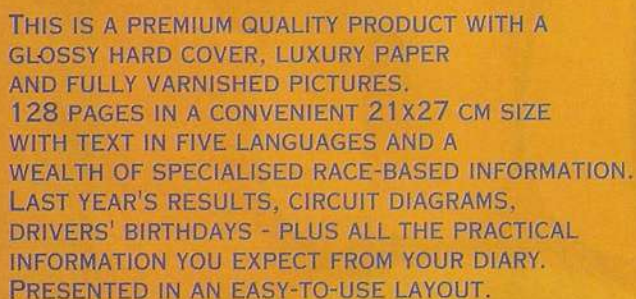
Law said: "Both Win and myself are really keen to do well in the series. We want to win, and we're very keen to beat the Porsches."



Win Percy could be reunited with XJR9

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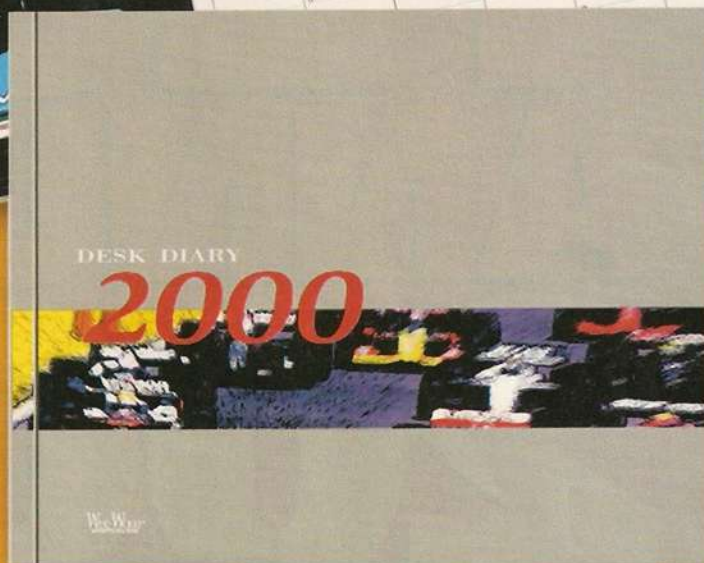


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Rallysprint reaches for the big time

The National Rallysprint Championship will become equal in stature to the full British rally series, according to Silverstone's John Taylor.

The circuit's rally consultant is aiming to dovetail the series with the BRC in 2001.

"If the British championship goes to four-wheel drive in 2001, there's no reason why we shouldn't structure the rallysprint calendar around it," said Taylor. "That way, the teams could compete in both championships."

Ambitious plans have already been put in place for next year.

Series organisers hope to attract at least two manufacturers to the Loctite-backed campaign next year, one of which is believed to be Peugeot.



Gwynne

A comprehensive TV coverage deal is one of the main attractions for teams to join the series. Taylor said that he was "extremely close" to announcing the championship's package of four programmes on terrestrial TV which will cover each round.

The Rallysprint series is currently hosted by Silverstone's Roger Clark circuit, but plans are in place to expand it further.

"There are currently no other suitable venues," said Taylor. "However, a circuit is being built in Belgium, and when it is finished we will go there."

Reigning champion Ian Gwynne, whose best time around the Northamptonshire circuit is faster than that of Rally Great Britain winner Richard Burns, said: "The National Rallysprint is a great series, but we need to attract more people."

2000 CALENDAR

Round one.....	May 27
Round two.....	June 24
Round three.....	August 5
Round four.....	September 7



The National Rallysprint Championship is aiming to dramatically increase its profile over the next few years

NEWS IN BRIEF

Triple F1 world champion Sir Jack Brabham walked away from his second major racing accident in three months on last weekend's Classic Adelaide Rally in Australia. The 73-year-old was hospitalised after a shunt in last September's Goodwood Revival Meeting.

BTRDA competitor Charlie Jukes will mount a full assault on the British Rally Championship next year, as well as a partial world campaign. The 30-year-old plans to upgrade his existing Proton Compact to works spec, adding a 200bhp kit engine. He is looking to contest at least three world rounds in Europe.

British Rally Championship driver Ryan Champion is set to drive in the Peugeot Super 106 Cup next year. The 1994 Peugeot Junior Champion will keep his showroom-class Mitsubishi for an attack on the Neste Rally Finland in August.

British Historic Rally Champion Dessie Nutt will be the man to beat on this weekend's Killarney Rally. The Porsche 911 driver is bidding for a hat trick of wins on the event.

A Champions of Motorsport dinner in Ireland raised £27,500 for Action Research, the country's leading medical research centre. The guests included former Ford rally boss Stuart Turner.

RALLY GREAT BRITAIN FULL RESULTS

1	Richard Burns/Robert Reid (Subaru Impreza WRC99)	3:53:44.2 [class winner]	46	Gary Kellam/Garry Morpeth (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:53:23.0
2	Juha Kankkunen/Juha Repo (Subaru Impreza WRC99)	3:55:31	47	Tony Jardine/Kevin Piper (Proton Satria)	4:54:30.0
3	Harri Rovanpera/Risto Pietilainen (SEAT Cordoba WRC E2)	3:58:39.5	48	Ries Huisman/Bart van Rensdijk (Subaru Impreza)	4:55:41.0
4	Bruno Thiry/Stephane Prevot (Skoda Octavia WRC)	4:02:11.7	49	Richard Bethune/David Owen (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:58:15.5
5	Freddy Loix/Sven Smeets (Mitsubishi Carisma GT)	4:03:19.5	50	Mike Corns/Ana Goni (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:58:35.0
6	Thomas Radstrom/Gunnar Barth (Ford Focus WRC)	4:03:47.5	51	Richard Worts/Graham Hopewell (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	5:00:08.3
7	Gilles Panizzi/Herve Panizzi (Peugeot 206 WRC)	4:04:17.8	52	Gethin Jones/Kevin Devine (Daewoo Lanos)	5:00:56.7 [class winner]
8	Markko Martin/Toomas Kitting (Toyota Corolla WRC)	4:05:21.5	53	Gilly Handley/Richard Pashley (Vauxhall Corsa GSi)	5:01:09.9
9	Petter Solberg/Phil Mills (Ford Focus WRC)	4:06:54.0	54	Graeme Presswell/Martin Saunders (Vauxhall Astra GSi)	5:02:27.2
10	Matthias Kahle/Dieter Schneppenheim (Toyota Corolla WRC)	4:08:48.2	55	Graham Middleton/John Morgan (Hyundai Coupé)	5:03:08.1
11	Jonny Milner/Duncan McMath (Toyota Corolla WRC)	4:10:07.3	56	Andreas Mansfeld/Marc De Jong (Honda Integra Type R)	5:03:34.4 [class winners]
12	Luis Clement/Alex Romani (Subaru Impreza WRC99)	4:11:57.8	57	Arwyn Williams/Terry Moore (Ford Escort RS Cosworth)	5:03:40.3
13	Krzysztof Holowczyc/J Fortin (Subaru Impreza WRC98)	4:14:15.5	58	Masayuki Yamada/Shunichi Washio (Subaru Impreza)	5:03:46.3
14	Armin Kremer/Fred Berssen (Subaru Impreza WRC98)	4:15:03.6	59	Steven Bayley/Nigel Bayley (Vauxhall Astra GSi)	5:03:47.9
15	Mark Higgins/Dryan Thomas (Volkswagen Golf GTI)	4:15:37.0 [class winner]	60	Heikki Salminen/Kari Hytonen (Mercedes C220)	5:04:04.5
16	Jesus Puras/Marc Marti (Toyota Corolla WRC)	4:15:51.2	61	John Van Camp/Alan Brown (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	5:06:07.6
17	Mark Fisher/Kevin Gormley (Subaru Impreza WRC98)	4:16:45.0	62	Robert Collins/Chris Wales (Subaru Impreza)	5:06:37.7
18	Martin Rowe/Derek Ringer (Renault Maxi Megane)	4:16:47.3	63	Philippe Chevalier/J Terrasse (Peugeot 106 Rallye)	5:07:07.6
19	Jarmo Kytölehto/Arto Kapanen (Vauxhall Astra kit car)	4:17:10.4	64	Avon Cayzer/Ray Holland (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	5:08:23.6
20	Neil Wearden/Trevor Agnew (Vauxhall Astra kit car)	4:19:44.2	65	David Beesley/Rob Dyson (Vauxhall Corsa GSi)	5:09:43.7
21	Bertie Fisher/Rory Kennedy (Subaru Impreza WRC98)	4:21:27.7	66	Tony Larkin/Laurie Walker (Peugeot 106 S16)	5:11:04.9
22	Ramon Ferreyros/Gonzalo Saez (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:22:27.5 [class winner]	67	Les Allfrey/Richard Pomfret (Peugeot 106 Rallye)	5:11:41.1 [class winner]
23	Richard Tuthill/Roger Freeman (Subaru Impreza)	4:23:54.6	68	Steve Weir/Alexandra Bohm (Skoda Felicia)	5:14:35.3
24	Gavin Cox/Tim Hobbs (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:25:57.4	69	Tim Green/Rob Smith (Proton Satria)	5:14:37.3
25	Kenneth Eriksson/Staffan Parmander (Hyundai Coupé)	4:26:16.1	70	Lars Sundling/Axel S Sundling (Honda Integra Type R)	5:17:13.1
26	Mark Perrott/Andrew Sankey (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:26:31.5	71	Peter Walster/Ian Holliday (Ford Sierra Cosworth 4x4)	5:19:23.7
27	David Wood/John Waterfall (Subaru Impreza)	4:28:17.9	72	Mauro Zamparutti/Andrea Monsutti (Opel Astra GSi)	5:21:06.8
28	Geoff Smith/Paul Morris (Ford Escort WRC)	4:30:52.3	73	Bob Bean/Graham Wild (Skoda Felicia)	5:23:11.5
29	Janne Tuohino/Mika Anttila (Ford Escort WRC)	4:31:26.9	74	Steve Head/Andrew Dugdale (Proton Satria)	5:23:31.5
30	Richard Davis/David Williams (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:31:59.7	75	Adrian McKee/Frank McAlister (Peugeot 306 16S)	5:24:24.1
31	Ignacio Sanfilippo/J Medina (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:36:36.2	76	David Patrick/Richard Patrick (Peugeot 106 Rallye)	5:25:28.0
32	Gary Adam/Gordon Adam (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:39:20.6	77	Tim Miller/Peter Moss (Nissan Micra)	5:26:31.4 [class winner]
33	Mats Andersson/Claire Mole (Proton Satria)	4:39:57.0 [class winner]	78	Chris Vlaar/Beene Vis (Nissan Micra)	5:29:41.8
34	Berni Kollervold/Elin Wolland (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:42:07.4	79	Nick Cochrane/Dave Richards (Peugeot 306 16S)	5:31:17.0
35	Evert Bolderheij/Arina Reijnen (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:43:40.4	80	Malcolm Conibear/Mike Jones (Proton Satria)	5:33:37.6
36	Eamonn Boland/Alun Cook (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:44:03.4	81	Pierluigi Comelli/Flavio Candoni (Peugeot 306 16S)	5:34:46.0
37	Natalie Barratt/Stella Boyles (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:44:50.9	82	Philippe Gobert/Jean-Marie Servant (Suzuki Swift GTI)	5:36:16.3
38	Kevin Furbur/Mark Andrews (Peugeot 106 S16)	4:46:31.5	84	Nigel Griffiths/Mike Hart (Citroen ZX 16V)	5:39:47.6
39	Bob Cousoul/Tom Cousoul (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:46:53.7	85	James Vickers/Mark Ellison (Vauxhall Astra GSi)	5:42:06.4
40	Eric Mallen/Miguel Baudovin (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:48:44.8	86	Terry Colley/Dave Lucas (Rover Mini Cooper 1.3i)	5:49:35.7
41	Innes Marlow/Alyson Marlow (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:48:54.2	87	Stefano Macaluso/G Bernacchini (Fiat Cinquecento Sporting)	5:50:43.6
42	Nick Foster/Bruce Coate-Bond (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:49:36.5	88	Tony Bell/Andy Bull (Ford Ka)	5:52:54.2
43	Phil Morgan/Martin Douglas (Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution)	4:50:31.6	89	Shinobu Kitani/Makoto Mizoi (Rover Mini Cooper 1.3i)	5:56:46.2
44	Martin Healer/Mark Thake (Ford Escort RS Cosworth)	4:50:44.6	90	Ian Brown/Craig Burgess (Honda Civic 3 Door SRI)	6:07:21.2
45	Martin Sansom/Phil Wells (Peugeot 106 S16)	4:51:07.2		No other finishers	

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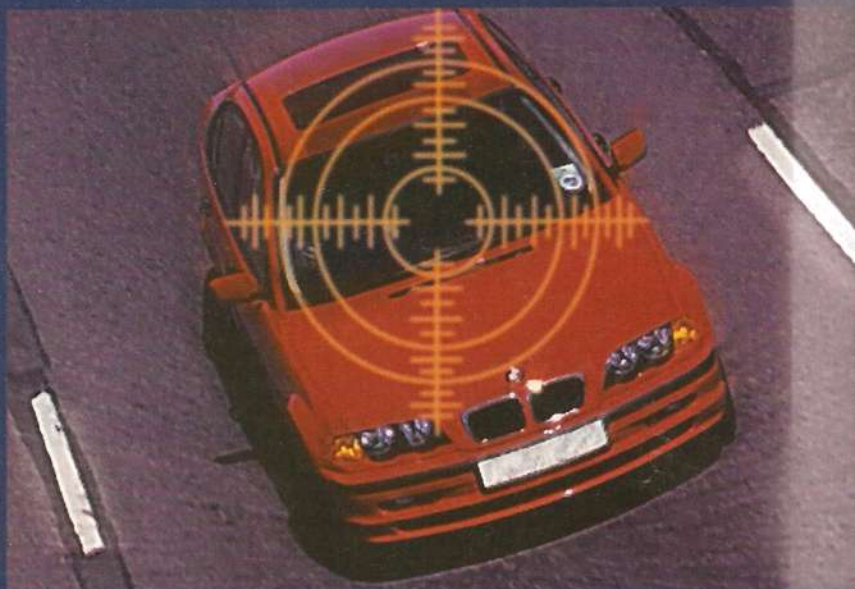
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CROFT November 27

Sherwood cleans up

Justin Sherwood made it four wins out of four in the Europa Cup winter series after another pair of lights-to-flag victories at Croft.

Following a restart in race one, Sherwood began to pull away from Robert Doornbos, Lance Robson, Ryan Walker and Noel Roddy. His immediate pursuer did not give up easily, however, and after five laps the gap closed again as Robson and Walker paired off for third.

For a while it looked as if the lead quartet would bunch up once more, but Walker then began to lose touch as Robson tried to stick with Doornbos.

"I kept finding all the damp bits," said Sherwood as he held on to win. Behind, though, Walker seemed set to challenge Robson for third, when the latter's CV joint broke on lap eight and left the young American with a solo run to the flag. A patient Noel Roddy completed the top four positions.

Sherwood had race two under control from the start. Doornbos was unable to match the power of the leader's modified engine, but fought hard to claim a strong second place nevertheless.

Having failed to finish the first



Justin Sherwood dominated the Europa Cup winter series with four victories

race, Robson charged from the back of the grid to take fifth position by the exit of Hawthorn on the opening lap, and passed Roddy for third after he spun at the hairpin.

His next target was Walker, but the Diamond racer fell off at Sunny, and Robson inherited a solitary third. Roddy recovered to fourth after Leslie Wright suffered clutch failure three laps from home.

Martin Lofthouse's Triumph TR8 and Richard Butterfield's Sylva Striker had a terrific scrap for the Sports Car laurels.

Initially, it was Butterfield to the fore until Lofthouse surged ahead into Tower on the second lap, only to run wide immediately and hand the lead back to his rival.

The pair ran nose-to-tail for the

next five laps then made contact at the Complex as Lofthouse went for the outside. He held on for the inside at the hairpin and the lead. On the exit, he ran wide again but still kept Butterfield behind.

As Lofthouse powered ahead, his victory was assured when his adversary spun and later ran off at Clervaux to drop to fourth behind Richard Butler's Chevron and Nigel Vaulkhard's Lotus Cortina - another great scrap.

Vaulkhard was in action again in the Saloons. He battled throughout the whole race with Andrew Morrison's Rover 200 as team mate Rick Tanton took his Lotus Cortina to a fairly comfortable victory.

At the flag, Vaulkhard just held second after finally getting the better

of his rival at Sunny on lap nine.

Steve Fitzsimmons' Chevron B42 inherited a comfortable Single-Seater victory, after Noel Roddy's Europa pitted with a flat battery. **Peter Scherer**

★ STAR DRIVE Robert Doornbos: two strong second places for the 18-year-old Dutch racer.

RESULTS

EUROPA CUP WINTER SERIES - RACE ONE (10 LAPS) 1 Justin Sherwood 13m59.09s (90.08mph); 2 Robert Doornbos 14m00.86s; 3 Ryan Walker; 4 Noel Roddy; 5 Leslie Wright; 6 Oli Wilkinson (Formula Vauxhall). **Class winners** Doornbos; Sherwood; Wilkinson. **Fastest lap** Sherwood 1m22.64s (91.47mph). **RACE TWO (12 LAPS)** 1 Sherwood 16m43.40s (90.40mph); 2 Doornbos 16m46.89s; 3 Lance Robson; 4 Roddy; 5 Wilkinson; 6 Matt Turner. **Class winners** Doornbos; Sherwood; Wilkinson. **Fastest lap** Sherwood 1m21.55s (92.69mph). **SPORTS RACING CARS (12 LAPS)** 1 Martin Lofthouse (Triumph TR8) 19m29.07s (77.59mph); 2 Richard Butler (Chevron S2000) 19m45.63s; 3 Nigel Vaulkhard (Lotus Cortina); 4 Richard Butterfield (Sylva Striker). **Class winners** Ian Blacklin (Westfield SE); Butler; Lofthouse. **Fastest lap** Butterfield 1m34.09s (80.34mph). **SALOON CARS (12 LAPS)** 1 Richard Tanton (Lotus Cortina) 19m42.20s (76.73mph); 2 Nigel Vaulkhard (Lotus Cortina) 19m44.52s; 3 Andrew Morrison (Rover 200); 4 Tom Hogan (Honda Integra). **Class winners** Terry Wright (Rover 100); Tanton; David Gray (Rover Vitesse). **Fastest lap** Morrison 1m36.40s (78.41mph). **SINGLE-SEATERS (12 LAPS)** 1 Steve Fitzsimmons (Chevron B42) 17m54.95s (84.38mph); 2 Richard Purcell (Vauxhall Lotus) 18m20.72s; 3 John Pinkney (Reynard SF78); 4 Richard Webster (Van Diemen RF81). **Class winners** Webster; Fitzsimmons. **Fastest lap** Noel Roddy (Formula Europa) 1m26.16s (87.73mph).

ANGLESEY November 28



Lee Taylor took both rounds of the Pre '87 series in atrocious weather conditions

Dominant Taylor comes of age

Two impressive drives from Paul Birch Racing's teenage newcomer Lee Taylor contributed to an exciting day's racing at Anglesey last weekend - despite the programme being shortened due to gale force winds and driving rain.

The former kart star had only two previous car races under his belt, but proved he had taken to the discipline like a duck to water with two pole positions and two clear-cut victories in the NW Formula Ford Pre '87 category.

In the first race, he was beaten off the line into School by Robert Wyke, but he took the lead on the main straight at the end of the third lap after pressing his rival closely from the green lights. Chris Brown brought his Mondiale home a distant third after Neil Hunt spun out on the 11th lap.

In the second encounter, Taylor made a lightning start and gradually built up a 19s lead over second-placed Wyke by the flag. The latter had temporarily dropped to fourth

at the start after missing a gear. Behind them, Brown fought hard to earn another third place.

Chris Stockton and Alan Pike also showed that they could master the treacherous track conditions by sharing the victory spoils in the two Post '87 Formula Ford battles, although they did not have things all their own way.

Steve Hobday started from pole position and looked set to lead the field home in the first contest. Lap 13 proved unlucky for him when Chris Stockton's Mondiale edged past his Swift out of School. Despite a spin at Abbots on the next lap, Stockton stayed ahead to the flag.

In the second race, ultimate winner Pike made a superb start to sprint past poleman Stockton into School. He led until an eventful eighth lap, which ended with Stuart Sanders and Stockton ahead of him and third-placed Hobday off at the Hairpin. Contact between the front two ended Stockton's race two laps later and Pike swept back into the lead past Sanders through School for the penultimate time.

Emulating Taylor's earlier Pre '87 Fford dominance, Neil Waterworth was the clear winner of both combined Ford XR2/XR3i encounters. Behind him, Andrew Lennie and Guy Minshaw battled

hard to share the spoils for second and third places.

Graham Read

★ STAR DRIVE Lee Taylor: dominated both Pre '87 Fford races in the wet.

RESULTS

POST '87 NW FF1600 - RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Chris Stockton (Mondiale M94S) 15m13.44s (62.48mph); 2 Steve Hobday (Swift SC93F) 15m16.41s; 3 Neil Hunt (Mondiale M89S); 4 Stephen Clegg (Reynard 89FF). **Class winners** Stockton; Hunt. **Fastest lap** Stockton 57.98s (65.62mph). **RACE TWO (12 LAPS)** 1 Alan Pike (Swift SC92F) 12m10.62s (62.49mph); 2 Stuart Sanders (Swift SC94K) 12m10.92s; 3 Clegg; 4 Hunt. **Class winners** Pike; Clegg. **Fastest lap** Stockton 58.02s (65.58mph). **PRE '87 NW FF1600 - RACE ONE (20 LAPS)** 1 Lee Taylor (Van Diemen RF85) 20m48.64s (60.94mph); 2 Robert Wyke (Reynard 84FF) 21m04.00s; 3 Chris Brown (Mondiale 86); 4 Neil Hunt (Crosbie 25F). **Class winners** Taylor; Hunt. **Fastest lap** Taylor 1m00.71s (62.67mph). **RACE TWO (12 LAPS)** 1 Taylor 12m25.51s (61.24mph); 2 Wyke 12m45.14s; 3 Brown; 4 Neil Jones (Crosbie 25F). **Class winners** Taylor; Jones. **Fastest lap** Taylor 1m01.16s (62.21mph). **FORD XR2s/XR3is - RACE ONE (15 LAPS)** 1 Neil Waterworth (XR2) 15m58.30s (59.56mph); 2 Andrew Lennie (XR3i) 16m06.42s; 3 Guy Minshaw (XR2); 4 Sarah Minshaw (XR2). **Class winners** Waterworth; Lennie. **Fastest lap** Waterworth 1m02.39s (60.99mph). **RACE TWO (12 LAPS)** 1 Waterworth 12m37.39s (60.28mph); 2 Guy Minshaw 12m44.36s; 3 Lennie; 4 Sarah Minshaw. **Class winners** Waterworth; Lennie. **Fastest lap** Waterworth 1m02.29s (61.08mph).

Rich pickings

FPA had a wealth of talent in Tarling and Lyons, but the former took the spoils in a tense fight. By Toby Waller

The one-make single-seater Formula Palmer Audi championship has often been likened to a mini Formula 1, and this year that comparison was particularly valid.

While Mika Hakkinen and Eddie Irvine battled for the world's top single-seater crown, with David Coulthard and Heinz-Harald Frentzen in hot pursuit, the 1999 FPA title battle boiled down to a similar two-by-two scrap going into Thruxton's final round.

Heading the pack were two equally talented but very different individuals. In the lead was Richard Tarling. The 21-year-old was hungry to take the title in his second year of the formula. Close behind was tenacious talent Richard Lyons, who looked set to clinch his first major national championship.

Also in with a shout, albeit a slim one, were '96 Formula Vauxhall Junior champion Tim Mullen and '97 FVJ frontrunner Damien Faulkner.

"The pair proved that they have the ability to go on to much greater things"

Both scored late-season wins which, on top of a year of steady form, put them close to the leading pair.

In the end it was Tarling who held off Lyons to take the title – but it was a close-run thing.

The pair were inseparable from the beginning of the year and proved that they both have the ability to go on to much greater things. Lyons certainly had the greater speed, but Tarling was more consistent and composed – and he reaped the rewards as a result.

The Englishman was almost never off the front two or three rows in qualifying, and he was an excellent subdued racer, combining cunning tactics and solid overtaking.

His consistency was incredible, and he only finished outside the top six three times in a month of misery that started at Brands Hatch in June.

He slid off the track at the Kent circuit on the warm-up lap while trying to heat up his tyres. The missed opportunity to get a valuable win from pole position clearly affected him in the next double-header at Donington Park, and he never really looked like the championship contender he was.

It was a sign of his tremendous resolve, however, that he picked



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Lyons (right) sprays his share of the champagne onto title winner Tarling

himself up to score a podium at Silverstone and a victory at Brands Hatch that moved him back into the title lead. From there, he confidently romped to the crown.

Silverstone was also a big turning

point for Lyons. This was where he made his biggest mistake of the year. While he was battling for second place with Mullen, he drove into the back of the Ulsterman's car. This cost him dear, as Tarling slipped through

into second place and closed dramatically on him in the standings.

So it was that Lyons, fresh off the back of matching the highly rated Antonio Pizzonia in FVauxhall, had another great year but ultimately missed out on the big prize.

Although he won more races and was undoubtedly the quicker of the two main contenders in qualifying, he was a little too over-ambitious at times – particularly when he was in the middle of the pack.

He was certainly good at overtaking, but he would sometimes lose his patience and try to push his way past a rival. Both would end up paying the price.

A pair of poor qualifying sessions for the final round left him in a tenuous position from which to fight Tarling, but he will have learned a lot from another tough year.

Faulkner and Mullen both allied raw speed with tenacity, and, by the end of the season they were almost as highly rated as the title leaders.

Ultimately, Mullen was the faster of the two, but he often struggled to bounce back from poor qualifying. Faulkner, in contrast, had a more consistent season and was the better of the pair at recovering from any problems in qualifying. Both,

TOP FOUR

1 RICHARD TARLING

Almost too close to call, but Tarling eventually gets the vote for his calm ability to fight back against his title rival, despite dropping behind him in the standings on two occasions.



2 RICHARD LYONS

Impressed in his first year in the series with blinding pace and confidence but lost the edge towards the end of the year. Still needs to bolster his natural speed with a bit more composure.



3 DAMIEN FAULKNER

Just edged out Mullen in the standings and our rankings by having the more consistent year. Able to recover well from poor qualifying, he only made one real mistake all season.



4 TIM MULLEN

As quick as the top three, but less consistent. A solid year, though, that has reaffirmed his potential after two hard years in Formula Vauxhall and Formula Renault Sport.





though, were like the title contenders in that their points score was a measure of their consistency and lack of mistakes.

The battle for fifth, sixth and seventh in the championship was just as closely fought, with Robbie Kerr heading Justin Keen and Sam Hancock by virtue of his two Thruxton wins.

Kerr had struggled to get his season off the ground, but once into his stride he put together a consistent string of good results – although he was too often hampered by poor qualifying.

Justin Keen was barely a multiple winner with two victories, but he perhaps should have won more. He threw away a possible third win at Brands Hatch in June and was punted off from the lead at Mondello and Thruxton.

Sam Hancock was the seventh

“Lyons was good at overtaking but he would sometimes lose his patience”

driver to win a race but posted too many retirements to really figure.

The trio all proved themselves, and they will be keenly watched wherever they race next year.

Overall, it was a good, solid second year for the formula. Next season it will step up a gear with the introduction of the European FPA format and a switch over to the British Racing Sports Car Club's Premier Package.

The championship may have had its glitches early in its first season, but this year was, on a technical basis, fairly trouble free – thanks to new, experienced blood joining the organisers. The most public problem was with the boost in Mondello, blamed on a change of turbo software. It didn't recur.

The points system certainly helped keep things close. The fact that seven drivers won races and many more were contenders for the top step of the podium, proved that the championship's format works. The only downside proved to be some murmurs of discontent from the drivers at the back of the grid.

Tarling is confirmed to take up his EFPA prize drive for winning this year's series. It will be fascinating to see who can beat him. ■

FINAL STANDINGS

1	Richard Tarling	210pts (3 wins)
2	Richard Lyons	198 (4)
3	Damien Faulkner	192 (1)
4	Tim Mullen	188 (1)
5	Robbie Kerr	179 (3)
6	Justin Keen	157 (2)
7	Sam Hancock	156 (1)
8	Derek Hayes	146
9	Jeroen Bleekemolen	143
10	Topi Serjala	141



Mullen (12), Hancock (2), Kerr (79), Keen (7), Tarling (1), Lyons (6) and Faulkner (24) were all good enough to hit the top of the podium in '99

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Clarke eventually came out ahead in a three-way fight for the V8 spoils

CLARKE'S COMMANDO RUN

Kevin Clarke shoehorned his way to victory in Eurocar V8s and Pickups following an exhausting season of boot-down, toe-to-toe action while the circus tried to draw in the crowds at new circuits. By Dud Candler



Tick Steward squashed his UK opposition, then did the same to the rest of the world

Anyone who attended the £10,000 winner-takes-all AUTOSPORT/Team Brask shoot-out at Brands Hatch in May, saw the Eurocar package at its glamorous and glitzy best.

Sadly, it wasn't always so, and despite being around for six years now, Eurocar has yet to make a major breakthrough in appealing to the masses.

The lure of seeing the cars at Snetterton and Oulton Park for the first time in 1999 did little to win over more fans, but maybe the new promoter for next year and the promise of the oval at Rockingham coming on-line early in the millennium will be the shot in the arm it needs to push Eurocars to a wider audience.

The way was paved for a new king of the showcase V8s with former double V8 champion Mike Jordan and '98 title holder Stevie Hodgson leaving the category.

A three-way, season-long battle between Kevin Clarke, Mark Willis and Barry Lee was eventually resolved in Clarke's favour after a tense finale at Donington Park.

Few would deny him his glory. He has always been competitive - be it in V6, V8 or Pickups - but suffered a big setback when his major backer pulled out at the end of '97. Unbowed, he ran the V8 in '98 on a budget of fresh air and optimism.

He was without a major backer again this year, so his win in the Brands shoot-out undoubtedly aided his cause. Few needed the money as much.

Alf Boarer, Chris Dawkins, Paul Sheard and Paul Eaton plus Peter Falding were invariably in the thick of the action, while Wales-based South African Mike Schmidt filled a number of column inches for all the wrong reasons when he suffered a mighty crash at Mallory Park that left eight marshals injured.

The V6s also suffered a massive ►

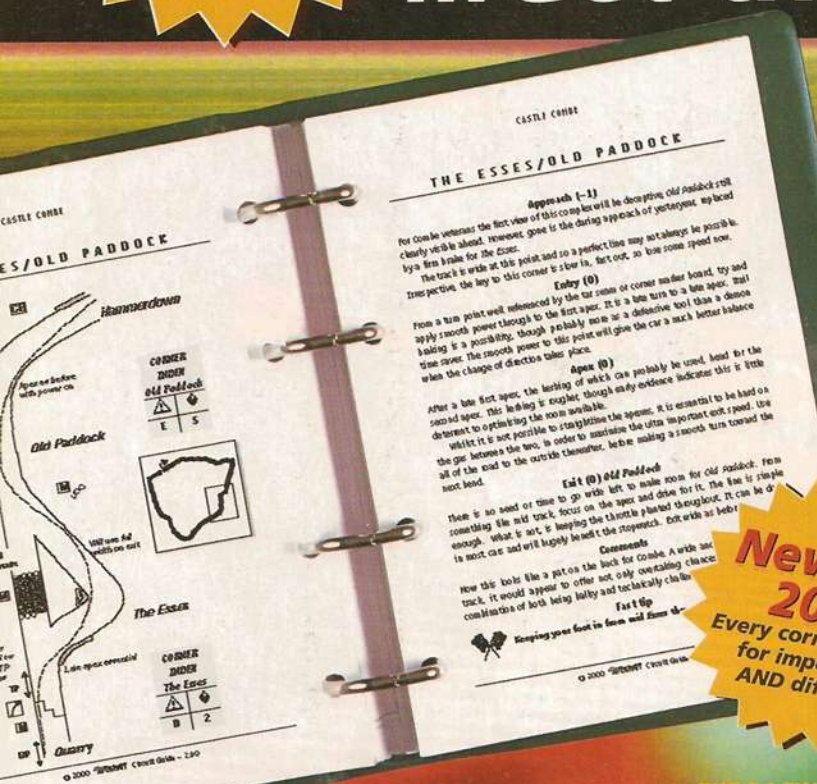
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◀ accident, again on Mallory's somewhat aptly named Monster Mile. This time, Yorkshireman Mark Proctor destroyed much of the barrier at the pit lane. However, both incidents amply demonstrated just how strong the Sonny Howard-built cars are. Both drivers walked away from their incidents completely unharmed.

Steve Dance stepped up on his fourth place in V6s in '98 to lift this year's title by a healthy margin. John Mickel (dovetailing his V6 and Legends operation with almost as much success as Kevin Clarke) was runner-up, just 15 points ahead of Sussex racer Rick Lemmon.

"Yorkshireman Mark Proctor destroyed much of the barrier at the pit lane"

Meanwhile, Clarke doubled his '99 championship tally in Pickups. He ran in the series under the blanket of the burgeoning Team Brask/EC Soft outfit and ended up with a reasonable winning margin over '98 runner-up Andy Steward (brother of Legends champion Tick), with whom he battled all season. Ace engine builder Dave Longhurst was third best in this well-supported series.

In the Legends, Tick Steward set out to recapture the crown he'd won back in '96. This year, he ran as part of the championship sponsor Old Spice team, and he simply crushed the opposition.

Behind him, team mate Steve Thompson failed by just 15 points to wrest the overall second spot from Team Brask's John Mickel, despite winning all three races at the final round.

The quality of the series was later confirmed as Thompson went on to lift the inaugural winter



Kevin Clark was determined to pick up more than one championship crown this year – and so he did, using the Team Brask Pickup



Steve Dance barely missed a beat on his way to the V6 honours but main rival John Mickel was almost as fleet of foot throughout

championship and Steward went to America and triumphed in the Legends world finals.

Having fought out last year's Formula First winter series, Alex Kapadia and Danny Browne were at it again in the newly renamed Formula Eurofirst championship. This time around, Kapadia took revenge for his narrow defeat in the winter series.

In terms of pace, the duo were again extremely evenly matched,

Browne winning one more race than his rival.

Kapadia's strength lay in his consistency. Only once did he fail to finish, and that came after a clash with Browne. Meanwhile, Kapadia's team mate, Simon Pearson (son of '60s Mini racer Barry) was a four-time race winner.

The Beetle Cup had never sat easily on the Eurocar package, and it was laid to rest quietly following two poorly supported races. ■

FINAL STANDINGS

EUROCAR V8 CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Kevin Clarke	4240
2 Mark Willis	4195
3 Barry Lee	4160
4 Alf Boarer	3510
5 Chris Dawkins	3445
6 Paul Sheard	2730

MINTEX EUROCAR V6 CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Steve Dance	4175
2 John Mickel	3595
3 Rick Lemmon	3580
4 Phil Woodhull	3340
5 Mark Proctor	3260
6 Mike Doble	2995

PICKUP TRUCK CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Kevin Clarke	4640
2 Andy Steward	4285
3 Dave Longhurst	4050
4 Lee Caroline	3795
5 Graham White	2710
6 Alan Seager	2230

OLD SPICE LEGENDS CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Tick Steward	6345
2 John Mickel	4940
3 Steve Thompson	4925
4 Racetech Team Car	4585
5 Simon Durrell	4575
6 Robin Fountain	4475

FORMULA EUROFIRST CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Alex Kapadia	3060
2 Danny Browne	2680
3 Simon Pearson	2625
4 Steven Coates	2530
5 Chris Plumb	2315
6 Steve Offer	2155



Kapadia proved himself more than capable by taking Eurofirst laurels

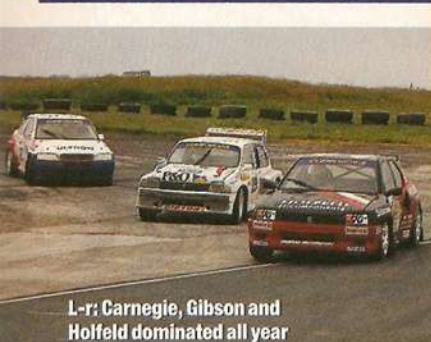


achievement *n.* 1. something that has been accomplished, esp. by hard work, ability or heroism. 2. successful completion; accomplishment.

1989 David Coulthard Formula 1 title contender with McLaren 1990 Gareth Rees 1996 British F3000 Champion 1991 Oliver Gavin 1995 British Formula 3 Champion 1992 Dario Franchitti CART Champ Car title contender 1993 Ralph Firman 1996 British F3 Champion 1994 Jamie Davies F3000 race winner 1995 Jonny Kane 1997 British Formula 3 Champion 1996 Darren Turner Formula 1 test driver for McLaren, Jordan and Arrows 1997 Andrew Kirkaldy runner-up 1998 EFDA Euroseries Championship 1998 Jenson Button Formula 3 race winner

WHO WILL BE NEXT...?





L-r: Carnegie, Gibson and Holfeld dominated all year



Moloney was on the pace until a mid-season crash



Carnegie started the year well. His early wins gave him enough of a lead to fend off his rival

RALLYCROSSED SWORDS

Carnegie and Holfeld swashbuckled all year, but the Escort man gave the *coup de grâce*. By Tim Whittington

With hindsight, it would be easy to argue that Dermot Carnegie won the Compomotive Wheels/Motoring News Rallycross Championship in round one.

Way back in March, the veteran Dubliner arrived at Croft in tip-top form. He was fast, reliable and qualified on pole for the 'A' Final. He made a slow start and avoided the clash between champion Helmut Holfeld and John Moloney to begin the year with a win.

Until that point, Moloney's speed at Croft was breathtaking. His Escort was on the boil again at Lydden and Nutts Corner, so he was looking like a serious title threat. Unfortunately, his season was ended by a massive crash at Mondello Park.

Tony Bell's Toyota Corolla was out of the running after a roll at Lydden, and John Cross had crashed out at Mondello, so the title race was effectively reduced to a straight fight between Carnegie and Holfeld.

However, the Peugeot man was always playing catch-up after struggling at Croft and then missing Lydden. He did everything he could

by posting five successive victories, but he needed cars between himself and Carnegie. Ultimately, his challenge was blunted by the opposition hitting the self-destruct button early in the season.

He wasn't helped by Carnegie's useful allegiance with Lady Luck. Good fortune is essential - and the Escort man certainly had it when it mattered. Pembrey was a case in

"Holfeld's challenge was blunted by the opposition hitting the self-destruct button"

point. He was running with a puncture but hung on to second place after Lawrence Gibson spun while challenging for position.

The title was eventually decided in the rain-lashed final round at Croft, where Carnegie suffered a transmission failure and Holfeld was hamstrung by a lack of suitable tyres.

Bell was back on the scene and took his



Five wins were enough to take Dave Ward to the Modified title in his 1.6 Vauxhall Corsa



Dave Bellerby (891) took Maxsport honours at his first attempt

maiden victory, but when the arithmetic was done Carnegie's early wins and string of second places were sufficient to give him the title.

Metro 6R4 driver Gibson was denied a victory only by shortage of power compared to the turbocharged opposition. He was in a podium position everywhere except Nutts Corner, where the engine broke, and he came home a worthy third.

Sue Jeffery's first full season with the Supercars resulted in a fine fourth place, while Steve Mundy slipped back to fifth after a road accident kept him away from the last two rounds.

The reprofiled series pitched all the two-wheel-drive cars together in a single 'Modified' class. The result was a feast of superb racing and some giant-killing performances by drivers of small-capacity machinery.

The feature of the season was a ferocious battle at the head of the field between the neat, tidy, experienced Dave Ward and bold upstart Trevor Gamble.

There was little between the pair until the penultimate round, in which Gamble crashed out of the 'A' Final. An exemplary performance in the final round gave Ward his fifth win and the title.

Dave Bellerby dominated the

poorly supported Maxsport (control tyre) class, and Phil Collard survived late-season challenges from Jamie Hickman and Nick Fredenham to take the Minishop Minicross title. ■

FINAL STANDINGS

SUPERCAR

1 Dermot Carnegie
Ford Escort 4x4 2.0t 670

2 Helmut Holfeld
Peugeot 306 4x4 2.0t 655

3 Lawrence Gibson
MG Metro 6R4 3.5 645

MODIFIED

1 Dave Ward
Vauxhall Corsa 1.6 665

2 Trevor Gamble
Ford Fiesta 1.6 620

3 Alan Tapscott
Vauxhall Nova 1.6 560

MAXSPORT

1 Dave Bellerby
Peugeot 205 1.6 690

2 Malcolm Paterson
Ford Escort 2.0t 585

3 Stuart Hesketh
Ford Escort 2.0 520

MINICROSS

1 Phil Collard
Mini 1.3 175

2 Nick Fredenham
Mini 1.3 175

3 Jamie Hickman
Mini 1.3 170



SHAUN SCOTT

DI DEAKIN OF *THE BILL*

I became attracted to motorsport when I was involved in an old TV series called *Winning Streak* about a young rally driver. Sadly, I never got to drive the car in that, but I was bitten by the bug as soon as we started filming. I was floored when we travelled to Kielder forest to film with a Metro 6R4 during the RAC Rally.

Acting as detective inspector Deakin in ITV's *The Bill* means I'm not called upon to drive. It's a pity, because I am addicted to the sport and have thoroughly enjoyed my brief forays behind the wheels of various racing cars. However, perhaps it's for the best that I don't do the driving in the series - we usually use stuntmen for the action scenes because they have to drive with extreme skill to hit their marks for the camera.

I started to hone my racing skills about five years ago with a few laps around Lord March's Goodwood circuit in a Rover SD1. It's an unforgiving place, but a good track to learn about basic racecraft. Still, I found out to my cost the penalty of taking the corners too quickly - I had a massive accident at Madgwick corner, a tricky right-hander, which put me off driving for a number of years. I could well imagine how Sir Jack Brabham felt after his shunt at Lavant corner during the circuit's Revival meeting this year. Those guys still know how to race.

I don't think the racing spirit ever diminishes. Recently, I was invited up to Birmingham to take part in a karting event in aid of a leukaemia charity. It was only when I arrived that I found out it was part of the British Touring Car Championship's awards night! The whole place was full of BTCC drivers and, despite being just for fun, nobody was prepared to give second best.

It was amazing to see those guys

zipping around in a kart. The competitive spark was well and truly lit.

Intriguingly, as the heats wore on, the competition got even more intense and, naturally, the manners on the track grew worse. Soon it was desperate: fists were waved and fingers pointed. Although it was all for fun, you can understand just how competitive they are.

That's something that is never truly captured on the TV. It's one thing to sit at home watching the action, but it's quite another to be

"Paddock Hill is like being in a freefalling elevator - it's terrifying"

stood at the side of the track seeing cars speed past at close quarters. I visited Brands Hatch earlier this year to watch the Formula 3 race, and I was absolutely stunned by the commitment of the young drivers through Paddock Hill bend.

Narain Karthikeyan, in particular, was awesome as he floored the throttle out of the corner. I've driven the circuit myself and I know how it feels - driving through Paddock Hill is like being in a freefalling elevator - it's a terrifying drop. I can't even begin to conceive how these young guys can blast through there side by side. It takes a different breed of person - or perhaps I'm just too old!

Another thing that struck me about the weekend at Brands was the quality of some of the national racing on



Speed trapped

Following a gruelling week in front of the TV cameras, one of Sunhill's top coppers finds himself racing from the scene of the crime straight to the side of the track



Narain Karthikeyan's commitment through Paddock Hill astounded Sunhill's 'baddie-catcher' (below right)

Sporting/LAT

display. I was amazed by the grunt of the TVR Tuscan, they were being wrenched and flung into corners at all kinds of angles. The Caterham Superlight races were phenomenal - the lead kept changing lap by lap, and the winner took the chequered flag by inches. It was a classic example of hard, fair racing.

The pity is that so few people go to see these races. The empty enclosures at Brands are in stark contrast to the seething mass of people at Silverstone on a Grand Prix Sunday. It's such a shame that some of the national events don't get greater exposure. I'm sure it would attract more people to the tracks.

Given that the BBC seems to

be losing many of its sporting contracts, it just seems common sense to televise some of these races. I'm certain there's an audience for it and exciting dicing on-track is certainly better than the bowls they show all the time!

I always think that people who enjoy motor racing almost have an addiction. It grabs you fiercely and won't let go. It's something that's intensely compulsive and everyone suffers withdrawal symptoms as they wait for the season to begin again in the new year.

My filming commitments always keep me very busy, but I'll make sure I attend some races in 2000. Like everyone else, I simply cannot wait for the new season. ■

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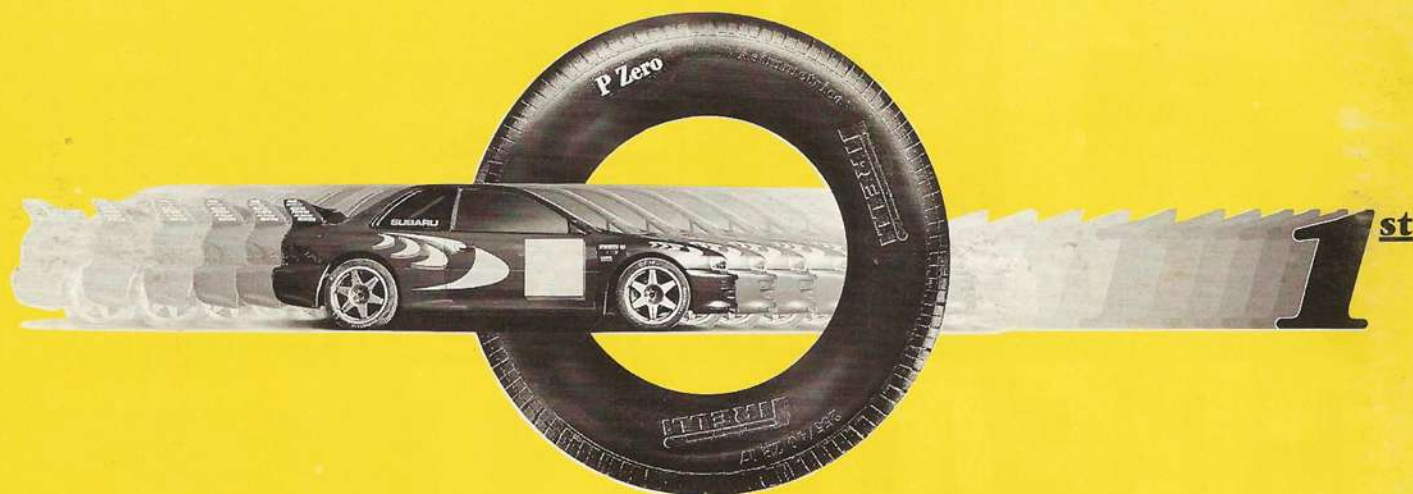
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Mark Higgins and Bryan Thomas for winning F2 overall.

plus all the other Pirelli-shod runners who clearly made the right choice.



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