

BRAZILIAN GP PREVIEW

**"FERRARI IS THE
COMEBACK STORY
OF THE YEAR"**

DAVID COULTHARD



EXPERT OPINION

**"IT'S BETWEEN
ALONSO AND
WEBBER"**

MARK HUGHES



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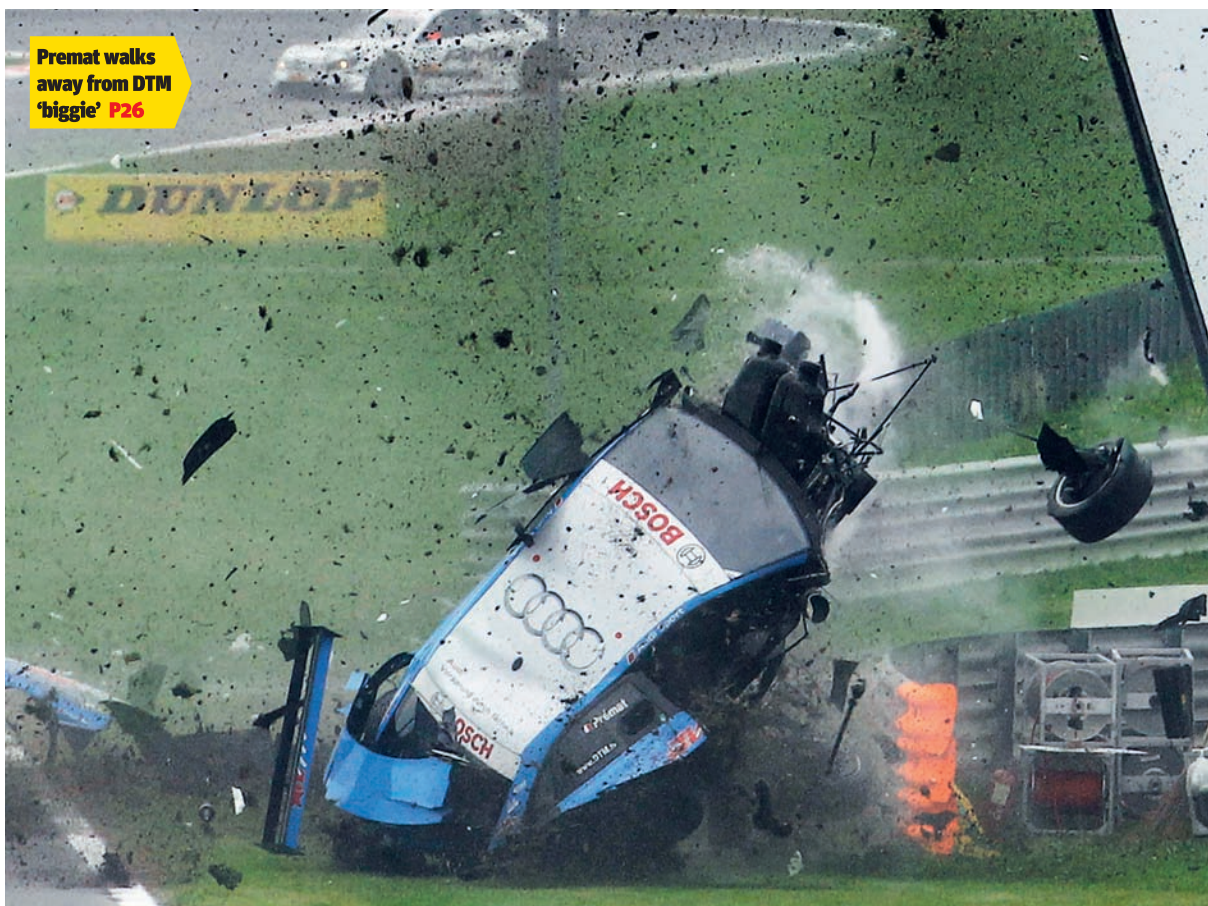
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POLE POSITION

Greatest season builds to a thrilling climax



IT SEEMED impossible after the dreadful Bahrain Grand Prix season opener that we would be hailing 2010 as the greatest Formula 1 season on record.

The 'dirge in the desert' couldn't have been more misleading in presaging what was to follow over the next 16 races.

With just two races to go, amazingly there are still five drivers with a mathematical chance of the championship. In reality, the

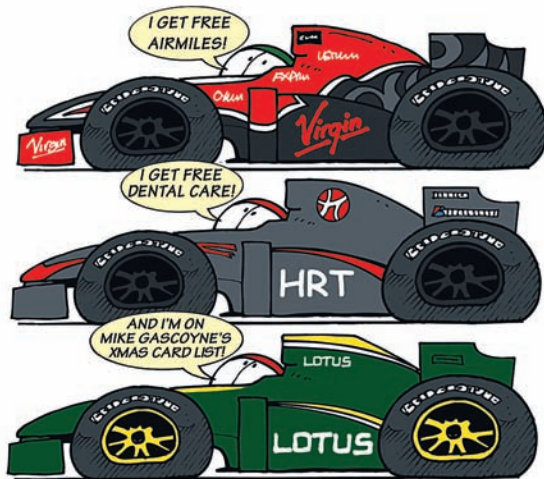
fight is likely to boil down to a head-to-head between Fernando Alonso and Mark Webber, with Lewis Hamilton the wild card praying for an incident-packed wet race in Brazil this weekend.

Alonso might have the points lead, but two Red Bull one-twins – with Webber leading home Sebastian Vettel – is enough for the title regardless of what the Ferrari star does. There are precious few examples in F1 history of the quickest car not ultimately carrying its pilot to the title, and Red Bull should have every confidence in the RB6's pace to deliver the results it needs.

Of course, it also requires its drivers to follow the script too. In a season when team orders have been such a hot potato, never has a squad needed them more than Red Bull does now.

Andrew van de Burt, editor

BAMBER'S WEEK



.....SO, NOT COMPLETELY POINTLESS THEN!

Jim Bamber

DTM

At least Jarvis didn't turn his car to pulp

Audi's Oliver Jarvis runs wide in qualifying at Adria – but not as wide as most others, and certainly not as wide as his colleague Alexandre Premat... Instead, the Englishman had a run to fifth. Premat's horrific crash, p27
DTM report, p44

Picture: Juergen Tap/DTM



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TELEFAT

F1 SHOWDOWN

Hamilton promises all-out attack

Former champ determined to keep his title hopes alive with aggressive approach to this weekend's Brazilian GP. By EDD STRAW

Lewis Hamilton has vowed to take the world championship fight down to the wire despite admitting that McLaren does not have the fastest car.

The 25-year-old is 21 points behind points leader Fernando Alonso and needs a win in the Brazilian Grand Prix to be certain of going to next week's Abu Dhabi decider still in the hunt. Despite

not winning since the Belgian Grand Prix in August, the 2008 champion believes that McLaren has been closing the gap to the pacesetter Red Bulls.

"The aim has to be to go to Abu Dhabi with a mathematical possibility of winning the title," said Hamilton. "This year, we haven't had the winning car — we've had a competitive car and we've won our

fair share. Red Bull have had the fastest car all year but Ferrari and ourselves have closed the gap. Hopefully we'll see that [on track]."

McLaren will take a multitude of upgrades to Brazil as it chases the performance boost it needs to challenge Red Bull and Ferrari.

MAXIMUM ATTACK

Hamilton has no plans to change his attacking approach in Brazil.

unreliability and bad luck that have left him playing catch-up in the points race.

"If you look over the whole season, I've had more DNFs than any of the other title contenders, which is disappointing. I've had a gearbox gone, a wheel failure and then I had Monza where I had a very light tap and the car broke. Most of the time, you'd get away with that but it just happened to be slightly the wrong angle. I don't feel that I've made more mistakes this year than I've made in other years."

A retirement in Brazil would almost certainly end Hamilton's title hopes, meaning that he cannot afford a repeat of his crashes in Monza and Singapore. And with McLaren only 27 points behind Red Bull in the constructors' fight — a title it is desperate to win for the first time since 1998 — claiming a hefty points haul is a must.



Button could play a supporting role

THOMPSON/GETTY

"The aim has to be to go to Abu Dhabi with a mathematical possibility"

Lewis Hamilton

Despite criticism from some quarters about his recent on-track clashes with Felipe Massa in Italy and Mark Webber in Singapore, Hamilton believes that it is

Hamilton aims to be smiling after Brazil

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

EDD STRAW
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Felipe Massa hasn't been 'beaten' in the Brazilian Grand Prix since joining Ferrari. His record since the 2006 race reads three pole positions, two wins and one world championship near-miss. But for forsaking victory in 2007 for the greater good of the Scuderia, he would have a perfect record.

Frankly, Massa hasn't done a great deal to back up Fernando Alonso's title bid other than handing him that controversial German GP win. At the time, it was the right decision for Ferrari to do that and, despite what the misguided rule book says, it remains so when you consider the current points situation.

Some in Ferrari reckon that confidence is part of Massa's problem. He's a driver who likes to be loved, cajoled and who was coaxed to a stunningly high level of performance by race engineer Rob Smedley in 2008. Perhaps with a partisan crowd behind him he could recapture the form that took him to within 22 seconds of the championship two years ago.

But with Massa savvy enough to know that his Ferrari future beyond 2011 is shaky, what if he found himself in the same position as Hockenheim? Might he think to hell with it and emphatically not understand the message?

Probably not, because as his dignity in defeat in 2008 showed, Massa is a class act. He could just be Alonso's perfect wingman at Interlagos.



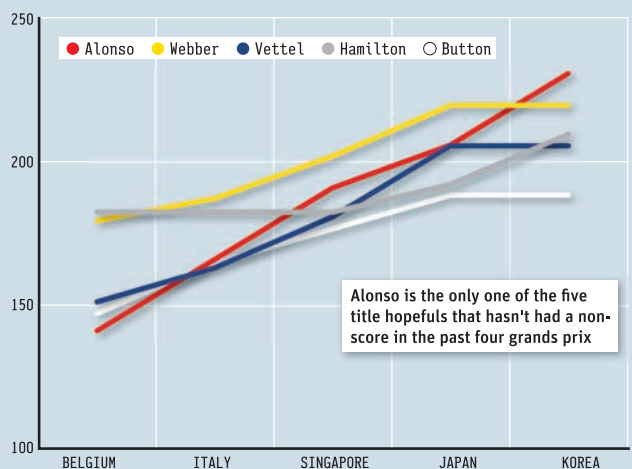
Will Massa yield on home soil?



The Briton needs to beat Alonso

ALONSO'S RISE TO THE TOP

FERNANDO ALONSO's title charge has really hit top gear since he crashed out of the Belgian Grand Prix. In the past four races, he has picked up 90 points – 35 more than next-most successful driver Sebastian Vettel. In the same period, post-Spa championship leader Hamilton has managed to score only 28 points.



Alonso is the only one of the five title hopefuls that hasn't had a non-score in the past four grands prix

BUTTON'S SUPPORT

Publicly, Hamilton's McLaren team-mate Button has not ruled himself out of title contention, insisting that "I've always said that I will fight until it is mathematically impossible", but McLaren will have no choice but to cast Hamilton as its lead driver.

Team principal Martin Whitmarsh has not explicitly said

that Button will become the team's number two now that his title hopes are as good as over, but AUTOSPORT understands that the reigning world champion is willing to help Hamilton's bid. The FIA has long said that team orders – and thus the possible manipulation of a race result – are permitted in the title run-in, making any decisions legitimate.



P10

The points situation explained

STREAKS

WILL IT BE SIX IN A ROW AT INTERLAGOS?

The world championship has been sealed at the Brazilian Grand Prix for the past five years. Current championship leader Fernando Alonso started the trend with his back-to-back titles for Renault in 2005-06.



F1 SHOWDOWN

Red Bull to keep setting the pace

Team has ground to make up, but Webber and Vettel will continue to have a car advantage over their rivals

Red Bull holds its world championship destiny in its own hands with the RB6 expected to set the pace in both Brazil and Abu Dhabi.

Although Mark Webber is 11 points behind championship leader Fernando Alonso, victories in both races would guarantee the Australian the drivers' title. The team has claimed 14 out of 17 pole positions this season, and the characteristics of Interlagos and the Yas Marina circuit — races the team won last season with a car built around the same design concept as its 2010 machine — mean that Alonso is banking on more Red Bull misfortune to close out the title.

Interlagos is expected to be the better of the two tracks for Red Bull as it is a more heavily aerodynamic-dependent layout than Abu Dhabi. That makes this weekend's race a must-win event for the team, particularly with McLaren and Ferrari expected to be closer on pace in the final race of the season.

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner believes that the title will go down to the wire. He has vowed that his team will this weekend bounce back from its disastrous double retirement in the Korean Grand Prix a fortnight ago.

"This championship will go down to the last lap in Abu Dhabi," he said. "We will fight back very strongly in Brazil."

This weekend will be a high-pressure one for Webber, who has not won a race since Hungary in July. Australian racing legend Jack Brabham believes that his compatriot's crash in Korea might have cost him the title.

"It would mean a lot to me and it would mean a lot to Australia," said the 84-year-old of Webber's title hopes. "But unfortunately I think his real opportunity has been blown [in Korea]."

The team is unconcerned about engine mileage despite Vettel's failure in Korea. Webber still has available the relatively fresh Renault unit that he used on the Saturday of the Korean GP meeting, while the engine Vettel lost was close to hitting its 2000km target distance.

"Sebastian's got enough engine mileage to be able to run unaffected to the end of the year," said Horner.

McLaren drivers Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button have no engine fears, while Alonso remains on target to not need a ninth unit — and the resulting 10-place grid penalty — despite losing two engines early in the season.



**P34 THE GREATEST
TITLE FIGHT EVER?**

POINTS PERMUTATIONS

FERNANDO ALONSO could clinch his third world championship with a top-three finish in the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The Ferrari driver leads Mark Webber by 11 points in the standings, but his hopes of sealing the crown with a race to spare depend on where his rivals finish. The Spaniard knows that he needs to finish ahead of Webber in one of the season's remaining two races to take the

crown regardless of the Australian's results. But with Ferrari ruling out making any further performance steps he is confident that podium finishes in the final two races will be enough to win the championship. This is despite knowing that a double win for Webber would deny him the title whatever happens in Brazil and Abu Dhabi.

Alonso is cautious about whether he

can win the title at Interlagos, saying: "I know it is theoretically possible, but that does not count for me."

Ferrari has not ruled out winning the constructors' championship. But unlike McLaren it will not be worried about sacrificing the team's title to chase the drivers' crown. Ferrari is 52 points off Red Bull, which is likely to seal its first constructors' title in Brazil.

POSITION/POINTS

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11+
Alonso	231	256	249	246	243	241	239	237	235	233	232	231
Webber	220	245	238	235	232	230	228	226	224	222	221	220
Hamilton	210	235	228	225	222	220	218	216	214	212	211	210
Vettel	206	231	224	221	218	216	214	212	210	208	207	206
Button	189	214	207	204	201	199	197	195	193	191	190	189



Alonso is chasing a third world title

Team orders will be considered



Vettel could end up supporting Webber

RED BULL team principal Christian Horner insists that Mark Webber will go into the Brazilian Grand Prix weekend as its number-one driver.

Horner has hinted that team orders will be invoked only if the race situation demands it. If Alonso were leading, the team would move Webber ahead of Vettel if necessary, but if Alonso is behind the Red Bulls then Vettel would not necessarily be required to cede a place to his team-mate.

"The mathematics will speak for themselves," said Horner. "I'm certain that both drivers will do everything possible to achieve the best result for the team."

Red Bull is cautious of deliberately disadvantaging Vettel. Should he be forced to hand victory to Webber in Brazil and the Australian hit trouble in the Middle East, it would allow Alonso to win the title with a top-eight finish regardless of Vettel's result. If Alonso retires in Brazil, the team is likely to allow Vettel to beat Webber to send both drivers to Abu Dhabi with a strong title shot.

The team will also be conscious of the fact that Vettel has been Red Bull's form man for the past four races, outqualifying Webber consistently and outscoring him by 14 points.

Red Bull should remain out front on pure pace

FERRARI/LAT

ALONSO WINS THE TITLE IN BRAZIL IF HE:

WINS THE RACE and Webber finishes outside the top four.

IS SECOND and Webber is outside the top eight with Hamilton not on the podium and Vettel not in the top two

IS THIRD and Webber doesn't score with Hamilton outside the top four and Vettel not on the podium



THE TOP SIX... Points leads thrown away

Only six times in the past 30 years has the man leading with two races to go lost the title

1 LEWIS HAMILTON (2007)

Had a 12-point lead over team-mate Fernando Alonso, and 17 over Kimi Raikkonen, after winning in Japan. Managed only two more points, allowing the Finn to steal the title at the finale.



2 NIGEL MANSELL (1986)

A disastrous start for Mansell in Mexico, and that tyre blowout in Adelaide allowed Alain Prost to overhaul the Williams driver's 10-point lead to take his second title for McLaren.



3 ALAIN PROST (1988)

The dropped-points scoring system, which allowed drivers to count only their best 11 finishes, distorted the picture. Prost led before Japan, but Senna still took the title with a round to spare.



4 CARLOS REUTEMANN (1981)

The Argentinian was three points ahead of Piquet with two to go. Things went wrong after wheel-banging with Alan Jones in Canada and a lacklustre drive in Las Vegas that gave Piquet the title.



5 ALAIN PROST (1983)

The Frenchman's Renault suffered a turbo failure in the South African Grand Prix. This, combined with Piquet's two wins and P3 in the last three races, cost the French team and driver a first world championship.



6 NELSON PIQUET (1980)

The Brabham driver failed to score in the final two races after an engine failure in Canada and a spin at Watkins Glen. Alan Jones capitalised by winning those final two GPs and thus claiming the first title for Frank Williams' eponymous team.



NEWWEY GETS A BLANK CANVAS

Sony has revealed the Red Bull X1 Prototype that will appear in the soon-to-be-released *Gran Turismo 5*. The 1483bhp car has been designed by Adrian Newey as "the future of racing were we not bound by regulations"



Bird chasing F1 team tie-up

Briton bids to land a third-driver deal in Formula 1 following his two-day test with Mercedes

GP2 race-winner Sam Bird is hoping to use his outing for Mercedes in next month's rookie test at Abu Dhabi as a platform to land a Formula 1 role next year.

The 23-year-old, who has previously driven a Williams in straightline testing, is targeting a second season in GP2 in 2011, but

he could combine it with a third-driver position in F1. It is not clear whether he is a contender for a Mercedes reserve-driver role, although the team has been without a back-up driver since Nick Heidfeld left to join Pirelli's tyre development programme in July.

"These rookie days are a fantastic opportunity to prove my ability in

a Formula 1 car," Bird told AUTOSPORT. "The main thing for me is that it's a chance to work with an F1 team in a proper test and I hope I can bring some things to the team and do the best job possible."

"I've had an encouraging year in GP2, but in terms of F1 it's hard to say for next year. I'm just focusing on the end of the GP2 campaign and the rookie days. I hope to be in GP2 next year, if not with the same team [ART] then with a very good team and try to win the title. But it's too early to say on an F1 role."

Bird has already spent some time in the Mercedes simulator in preparation for his Abu Dhabi test, and he will also be well dialled-in to the Yas Marina circuit as the GP2 finale will be held over the grand prix weekend.

Mercedes motorsport boss Norbert Haug said that the team was keen to use the test to give Bird a proper chance to learn rather than chopping and changing drivers.

"Sam has had a very good first year in GP2," Haug told AUTOSPORT. "This test is

supposed to be for teams to try young drivers, but most of them just get a driver in to test parts on their cars for them and they don't give them a proper chance. Sam will have both days, so it is a good opportunity for a young guy to get some proper F1 experience."



Bird had strong rookie campaign in GP2

CV

SAM BIRD

AGE 23



2010
2009

Lies fifth in GP2 (1 win)
7th, GP2 Asia;
8th, F3 Euro Series;
3rd, Macau GP

2008
2007
2006

11th, F3 Euro Series
4th, British F3 (2 wins)
3rd, Formula Renault
UK (4 wins)

2005

2nd, Formula BMW UK
(6 wins)

2004

14th, Formula BMW UK

Villeneuve: "I had F1 budget"

FORMER WORLD champion Jacques Villeneuve has revealed that he had raised \$60 million for his stillborn Formula 1 team project.

The Canadian had hoped to acquire an existing team after the FIA decided not to hand the 13th slot on the 2011 grid to any of the applicants. But he has now admitted that he's abandoned any

hope of his project, run in association with former GP2 outfit Durango, coming into F1 next year.

"We spent a lot of time and energy on the F1 project and we had \$60 million for it," Villeneuve revealed to AUTOSPORT.

"I'm not working on F1 right now; today I am focusing on NASCAR. F1 is highly political and I don't

know if I want to be a part of that. Six months ago, when I had time to buy a team and get my hands into it, yes.

"The other issue is that with the sponsors we had in place, it's one thing when you're working on it in August, but in November they have their contracts in place. It's risky to buy a team now because the sponsors you had won't

happen if it's too late – that's not a risk I'm willing to take."

Villeneuve has been working on moving into NASCAR full-time for several years, but previous efforts have been with existing teams. He is now keen to start up his own operation, although admits that he will have to raise fresh funding.

"It [the F1 budget] was a big pile of money," he said. "But people interested in F1 aren't interested in NASCAR, which is a shame because it would be great to bring that money straight across!" Villeneuve, 39, now looks unlikely ever to race in F1 again, although he has not ruled out starting up a grand prix team some time in the future.



Villeneuve: F1 hopes are out in the cold

THIS WEEK IN F1



McLAREN Lewis Hamilton believes that he could not have won the Korean Grand Prix even if he hadn't run wide at the first corner and let Fernando Alonso past. "It would only have been a matter of time before he'd been able to get through," he said.



MERCEDES Ross Brawn insists that he has no plans to leave the team in the short-term future. "Everybody has to have a succession plan and we will have one," he said.



RED BULL Christian Horner has scotched claims that Mark Webber deliberately allowed his car to bounce across the track in an attempt to take out a title rival in Korea. "Mark's intention was not to take out another driver," said Horner of Webber's clash with Nico Rosberg.



FERRARI Felipe Massa has highlighted single-lap pace as being Ferrari's biggest disadvantage compared with Red Bull. "Qualifying is still our weak point," he said. The team has two pole positions this year.



WILLIAMS Frank Williams has hailed Nico Hulkenberg as a future champion despite the team considering dropping him next season for financial reasons. "One day, he'll win the world championship in Formula 1," he said.



RENAULT Rookie driver Vitaly Petrov learned the Interlagos layout in double-quick time ahead of this weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix. "It only takes an hour to know the track pretty well," he said of the learning process.



FORCE INDIA Vitantonio Liuzzi believes that his sixth-place finish in the Korean Grand Prix has shown the sport what he is capable of after a season of bad luck. "People know what I can do when things go right," he told AUTOSPORT.



TORO ROSSO Jaime Alguersuari has confirmed that he will participate in Felipe Massa's International Challenge of the Stars karting event in Sao Paulo in December.



LOTUS Heikki Kovalainen has torpedoed reports that manager Flavio Briatore blocked his graduation to F1 in 2005. "Ignore the false headlines originating from Finland," he said.



HRT Hispania will run Williams gearboxes next season, replacing the Xtrac units it currently uses. The deal is expected to run for at least the next two years.



SAUBER Peter Sauber has blamed the team's poor early-season form for being only eighth in the constructors' points. "With a reliable car, it would have been possible to score 36 points in the first part [of the season]," he said.



VIRGIN Timo Glock will become Germany's 10th most-prolific grand prix starter at Interlagos this weekend. It will be his 53rd start in Formula 1.

D'Ambrosio set for Virgin

JEROME D'AMBROSIO is closing on a Virgin race seat for 2011, with a deal imminent as AUTOSPORT closed for press.

Renault team principal Eric Boullier, who also heads up the Gravity Sports Management programme that looks after d'Ambrosio, has confirmed that a deal is 95 per cent done. The Belgian GP2 racer, who has driven for Virgin during first free practice at the past three grands prix is believed to be bringing a sponsorship package to the team for 2011.

D'Ambrosio will drive again for Virgin during free practice in Brazil, but he will skip Abu Dhabi because of his GP2 commitments. He will then appear in the young-driver test at Yas Marina on November 16-17 driving one day apiece for Renault and Virgin.

It is not clear who d'Ambrosio will partner at Virgin next year. The team is publicly determined to retain Timo Glock, but the German has expressed concerns about its rate of progress. Lucas di Grassi also remains a contender, but he is also believed to be targeting a third-driver role with a bigger team.

Ecclestone calls for Mosley return

BERNIE ECCLESTONE has backed former FIA president Max Mosley as having a possible future in Formula 1, saying "it would be nice to have him back".

In an interview with the BBC, the 80-year-old said that he did not want Mosley to leave the FIA and suggested that there could be a way back for Mosley in the governing body.

"I didn't want him [Mosley] to go," Ecclestone said. "It would be nice to have him back. I suppose

we could go back and have what we called FISA and Max could be president of the FIA and [current FIA president] Jean Todt could still be president of FISA running the sporting side."

Mosley claims that he has no designs on returning to F1 in any capacity.

"I think my Formula 1 days are finished and I have moved on to other things," he said. "Obviously I'm watching with interest, but one should never go back.

"He [Todt] must be given a chance to get on and run it in his own particular way, which obviously will be different from the way I ran it, probably better in many respects. It is very friendly of Bernie to say 'come back', but it would not be the right thing for me to do."



Bernie and Max were close allies

MASON/GETTY



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Straight talk David Coulthard

Still Britain's all-time leading F1 points scorer

The passionate Brazilian fans and the historic Interlagos circuit have been given the F1 title fight they deserve

When you go to Interlagos, you tip your cap to the history of the sport. At the current Turn 1, you can see the old first corner that carries on past it, the one that the likes of Emerson Fittipaldi and all these greats from the past used to try to take flat out.

Yes, it's rough around the edges, but you don't mind that. Just like you don't mind your Grandad dribbling (because he's your dear old Grandad), you don't mind Interlagos being the way it is because it has been around a long time and has earned its place.

The passion of the fans is something to behold. From kids to OAPs, there is a huge following for Formula 1, second only to football. And there's nothing quite like when they start banging their drums before the race and chanting for

to happen. But I think people enjoy going to Brazil, and names like Fittipaldi, Piquet and Senna have created a real love affair between our sport and their country.

As a track, Interlagos is a unique challenge because it's a short lap without much heavy braking, so getting temperature in your brakes can be quite tricky in qualifying. It's anti-clockwise so look out for the drivers resting their tired necks late in the race. The track has some long straights, which should favour McLaren and Ferrari, but that middle sector is all about aero load, and that is Red Bull territory.

RED BULL'S CONUNDRUM

I've heard some criticism of Red Bull this season, and of course if the team doesn't win the championship the hindsight world champions will be out in force. But imagine the party if it does win!

What people must remember is that Dietrich Mateschitz owns the team 100 per cent, and if he says no team orders (remembering of course that team orders are officially not permitted in F1) then that's the way it is, and it's up to the drivers to go out there and score the points like they have all season. Things can change so quickly too. Prior to Korea we all thought that Mark Webber was the favourite for the championship, but now you'd have to say it's Fernando Alonso in the slightly stronger position.

Red Bull needs one-twos at the final two races, and the RB6 is more than capable of doing that. Sebastian Vettel will want to win

them both and, when your own title hopes are still alive, you're not going to like being told to help your team-mate. You race to win, but you need your team to help you perform. If you try to go it alone, what can you do? The driver is in a very weak position when it comes to these situations.

FANTASTIC FERNANDO

Personally, I would like to see one of the world-champion virgins win the title and see the Formula 1 love spread around a little.

Everything suggests that Red Bull should win this championship – its car has been the quickest of them all this year. But Ferrari has been the comeback story of the season; think back to Turkey, when Fernando was 12th on the grid. And you can't take anything away from his continued belief that they could win this championship. Michael Schumacher was the benchmark in F1 – in his first career – and Fernando beat him back then and has continued to be the benchmark ever since. He always delivers. If he wins it this year, you couldn't say he doesn't deserve it.

For Sebastian, making up 25 points in two races is a big ask, while McLaren doesn't have the car, so Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button need a bit of luck.

The bottom line is that there is not a bad driver among the contenders and it has been fascinating to see the very different driving styles and personalities on display this season. Could this be the greatest championship ever? 🏆



They won't be happy if Massa lets Alonso by

'Rubinho' and Felipe Massa. There's this energy that you feel in Brazil, even from the moment you start your journey from the hotel to the track. You're never sure if you're going to get mugged or what's going

“I would like to see the F1 love spread around a little”

TRACK GUIDE



Barrichello's inside line

EXCLUSIVE



F1's most-capped driver is about to race at home for the 18th time - and he still loves the place

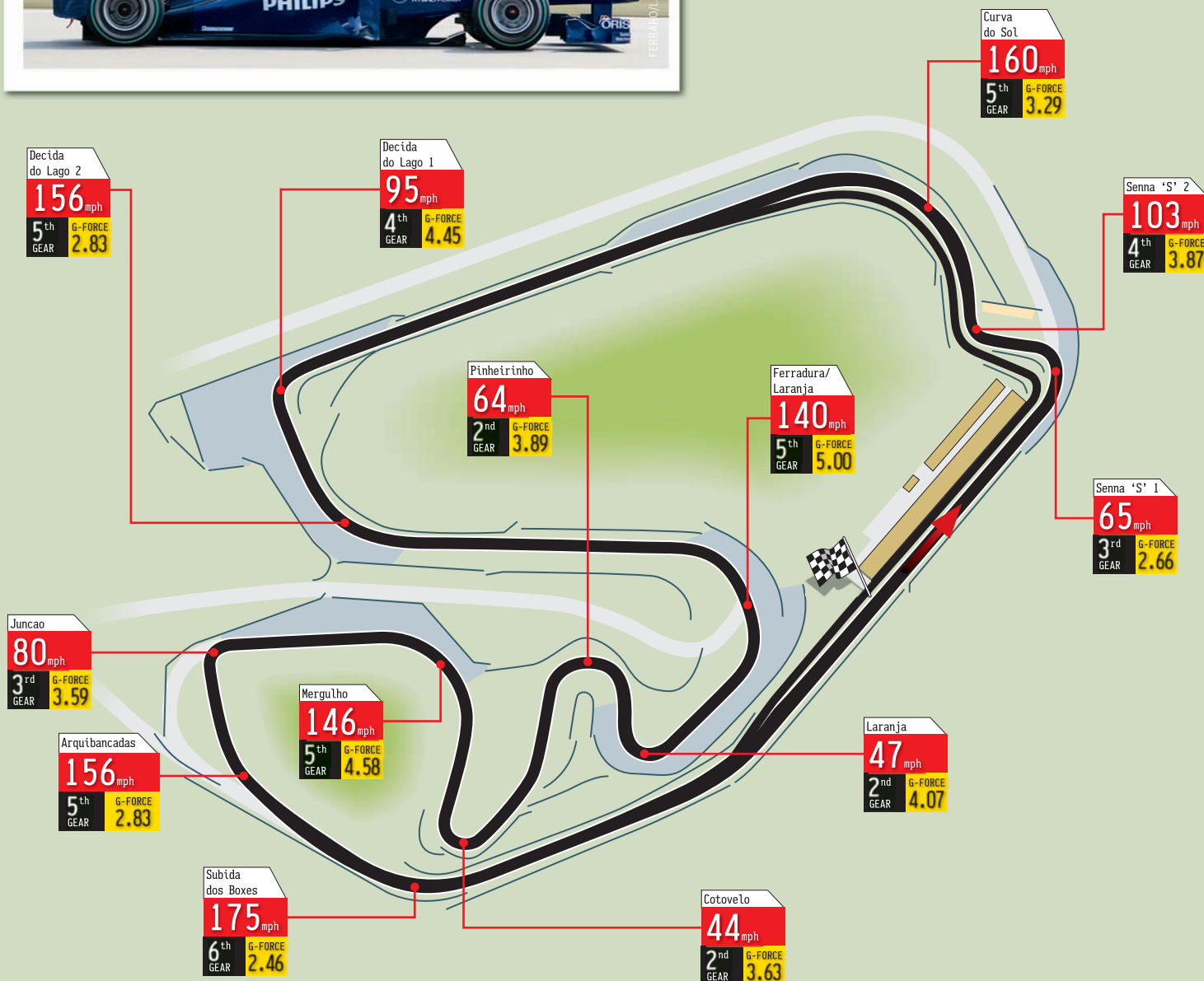
Interlagos is my favourite track – I love the place and I love the atmosphere. It just goes by so fast and it's a very busy week – although this year it's going to be easier because the Tuesday before is a holiday in Brazil, and I'm not going to be in Sao Paulo from Friday to

Tuesday. The track is great – you can overtake, the weather is unpredictable and although it used to be very bumpy it's got better to become a lovely track. Most people love going to Brazil – although a few hate it because of the traffic but it's nowhere near as bad as China or Turkey!



HOME SUPPORT

Even at the times when I didn't have a good car, and Felipe Massa won the race and almost the championship in 2008, the fans never forgot me. I have a lot of respect and passion from them. They are always noisy although because of the press sometimes they can be quite negative, but the fans have always been there chanting "Rubinho, Rubinho!"



THE HURT OF BRAZIL

I don't have a bad feeling going to this race even though I've only finished six times in 17 visits. I had many problems in the past that have been human and mechanical problems so it's nothing to do with the place itself. The vibe can be positive or negative but every year there's a reborn chance to win at home!



OVERTAKING

The entry to the first corner is a great place to overtake – but it is all about getting a good exit out of the last corner.



FANS=FASTER?

I think the support can help your performance. If the car is good there – and the Williams has always been at least okay at Interlagos – I have a new Cosworth engine for the race so hopefully, along with the support from the fans, that will put me up the rankings. From all of the messages that I receive I know people want me to do well there.



INTERLAGOS WEATHER

	18C FRIDAY SUNNY
	18C SATURDAY SUNNY
	17C SUNDAY SUNNY

TYRE CHOICE

Super-Soft	Soft	Medium	Hard
Option	Unused	Prime	Unused

WEATHER

There is always a chance of rain at Interlagos. Last year, during qualifying, it was too wet to drive so it was delayed. But when you can run it's very slippery, but great to drive.

BEST MEMORY

Pole position last year for Brawn is a great memory and I can remember every overtaking move I've ever done there! But the year that really stands out was 1999 when I was driving for Stewart. I saw everyone standing up in the grandstand after I'd finished my lap – I didn't realise that I had made up a place to outqualify Michael Schumacher and start third!



FAVOURITE CORNER

I love the double right-hander into Laranja – for me it's one of the best corners in the world. You can't see the exit of the corner very much and it's really nice. There's a little bit of time to be found there as well.



SET-UP

Interlagos is not an easy track at which to get the set-up right. You need good traction and a good balance and also the aerodynamics are important.



TRACK GUIDE

NUMBER OF LAPS

71

CIRCUIT LENGTH

2.677m

RACE DISTANCE

190.067m

2009 POLE POSITION

RUBENS BARRICHELLO

2009 WINNER

MARK WEBBER

BRAZILIAN GP PREVIEW



MARK HUGHES



Bumpy but brilliant Interlagos may not host the 2010 title decider, but the pressure's still on...

Bumps coming at you from different directions, never the same two years running as the land beneath constantly resettles between two underground lakes. A fury of sensations, of constant compromise and fight, alternate attack and patience, any significant error magnified because of the short lap, no time to recover.

Add in mercurial weather patterns and the unpredictability makes it the perfect setting for a title decider but we're almost certainly not going to get one this weekend. It's where Jenson Button probably bows out of the fight, but it's easy to see at least a three-way showdown in Abu Dhabi a week later.

Interlagos's layout, with just one truly fast corner, suggests there's likely to be little between Red Bull and Ferrari and so the fascinating dynamic of Fernando Alonso continuing to put pressure on the delicate dynamic between the Red Bull drivers continues. Can Red Bull really afford not to ask Sebastian Vettel to act as Mark Webber's foil? If it asks, does Vettel comply? All the while, the relentless, ruthless performance of Alonso – with the unambiguous support of his team – clicking away on the beat, never missing,

not when there's the sniff of a rout in the air. The whole scenario forms a pressure ratchet.

Lewis Hamilton is probably going to need the equalising factor of rain to fight out this race, such is the McLaren's lack of cutting-edge pace in general and its dislike of bumps in particular. So, even without a decider, the tension and drama will be there regardless.

Key questions

What the Brazilian GP will tell us

■ Whether Red Bull can manage its two drivers to ensure the title

■ Will weather allow McLaren to stay in contention?

■ Is Alonso going to bring the championship to an end?



Alonso will keep up the late-season pressure

The Sao Paulo topography creates a classic race track



GARY ANDERSON TECHNICAL CONSULTANT



SET-UP GUIDE

Brazil's bumps get worse every year so you need a compliant mechanical set-up as the tight infield section has camber changes that induce front-wheel locking on entry and wheelspin on exit. Aerodynamically, with Monza at level 1 and Monaco at level 10, Interlagos requires about level seven. You need the infield grip but it is a long old haul out of the last corner down the pit straight. An effective f-duct will really pay dividends.

TV AND RADIO LISTINGS

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5

1155-1335 Free practice 1 LIVE (BBC red button, Radio 5 Live Sports Extra and online)

1555-1735 Free practice 2 LIVE (BBC red button, Radio 5 Live Sports Extra)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6

1255-1405 Free practice 3 LIVE BBC red button, Radio 5 Live Sports Extra

1500-1720 Qualifying LIVE (BBC1 & Radio 5 Live Sports Extra)

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7

1500-1815 Grand Prix LIVE (BBC1 & Radio 5 Live)

2300-0000 GP Highlights (BBC3)

AUTOSPORT TIPSTERS

Four AUTOSPORT journalists have been given an imaginary £50 and carte blanche to bet their way through the season. Interlagos favourite Felipe Massa is a popular choice – the Brazilian has won twice and finished second in his past three races here.



JONATHAN NOBLE
GROUP F1 EDITOR
£5 Hamilton to win 9/2

CURRENT TALLY
£59



EDD STRAW
F1 EDITOR
£20 Felipe Massa each way 25/1

CURRENT TALLY
-£41



ANDREW VAN DE BURGT
EDITOR
£25 Massa to finish on podium 3/1

CURRENT TALLY
£17



MARK GLENDENNING
DEPUTY F1 EDITOR
£5 Mark Webber to win 9/4

CURRENT TALLY
£104



Massa always excels at home

RACE ODDS	
Webber	9/4
Vettel	9/4
Alonso	7/2
Hamilton	9/2
Button	16/1
Massa	16/1
Kubica	28/1
Rosberg	40/1
Schumacher	66/1
Barrichello	125/1
Hulkenberg	200/1
Petrov	200/1
Sutil	250/1
Kobayashi	250/1
Heidfeld	250/1
Liuzzi	300/1
Alguersuari	500/1
Buemi	1000/1
Kovalainen	2500/1
Glock	2500/1
Trulli	2500/1
Di Grassi	5000/1
Yamamoto	2500/1
Senna	5000/1

Odds supplied by William Hill

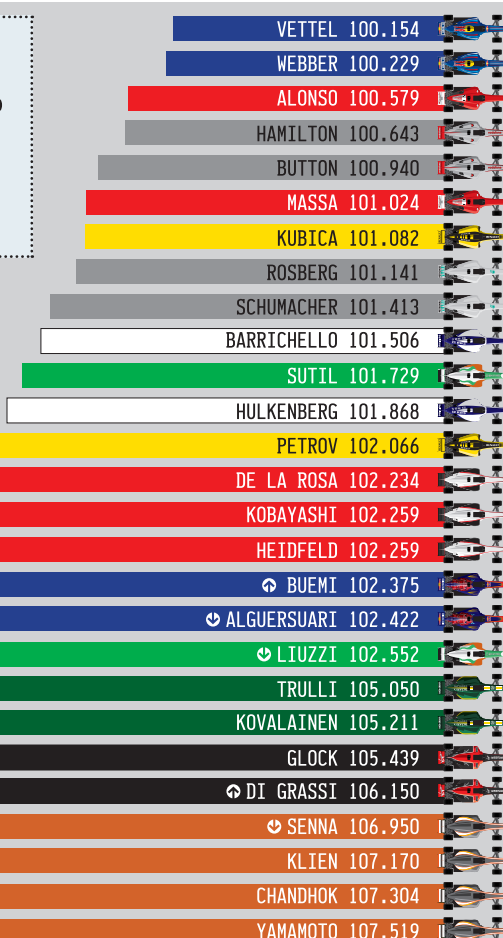
PACE COMPARISON

AUTOSPORT's performance index, formulated by technical editor Gary Anderson, is generated by taking each driver's fastest single-lap time from each weekend. This time is expressed as a percentage

of the fastest lap of the weekend, which is always 100 per cent. The overall figure for each driver is the mean percentage from the 17 race weekends held so far, and will be updated through the year.

WHAT'S CHANGED?

The intra-Scuderia Toro Rosso fight for supremacy continues, while at Sauber Nick Heidfeld moves level on outright pace with team-mate Kobayashi



2009 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Mark WEBBER	Red Bull-Renault
2	Robert KUBICA	BMW Sauber
3	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes
4	Sebastian VETTEL	Red Bull-Renault
5	Jenson BUTTON	Brawn-Mercedes
6	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari
7	Sebastien BUEMI	Toro Rosso-Ferrari
8	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Brawn-Mercedes

POLE Rubens BARRICHELLO (Brawn) 1m19.576s

Barrichello takes pole position, but Webber is always in the box seat after qualifying on a heavier fuel load. Button finishes fifth from 14th to seal the title.

2008 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Felipe MASSA	Ferrari
2	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
3	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari
4	Sebastian VETTEL	Toro Rosso-Ferrari
5	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes
6	Timo GLOCK	Toyota
7	Heikki KOVALAINEN	McLaren-Mercedes
8	Jarno TRULLI	Toyota

POLE Felipe MASSA (Ferrari) 1m12.368s

Massa claims victory – and for a fleeting moment the title – on home soil only for Hamilton to pass the slick-shod Timo Glock for fifth with seconds to spare.

2007 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari
2	Felipe MASSA	Ferrari
3	Fernando ALONSO	McLaren-Mercedes
4	Nico ROSBERG	Williams-Toyota
5	Robert KUBICA	BMW Sauber
6	Nick HEIDFELD	BMW Sauber
7	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes
8	Jarno TRULLI	Toyota

POLE Felipe MASSA (Ferrari) 1m11.931s

Massa hands victory, and the world championship, to team-mate Raikkonen as Hamilton suffers a mysterious gearbox glitch early on and loses ground.

2006 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Felipe MASSA	Ferrari
2	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
3	Jenson BUTTON	Honda
4	Michael SCHUMACHER	Ferrari
5	Kimi RAIKKONEN	McLaren-Mercedes
6	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Renault
7	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Honda
8	Pedro de la ROSA	McLaren-Mercedes

POLE Felipe MASSA (Ferrari) 1m10.680s

Massa takes his first home victory while Alonso's second place is more than enough to deny Schumacher the title in the German's swansong race.

2005 RESULTS

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Juan Pablo MONTOYA	McLaren-Mercedes
2	Kimi RAIKKONEN	McLaren-Mercedes
3	Fernando ALONSO	Renault
4	Michael SCHUMACHER	Ferrari
5	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Renault
6	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Ferrari
7	Jenson BUTTON	BAR-Honda
8	Ralf SCHUMACHER	Toyota

POLE Fernando ALONSO (Renault) 1m11.988s

Alonso's third place is enough to seal his first world championship on a day that sowed the seeds for his ill-fated move to McLaren for 2007.

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MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

Title frontrunners Mark Webber and Fernando Alonso share a parallel history in Formula 1 – and are much more closely matched than the story told by their respective CVs

With just the final back-to-back two races to go – and barring something radically unlikely unfolding in Brazil – the battle for the world championship seems to be distilling down to a duel between Fernando Alonso and Mark Webber, two drivers with a parallel history and a lot of mutual respect.

Both proteges of Flavio Briatore, they each made their F1 debuts with Minardi in the early part of the decade. In fact, as Webber stepped up from his Renault test driver role to take up his race seat as Alonso's replacement at Minardi, so Alonso went in the other direction, taking a race sabbatical in 2002 to test for Renault. Minardi boss Paul Stoddard was interesting when asked to compare them, saying: "I think they are both outstanding. I wouldn't like to put money on which of them shades the other. If anything, I'd say Fernando is a slightly faster qualifier and Mark a little bit more relentless in the race." Which rather goes

against what their subsequent reputations became.

In 2002 Alonso was loaned to Jaguar for a test at Silverstone where he was predictably impressive – equalling regular driver Pedro de la Rosa's time despite being loaded with around 0.5s more fuel. The team would likely have signed him for '03 had not Briatore installed him in a race seat at Renault. So Jaguar took Webber – who'd tested similarly impressively a couple of months after Alonso – instead.

Alonso was on his way. Renault in '03 was a better team with a better car than Jaguar and continued on an upward trajectory that culminated in double world titles. Webber, despite dragging the Jag and subsequently the '05 and '06 Williams to grid places they had no right being, was underrated and for a time it looked like he never was going to find the slot that magically switches on a driver's F1 career. It was going to be the great career that never was.

Partly it was his own fault. At the end of 2004 he had the solid offer of joining Alonso at Renault – the drive that Giancarlo Fisichella subsequently took. He turned it down, went to Williams instead, and though he never admitted it publicly, one of the reasons he did so was that he feared the prospect of walking into Alonso's team and being compared directly when Fernando already had a three-year headstart there.

You get the feeling Alonso has always figured large in Webber's mind, is the one he measures himself against. Certainly, whenever they

were fighting for position on track there seemed an added intensity. At Bahrain in 2004, Webber was ruthless in his defence, almost (but not quite) to the point of dangerous. At Suzuka in '05 as Alonso came storming from the back, it was a similar story as he encountered Webber. At 190mph down to Turn 1 late in the race, the Renault was catching the Williams hand over fist and Webber moved to block the inside, leaving not quite a car's width there. Fernando moved there anyway, putting his right-rear on the grass, momentarily putting the engine on the rev-limiter in top gear. In Spain last year Webber had Alonso hard over towards the right on a safety car restart, Alonso again getting past by using some grass, though on this occasion Webber repassed by braking later than late into Turn 1.

Pat Symonds has worked with them both and is fascinated to see how things pan out. "You might say Fernando has the edge because he's won titles before and against anyone else I might agree," he says. "But against Mark, no. Mark is incredibly mentally strong, totally pragmatic. He just fights and fights and fights, that's how it's always been for him. Mark is always at 100 per cent whereas with Fernando, he needs the carrot of something special to see him at his best – and that's what we're seeing now. But just because he's on a run doesn't mean anything. I'd say of far more relevance is the fact that the Ferrari still isn't quite as fast as the Red Bull. I'm a massive fan of Mark's and I think he would be a fantastic world champion." ❧



Alonso tested for Jaguar in '02, but opted for Renault

“Alonso is the one Webber measures himself against”

FIN

F1-style shark fin, compulsory on new LMP1 cars, gives new look

MONOCOQUE

Front end resembles 908, but there are minor differences

REAR BODY

Lower rear deck exploits smaller engine demanded by 2011 rules

2010 CAR**2011 CAR**

SPORTSCARS

New Peugeot is on track

First shots of car have appeared, but the French manufacturer has been testing it since July

Peugeot has been testing its 2011 Le Mans 24 Hours challenger since the end of July, it has emerged.

The French manufacturer confirmed that the new 90X was up and running after scoop

photographs from a test at Monza last week were published on AUTOSPORT.com on Friday. It reacted by sending out its own images of the car, which were taken at its shakedown at an undisclosed French proving ground on July 27.

Peugeot had previously refused to reveal whether the replacement for the 908 had run. It would only say that it would hit the track this year.

The car in the photographs retains the look of the 908 and is liveried in 2010 colours, but it is the all-new 2011 car.

Clear differences can be seen at the front of the car. The shape of the

nose is different and the curvature of the windscreen appears to be elliptical in plan view. Another giveaway is new door hinges.

The most dramatic changes are at the back of the car, which incorporates the shark fin mandatory on all new prototypes next year. The rear end has been repackaged around what will be a smaller engine.

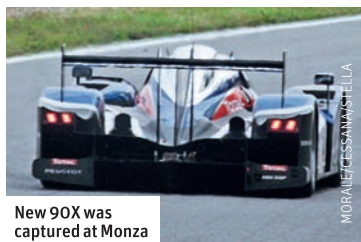
The exhausts now exit through the top surface of the rear deck rather than out of the side. The wheel-arches have been reprofiled, and include a dip behind the wheel.

Peugeot Sport has so far refused to reveal what powerplant the 90X

is running and whether it is a hybrid incorporating an energy-retrieval system. Technical boss Bruno Famin said that Peugeot is "still exploring options with regards to the engine".

Those at Monza suggested the car sounded like a turbodiesel and the cooling package looks near identical to the 908. Some have interpreted the roof-mounted air scoop as an indication that the 90X is powered by a normally-aspirated engine, though this could still offer a benefit with a turbodiesel.

Peugeot's rhetoric in rules meetings also suggests that it is committed to staying with diesel.



New 90X was captured at Monza

MORALE/CESSANA/STELLA



MORALE/CESSANA/STELLA

SPORTSCARS

Older LMP2s to be slowed in 2011

EXISTING LMP2 prototypes are set to be slowed ahead of the start of next season to ensure that the new generation of cost-capped cars is competitive.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, which sets the LMP rules, has told teams and constructors that it plans to increase the weight and reduce power of existing cars converted to the new engine formula. It has proposed a 20kg weight increase and

a five per cent reduction in air-restrictor diameter for 2010 machinery.

The ACO has vowed that so-called grandfathered cars will not be quicker than cost-capped LMP2s next year. It said it was proposing changes now because the likely late delivery of new cars will not allow their performance to be assessed before the season starts.

It said it will assess the balance

between the different cars after two races. It stated that it will take "immediate measures" should one chassis/engine combination have a significant performance advantage.

The ACO is also planning an increase in restrictor diameters for turbo engines after feedback from tuners suggested they would not be competitive against normally-aspirated units.

Old cars can't beat the new ones



SPORTSCARS

Ratel pushing for GT3 series in US



Audi wants to race R8s in Nth America

A SERIES could be run to FIA GT3 regulations in North America next season.

FIA GT boss Stephane Ratel, who created the GT3 category for the 2006 season, has called a meeting of the manufacturers and specialist tuners that

build GT3 cars for the middle of this month. A series in North America is high up the agenda.

Ratel was reticent about his plans to export the category to a new market.

"I'm bringing everyone together to listen to what they have

to say," he said. "This is customer racing, and if I can give them more opportunities to sell cars, then that is good."

Ratel suggested there was room for GT3 in North America.

"America is a crowded marketplace, but it is crowded by series

focused on prototypes [Grand-Am and the American Le Mans Series]," he said. "My opinion is that the most glamorous cars [GTs] should not be in a secondary class."

Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich said he supported any move that would allow the R8 LMS GT3 car to race in the US and Canada. He said a stand-alone series would be preferable to allowing the R8 to join Grand-Am's GT class – a move that is being considered by the US series – because the Grand-Am move would require a new spec of car to be built.

IN BRIEF

SIMS FOR FIA ACADEMY

Former McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner Alexander Sims (right) has been nominated by the MSA for the FIA's new Academy to help the development of young drivers. The FIA plans to select 10 drivers from its shortlist to join the scheme.



OAK PAIRS WITH DUNLOP

OAK Racing will be Dunlop's development partner when it returns to LMP1 next year. The team began testing one of its LMP2 Pescarolo-Judds fitted with P1 wheels and tyres at the Algarve circuit last week.

FIRST NISSAN TEAM

The British Bruichladdich prototype squad is the first team to announce plans to run the new Nissan LMP2 engine. Its Zytek O7S is being converted to take the new 4.5-litre V8 powerplant ahead of next year's Le Mans Series.

F2 TEST DATES REVEALED

Formula 2 has confirmed its winter test dates for next month. The series will host tests at the Algarve circuit on December 2-3 and Barcelona on December 9-10.

LAMY JOINS LARBRE

Peugeot factory driver Pedro Lamy is returning to Larbre Competition for this weekend's Zhuhai 1000Km, the final round of the Intercontinental

Le Mans Cup. The Portuguese will share Larbre's Saleen S7R with French GT champions Laurent Groppi and Patrick Bornhauser.

BOTTAS TO MACAU

Valtteri Bottas will race for Prema Powerteam at the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix. Bottas had initially not entered the race, as he hoped to join Williams for the young-driver Formula 1 test in Abu Dhabi.

SIGNATURE SIGNS ABT

F3 Euro Series champion team Signature has signed Daniel Abt for 2011. The son of Abt Sportsline DTM team boss Hans-Jurgen was second in German F3 this year, and has ties to engine supplier Volkswagen.

JTCC RELAUNCHED

The Japanese Touring Car Championship, which will be revived in 2012, was officially launched at Okayama last weekend. Organiser Concorde Management is aiming for a six-event calendar, with the final round on the Macau Grand Prix bill.

SPORTSCARS

No red 5, but team stays alive

THE BOSS of the Beechdean Mansell Motorsport squad has insisted that the team will continue in 2011, despite putting its car up for sale.

Andrew Howard, who linked up with the Mansell family at the start of this season, said that the team was reviewing its options. He said that continuing in the LMP1 division – with its Ginetta-Zytek if the car is not sold – and moving into the GT ranks were among the possibilities.

"We are committed to maintaining Beechdean Mansell Motorsport at the highest level," said Howard. "We aim to be in Europe next year competing in endurance racing."

Asked if the Mansell brothers, Greg and Leo, would be among the drivers, he said: "That does depend on budgets."

Howard, who has raced up to British GT level, also revealed that he hoped to be part of the driver line-up in 2011.



Boss Howard has pledged to carry on

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

GARY WATKINS
INTERNATIONAL
EDITOR AT LARGE



It's a strange way to announce a car that will be challenging for honours in one of the world's most prestigious races. Peugeot initially denied that the definitive 90X was running at Monza last week, then thought better of it and gave us a few scant details about the car that it hopes will win the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Those details did not include the engine configuration, though the indications are that it is a turbodiesel, this time a 3.7-litre V8. There are clues aplenty on the car, right down to the HDi FAP stickers.

Expect the 90X to be a hybrid, at least at some point in the future. Peugeot said back in January that the car would incorporate hybrid technology, though it has backed away from that promise in recent months.

It all makes sense: Peugeot is about to start selling a diesel hybrid for the road. Which is probably why it has been so coy about the engine in the 90X.

Journalists will start driving the 3008 HYbrid4 early next year, so it makes sense to wait until then to start shouting about a hybrid 90X. And fair play to Peugeot. It's all too easy to forget that manufacturers go racing to promote their products.

Hardly a high-profile launch for new Peugeot



BIG NUMBER

5000

The number of Euros DTM team Abt Sportsline was fined for throwing a bucket of water over Mattias Ekstrom's Audi from the pitwall at Adria on Sunday. The crew were trying to clean the windscreen, which they'd forgotten to do at his pitstop

DTM

Premat okay after huge crash

Audi's French driver is cleared by doctors to race in China after his enormous Adria DTM shunt

60 SECONDS WITH ALEXANDRE PREMAT

Audi DTM driver

How are you feeling now?

I'm fine. Much better than on Sunday. I still have pain in my ankle, but it's nearly gone. Later this week I should be able to walk normally. My neck is a bit stiff, but I would say that with the impact I had, I am happy about the shape I am in.



What was your view of the accident?

It wasn't Maro [Engel]'s fault. I had a bad exit out of the corner because Ralf Schumacher didn't leave me room. I saw Maro in the mirror, and I moved a bit to the left so I could see better because there was a lot of spray. I remember that I had one hand on the steering wheel, and one on the gear lever and then the car just went left really quickly when he touched me.

What went through your mind during the crash?

As soon as the car spun I knew I was going to crash, but I did not expect this kind of accident. My eyes were open the whole time, and with every impact the car was getting smaller around me. When you are rolling and rolling you can't work out where the sky is and where the ground is – it's like being in a washing machine.

How did you feel when the accident finished?

When the car stopped I tried to move all my body parts. When I knew that everything was still there, I got out as quick as possible so everyone could see I was okay. Once I was over the barrier, I stopped and thought, 'fucking hell, that was a huge one!' I was a very lucky boy. It was disappointing because we were fast all weekend so we could have had a good result, but some things are more important than results, like surviving this and going home to my family.

Do you expect to go to China for the finale?

Yes, of course. I'm looking forward to going to China to race. And Audi have told me that they will build me a new car for Shanghai.



Alexandre Premat was talking to AUTOSPORT News editor Glenn Freeman

Audi will build a new car for Alexandre Premat to complete the DTM season after the Frenchman destroyed his A4 at Adria last weekend.

Premat's car slammed into the barriers and then rolled several times after he was clipped by Mercedes driver Maro Engel at the end of the first lap of the race.

He sustained minor injuries to his ankle and neck, but he expects to be back to full fitness within two weeks.

"I would say I'm in good shape," Premat told AUTOSPORT. "I have had all the tests with the doctors and everything was fine. Now I just have to rest."

Premat was reprimanded

by officials for moving across on Engel, who said that he had nowhere to go.

"He'd already blocked me to the right, so I went left and he blocked me there as well," said Engel. "I had a massive run on him, but when he kept moving across I was just thinking, 'get out of there' because I knew it was going to be a big one."

After hitting the barrier, the Audi digs into the grass



The car then disintegrates as it rolls over multiple times



It came to rest wedged against the wall, but Premat was unhurt



IN BRIEF



KANAAN WITHOUT A DRIVE

Former IndyCar champion Tony Kanaan (above) says that he has not yet started looking for a new IndyCar drive, after Andretti Autosport released him last week due to a lack of funding. The team also announced that it has re-signed Ryan Hunter-Reay for the next two years.

VISO GIVES INDY FEEDBACK

Dallara has initiated a process of driver input to help with the development of the 2012 IndyCar chassis. EJ Viso visited the manufacturer's factory in Italy, where he gave feedback on the comfort and practicality of the cockpit.

ROBBY GORDON SCALES DOWN

NASCAR owner/driver Robby Gordon has ruled out contesting the full 36-race Sprint Cup calendar next year. "We'll do the big races that appeal to us, and we'll have some fun elsewhere too," he said.

JIM HUNTER PASSES AWAY

NASCAR's vice president of corporate communications Jim Hunter died last week, age 71. Hunter, who had bravely battled cancer for the past year, had two stints working for NASCAR, from 1983-1993 and 2001-2010.

HARVICK AND RCR TEAM-UP

Kevin Harvick's NASCAR team will take over the running of Richard Childress's Nationwide Series programme from 2011. The two teams currently race against each other in the championship, while Harvick drives for RCR in the Sprint Cup.

JEFF GORDON GETS FUNDING

Hendrick Motorsports has confirmed it has a full budget in place for four-time champion Jeff Gordon for next year. Gordon's 2011 budget had been in doubt in recent months.

INGRAM TRIES VECTRA

Ginetta Junior champion Tom Ingram had his first taste of BTCC machinery with Team Eurotech at Silverstone on Tuesday. "It's definitely something I could get used to," said the 17-year-old (below).



Oschersleben: not an F2 kind of track



FORMULA 2

F2 future lies away from WTCC support bill

FORMULA 2 will split from the World Touring Car Championship package in 2011 and has submitted its own schedule to the FIA for approval this week.

F2 has supported the WTCC at European venues since its reformation as a

one-make series in 2009, but series boss Jonathan Palmer wants a calendar that features more Formula 1 circuits.

"The WTCC is moving away from what our driver market wants, they have got different criteria for their

calendar," he said. "The WTCC wants to go to places that are commercially viable for it, which is totally understandable, but it means they move away from the mainstream F1 circuits."

"Our drivers in Formula 2 are focused on getting to F1,

and so it's a significant advantage for them, and therefore us, to run on grand prix circuits. We've put together and submitted to the FIA an outstanding and exciting calendar, dominated by F1 circuits, which we hope will be approved on Friday."

NASCAR

Ambrose backs RPM to survive



Ambrose will stay in the US to help Petty

MARCOS AMBROSE will not return to Australia this winter in a bid to help NASCAR team Richard Petty Motorsports survive into 2011.

The former V8 Supercar champion, who has signed for the cash-strapped team for 2011, usually leaves America to go home for the NASCAR off-season.

"I'm not going back to Australia this year," he said. "It's all getting pretty hot and heavy, so I've got to stay here. The team is in a tight situation. All I can do is voice my commitment to them and try to help them through this."

Ambrose added that he is in constant contact with his future employers about the problems at the team.

"I talk to them a lot," he said. "They're having to restructure and rethink how they're going about the business side of the sport. I have no control over the decisions that are going to be made, but I wish them the best of luck and I look forward to driving for them."

NASCAR

Stewart wants four cars



Stewart wants to double his team size

NASCAR OWNER Tony Stewart plans to expand his team to the series maximum of four cars in the future.

The two-time Cup champion started his own outfit for the 2009 season, and so far it has run two cars for Stewart and Ryan Newman. But the 39-year-old owner/driver has his sights set on joining the likes of Hendrick Motorsports as a four-car programme in the future.

"The goal of the organisation is to be a four-car team eventually, we would love it," said Stewart. "There are a lot of challenges right now in the sport – it's hard enough keeping two cars going. But yes, down the road we want to have a third team, and add a fourth team after that."

Stewart's team has won seven races in its first two seasons, and

he has made the Chase for the championship in both campaigns. And the team boss does not want to jeopardise the competitiveness of his two-car outfit by expanding before it is ready.

"It's not going to happen for next year," he said. "If we were going to add a team now we would like to have it started and have made that decision by the middle of the summer."

"I'm proud of our programme, and it's something that you can't take for granted right now. It's not easy, and you don't see many teams adding cars at the moment. But it's something we want to do. When we get the right opportunity, and the right sponsor and driver, we're definitely interested."

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WTCC

BMW sparks latest rules row

'Disability' loophole allows BMW to gain a weight break in Japan. Cue the usual outrage from rivals...



BMW's had more pace in Japan

Chevrolet has hit out at World Touring Car Championship title rival BMW following a controversial ruling on gearboxes at last weekend's Okayama round.

Race stewards allowed the factory RBM-run BMWs of Andy Priaulx and Augusto Farfus to change from five-speed H-pattern to six-speed sequential gearboxes, and to gain a resultant weight break of 30kg, starting in Japan.

Chevrolet announced its intention to appeal the decision immediately and had until yesterday (Wednesday) to officially lodge the appeal with the FIA.

Until the appeal is heard, the results at Okayama remain provisional, including Farfus's win in race two. It is possible that a hearing will not occur until after the season finale in Macau, where BMW star Priaulx can still mathematically beat Chevrolet's Yvan Muller to what would be the Briton's fourth WTCC crown.

Key to Chevrolet's opposition to the decision is the fact that the final drive and set of gear ratios in question was originally homologated to enable former WTCC racer Alex Zanardi to compete in a BMW fitted

with hand controls.

Chevrolet Europe motorsport manager Eric Neve told AUTOSPORT: "I'm not angry with BMW, I'm just disappointed.

"We all agreed some years ago that the sequential gearbox could be homologated for Alex Zanardi and Alex Zanardi only, because he cannot use pedals in the car.

"Then we agreed this season that [independent competitor Andrei] Romanov could use it too because we recognise that it is a cheaper alternative for independents. But to let the works team do it...

"They have taken advantage of a ruling applied to a disabled man. I have to give credit to them because it is within the rules and the stewards have allowed it, but it is against the spirit of the rules."

The works BMWs, plus the independent Team Engstler machine of Franz Engstler, all switched to the sequential box in Japan. The affected BMWs were 25kg lighter than the Chevrolet Cruzes and 45kg lighter than the SEAT Leon TDIs.

➔ **P42 WTCC REPORT**

WTCC

Reversed-grid review



Race two grids set for shake-up

A PROPOSAL to change the way the grid is set for the second race of each World Touring Car Championship weekend was due to be voted on this week.

The plan was due to go before the FIA World Council yesterday (Wednesday), and would do away with the existing system whereby the finishing order of the top eight in race one is reversed to determine the first

four rows of the grid for race two.

It is proposed that from next year the first 10 places for race two's grid are based on the reverse of the order from the first segment of qualifying (Q1).

The idea is the brainchild of FIA Touring Car Commission president Jonathan Ashman, who believes that the system would prevent teams manipulating the order of race one to get a driver onto the front row for race two. He claimed there would be "no way to play games".

Ashman said that his ideas had the support of the drivers and that he had found only one who was against it.

The remainder of the second grid would still line up according to the finishing order of the first race.

WTCC

Tarquini may quit WTCC

REIGNING WORLD Touring Car champion Gabriele Tarquini has hinted that he may walk away from the series at the end of the season.

The Italian was left without a factory drive when SEAT withdrew from the series during the winter and has spent the year with the Spanish SUNRED Engineering squad, competing under the SR-Sport banner.

The 48-year-old has won five times this season and was a title contender up until last weekend's races, but believes he needs better support if he is to regain his crown in the future.

"I do not want another year like this," he told AUTOSPORT. "Seriously, SUNRED is a good team and the SEAT is a very competitive car, but there is a problem with resources.

"We are stretching ourselves and we don't have the resources to do that [for much longer]. The Leon TDI is a good car and is still very competitive, but next year there will be no TDI.

"I think SUNRED will stay in the WTCC with a 1.6-litre Leon, but I don't know. I don't know if I will be here."

Tarquini tested a number of cars from the Superstars Series last month, but ruled out following fellow former F1 drivers Gianni Morbidelli, Nicola Larini and Johnny Herbert into the series.

"The championship is getting better," he said. "But there are still only a couple of really good teams like N.Technology and ROAL. I think that when they get the [performance] balance right between the cars then more good teams will come and more drivers."

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FORMULA 3

FIA working to save F3

FIA wants F3
grids to prosper

Governing body backs F3 as a vital feeder formula and plans to introduce invitational-event championship

The FIA is set to throw its weight behind Formula 3 and create a new title out of the major invitational events, including Macau and the Masters at Zandvoort.

It is understood FIA president Jean Todt believes that F3 is a vital step on what he called the "motorway from grass-roots to Formula 1" when he spoke to AUTOSPORT about his idea to rationalise the single-seater ladder in the summer (June 3). Some kind of FIA Cup linking the big one-off

F3 classics at Macau and Zandvoort, and new events at Pau and Korea International Circuit due to start in 2011, are set to be part of this plan.

Todt has charged new FIA employee Giles Simon, formerly his engine boss at Ferrari, with coming up with ideas to bolster F3. Simon said that the FIA was "reviewing how we can help F3 because we believe it is a fundamental step for young drivers and engineers".

Simon explained that it was a "little too early to speak about it" but said that he would "soon make

a proposal". There was nothing on the agenda to that effect for this week's World Council, which suggests that the FIA is focusing on 2012 when the next generation of F3 car will be introduced.

Stephane Ratel, whose eponymous organisation runs the British Formula 3 International Series, said he was "in favour of anything that promotes F3".

Ratel insisted that it was important that any cup or challenge that linked the big races was only open to teams and drivers

competing in one of the series running latest-spec F3 cars – namely Britain, the Euro Series and the Japanese championship.

One proposal concerning F3 that was due to go before the World Council this week was an attempt to limit development in the category. Front-end aerodynamics would be homologated, to prevent well-funded teams from developing their own aero packages.

 **P52 EURO SERIES REVIEW**

FORMULA 3

Korean race cancelled

THE 2010 Korea F3 Superprix, due to be held on the weekend after Macau later this month, has been cancelled.

The one-off event, held originally on the streets of Changwon between 1999 and 2003, was revived this year by Macau organiser Barry Bland and was due to be held at the new Yeongam circuit, which hosted the inaugural Korean F1 GP last month.

Bland was expecting a full 30-car entry for the race, with most teams and drivers treating Macau and Korea as a double-header. But Korean

motorsport body KAVO has cancelled the event due to force majeure.

Bland said: "We understand this is due to a legal technicality with the circuit, which appears to have been brought about by some objectors."

"It should be a temporary problem, but that is all we know at the moment. This is hugely disruptive and disappointing, and it is obvious that the cancellation will bring many associated problems. Our priority is now to get everyone home quickly after the Macau event."

Yeongam track hosted F1



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WRC

Todt warns WRC: change or die

Former winning co-driver and Peugeot Sport boss urges the sport's powerbrokers to re-evaluate or risk extinction.

FIA president Jean Todt has warned that failure to make significant changes to the World Rally Championship could kill the series in five years.

Since his election, Todt has empowered various working groups to report back to him on the WRC and in the last few months, the seeds of change have been sown in the sport. The former world championship co-driver is keen to see some sections of the sport returning to an endurance aspect – and he is very keen to move away from the current cloverleaf style of events with a central service park.

“We are looking at a five-year programme of implementing changes, bringing a slightly new

format to one or two rallies,” he said. “It will take time. In five years, we should be in a different situation. If we would not be in the different situation [to today] then the question is whether there is space for the WRC?”

Todt emphasised that he is not about to instigate stringent changes, but he added that strong guidance was required to return the sport to the status it once held.

“This is not about a revolution for 2011,” he said. “I don’t want to do something which makes everybody unhappy, but also, people don’t like to change; they are happy with the status quo. I don’t feel, if we want to take the sport to the next dimension, we can be happy

with the status quo.

“For me, rally is not about round and round. It’s not about going out in the morning, coming back for lunch for two hours and then going and doing the same stages and then coming back at six in the evening. This is not the rally. Rally is a great symbol of adventure and endurance and, in places like Latin America or Australia or New Zealand, the rally can be like this. I don’t say it’s going to fit for every rally. Some, like France or Spain or Britain work with the [current] format and that’s okay, but I feel this format has been imported to all the organisers.”

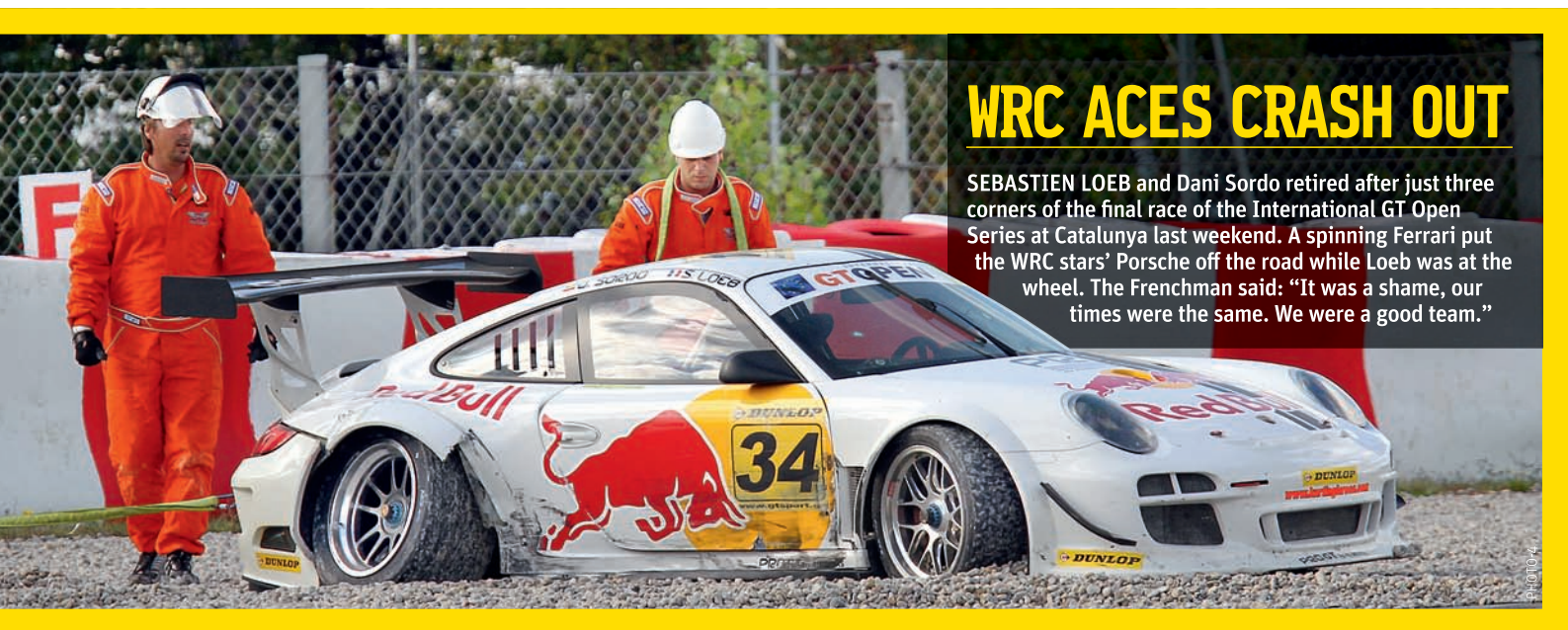
One of the initial changes to regulations for WRC is the potential increase of competition

mileage. This is currently capped at 250, but from next year, events are being encouraged to run between 280 and 530 miles. The use of remote service zones to take routes away from centralised service is also being encouraged.



Todt wants WRC to get back to its roots

MCKLEIN/DE



WRC ACES CRASH OUT

SEBASTIEN LOEB and Dani Sordo retired after just three corners of the final race of the International GT Open Series at Catalunya last weekend. A spinning Ferrari put the WRC stars' Porsche off the road while Loeb was at the wheel. The Frenchman said: “It was a shame, our times were the same. We were a good team.”

PHOTOGRAPH

WRC

Ford boys go the distance in Fiesta

FORD DRIVERS Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala covered almost a WRC event distance each day during their first three-day test of the full-specification Fiesta RS WRC, next year's Focus replacement.

The car ran on asphalt in the Vals area of Spain last week and completed 604 miles in three days.

Hirvonen said: “It’s really encouraging that we covered these distances in the first test of the 2011 engine and car, doing a WRC round in a day is pretty impressive with such a new car.”



New Fiesta covered big mileage in Spanish test

PHOTOGRAPH

WRC Pan-Welsh plan mooted for Rally GB

NEXT YEAR'S Rally Great Britain could start from Llandudno following last weekend's successful promotional event in the town.

Chief executive of Britain's WRC round Andrew Coe said the event worked perfectly and that he now saw no reason why the start of Rally GB couldn't move north for 2011. A range of rally cars – including Matthew Wilson's Stobart Ford – were on display at Conwy Castle on Saturday before moving into Llandudno for a demo the next day.

Coe said: "We're delighted with the way this promotional event has run. We'll have more



Wilson entertained Llandudno crowds

discussions with the local council, but there's a huge enthusiasm for this event in Llandudno and Conwy."

The initial plan would be to stage a ceremonial start in Llandudno on the Thursday night

before a possible run around the Great Orme stage on Friday morning ahead of classic North Wales stages such as Penmachno, Clocaenog then a move into mid-Wales with Dyfnant and Dyfi and a remote

service in Builth Wells. The event would then head south to Cardiff on Friday evening.

"We're looking for a pan-Welsh event," said Coe, "and the WRC regulations lend themselves to it now."

IN BRIEF



WILKS TO PEUGEOT

Guy Wilks has confirmed his decision to switch from Skoda to Peugeot for next season's IRC. The Englishman will drive the 207 S2000 competitively for the first time in Monte Carlo next January.

MAHONEN LANDS TOP JOB

Rally Finland commercial boss Jarmo Mahonen was expected to be confirmed as the new president of the WRC commission at yesterday's World Motor Sport Council meeting.

BIG PRIZE FOR CYPRUS

The first Golden Stage Rally runs in Cyprus (following the Cyprus Rally – the IRC finale), with a prize fund of £130,000 for the two-stage event. The fastest driver over the two runs of the 15-mile mixed-surface takes £26,000. Entrants include Nasser Al Attiyah, Andreas Mikkelsen and Martin Prokop.

PROTON DUO FOR CHINA

Chris Atkinson returns to the Proton team for the final round of the Asia-Pacific Rally Championship in

China this week. Alister McRae will drive the sister Satria Neo S2000. Brothers Mark and David Higgins will contest the event as part of their Chinese Championship efforts.

63 CARS FOR RALLY GB

The entry list for next week's Rally GB has been issued, with 63 cars. Fifteen of those are World Rally Cars, contesting the final event in the current era of the two-litre WRC.

NEW CITROEN IMPRESSES

Citroen's DS3 R3 continued to impress, with another class win – and third overall – on last weekend's Rallye International du Valais with Thierry Neuville on driving duties. The car's final outing of the season will be with Sebastien Ogier on the Rallye du Var next month.

BID FOR BURNS CAR RIDE

Rally fans have the chance to fulfil a dream on next week's Rally GB – by bidding to go for two laps of the Cardiff Bay superspecial stage in one of Richard Burns' rally cars. Details of the eBay auction are available at www.richardburnsfoundation.com.



WRC Sordo quits Citroen and eyes Ford



Sordo is free to look elsewhere for 2011

DANI SORDO has parted company with Citroen – the only team he has driven for in his professional career.

The Spaniard, who has driven for the factory team since 2007, has been told he has to find a budget to drive for the Citroen Junior Team in 2011. There is no place for him alongside Sebastien Loeb and Ogier in the top team.

Sordo said: "It's not a nice decision, but I can't be angry with anybody. They have a good team next year with Loeb and Ogier. It's going to be hard, but I have to find something. Olivier Quesnel is nice in the way he is talking about me, but I want to be in the team because I am fast, not because I'm a nice guy."

Sordo is talking to both Mini and Ford about next year. Ford's Malcolm Wilson said: "We are talking to him, but not for the BP [official] team. At the moment there's no deal in any shape or form."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

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North Wales, by the sea, in nearly November. Not normally the place to be. Except it was on Sunday. It stopped raining and, in a car park by the beach, Matthew Wilson was doing donuts. Lots of them. In total, more than 24,000 eyes followed each revolution.

And it looks like those revolutions might be about to revolutionise Rally GB. Revolutionise? That might be a bit strong. Big shake-up, more like (see story left).

Sunday was a great day and a brilliant promotion for Rally GB. More than 10,000 people turned out to watch, among others, Matthew Wilson's Stobart Focus and Jason Pritchard's Subaru Impreza. And all were rewarded with cracking entertainment.

This was nothing like the pre-Rally Portugal roadshow that roped off the centre of Porto and was watched by 20 times as many, but it was a great foundation with entirely laudable intentions. Next year's event needs to be the weekend before the main event – like Portugal – and all teams must attend. And we need to get out of the car park and into some sort of main street. We need to interrupt the public of Llandudno a little bit more; shift the bushel and expose the light.

In the meantime, congratulations to all council and organiser-types involved. Great initiative and great skids.

Rally GB could do with some new fans



IRC PREVIEW

Event	Cyprus Rally
Round	12/12
Based	Limassol
Date	November 5-6
Stages	14
Surface	gravel/asphalt
Competitive miles	146
2009 winner	Sebastien Loeb (WRC)
2010 Champion	Juho Hanninen



MICKLETHORPE

IS THIS THE GREATEST TITLE FIGHT IN HISTORY?

Five drivers can still win the F1 crown with just two grands prix remaining.
TONY DODGINS explains why the 2010 championship showdown
is so mesmerising and rates it alongside previous run-ins



Look back these past five years and Formula 1 has been compelling, with jaw-dropping drama the rule not the exception. As Fernando Alonso cemented his ending of the Michael Schumacher era in 2006, it went down to the wire – just. The end of 2007 prompted suspicions. Amid ‘Spygate’ and McLaren’s \$100m fine, Max Mosley had already let it be known that he would have disqualified the drivers as well. What, he asked, do you tell Kimi Raikkonen? In view of Lewis Hamilton’s weird boxful of neutrals at the Interlagos decider, even weirder race strategy later, and Alonso’s missing three-quarters of a second for most of the race, you wondered about an edict from on high – win this one and you won’t play in ’08...

But McLaren didn’t win it and most certainly were there a year later while the world watched, spellbound, as Hamilton pinched the title from under Felipe Massa’s nose on the last lap of the final race. Jenson Button broke the sequence last year by only torturing us as far as the penultimate round.

This year, who knows? Any one of Alonso, Mark Webber, Hamilton or Sebastian Vettel would make a deserving champion, with Button effectively out of it.

Look back at the title battles since the sport started shaping itself into the televised global spectacle it has become, during the late 1970s/early 80s, and you find mainly duels: Jones v Piquet (’80); Piquet v Reutemann (’81); Rosberg v Watson (’82); Lauda v Prost (’84); Senna v Prost (’88-’89-’90); Schumacher v Hill (’94); Schumacher v Villeneuve (’97); Schumacher v Hakkinen (’98/’00); Hakkinen v Irvine (’99); Schumacher v Raikkonen (’03); Alonso v Schumacher (’05-’06); Hamilton v Massa (’08).

Jacques Laffite was an outsider in ’81, making it a three-way fight, as was Rene Arnoux two years later. There was the epic Adelaide ’86 season finale with Prost pinching his second crown from under the noses of Williams drivers Mansell and Piquet (see page 38), the aforementioned suspect ’07 triple-header and then Vettel and Barrichello hassling Button as far as Interlagos last year. But five men still mathematically involved in a situation too close to call? Fabulous.



TOP QUALITY DRIVERS

Even better is the quality of those drivers. Fernando Alonso just looks like a world champion. Thanks to '07 though, he has become the pantomime villain for many, the man you love to hate, a forcefield of negative energy.

Ferrari’s technical chief Aldo Costa has a different view: “Fernando’s arrival in the team has been very, very positive. It took him very little time to settle in. It was like he’d been here 10 years. It was black and white, like a switch. As soon as we started working with him there were no issues at all and he was the most positive bloke in the team – always pushing, always optimistic. He’s been a real asset – in the car and out of it.”

He won first time out for Ferrari in Bahrain, then came a couple of uncharacteristic errors – the jumped start in Shanghai and the costly practice shunt in Monaco. Ferrari believes a lack of understanding of its first iteration f-duct was behind the below-par display in Turkey, then came the safety car misfortunes at Valencia/Silverstone and suddenly he was on the back foot. Not anymore. If there’s a driver you wouldn’t want to have to beat twice in a row to win a championship, it’s Alonso.

People with eyes to see have known how quick Mark Webber is for a long time. It’s just that, like Jenson Button until '09, he wasn’t able to demonstrate it at the front. For so long a series of bad cars was supplemented ▶

“Fernando’s arrival in the team has been very, very positive. He’s been a real asset”

FERRARI’S ALDO COSTA



◀ by awful luck, although for a man able to walk away from the aviation accidents he had at Le Mans twice, and at Valencia this year, the boulevard of luck is clearly no one-way street.

But, just as he got his backside into an Adrian Newey car at a time of wholesale rule change, what happened? A Nissan X-Trail ran him over, breaking a leg and shoulder. As Newey suggests, despite winning two races last year, Webber was not physically right.

"The drivers have been more even this year in qualifying but there's no obvious explanation," says Newey. "I guess the car is a bit less nervous on corner entry and that's primarily down to the front tyre, so possibly that helped Mark more than Sebastian, but with Mark's cycling accident prior to '09 he must have put on a very brave face..."

Recently, Giancarlo Minardi, the man who gave Webber his F1 debut in 2002 in Melbourne — when Mark got a Minardi home in fifth, which should have been a clue — said this: "He's always been very fast in all conditions. He's worked hard to shed excess pounds without compromising muscle mass and is a complete driver, without doubt one of the top four in the world. He's been underestimated by everyone."

"The ugly cycling incident left him in the shadows of his new team-mate but, fully recovered, he's put Vettel in serious difficulty. I think you need to earn the drivers' title, although to make that final leap you need complete

"You need to earn the drivers' title, but to make that final leap you need complete support"

GIANCARLO MINARDI

support. That's precisely why I'm not in agreement with the Red Bull strategy, leaving its two drivers free to fight. At Suzuka, Webber lost seven points to Alonso."

Not to mention the potential 25 he dropped trying to stay with Vettel on a slippery track in Korea...

That, more than any other, was the head-in-the-hands moment of the 2010 championship. Webber can still do it and many would love to see it. Alonso's a champion, Hamilton's a champion, Button's a champion and Vettel, barely out of nappies by comparison, will have his day.

Webber opened eyes with his dominant back-to-back wins from pole in Barcelona and Monaco, which rattled Vettel's cage. He also gave us one of the best lines of the year in Spain. Vettel, long dubbed 'the new Schumi' by the German media, couldn't match his pace in Barcelona and finished 50s back, doing well to contain a brake problem



Monaco practice shunt derailed Alonso's bid



Button may soon have to play a supporting role



German GP victory for Alonso was controversial



Champ Button has had a weaker second half of '10



and defend his third place from the seven times champion. One of the British journos mischievously asked Webber what had happened to the new Schuey.

"Dunno, mate," he smiled, "he was back down the road with the old one." There was no arrogance, just a wink from one of the paddock's most rounded guys.

What can you say about Lewis Hamilton? If he was a golfer he'd be Seve Ballesteros; a fighter, Mike Tyson; a footballer, Marco Van Basten.

Playing the percentages is not for him. With his innate talent, Lewis is one of the most exciting drivers ever to sit in an F1 car. Sometimes though, it bites him, as at Monza. Singapore you can't really lay at his door — he left himself vulnerable but he had to have a go and Webber gave him a helping hand.

To have Hamilton within 11 points of the championship lead with two to go is more than uncomfortable for Alonso and Webber. They should have the McLaren's measure in Brazil and Abu Dhabi but Hamilton was awesome



Webber has been a match for Vettel all year



Lewis/Webber Singapore hit led to Briton retiring



Red Bull collision put paid to Vettel in Turkey



Vettel spoiled his and Button's race at Spa...



... but it all came good in Japan for dominant win



Hamilton: clutching at straws on consistency



The '08 champ's Italian GP lasted less than a lap

at Yas Marina last year. You wouldn't want to head for the final race knowing you had to beat Lewis.

Times without number this year, facing the fact that the McLarens haven't had the qualifying speed to trouble Red Bull, Martin Whitmarsh repeated the same line: "I'm not concerned. The race is tomorrow and I firmly believe we have the two best racing drivers in the world."

For Button though, the second half of the season has not been as impressive as the first, notwithstanding a fine drive

at Monza where he lost out to Alonso by the narrowest of margins. But for divine intervention, it will be a supporting role from here on in.

Sebastian Vettel is without doubt the unluckiest of the five main men. How could you not let him race for it? A crack in the ceramic top of a spark plug and a wheel failure cost him 38 points at the first two races in Bahrain and Australia. Add in another 25 for Korea, at least 30 lost to rushes of blood to the head at Istanbul and Spa, and he should already have the title locked away. That

he's still in it says all you need to know about the pace of both Sebastian and Red Bull's RB6.

Vettel also cost himself at least 11 points at Silverstone when he rejected the notion of tucking in behind the faster-starting Webber, but the wins in Malaysia, Valencia and at Suzuka were all majestic, as was his drive in Korea before that cruellest of engine failures. You wouldn't bet against more of the same in the final two races either, but there's still every chance it won't be enough. ►

FASCINATION THROUGHOUT TEAMS

The team battle has been just as intriguing, with innovation in all three leading outfits. Adrian Newey's Red Bull RB6 is undoubtedly the car of the year, with an optimised blown diffuser on it from the final Barcelona pre-season test that's been key to its stunning performance in long-duration, high-speed turns. Last year they got Copse almost flat and this year they managed it at Barcelona's Turn 9, which bought the broadest of smiles to Adrian's face.

The blown floor was difficult to respond to. Exhausts are long-lead items and it took Ferrari and Renault four months to arrive with a blown floor at Valencia in June. Ferrari, meantime, had its engine/gearbox tilted to optimise airflow to the diffuser and concentrated on its blown floor and f-duct, while other teams prioritised more standard aero work. When Ferrari was able to do likewise, allied to a revised gearbox to improve diffuser performance, it made strong steps and is now very close to Red Bull's level.

McLaren arrived with its ingenious f-duct, which gave an early-season advantage until the rest responded. Amazingly the device had been in development since 2008. For something to stay quiet that long around F1 means that Paddy Lowe and Tim Goss have obviously missed their vocations with MI6!

The team seemed to lose ground mid-season, most likely in terms of front-wing performance, but kept

developing. They, and Lewis Hamilton, are still there...

In days gone by, with limitless spending, maybe it would not have been quite so close. There has been innovation in different areas but the teams have had to be selective with development and have gone down different routes. It may not be true to say that is the sole reason Red Bull has been able to take on Ferrari and McLaren. Red Bull's Dietrich Mateschitz has deep pockets too and the smartest thing he did was dip into them for Newey. That said, the resource-restriction agreement has no doubt helped.

There has been fascination everywhere. Newey, for example, reckons that the Renault engine is still four per cent down on a Mercedes, equating to half a second per lap at some places. He's irked that Mercedes has blocked all conversations aimed at Renault being allowed to redress the balance. And yet the Renault team has been able to develop an f-duct good enough to allow Robert Kubica to set a free-practice 3 best in Korea's high-speed sector 1, with a Renault engine obviously. Go figure...

While on the subject of Kubica, a five-way world championship battle in which neither Robert, Michael Schumacher, Nico Rosberg nor Mercedes (the reigning champion team, remember) are involved in, tells you all about F1's current strength in depth. Even if the sport has held you in its thrall for 40 years or more, no season has bettered 2010.

Whoever comes back from Yas Marina with the crown has earned it. ☑



Vettel checks on rival McLaren's developments



Adrian Newey's Red Bull RB6: the car of the year



Alonso settled at Ferrari team incredibly quickly

1986 THEN AS NOW?



Mansell (l) and Piquet both fought for the title



Left-rear blowout for our Nige spoiled Brit's hopes

CHRISTIAN HORNER, aged just 12 at the time, might ask Frank Williams about 1986...

Eight months after the road accident that changed Frank's life, he travelled to BBC studios in Shepherd's Bush ready for the season finale from Adelaide in which Nigel Mansell was favourite to win the title.

In the 15 previous races Frank's FW11 had won nine times. Williams took the constructors' title that year with 141 points to McLaren's 96.

The drivers' fight was more complicated. When Nelson Piquet joined

Williams for '86 it was assumed the twice world champion would be its number one. But that was counting without Mansell, who had won his first two GPs the year before, at the age of 32.

Mansell was no great respecter of reputation and did to Piquet exactly what Webber has done to Vettel at Red Bull this year – seized an early initiative and been impossible to shake.

Going in, Mansell had 70 points and five wins, Prost 64 points and three wins, and Piquet 63 points and four wins. Under the scoring system, taking

into account dropped scores, Nigel needed a third place to be sure. It looked a formality.

He was cruising in third place, behind Piquet, when, 18 laps from the end, his left-rear Goodyear exploded. Keke Rosberg's McLaren had already suffered a tyre delamination. Piquet now led with the title in his grasp but Williams took the responsible action of calling him in for new rubber.

That handed the lead to Prost. Alain had punctured a front tyre against Berger's Benetton 32 laps into the

82-lap race and had already changed tyres.

But his fuel readout was telling him he was five litres short. He couldn't back off because he needed to win and the re-shod Piquet was closing fast. Alain beat Nelson to the line by four seconds to retain his title. Frank's two number ones had won most battles but lost the war.



Prost came from behind to take title number two

HISTORY'S TRIPLE-HEADERS

MATHEMATICALLY, FOUR men could have won the world title heading to the '82 season finale in a Caesar's Palace car park in Las Vegas. In reality it was a duel. Didier Pironi had suffered a career-ending shunt seven weeks earlier at Hockenheim and Niki Lauda's hopes rested on an

appeal against Belgian GP disqualification, which he lost. Keke Rosberg took the crown from John Watson having won just once during the season.

We've seen triple-header title fights on nine occasions. In 1950, Fangio led his Alfa Romeo team-mates going in but suffered

a broken gearbox at Monza, leaving Giuseppe Farina to take the inaugural title.

In '59 Jack Brabham led going to Sebring. Stirling Moss and Tony Brooks could have overhauled him but Moss suffered transmission failure having led from pole position.

In '64, Graham Hill

headed John Surtees and Jim Clark going to Mexico but was eliminated in a controversial collision with Surtees' Ferrari team-mate Lorenzo Bandini, allowing Big John to take the title.

Hill won out in another three-way fight with Jackie Stewart and Denny Hulme at the same venue four years later. A win would have been good enough for Stewart and he led before dropping back to seventh with a misfire.

Emerson Fittipaldi overcame Clay Regazzoni and Jody Scheckter at Watkins Glen in '74 and Carlos Reutemann crumbled in Las Vegas seven years later, allowing Nelson Piquet to take his first title by a single point with fifth place. Piquet,

Reutemann, Jones, Laffite and Prost were covered by just seven points at the end of that race!

Piquet came from behind again to pip Alain Prost in '83 at Kyalami with Rene Arnoux the outsider. Then came the epic '86 showdown in Adelaide (see opposite page) before a gap of more than 20 years when Kimi Raikkonen clinched the '07 title against McLaren's Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso at Interlagos.

Alonso has already booked his place in any potential Abu Dhabi 2010 face-off but he might note a little nervously that only three times has the man heading the championship going in come home with the crown!

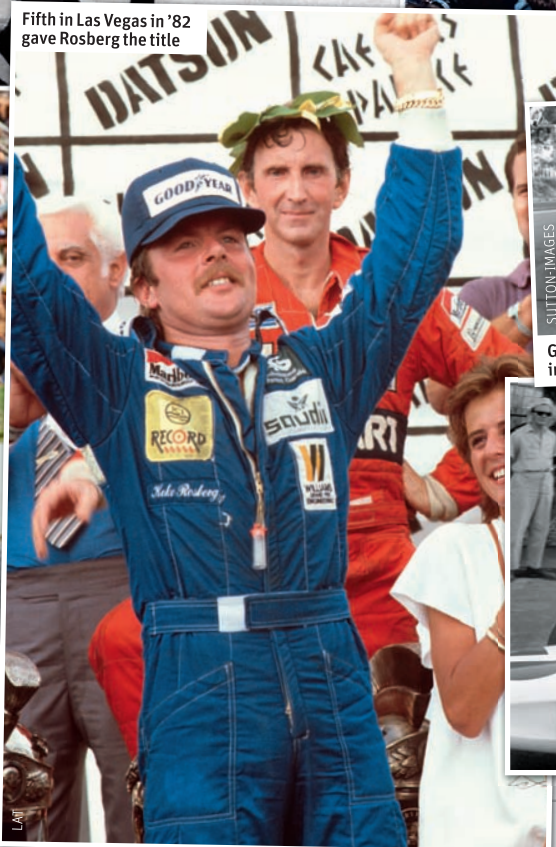
Brabham/Moss/Brooks duked it out at Sebring



Stewart grills Fittipaldi on '74 title-fight success



Fifth in Las Vegas in '82 gave Rosberg the title



Graham Hill prevailed in 1968 Mexican scrap



Piquet took his second title at Kyalami in '83



Bike ace Surtees added car title to CV in 1964

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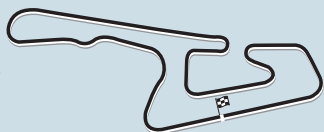
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OKAYAMA

Japan
October 30-31
WTCC
Round 10/11



AT A GLANCE

- Winners **Rob Huff/Augusto Farfus**
- Pole position **Andy Priaulx**
- Fastest laps **Yvan Muller/Michel Nykjaer**



Tarquini throws it off road

Going gets tough; Huff gets going

It was good news for Chevrolet in Japan, as Rob Huff was supreme in soaking wet conditions, while RML team-mate Yvan Muller moved ever-closer to claiming the 2010 WTCC drivers' title

QUALIFYING

Munich cheer festival for Priaulx

Following the works team's change to sequential gearboxes (see *Pit & Paddock*), it was always going to be a BMW on pole at Okayama, but it could have been privateer runner Colin Turkington rather than Andy Priaulx.

Fastest in Q1, the series returnee couldn't match it in Q2 and dropped to fourth, while Priaulx used RBM team-mate Augusto Farfus to tow him to his first pole since Macau 2006.

"I don't have the luxury of a team-mate to give me a slipstream," said Turkington. "And that's got to be worth a couple of tenths – even here."

Farfus was second, 0.5s slower than Priaulx, with Rob Huff third in a Chevy 25kg heavier than the German machines. Franz Engstler was the best independent in 10th.



Farfus (left) towed Priaulx to rare pole

Rob Huff was at his brilliant best at Okayama. Not only did he take his second World Touring Car Championship win of the year in dismal weather conditions, but in doing so he also provided Chevrolet team-mate Yvan Muller with a welcome boost in his quest for a second title in three years.

Muller, who took home a pair of third places from Japan, is almost home and dry now after title rivals Andy Priaulx and Gabriele Tarquini both made errors that eliminated them from the second race.

There was some consolation for BMW's factory RBM squad as Augusto Farfus took his first WTCC win for a year. And there was cheer for a privateer BMW effort too,

as the returning Colin Turkington took a magnificent second place behind the Brazilian in his WSR-run 320si.

Huff had qualified third, but rain arrived at Okayama 90 minutes before the first race, and in those conditions the Briton and his RML-run Chevy Cruze were the class of the field – his best lap was 0.4 seconds faster than either works BMW during the first third of the race.

"Andy and Augusto were having problems with their tyres in getting the grip, but mine just gripped straight away," said Huff, who edged past the Brazilian's BMW within three corners of green-flag running (both races began with two laps behind the safety car). "Front-wheel drive is a big positive in the wet."

Priaulx was a tougher nut to crack, and the pair made

contact exiting the fast left-handed Williams corner as Huff got his Cruze sideways after hitting a huge puddle – "It was all under control," he said. But Huff was not to be denied as he dived down the inside into the left-hand Piper turn behind the paddock to grab the lead.

Race two should have provided at least some good news for SEAT, as Michel Nykjaer's eighth place earlier on gave him pole on the reversed grid. The Dane pulled out a 5s advantage in his SUNRED-run Leon within the first seven laps, but two laps behind the safety car (for a reason that was not obvious to anyone) allowed the pack to bunch up.

Nykjaer had moved over to allow quasi-team-mate Tarquini into seventh on the final lap of the earlier



Huff finally squeezed past Priaulx to win

RACE RATING

★★★★★

More intriguing than entertaining. Could have done with a little less water for the sake of close racing

“It was the most difficult race of the year - even more difficult than here last year”

Augusto Farfus finds the rain in Japan ever-trickier

REPORT WTCC OKAYAMA



Jamie O'Leary reports

KEY MOMENTS

RACE 1 Huff passes Priaulx to secure second win of year

RACE 2 Priaulx and Tarquini both exit through errors, leaving Muller free to take third and look ever-more secure for title

race, but before any similar questions could be asked of him he was off the track at the long Attwood right-hander and dropping back.

So the ultra-experienced Tarquini was ahead and set for a win that would reinvigorate his title push... until he understeered off at the Hobbs hairpin and clouted the tyrewall; world championship defence over.

By this time Priaulx was gone too. “I lost the dash on the grid and the power-steering early on, and on one lap I came down the long straight, saw nothing, braked a bit too late and I was in the gravel,” he said. “My mistake.

“I reckoned this was the best year of my career from a pure driving perspective, because our car’s not been

the fastest. Not any more. The title’s gone.”

In fairness to Priaulx, the conditions were dire and he’s still got a mathematical chance of beating Muller to the crown, even if a 37-point deficit means that the Frenchman only needs a single podium in Macau to become the first man to win the world title with two different manufacturers.

So it was Farfus to the fore, and getting payback for a weekend that had revolved around the Brazilian supporting his team-mate’s title assault.

But Turkington was lurking, the former BTCC champion the only man to really exploit the typical wet-weather lines around the former Pacific Grand Prix venue.



Turkington and Farfus played starring roles

“It was a bit weird going into corners and leaving a massive door open on the inside,” said Turkington. “But I knew the pay-off would be the traction coming out of the turns, and it worked out perfectly.”

Or at least it might have done had backmarker Henry Ho not spun his BMW exiting the aptly named Revolver bend and brought out a safety car that neutralised the field for the final lap and a bit.

It prevented Muller and Huff from nibbling at the rear end of the yellow 320si as the Chevy duo secured

third and fourth places ahead of Alain Menu, Robert Dahlgren, Nykjaer and Norbert Michelisz, who had earlier taken a career-best fifth place in his Zengo-Dension SEAT.

The battle for the independent victories was equally hard-fought, and the weekend belonged to British squad bamboo-engineering and its Chevy Lacettis.

The team’s Japanese recruit Yukinori Taniguchi used his knowledge of both track and weather to good effect in race one as he took his first indie victory, battling bravely with Tom

Coronel’s ‘works’ SEAT for most of the race.

His team-mate Darryl O’Young completed a superb one-two for the squad and then added victory later on. With championship leader Sergio Hernandez spinning his Proteam BMW out, O’Young lies only 21 points behind with 43 up for grabs in the double-points Macau finale – a track he knows intimately from his years in Asian Porsche racing. 🏆

FINAL ROUND
Macau (PRC), November 20-21

RESULTS

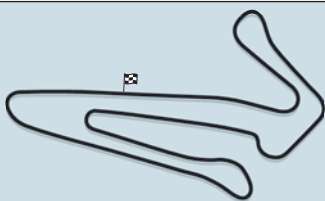
FIA World Touring Car Championship, Okayama (J), October 30-31, round 10 of 11

GRID		RACE 1 - 16 LAPS, 36.820 MILES						RACE 2 - 16 LAPS, 36.820 MILES				CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE				
		POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	WEIGHT	TIME	GRID	POS	DRIVER	TIME	GRID	POS	DRIVER	PTS	
2	FARFUS 1:37.408	1	PRIAULX 1:36.972										1	Muller	295	
4	TURKINGTON 1:37.495	3	HUFF 1:37.441						1	2	Turkington	+0.275s	3	Priaulx	258	
6	TARQUINI 1:37.727	5	MICHELISZ 1:37.577						8	3	Muller	+0.999s	6	3	Tarquini	242
8	MULLER 1:37.913	7	MENU 1:37.844						2	4	Huff	+2.097s	8	4	Huff	233
10	ENGSTLER 1:38.605	9	ROSSI 1:38.387						5	5	Menu	+3.101s	9	5	Farfus	186
12	NYKJAER 1:37.904	11	MONTIEIRO 1:37.904						4	6	Dahlgren	+3.440s	10	6	Menu	161
14	POULSEN 1:38.156	13	O'YOUNG 1:38.056						6	7	Nykjaer	+4.449s	1	7	Monteiro	158
16	CORONEL 1:38.190	15	BARTH 1:38.171						12	8	Michelisz	+5.707s	4	8	Coronel	126
18	HERNANDEZ 1:38.728	17	D'ASTE 1:38.540						7	9	Coronel	+6.176s	21	9	Turkington	86
20	ROMANOV 1:39.098	19	Y. T. GUCHI 1:38.747						10	10	O'Young	+7.336s	12	10	Michelisz	62
22	N. T. GUCHI 1:39.891	21	ITO 1:39.584						24*	11	Engstler	+7.888s	15	INDEPENDENTS' TROPHY		
24	DAHLGREN 1:38.128*	23	CHEN 1:39.997						19	12	Poulsen	+8.081s	16	POS	DRIVER	PTS
26	BEINWANT no time	25	HO 1:40.681						13	13	Rossi	+8.546s	24	1	Hernandez	124
		27	YANAGIDA no time						22	14	Barth	+9.584s	26	2	O'Young	103
									10	15	Yanagida	+10.903s	18	3	Poulsen	97
									14	16	Romanov	+10.973s	23	4	Engstler	95
									26	17	Y Taniguchi	+13.331s	11			
									27	18	d'Aste	+13.954s	27			
									25	19	N Taniguchi	+27.382s	14			
									21	20	Bennani	+31.379s	17			
									16	21	Chen	-1 lap	22			
									23	22	Ho	13 laps-spun off	19			
									20	R	Hernandez	11 laps-accident	13			
									9	R	Tarquini	10 laps-accident	2			
									11	R	Monteiro	10 laps-steering	25			
									15	R	Ito	7 laps-accident	20			
									17	R	Priaulx	3 laps-accident	7			

KEY R=Retired; *10-place grid penalty. **Race 1** Winner's average: 69.54mph. Fastest lap: Muller, 1m51.813s, 74.08mph. **Race 2** Winner's average: 65.39mph. Fastest lap: Nykjaer, 1m53.479s, 72.99mph.

ADRIA

Italy
October 30-31
DTM
Round 10/11

**AT A GLANCE**

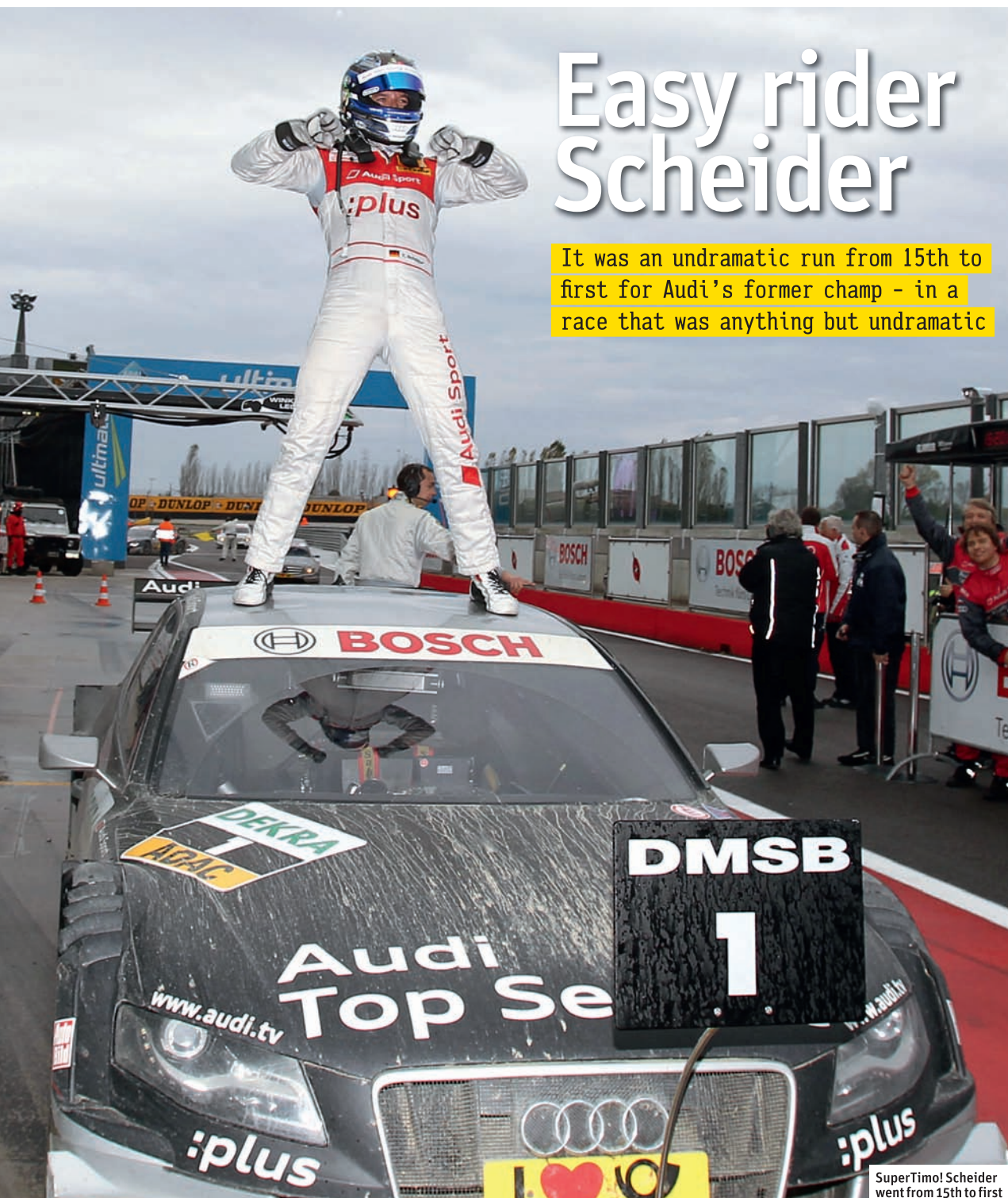
- Winner **Timo Scheider**
- Pole position **Gary Paffett**
- Fastest lap **Mattias Ekstrom**



Di Resta got a mucky Merc – and no points

Easy rider Scheider

It was an undramatic run from 15th to first for Audi's former champ – in a race that was anything but undramatic



SuperTimo! Scheider went from 15th to first

Timo Scheider had come close to winning the two DTM races prior to last weekend's trip to Adria.

But on Saturday evening, after qualifying 15th, he'd never have dreamed that he would break his duck for 2010 at the Italian circuit.

As it turned out, Audi's two-time champion came through the chaos caused by damp conditions to take quite a comfortable win. And he owed that to three things: an amazing first lap; a clever strategy; and his searing pace.

Even in wet conditions, Scheider's progress from 15th to seventh on the opening lap was seriously impressive. That put him ahead of Alexandre Premat's red-flag-causing shunt on the start/finish line, from which the Frenchman miraculously walked away (see *Pit & Paddock*).

When the race resumed, it was clear that the distance would be shortened due to time constraints. As Mercedes men Bruno Spengler and Gary Paffett pulled away at the front, Scheider was in a group of four Audis that was being held up by Jamie Green's older Merc.

Scheider had to deal with the struggling Green, plus Audi drivers Markus Winkelhock and Oliver Jarvis, before he could show his true pace. He ran fourth behind team-mate Mattias Ekstrom, and both were at least a second per lap faster than the Mercs out front.

Ekstrom's hopes fell apart when his gear lever broke on lap 18, and he toured back to the pits for repairs. He rejoined at the back, but admitted afterwards: "The race was lost, so I just left my motivation in the pits and drove to the finish."

But Scheider still had everything to fight for. As he continued to eat away at the gap to the leaders, Paffett spun while hounding Spengler. The Briton would leapfrog his team-mate when Spengler struggled in

QUALIFYING

Mercedes man Paffett hangs on by his fingertips



Paffett (middle) pipped Spengler and Ekstrom

➡ Gary Paffett watched on as all three of his Q4 rivals held the upper hand over his Mercedes after two sectors of their qualifying laps. Yet, somehow, the 2005 champion's benchmark remained at the top for a much-needed pole position ahead of Bruno Spengler, Mattias Ekstrom and

the impressive Jamie Green's older Merc.

There was drama at the back of the field too, as initially it seemed that Timo Scheider had bumped Audi team-mate Mattias Ekstrom out in Q1. But Scheider had started his lap 0.168 seconds after the chequered flag came out, so he was left to start 15th.

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Drama from the word go thanks to the conditions. Nearly every lap was eventful somewhere down the field

“When I saw there were only 15 laps to go, I wondered if the team had forgotten my stops”

Scheider was in the dark about Audi's radical pit strategy

REPORT DTM ADRIA



Glenn Freeman
reports

KEY MOMENTS

LAP 1 Rockenfeller spins di Resta down to last at the final corner

LAP 20 Paffett spins, handing another place to Scheider

LAP 33 Paffett jumps Spengler in pits, keeping title hopes alive

the middle stint, but he'd given up track position to Scheider, who showed no signs of easing up. As everyone else pitted the Audi stayed on track, eventually making the first of its two stops just seven laps before the finish.

“The strategy was different to everybody else's, but it was down to the performance that we had today,” said the winner. “Starting from P15 the expectations were quite low, but it was an amazing race. I joked with my guys before the start that I would get

onto the podium, and now here I am as the winner. We had a really good car today, and the key to the strategy was the pace we had on used tyres.”

Spengler's horrible middle stint left Scheider unchallenged at the front, and it allowed Paffett to take second. That kept the 2005 champion in the title hunt, but he couldn't hide his frustration at making Scheider's life easier with that spin.

“It was disappointing because I felt I could win the race,” said Paffett. “I



Oops: Paffett spins away what could have been a win

locked the rear wheels into Turn 2 and spun, so Timo got past. Then I drove as hard as I could and the car was good so I could get past Bruno and keep him behind. But there was no chance of catching Timo.”

Had Paffett been able to stay ahead of Scheider before the stops, he could have covered whatever strategy the German adopted, while both would have jumped Spengler. But once Scheider was set free, he could do as he pleased on his way to Audi's first win since Valencia in May.

Spengler was satisfied with third place, as he'd come out of a tough day unscathed and back in the championship lead. That was mainly thanks to Paul di Resta enduring a torrid day that he had started at the top of the points. The Scot was tipped into a spin

when Mike Rockenfeller went into the final corner too deep on lap one, sending him to the back for the restart. He worked his way back up to seventh, but then came under attack from Miguel Molina. The pair banged wheels on the approach to Turn 1, which broke the Spaniard's suspension. That caused Molina all sorts of problems under braking for Turn 2, where he slammed into the back of the Mercedes. Di Resta — who felt the clash was a retaliation from Molina — rejoined in eighth, but his hobbled car was no match for a recovering Ekstrom, who stole the final point from him with a lap and a half to go.

“If I had hung on to seventh I'd only be a point behind Bruno and that would have been a good recovery from 17th,” said

the Scot, who also went off entering the pits when he got a late call to come in for the first time. “The car was destroyed. I know the Rockenfeller clash wasn't intentional, but he needed to be more responsible. Molina just drove straight into me because we'd had a little ding-dong at the previous corner.”

Molina countered: “I was just trying to stop the car because Paul broke my suspension when he drove into me. I tried to avoid him, and I only just touched him.”

The chaotic nature of the race presented David Coulthard with a chance to fight for points as he enjoyed his best race of the season. He was in a genuine midfield scrap, in which he ran as high as seventh, but he threw it all away with two trips through the gravel. The first was at the pit entry for his first stop, and the second came moments later — at Turn 3 on his out-lap.

“This was my best chance to score points,” he said. “To lose them because of two mistakes I've made is disappointing. I still don't really know what I'm doing here, but it was fun to battle with these guys.”

Coulthard has one more chance to score, in Shanghai at the end of November. But anything he does is likely to be a sideshow to the three-way title showdown. ☒



Scheider fought past midfield in early laps

RESULTS

DTM, Adria (I), October 29-31, round 10 of 11

GRID	
1 PAFFETT 1:10.471	7 SPENGLER 1:10.481
3 EKSTROM 1:10.560	4 GREEN 1:10.700
5 RYFFELLER 1:10.271	6 DI RESTA 1:10.309
7 JARVIS 1:10.349	8 MOLINA 1:10.431
9 TOMCZYK 1:10.371	10 W'ELHOCK 1:10.464
11 PREMAT 1:10.466	12 ENGEL 1:10.666
13 STODDART 1:10.903	14 S'MACHER 1:10.975
15 SCHEIDER 1:10.983	16 COULTHARD 1:11.082
17 CHENG 1:11.083	18 LEGGE 1:11.269

38 LAPS, 63.799 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	RESULT	GRID
1	Timo Scheider (D)	Abt Sportsline	Audi A4 (2009)	1h15m01.965s	15
2	Gary Paffett (GB)	HWA	Mercedes C-class (2009)	+8.912s	1
3	Bruno Spengler (CDN)	HWA	Mercedes C-class (2009)	+9.738s	2
4	Markus Winkelhock (D)	Team Rosberg	Audi A4 (2008)	+16.965s	10
5	Oliver Jarvis (GB)	Abt Sportsline	Audi A4 (2009)	+18.008s	7
6	Martin Tomczyk (D)	Abt Sportsline	Audi A4 (2009)	+22.527s	9
7	Maro Engel (D)	Mucke Motorsport	Mercedes C-class (2008)	+34.424s	12
8	Mattias Ekstrom (S)	Abt Sportsline	Audi A4 (2009)	+41.246s	3
9	Paul di Resta (GB)	HWA	Mercedes C-class (2009)	+43.757s	6
10	David Coulthard (GB)	Mucke Motorsport	Mercedes C-class (2008)	+47.033s	16
11	Ralf Schumacher (D)	HWA	Mercedes C-class (2009)	+52.417s	14
12	Jamie Green (GB)	Persson Motorsport	Mercedes C-class (2008)	+57.321s	4
13	CongFu Cheng (PRC)	Mucke Motorsport	Mercedes C-class (2008)	+58.240s	17
14	Susie Stoddart (GB)	Persson Motorsport	Mercedes C-class (2008)	+1m04.430s	13
15	Katherine Legge (GB)	Team Rosberg	Audi A4 (2008)	+1m09.289s	18
16	Mike Rockenfeller (D)	Team Phoenix	Audi A4 (2008)	+1m17.953s*	5
R	Miguel Molina (E)	Abt Sportsline	Audi A4 (2008)	31 laps - suspension	8
R	Alexandre Premat (F)	Team Phoenix	Audi A4 (2008)	1 lap - accident	11

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Spengler	66
2	di Resta	63
3	Paffett	57
4	Scheider	47
5	Ekstrom	35
6	Green	29
7	Rockenfeller	22
8	Jarvis	18
9	Tomczyk	15
10	Premat	12

KEY R=Retired
Winner's average: 51.017mph.
Fastest lap: Ekstrom, 1m21.722s, 73.960mph.
* includes 30-second penalty for causing collision

FINAL ROUND
Shanghai (PRC),
November 27-28

NASCAR SPRINT CUP TALLADEGA (USA), OCTOBER 31, RD 33/36

Bowyer beats Harvick by a nose at Talladega

Clint Bowyer was performing burn-outs to celebrate his first-ever win at Talladega even before NASCAR had confirmed it, as a pile-up on the white-flag lap led to a lengthy review of the videos and timing loops to determine he was ahead of Richard Childress Racing team-mate Kevin Harvick when the yellow flag flew.

Harvick was lucky to escape an earlier collision with Marcos Ambrose, which damaged the front

end of his Chevy and required cosmetic repairs. A huge push from David Reutimann put Harvick side by side with leading duo Bowyer and Juan Pablo Montoya on that last lap, but it wasn't quite enough.

"Hell yeah! Claim that one before somebody else does," quipped Bowyer, who performed donuts before and after his victory was announced. The race ended when AJ Allmendinger flipped on the approach to Turn 1 on the final lap.



Battered Harvick (left) congratulates Bowyer

Harvick closes on points leaders Jimmie Johnson and Denny Hamlin, the top three covered by only 38 points.

● Chuck Bradbury Sr

RESULTS

1 Clint Bowyer (Chevrolet Impala), 188 laps in 3h03m23s; 2 Kevin Harvick (Chevy); 3 Juan Pablo Montoya (Chevy); 4 David Reutimann

(Toyota Camry); 5 Joey Logano (Toyota); 6 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota); 7 Jimmie Johnson (Chevy); 8 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 9 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 10 Brad Keselowski (Dodge Charger). **Points 1 Johnson, 6149;** 2 Hamlin, 6135; 3 Harvick, 6111; 4 Gordon, 5942; 5 Kyle Busch, 5919; 6 Carl Edwards, 5902; 7 Tony Stewart, 5832; 8 Matt Kenseth, 5825; 9 Kurt Busch, 5799; 10 Jeff Burton, 5797.

EUROPEAN F3 OPEN BARCELONA (E), OCTOBER 30-31, RD 8/8

Fumanelli inherits a win

Italian RP Motorsport duo Kevin Ceccon and David Fumanelli took the spoils at the Euro F3 Open finale in Barcelona, Fumanelli capitalising on Tono Fernandez's exclusion for failing to serve a drive-through penalty.

Polesitter Fumanelli outranked himself at the first corner of race one. Fernandez could not peg the four-second gap to leader Ceccon, who cruised to an easy win. Carlos Sainz Jr scored his first series podium on his third start.

In damp conditions, Sainz nearly jumped polesitter Fernando Monje at the start of race two before completing the job at Turn 11. But his early charge soon faltered as he struggled to cool his rain tyres on the drying track, and Fernandez took the lead when Sainz ran wide at Turn 3.

After starting from the pitlane, Fumanelli powered into contention. He destroyed Fernandez's 8sec lead in just two laps, but couldn't find a way past.

It proved unnecessary when Fernandez was penalised for illegally changing tyres on the grid (Sainz parked his car after getting a similar penalty).

● James Gent

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Kevin Ceccon (Dallara F308), 17 laps in 30m04.024s; 2 Tono Fernandez (F308), +0.971s; 3 Carlos Sainz Jr (F308); 4 David Fumanelli (F308); 5 Matteo Beretta (F308); 6 Fernando Monje (F308). **Race 2 1 Fumanelli**, 16 laps in 30m16.374s; 2 Ceccon, +22.901s; 3 Juan Carlos Sistos (F308); 4 Biagio Bulnes (F308); 5 Pedro Quesada (F308); 6 Luis Villalba (F306). **Points 1 Marco Barba**, 307; 2 Callum MacLeod, 224; 3 Fumanelli, 224; 4 Ceccon, 184; 5 Fernandez, 166; 6 Monje, 92.

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN BARCELONA (E), OCTOBER 30-31, RD 8/8

Guesting Piquet scores

Guest drivers Alvaro Parente and Nelson Piquet walked away victorious in the International GT Open finale at Barcelona, but it was Alvaro Barba and Pierre Kaffer who took the crown.

Just one point separated the champions and runners-up Enrico Toccacelo and Raffaele Giammaria going into the final race following Barba's race-one trip into the barriers. Second-on-the-grid Kaffer nearly repeated the error in race two, but fifth at the flag – ahead of Toccacelo in seventh – was enough to secure the title.

Parente won race one after a frenetic scrap with Adam Christodoulou, which involved them both going off-track around Turn 10.

Lengthy pitstops dropped Piquet and Christodoulou out of contention in race

two. The top Porsche crew in the opener, Richard Lietz and Gianluca Roda, won that race and leapt to second in points.

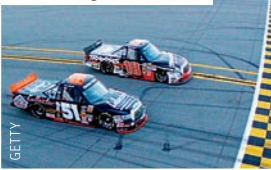
● James Gent

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Alvaro Parente/Nelson Piquet (Ferrari 430 GT), 37 laps in 1h10m40.436s; 2 Tim Mullen/Adam Christodoulou (Ferrari), +2.115s; 3 Michal Broniszewski/Philipp Peter (Ferrari); 4 Enrico Toccacelo/Raffaele Giammaria (Ferrari); 5 Richard Lietz/Gianluca Roda (Porsche 911 GT3-RSR); 6 Niki Cadei/Marco Frezza (Ferrari). **Race 2 1 Lietz/Roda**, 25 laps in 50m16.562s; 2 Emmanuel Collard/Dino Lunardi (Ferrari), +0.387s; 3 Sintu Vives/Manel Cerqueda (Ferrari); 4 Gabriele Lancieri/Max Wiser (Aston Martin Vantage); 5 Pierre Kaffer/Alvaro Barba (Ferrari); 6 Matt Griffin/Jack Gerber (Ferrari). **Points 1 Barba/Kaffer**, 198; 2 Lietz/Roda, 193; 3 Giammaria/Toccacelo, 191; 4 Narac/Pilet, 181; 5 Mullen, 130.

IN BRIEF

Busch (18) got the verdict



NASCAR TRUCKS

A sideways Kyle Busch surged past a bitter Aric Almirola to win at Talladega in the closest-ever recorded finish – 0.002secs – in Truck Series history on Saturday. Almirola claimed Busch passed him under the yellow line, but NASCAR ruled that Busch only did so as he was trying to regain control of his truck. Ron Hornaday walked away from a huge somersault, which also took out points leader Todd Bodine.

BRAZILIAN GT3

Valdeno Brito and Matheus Stumpf were crowned Brazilian GT3 champions by claiming the title at Curitiba. Driving a Hermann Racing Ford GT, Brito and Stumpf sealed the title with a second place and a win.

FORMULA BMW PACIFIC

Singapore-based Brit Richard Bradley wrapped up the title with second place in race one at Okayama, then was promoted to victory when on-the-road winner Yuichi Nakayama was excluded for running an illegal differential. Bradley took his Eurasia Motorsport car to second in race two behind maiden winner Calvin Wong (Mofaz).

SOUTH AFRICAN V8s

Teenager Brandon Aubrey (Jaguar) sealed the South African V8 title at East London last Saturday when title rival Jaco Correia (Corvette) retired from race two after winning the first. The second race went to Correia's brother, fellow Corvette racer Danie.



CURRENT
STANDINGS

- 1 Sebastian Vettel <> 23,322
- 2 Mark Webber <> 23,105
- 3 Sebastien Loeb <> 21,408
- 4 Fernando Alonso <> 19,384
- 5 Lewis Hamilton <> 18,469

Ranking the world's best drivers

WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

The only change in the top 10 is Jimmie Johnson dropping to eighth behind Jenson Button after finishing seventh at Talladega, while Juan Pablo Montoya's strong race promotes him six places to 32nd. In WTCC, Yvan Muller (75) leapfrogs Gabriele Tarquini (79).

To see the full list, visit castroldriversrankings.com

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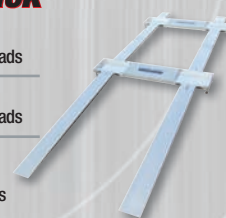
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"My best win this year was on the Manx. I tried so hard to win it last year but I managed this time and it was a great feeling"



Armed with a GpN Impreza, Cronin took a second crown

MY SEASON Keith Cronin

The first Irishman to win two British Rally Championship titles looks back on 2010

CRONIN CV



Name Keith Cronin
Born July 18 1986
2010 British Rally champion (2 wins)
2009 British Rally champion (3 wins);
Pirelli Star Driver
Award winner
2005-2008 National rallying in Peugeot and Mitsubishi machinery
2004 Switches to driver's seat
2003 Begins rallying – as a co-driver

When I last year became the first Irish driver to win the British Rally Championship since Billy Coleman in 1974, I thought that feeling was pretty special. I'm now a bit lost for words at becoming the first Irishman ever to win it twice. It hasn't really sunk in yet. I'm not sure when it will.

When I stand and look at the names on that British championship trophy, it's really impressive; my name is there with the likes of Colin McRae and Ari Vatanen. I'm not, of course, for one minute comparing myself with them, but it's nice to know that I'll always be the first Irish driver to win it twice.

Our year started really well with the Bulldog and a second successive win on that event. I really enjoy the roads over there in Wales, they're absolute classics and to get the season off with a maximum score was great. It's fair to say it wasn't all plain-sailing for me this year. It did take me a little bit of time to get used to working with a professional team like TEG Sport, after being used to doing everything on my own as a privateer.

But once I'd got used to them and vice-versa, everything really clicked and it was fantastic. It wasn't just

Cronin (right) and Barry McNulty celebrate title



a new team I had to get used to, though – I swapped my own Mitsubishi Lancer for a brand-new, Pirelli-sponsored Subaru Impreza, courtesy of winning last year's Pirelli Star Driver award. Obviously, they're both Group N cars, but they are quite different in nature. The Mitsubishi has a bit more grunt, but the Subaru's handling is brilliant through the twisty stuff.

I enjoyed driving the stages on the Ulster as much as any. The Glendun and Torr Head stages are brilliant. People think this is my home event and that's why I enjoyed it, but it didn't feel much like that while I was making the

eight-hour trip from Cork to Antrim!

The best win for me was the Manx. I tried so hard to win it last year, but this year I managed it and it was a fantastic feeling. Much the same as the BRC trophy, you look at the names who've won on the Isle of Man and my name on it is great for my CV.

And then the final round in Yorkshire. I was really steady, not wanting to make any mistakes or to put a wheel wrong. We didn't. And we got the title.

Now, I know the time has come for me to move onwards and upwards. I'm hoping my BRC success will be the springboard to IRC for next year.



MORTARA PLAYS SIGNATURE TUNE

Edoardo Mortara came back to F3 to reignite his career and it paid off. By GLENN FREEMAN

As far as decisions go, this one was a no-brainer. Following his 2009 Macau Grand Prix win on his return to the Formula 3 ranks, Edoardo Mortara either accepted Volkswagen's offer to step down from GP2 to the F3 Euro Series, or he stopped racing.

Volkswagen meant business in 2010. It had invested a lot of money and resources in getting the better of Mercedes in F3, and Mortara was the final piece in the puzzle to ensure that it won its first Euro Series crown. Mortara played down the pressure he was under coming back to the championship as a former runner-up (to Nico Hulkenberg in 2008) but he now admits that he had put huge pressure on himself.

"I knew that I had to win this championship if I wanted to continue racing beyond this year," he says. "Not just winning, but winning with a big margin too. If I didn't, I knew it

would be difficult to find a drive again. I had no choice."

As it turned out, any anxiety was misplaced. Mortara was the class of the field, with his mature head paying dividends as the young hotshoes still on their way up the ladder couldn't match his mistake-free approach.

When he qualified on pole, he cleared off at the front. When he didn't start at the head of the field, he would patiently pick his way through the cars ahead. His rivals would either cede the position, or throw the car off when chasing or being chased. It all looked very straightforward, and Mortara puts it not down to experience, but the quality of the car underneath him.

"When you have a good car, everything changes," he says. "You don't put too much pressure on yourself, because you know you can perform. When you are struggling with a car, you overdrive to try to make up time, and that costs you even more. In a good car, you can drive relaxed."

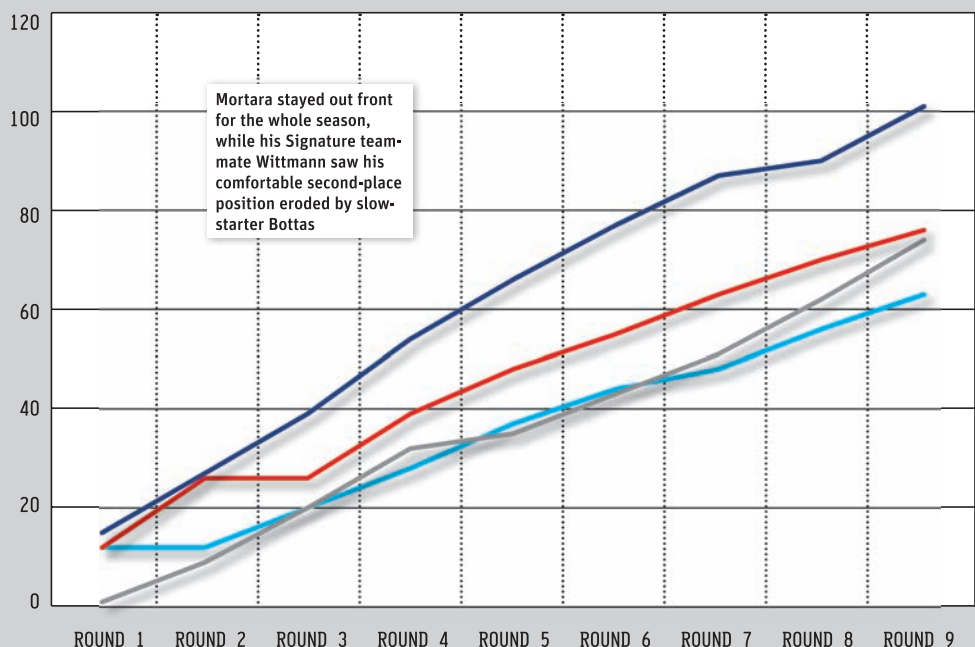
Yes, he had the best car, but so did his team-mates Marco Wittmann and Laurens Vanthoor. Wittmann was a surprise thorn in the side of the championship leader, especially in the first half of the season. But aside from

Mortara/Wittmann:
Signature one-two



ROUTE TO THE TITLE

HOW THE TOP MEN PROGRESSED



All smiles for the champ after stepping back



one race win in early in the year, the German usually had to settle for racking up the second-place trophies.

Mortara's relentlessness eventually broke Wittmann's challenge. Despite reversed grids in the Euro Series, Mortara was on the podium in the first five races of the year, and after 11 races his lowest finish was sixth. Even with those stats in mind, he still believes he had to stretch himself more when he fought with Hulkenberg in 2008.

"It sounds strange, but I think I did a better job in 2008," he says. "This year

I had a great car, and it makes it pretty easy when everything is going well. You do a little bit of work in free practice, and then you just go for it in qualifying and can get pole positions. In 2008 we struggled a lot with the car, but I did my best all season and we finished second. But that year our car was a long way behind what we have now."

It all made a pleasant change for the man that had left F3 in 2008 with such high hopes for GP2. He won the second race of the year, but his relationship with his engineer at Arden fell apart after that, and he ended the season a miserable 14th.

"I made the right decision to come back to F3, not just because of the results, but because of my happiness," he says. "Last year I was really down – it was hard to go racing. But coming back to Signature was like returning to my family, and to give them and Volkswagen the championship was my gift back to them."

So, all in all, the return to F3 has worked. There's still the small matter of returning to Macau (more of which in a few weeks), but what about 2011? Did he dominate enough this year to keep his career going?

"I don't know what will happen, but I'm talking to people," he says. "I want to find the best opportunity for me. I want to see if it's possible to go to the DTM, because I don't think it is worth going back to GP2 unless you are in a top team. Honestly, I would prefer to stay at home than to go back there."

Now, if only there was a Volkswagen-affiliated manufacturer in the DTM... ❧

ART gives up crown p54

TOP 10 DRIVERS

Glenn Freeman rates the top 10 drivers from the nine-round season



1. EDOARDO MORTARA

Series returnee had to win the title this year, and he delivered with ease. Never looked flustered all season, and his experience allowed mature approach that no-one else could live with.

Defining moment: Waltzing from fifth to first in the opening race at Paul Ricard. Game over.



2. VALTTERI BOTTAS

In his second year at ART, the Finn was supposed to kick on. Once he had accepted that the title was out of reach he found his form, but it was too late to snatch second in the points.

Defining moment: Winning at Oschersleben by more than 20 seconds.



3. MARCO WITTMANN

After a rookie season with Mücke that even he described as "totally shit", he rediscovered his frontrunning pace from his FBMW days. At times he could push Mortara, but he faded as ART improved.

Defining moment: Winning from pole in third outing showed he was a force.



4. ALEXANDER SIMS

Looked fired up at the start of the year, but after disastrous Hockenheim weekend he never quite got to grips with ART's set-up. Qualifying would prove to be his main Achilles' heel.

Defining moment: Never got back in contention after lap-one shunt at Hockenheim.



5. DANIEL JUNCADILLA

The surprise pole-sitter at the season opener fluffed a few too many starts and struggled with consistency. But he was genuinely quick, and showed a lot of promise when everything worked. Ended the year with a deserved win.

Defining moment: Starts, many of which he cocked up.



6. LAURENS VANTHOOR

New to the Euro Series, but this was his third year in F3. With that in mind, and Signature's equipment at his disposal, he didn't stand out enough against the other series first-timers.

Defining moment: Getting mugged by Mortara at the start at the Nurburgring cost him a win.



7. ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

Motopark had VW power, but overall it was no match for Signature. Da Costa's three wins were all in reversed-grid races, but he at least had the consistency to score points. Improved as the year went on.

Defining moment: Oschersleben podium proved Saturday pace.



8. ROBERTO MERHI

Should have been a thorn in the side of the title contenders, but threat never materialised. Mücke didn't have a great year, but Merhi admits he didn't achieve what he should have in year two.

Defining moment: Impressive cameos in GP3 helped repair his reputation.



9. CARLOS MUNOZ

Suffered, like Merhi, from his Mücke team dropping the ball this year. But he went on to display signs of steady improvement, and was a more frequent points scorer as the season wore on.

Defining moment: Flying off the road three laps from a maiden victory at Oschersleben.



10. KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Slightly tongue-in-cheek this one, but the Euro Series field lacked a bit of depth this year. Jan's son turned up for one weekend and managed to win a reversed-grid race pretty comfortably.

Defining moment: Converting pole into first-corner lead and victory at Valencia.

ART LOVERS: NO NEED TO BE TOO CRITICAL

Signature won, but series king ART was close, says boss Frederic Vasseur. By GLENN FREEMAN

There had been times during the six years of ASM/ART dominance that it seemed the French outfit would never be toppled in the F3 Euro Series. It had the best cars, the best engines, and always attracted the best drivers. The longer the success went on, the less likely it seemed that anyone could break that cycle.

But the warning shots for 2010 were fired as early as November of last year. The Volkswagen-backed Signature squad turned up at the prestigious Macau Grand Prix with a new-spec engine, which it had produced just in time to meet the FIA's homologation deadline at the end of October. Edoardo Mortara and Jean-Karl Vernay fought an exclusive battle for victory on their way to a dominant one-two for Signature, and Euro Series runners in attendance left Macau knowing that Philippe Sinault's team had turned a pretty serious corner.

And so it proved. Sinault, who describes ART team boss Frederic Vasseur as "my Formula 3 brother", now has an F3 Euro Series title to his team's name. In his eyes, this year's success was the culmination of the efforts put in by Signature and VW since the two paired up in 2008.

"I imagine our partnership like a huge, heavy, metal wheel," he says. "In 2008 it started moving very slowly, and since then it has built up speed. Then, this year, it has been moving very quickly and we have seen the results."

The results were clear to see from the first race weekend of the year at Paul Ricard. Yes, Daniel Juncadella's Mercedes-powered Prema car took pole position, and the speed-trap figures between the Signature cars and the Mercedes runners were not too different, but every other team on the grid was running absolute minimum downforce, while Signature was able to

add a little bit extra wing to improve its handling in the track's twisty bits.

It wasn't all about engine power though. The Mercedes was able to achieve similar top speeds, but the VW's advantage was mainly in the bottom end, which made it a very powerful weapon when defending positions. A driver in a VW-powered car could launch himself out of a corner so well that by the time the Mercedes engine had caught up, the chasing driver had run out of road to mount an attack before the next braking zone.

Plus, Signature had other non-engine related tricks up its sleeve, which were still thanks to VW's investment. The team appeared at the season opener with a radical aero package, which included Formula 1-inspired humps on the nose. The efficiency of the aero package, combined with a marginal engine advantage, offered impressive performance compared with the rest of the Euro Series grid. But when the series arrived at low-speed Oschersleben, where mechanical grip was more important than aero, ART rolled back the clock and blew everyone (Signature included) away. Ironically, it was that weekend in Germany that Mortara sealed the title.

Despite ART's six-year run of titles coming to an end with an absolute trouncing in the standings, team boss Vasseur doesn't believe there was much of a performance swing between his squad and Signature.

"If you look back, the gap between us and our closest challengers was usually only one tenth, maybe two," he says. "And this year, most of the time we were only one tenth behind on laptime to Mortara. That's only a two-tenth swing, but with qualifying being so important in Formula 3 that is all you need. We did a good job, but this time it wasn't good enough." ❧



Signature finally toppled king ART



ART/Mucke/Prema were best of the rest



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FORMULA 3 vs GP3. It was a battle that bubbled under the surface all year, although both parties did a reasonable job of keeping any ill feeling private.

The Euro Series suffered more than British F3 at the hands of the new category in 2010. But it still had most of the strongest drivers at this level. The results of any F3 drivers who crossed the divide during the year did little to disprove that theory.

But that, and the fact that

the GP3 cars were widely criticised even by series regulars, is unlikely to overcome GP3's trump card – its place on the F1 support bill. More people in the F1 paddock know of GP3 champion Esteban Gutierrez than any F3 driver, and he looked ordinary when he drove in the Euro Series. Drivers and sponsors further down the ladder will have taken note, so expect a much stronger GP3 line-up in 2011. F3 isn't out of the woods yet.



GP3's trump card is F1-support status



LOOKING AHEAD

DELAYED REACTION

THE DECISION last winter to prohibit teams from running four cars in the F3 Euro Series turned out to be seriously misplaced confidence on the part of the organisers.

At the time, only ART Grand Prix was a four-car outfit, but the decision was made to allow more teams to join the grid. Then just 13 cars lined up for the season opener, thanks in the most part to the arrival of the 30-car, F1-supporting, GP3 Series.

But the alarm bells had been ringing for some time before the season kicked off. By the third round at Valencia in May there was already talk that a radical overhaul was in the works for 2011. An announcement was tentatively planned for the F3 Masters at Zandvoort on the first weekend of June.

Nothing was said at the Masters, and delays went on into the summer. A lack of willingness on the part of the manufacturers to talk was the main cause.

Things moved on in August, when the series announced that teams had signed an agreement for next year. There were vague details of an overhauled calendar with fewer DTM support races, and a vastly expanded test programme.



Grids were thin during 2010

But the teams were quick to point out that they had merely signed an agreement saying: "If you give us a product that allows us to get enough drivers, we'll stay."

Things went quiet again, with the pressure mounting. ART boss Frederic Vasseur admitted privately that if the 2011 package wasn't confirmed at Hockenheim for the finale, the series didn't have a hope. Sure enough, details were released, with triple-header races and more testing.

Top squads ART and Signature claim they are already over-subscribed for next year.

ART's Fred Vasseur was still pleased with effort



2010 F3 EURO SERIES

POS	DRIVER/ NATIONALITY	TEAM (CAR)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	POINTS
1	EDOARDO MORTARA (I)	SIGNATURE (DALLARA-VW)	1/2	2/3	1*/6	1*/3	1*/6	1*/11	1/R	6/R	1*/EX	101
2	MARCO WITTMANN (D)	SIGNATURE (DALLARA-VW)	2/3	1*/4	11/7	2/2	5/2	3/6	3/5	7/2	3/7	76
3	VALTTERI BOTTAS (FIN)	ART GRAND PRIX (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	9/6	3/5	2/4	3/1	6/7	2/R	4/4	1*/11	2/3	74
4	ALEXANDER SIMS (GB)	ART GRAND PRIX (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	3/1	R/8	3/5	4/4	4/3	4/5	5/8	2/8	4/5	63
5	ROBERTO MERHI (E)	MUCKE MOTORSPORT (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	5/4	4/1	4/R	5/11	3/5	5/3	11/10	5/9	5/2	56
6	LAURENS VANTHOOR (B)	SIGNATURE (DALLARA-VW)	R/5	R/R	5/3	9/5	2/11	7/2	2*/7	13/4	6/EX	42
7	ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA (P)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	8/8	7/9	6/R	7/R	7/1	8/1	8/1	3/R	9/4	40
8	DANIEL JUNCADILLA (E)	PREMA POWERTEAM (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	4*/7	8/2	9/9	11/6	12/10	R/9	6/3	4/6	8/1	35
9	CARLOS MUNOZ (CO)	MUCKE MOTORSPORT (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	R/12	14/R	10/R	6/9	14/9	6/4	7/2	8/10	11/6	18
10	JIM PLA (F)	ART GRAND PRIX (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	7/11	13/6	R/8	R/8	8/4	10/13	13/12	9/1	12/11	13
11	NICOLAS MARROC (F)	PREMA POWERTEAM (DALLARA-MERCEDES)	11/10	10/13	8/2	10/10	9/8	13/12	12/11	10/3	R/8	10
12	KEVIN MAGNUSSEN (DK)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	-/-	-/-	7/1	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	8
13	ADRIAN QUAIFE-HOBBS (GB)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	6/9	5/7	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	7
14	MATIAS LAINE (FIN)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	10/13	9/10	R/10	8/7	11/R	12/10	10/6	11/R	10/9	3
15	CHRISTOPHER ZANELLA (CH)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	10/R	9/7	DNS/DNS	-/-	7/R	2
16	TOBIAS HEGEWALD (D)	MOTOPARK ACADEMY (DALLARA-VW)	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	12/7	-/-	1

NON-POINTS SCORERS: Esteban Gutierrez (MEX), ART Grand Prix (Dallara-Mercedes) (round 2); Mika Maki (FIN), Motopark Academy (Dallara-VW) (rounds 5-7); Jimmy Eriksson (S), Motopark Academy (Dallara-Mercedes) (round 2); Renger van der Zande (NL), Motopark Academy (Dallara-VW) (round 8); Sandro Zeller (CH), Jo Zeller Racing (Dallara-Mercedes) (round 9); Luis Jorge Sa Silva (AO), Motopark Academy (Dallara-VW) (round 2)

KEY TO RACES: 1 Paul Ricard, April 10-11; 2 Hockenheim, April 24-25; 3 Valencia, May 22-23; 4 Norisring, July 3-4; 5 Nurburgring, August 7-8; 6 Zandvoort, August 21-22; 7 Brands Hatch, September 4-5; 8 Oschersleben, September 18-19; 9 Hockenheim, October 16-17. **POINTS SYSTEM:** Race 1 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1; Race 2 6-5-4-3-2-1

*point for race 1 pole position

LEARNING FROM THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS

BEN ANDERSON gets a driving lesson from Trevor Carlin's top British F3 team



Anderson rounds Hatchet's Hairpin

Every year, scores of young drivers seek to graduate to Formula 3 and make a crucial step on the rocky path to future F1 stardom.

Naturally, the most successful team usually has its pick of these pilots. In British F3, that privilege falls to Carlin, which has run the past three British F3 champions and six of the past 10 – stretching back to Takuma Sato in 2001. That's a pretty impressive track record for a team that's only been around (properly) since 1997.

Today, AUTOSPORT has the

chance to experience what it's like for one of those ubiquitous junior throttle jockeys who aspire to race for Trevor Carlin's eponymous team.

The scene is Pembrey – the self-declared 'home of Welsh motorsport', nestled snugly on the south-west coast near Llanelli. British F3 hasn't raced at this quick little 1.456-mile venue since August '99, when Jenson Button scored victory for French squad Promatecme, but teams still test here regularly.

"We come to Pembrey because it's relatively cheap to hire [exclusively]

and because it's a good track for assessing drivers," says Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen. "It's got some fast sections and a good variety of corners, which is useful for telling us which drivers are any good – and which ones are not."

Gulp!

Because the team is treating this as a proper test, rather than a jump-in-for-half-a-dozen-laps-during-the-lunch-break promo session, my experience begins a week earlier with a seat-fitting session at Carlin F3 HQ in Aldershot. I arrive shortly after 11:30am and don't leave until well after 8pm.

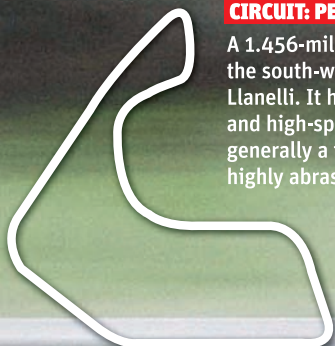
That's because the team, led by manager Gary Bonner, spends painstaking hours 'blowing', then refining, my very own foam seat. For someone used to jumping into cars set up for someone else and just making the best of it, this is quite a luxury!

"We take our time to get this right because if the driver feels that something is not right then it will distract them and they won't be able to focus fully on what they are supposed to be doing," explains Bonner.

All of the team's six cars are being stripped and rebuilt ahead of the 2010 season finale at Brands Hatch. I'll be driving F308 chassis 056, driven previously by Sam Abay and Max Chilton, and raced by Formula BMW

CIRCUIT: PEMBREY

A 1.456-mile circuit that sits on the south-west Welsh coast near Llanelli. It has a good mix of slow and high-speed corners, but is generally a fast circuit with a highly abrasive surface.





TC to BA: "If you bend it, you'll walk home"

graduate Rupert Svendsen-Cook this season. During my workshop visit, I also go through some data and on-board video with Owen, who will engineer the car during my test, and have a play on Carlin's R Factor-based F3 simulator. Better to get any crashing out of my system on a computer game rather than shunt the real thing.

After nearly a week of studying, and taking advice from all and sundry ("Don't shunt," courtesy of Raikkonen Robertson team boss Anthony Hieatt being a particular highlight), it's time for the true test to begin.

When we arrive at the circuit it's wet, *really* wet. The Welsh weather gods have not been kind, so treaded Cooper Tires rubber is fitted for the duration. We begin by hoisting umbrellas and embarking on a track walk. I've driven Pembrey many times

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Trevor Carlin (right) formed his F3 team in 1997, to run ex-Formula Vauxhall Junior frontrunner Henry Stanton.

"I read in *Motoring News* that this lad's dad wanted to set up his own F3 team and just as I read it, [future Double R boss Anthony] 'Boyo' [Hieatt] called me up and said to phone [driver coach] Rob Wilson, who was advising young Henry.

"All I had was a tiny rigid truck, no workshop, and some equipment from [the] Williams [pitstop challenge]. I had a lot of F3 experience though, so I told Rob I could

put the team together.

"There was me, Bruce Carey as engineer, 'Boyo' came in as number one mechanic and Gary Bonner [now Carlin team manager] as number two.

"I proposed it to Rob and set up a meeting with the old man. I totally blagged it! I showed him the workshop I was hoping to buy and he went for it – the Carlin race team was born!"

The outfit has gone on to become one of the most successful F3 teams ever. Carlin also runs cars in GP3 and Formula Renault 3.5.



◀ could do it no problem at all.”

I miss countless upshifts trying to get it right. Attempts to pre-load the lever and rely on the engine cut to complete the gear changes prove fruitless, so I revert to coordinating pulls of the gear lever with a flick of the left-hand-operated paddle. This seems to work well, though it relies more on precise timing. Nevertheless, with this problem sussed, I can now focus on actually driving the car.

Despite running very soft settings, I am amazed at how stiff the car feels over the bumps – necessary of course to resist the extreme loads placed on it as it generates downforce. I also find it incredibly easy to lock the front brakes and my run is curtailed after 15 laps when I lock up and head straight across the grass at the third-gear Brooklands hairpin. I skid harmlessly onto the escape road, but stall the engine. Time to head back to the pits for a debrief...

“You’ve got all day,” says Owen. “So it makes sense to pit if you start making mistakes. That way you can rest and take some time to reflect on things.”

Having set a 57-second best on my first go, (I’m told 55s is a quick time in the wet) I shave another quarter of a second off during the second run – helped by improved familiarity and increased confidence. This puts me within 0.6s of regular driver Lucas Foresti, who is also testing that day.

A look through the data, however, reveals I am braking too sharply for the high-speed Honda right-hander (still taken in fifth gear in the wet in an F3 car!) and too softly for the slow-speed Turn 1, Hatchet’s Hairpin. Moving the brake bias rearwards has helped with the front locking, but there’s still plenty to improve upon.

“The key is mid-corner speed in the slow-speed bends,” reveals Owen. “There is a lot of time to be found there in an F3 car – especially with new tyres. [Alan] van der Merwe [who the team ran to the 2003 title] was particularly good at this.”

During the next run I am able to sort out my braking technique for Honda – helped by holding fifth gear through the kinked approach, instead of shifting down from sixth. I also improve under heavy braking (to the point where I am better than Foresti into Hatchet’s according to the data!), but lose time through the ‘crossing’ – a rapid sequence of left-handers that bring you into a fifth-gear plunging downhill right. This demonstrates how easily complacency can creep in to some areas of driving as one seeks to improve others. I shave only a tenth or so off my best time, while Foresti leaps into the low 55s – equivalent to the dry Formula Jedi lap record at Pembrey!

“The deficit is mainly in the high-speed corners,” explains Owen.



Team feels Pembrey is good for assessing drivers



Debrief with Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen



P1? Dream on Ben, you’ve got no chance!

“But it takes time – certainly more than a day. It’s taken a year for us to get him [Foresti] to this point!”

As the day wears on I am told my driving improves. I’m more consistent, but no extra time is forthcoming. This is mainly because the conditions worsen. The track looks slightly better for my final run, but I am too drained to hook a lap together. I make a conscious effort to push and manage to glide through the crossing notably quicker than before, but my head rolls back as I do so, and by the time gravity has handed my neck muscles back to me, I’ve already messed up the entry into the next quick right. Clattering untidily across the inside kerb tells me I’m done for the day...

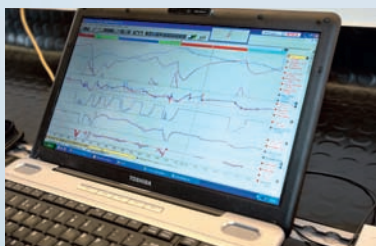
“New tyres are probably worth 0.5s, but Pembrey has quite a reasonable amount of grip in the wet so using them would have been a bit of a waste of time,” says Owen. “You did well – improved in the areas we wanted to improve and really it’s very difficult to go out and drive an F3 car in the wet for the first time. You kept it in one piece and didn’t embarrass yourself.”

Carlin adds: “I knew you would be okay but it was better than I expected. You were driving the car pretty much from lap one, whereas some rookies are passengers for the first 10 laps.”

“There’s a certain level people can get to before they have to really start driving it and using the grip and you adapted to that very quickly. With two weeks of practice at Pembrey you’d be able to put yourself on the grid and not be embarrassed in the slightest.”

I think the car has probably flattered me – it is indisputably superb. Open regulations have allowed teams to develop various iterations for decades and it shows. An F3 car is more refined than a vintage wine and driving it properly requires enormous concentration, precision and stamina. Improving one part of your technique can easily affect something else adversely. The key is stringing it all together – improvement without compromise, but this is like keeping 1000 plates on sticks spinning simultaneously – bloody difficult!

I completed 90 laps during my maiden test and can now better



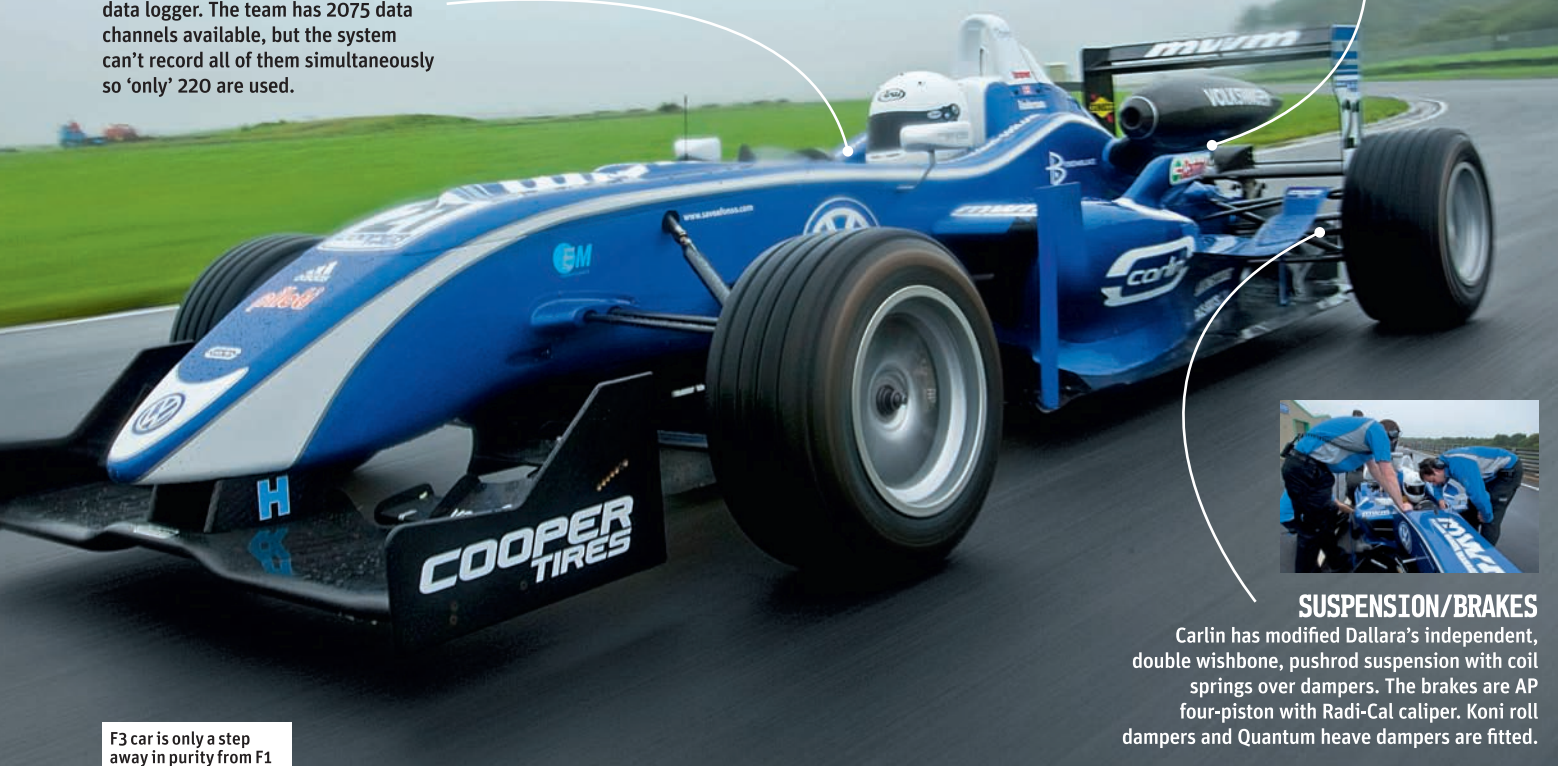
DATA LOGGING/ELECTRONICS

All British F3 cars use a Bosch ECU and data logger. The team has 2075 data channels available, but the system can't record all of them simultaneously so 'only' 220 are used.



ENGINE/GEARBOX

F3 cars run two-litre, four-cylinder motors – Carlin uses Volkswagen. Peak power is 202bhp at 5800rpm, with peak torque of 189lb ft at 5000rpm. Gearbox is a Hewland six-speed sequential unit.



F3 car is only a step away in purity from F1



SUSPENSION/BRAKES

Carlin has modified Dallara's independent, double wishbone, pushrod suspension with coil springs over dampers. The brakes are AP four-piston with Radi-Cal caliper. Koni roll dampers and Quantum heave dampers are fitted.

appreciate the potential of the category to improve drivers. With the amount of time F3 racers spend in the car, and the level of technique required to get the most out of it, it's no wonder they find stepping into other categories so easy. The spare capacity F3 generates in its drivers must be staggering.

"Driving an F3 car is a bit like that film *Tron*, where that guy [computer hacker Kevin Flynn] gets stuck in a computer," suggests Carlin. "You are hard-wired into the car and can almost make it do things by thought."

"An F1 car is the ultimate example of that, but an F3 car is only a step away from it in purity. You only need one year to make a huge step. The great example is [Brendon] Hartley, [Jaime] Alguersuari and Turvey. At the end of their year [in 2008] they were top quality – they just learnt so much. If you did that year and then did this test, imagine the level you'd reach and imagine the lap time!"

But that's all I can do: imagine how much better I'd be if I could do F3 full-time. And imagine being half a million quid richer. Dream on... ☼

CARLIN'S MOST IMPRESSIVE ROOKIE TESTS

TWO NAMES spring instantly into Trevor Carlin's mind when asked to recall the most impressive maiden F3 tests he has seen at Pembrey.

"Jenson Button and Kimi Raikkonen," he says. "The best has to be the first one though, which was an evaluation test for Jenson at the beginning of '98."

"Steve Robertson [Kimi's co-manager] obviously knew 'Boyo' [Hieatt, who engineered Robertson in F3] and he knew we had a car."

"They said could we, if they paid our expenses, take our car to Pembrey, give this kid a run and see what we thought."

Button's instant and effortlessly smooth heel-and-toe technique during that maiden test is well documented, but Button's second run with Carlin was arguably



even more impressive.

"A month later, they asked us to give it another go – almost to double check," recalls the team founder. "On that day Warren Hughes was driving with Portman and we were quicker."

"Warren was a very good driver and they were running a full '98 spec car – we were still in '97 spec. We had no hesitation, all we thought about Jenson was validated."

Finland's talented but enigmatic F1 world champion-

turned-Red-Bull-WRC shunter Kimi Raikkonen is Carlin's other standout try-out.

"He had only done Formula Renault and had a Sauber F1 test coming up, so the Robbos just wanted him to drive something bigger than Renault before the F1 car," says Carlin.

"It was pissing wet – really shit weather – but he was just amazing. We sat in the truck and could see the exit of the crossing out of the window. Every lap he was just oversteering, drifting perfectly onto the kerb and back onto the track, with absolute precision."

"He was matching if not going quicker than [Takuma] Sato [then entering his second season of F3], although he was on different tyres so we couldn't compare apples for apples, but it was still amazing."



V8 SUPERSTAR

Once an F1 hopeful, James Courtney is now on the brink of winning the V8 Supercars championship. By ANDREW VAN DE BURGT

Those of you with a long memory may recall the time when Aussie tin-top legend Dick Johnson brought his awesome Ford Sierra over to the 1988 Silverstone TT and made the works Eggenberger-run cars and the dominant BTCC machine of Andy Rouse look like amateurs – until a water pump failed when team-mate John Bowe was at the wheel, which forced them out of the lead battle.

But for all the success Johnson enjoyed as a driver and team owner, DJR hasn't won a title since 1995, when Bowe took the Australian Touring Car Championship in a Ford Falcon EF. That long run, which dates back to the time when Blackburn Rovers won the Premier League and Robson and Jerome were having hit singles, could be about to end.

With races at Symonds Plain, Sandown and Homebush to come, James Courtney holds a slim 71-point lead (there are 150 points for a win in a standard race) over defending V8 Supercars champion Jamie Whincup. Three-time champ Craig Lowndes

and Mark Winterbottom are also in contention.

It's a complete turnaround from the reputation Courtney, now 30, first garnered when he joined Australia's premier racing series. "A crasher?" he interjects as we start to talk about his initial foray into the series. "I'd just joined Stone Brothers and they'd had a lot of success with Marcos Ambrose. But despite this they were basically just running the team out of a garage. Things had moved on in the series and they hadn't. So I was having to drive at 110 per cent all the time just to keep up. And when you're pushing that hard crashes happen."

The outfit might not have been the best, but Courtney was still able to show what he was capable of, taking his first win in the series at Queensland in 2008. By now he was loving being back home after spending almost all of his adult life abroad – karting in Italy, Formula Ford and Formula 3 in Britain and then F3 and Super GT in Japan.

In fact he was enjoying the experience so much that he persuaded



Takes two wins in first season with DJR in '09



DJR Sierra shamed Europe's best in '88



Courtney leads V8 Supercars points table



Ex-F3 engineer Adrian Burgess is a key ally



F1 dreams ended by huge Jaguar Monza test shunt

his old Carlin F3 engineer Adrian Burgess to end his unhappy spell at the Midland F1 team and take up a job in V8s. Burgess became sporting director at DJR, and Courtney duly joined him there in 2009.

The pair get on famously, and six wins have followed. "His speed and desire to win have really driven the team on," says Burgess. "The mechanics and engineers see that and it inspires them too. When he first came here he was trying to show how quick he was, but I knew that already. He's calmed down a bit now and that's what's taken us to the lead of the championship."

For 2009 DJR secured the use of Triple 8-built Ford Falcons and under Burgess's assured leadership this has taken the squad back to title-winning

ways. Having built up a great reputation, Burgess is now off to become team principal of the McLaren of the Supercar paddock – Triple 8. Does this mean Courtney will follow him? "We'll see," Courtney laughs.

The recent Gold Coast 600 at Surfers Paradise also gave Courtney a chance to team up with one of his heroes. During his time in British Formula Ford he became best mates with Marino Franchitti and "basically sponged off Dario for a couple of years".

The original plan was for Courtney and the IndyCar champ to pair up, but with precious title points at stake veteran Warren Luff was drafted in while Franchitti teamed up with Steven Johnson in the sister car.

"It was strange telling Dario how to drive after looking up to him for

all these years," says Courtney.

"It was a bit weird, but cool, telling him he wasn't listening to what I was saying and that he ought to be doing it this way or that!"

It's all a long way from the day his F1 dream basically ended with a huge testing crash at Monza. The rear suspension of his Jaguar R3 failed on the super-fast entry to the Ascari chicane. The car was destroyed and a concussed Courtney was badly shaken.

His links with Burgess later led to the offer of a Midland F1 drive, the rejection of which may have been the best decision he ever made...

"I'd love to do Daytona [24 hours] with Dario and Marino and also Le Mans at some point," he says. "Even if the offer of a drive at McLaren or Ferrari came up in F1 now I'd turn it down. That's ancient history to me."

So is the last DJR title win, but that could be about to change. ❧

SUPERCAR STATS



2010 Leading points; 4 wins, 9 podiums, 1 pole
2009 7th in points; 2 wins, 6 podiums
2008 6th in points; 1 win, 8 podiums, 1 pole
2007 9th in points; 7 podiums, 1 pole
2006 11th in points; 4 podiums

COURTNEY: A CAREER IN PICTURES From British Formula Ford to Japan and back home to V8 Supercars



1999-2000

After more than a decade of racing karts in Australia and Europe, Courtney moves into single-seaters and the British Formula Ford Championship in 1999. A year later he takes the title with a then-record 11 wins.



2001

A move into British F3 follows with the new Jaguar Racing team (basically a rebranded Paul Stewart Racing). Takes one win and makes his F1 test debut at Monza.



2002

Switches to Carlin Motorsport. Scores 12 pole positions and five wins, but huge F1 test accident at Monza forces him to skip the Rockingham round and he's pipped to the title by Robbie Kerr.



2003

Leaves Europe to race in All-Japan F3 series with TOMS. Takes title with 13 wins, also makes Formula Nippon debut with SZigen.



2004-2005

Graduates to Super GT with TOMS. Scores four podiums in total and is third in the 2005 standings. Also makes his V8 Supercar debut that year co-driving with legend Jim Richard at HRT in the endurance races.



2006-2008

Makes full-time switch to V8 Supercars with Stone Brothers Racing. Sets the fastest lap at Queensland during his first season and takes his first win there two years later.



2009-PRESENT

Moves to Dick Johnson Racing. Takes two wins during first season. Scores four more wins in 2010 to lead the standings with three events to go.

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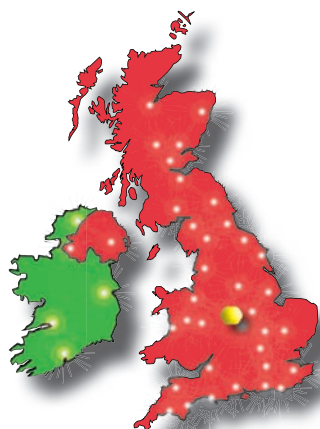
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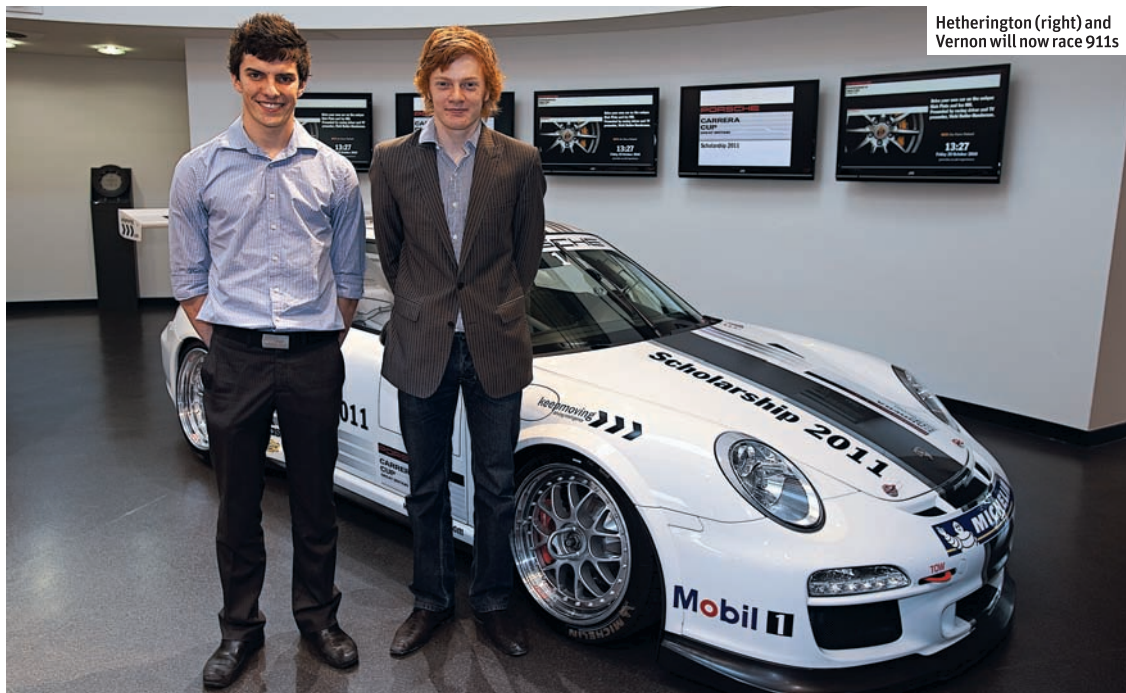
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Strong entry for Walter Hayes despite late withdrawals, p76



Hetherington (right) and Vernon will now race 911s

Hetherington and Vernon win Porsche scholarships

G50 race winner and FPA frontrunner earn funding for Carrera Cup move



GINETTA G50 frontrunner Benji Hetherington and Formula Palmer Audi race winner Kieran Vernon will both move into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB next season after winning the category's scholarship prize.

Ex-Formula Ford racers Hetherington, 18, and Vernon, 20, were chosen from a group of six finalists, which included former Sport Maxx Cup champion Leyton Clarke, Formula Renault UK racer Michael Lyons, another Ginetta G50 frontrunner, Adam Morgan, and Renault Clio Cup race winner Sam Tordoff.

"Winning the Carrera Cup Scholarship is a huge boost to my career," said multiple karting champion Vernon,

who finished runner-up in the 2007 Ginetta Junior championship before taking second in the senior G20 series the following year. "It's a fantastic opportunity and I can't wait for the start of next season."

Hetherington and Vernon came out on top after a two-day evaluation at the Porsche Human Performance Centre at Silverstone, which included driving Carrera Cup cars on the National circuit. Both will receive a £50,000 contribution towards their budgets for a full season in next year's championship.

"I'm almost at a loss for words. Winning the scholarship is absolutely fantastic," said Hetherington, who

finished third in G50s this year after graduating from Formula Ford 1600 in 2009. "I'm going to be smiling all the way until the start of next season."

Porsche inaugurated the scheme in 2008 in the hope of giving young drivers the chance to follow in the wheeltracks of former champion Richard Westbrook and use the Carrera Cup as a springboard to a career as

a factory sportscar driver.

Hetherington and Vernon follow in the footsteps of ex-FPA title contender Tom Bradshaw, 2006 Caterham Academy champion Lewis Hopkins, ex-single-seater racer Euan Hankey and former British GT race winner Michael Meadows as Carrera Cup scholars.

None of the scholars has yet won races in the category, let alone challenged veterans Tim Harvey and Michael Caine for the title. But championship manager Marion Barnaby told AUTOSPORT that Porsche was pleased with what the scheme has brought to the series.

"At the moment the programme runs along," she said. "We used to do a VIP car but now we invest the money in these guys and get PR that way. It's always hard to put them against Harvey and Caine — they have been in the Carrera Cup for many years and know the cars inside out."

The Carrera Cup GB will introduce the latest-specification 911 GT3 Cup model for 2011, and Barnaby is confident this will help the 2010 scholars by eroding the established drivers' experience advantage.

"It will be very interesting with the new car," she added. "Neither Tim nor Michael has been in it and the scholars have had a slight flavour. We should have a very level playing field for next year."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



THAT PORSCHE continues to run its scholarship is great news for the Carrera Cup, and for young drivers looking to start a GT career. Kieran Vernon and Benji Hetherington have done enough elsewhere to suggest they can perform well at this level, and it will be interesting to see how they progress in 2011.

From Porsche's viewpoint, the scholarship helps bring two extra cars to the grid, but so far no scholar has won a race. Given that Tim Bridgman, James Sutton and Nick Tandy have proved that young guns can usurp experienced veterans Tim Harvey and Michael Caine, this fact must be a bit of a worry.

Of course, Harvey and Caine set a high benchmark, but surely young drivers wanting to make careers in sportscars have to beat them?

Perhaps part of the problem is that the scholarship prize represents £50,000 towards a budget — less than half what is needed for a full season. That means Porsche needs scholars who can find quite a bit of funding themselves. Would it not be better to fund one driver more fully, allowing Porsche to really focus on finding the next Richard Westbrook?

Of course, if the new scholars mix it with Harvey and Caine next year, then it will be hard to argue with Porsche hedging its bets.

Extra contact details

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ben.anderson@haymarket.com

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Walter Hayes Trophy

Strong Hayes entry despite late losses

Former category aces pull out of Silverstone FF1600 extravaganza, but almost 120 drivers will contest heats



Close racing has attracted big Walter Hayes entry

EX-FF1600 aces Scott Malvern and Rory Butcher will not renew their rivalry at the Walter Hayes Trophy this weekend, but the Silverstone event has still attracted nearly 120 cars.

British Formula Ford Championship runner-up Malvern was planning to drive a Cliff Dempsey Racing-run Ray, alongside two-time WHT winner Peter

Dempsey and Team USA drivers Spencer Pigot and Felix Serralles, but budget and logistical issues have now forced him out. His place will be taken by his 2010 team-mate Cormac O'Neill.

Budget issues have also ended Butcher's hopes of a category return in his Van Diemen RF92.

The draw was made earlier this week,

with 19 or 20 cars expected in each of the six heats. Former British Formula Ford race winner Adrian Campfield will appear in heat five, against category aces Ivor

McCullough and Michael Vergers, after replacing Castle Combe FF1600 champion Marcus Allen in one of Kevin Mills Racing's Spectrums.

SELECTED WALTER HAYES ENTRIES

HEAT 1	HEAT 2	HEAT 3	HEAT 4	HEAT 5	HEAT 6
Felix Fisher	Noel Dunne	Jordan Skinner	Peter Dempsey	Ivor McCullough	Wayne Boyd
Spencer Pigot	Joey Foster	Neville Smyth	Ben Norton	Michael Vergers	Felix Serralles
James Tucker	Morgan Dempsey	Tim Reynolds	John Ferguson	Adrian Campfield	Stuart Gough
Glynn Geddie	Steve Roberts	Cormac O'Neill	Ed Moore	Will Schryver	Josh Fisher

Formula Renault UK

Bell joins Atech for Winter Cup

ONE OF BRITAIN'S top up-and-coming sportscar racers is to join one of New Zealand's leading talents in Atech GP's Formula Renault Winter Cup squad.

Matt Bell, who will contest next season's British GT Championship in an Audi R8, will partner 18-year-old Richie Stanaway, who cruised to this year's German Formula ADAC Masters title.

While Bell is looking to broaden his experience, Stanaway is tipped to join the Gravity management stable of Renault F1 team owner Gerard Lopes.

Bell had his first run-out in Atech's FRenault machine at Pembrey last week, while Stanaway got his maiden taste of the category at Nogaro with top Eurocup squad Tech 1 Racing.

Atech boss David Hayle confirmed that he hopes to complete his team's line-up with Danish karting star Nicolaj Moller Madsen.



Bell and Stanaway will drive for Atech

Formula Renault Eurocup

Fortec ready for European attack

TOP FORMULA Renault UK team Fortec Motorsport is to re-enter the category's Eurocup next season.

Fortec, which carried Tom Blomqvist to the 2010 FRenault UK title, will run a three-car squad in the series, which it contested in 2008-09.

Team owner Richard Dutton said: "We've ordered three new cars, so it's all happening. We very much enjoyed doing Formula BMW Europe, so with that series finished we wanted to retain a broader presence in Europe. "Being so strong at the end of the

season with the Renault, it seemed a shame not to capitalise on that. We think we'll be very strong."

No drivers have yet been confirmed, although Greek racer George Katsinis, who raced for Fortec in FBMW, has been testing one of the squad's FRenault UK cars lately.

● Fortec has completed its FRenault Winter Cup line-up with Finn Joni Wiman, who is mentored by ex-World Rally champion Marcus Gronholm. Wiman raced this year in the German Formula ADAC Masters series.

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British Formula Ford

Dempsey commits to latest Ray

FORMULA FORD constructor Ray is building a revised contender for the British championship next season and frontrunning team Cliff Dempsey Racing has already committed to running the car.

CDR returned to the Duratec-engined championship this year and fought the Jamun Mygale squad, which has not lost the title since 2004, for the crown with Scott Malvern. Dempsey has now

confirmed that he aims to be back next season with Ray chassis.

"The new car looks pretty good and I've ordered one already," said Dempsey after visiting the Ray factory last week. "It has a narrower rollhoop, stiffer chassis and a new tail section that is more aerodynamic."

"I'm really excited about it and I can't wait to get going."

Mygale has already launched its latest contender. The M11-FF was displayed at the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch last month.

● Ray is also continuing to develop its Sports 2000 Duratec contender. Damian Griffin raced the revamped car for the first time at Brands Hatch last month and a second new car is currently in build.



CDR and Ray: quick in 2010

EBREY/LA

Donington Park

Donington announces its own historic racing festival for 2011

DONINGTON PARK has launched its own international historic motorsport festival, to take place for the first time on April 30-May 2 next season.

The Leicestershire circuit has linked up with race organiser Duncan Wiltshire, who will be responsible for running the Donington Historic Festival from 2011.

No details on the content of the programme have yet been confirmed, but track owner Kevin Wheatcroft said: "The circuit has a fabulous history that is an important part of British heritage, from the days of the pre-War Silver

Arrows Grand Prix cars right through to modern times. The launch of the Donington Historic Festival is one example of how we intend the circuit not only to survive, but to thrive in the years to come."

Wiltshire added: "The Donington Historic Festival aims to fill a very clear hole in the calendar

by placing the needs and wishes of owners, drivers and knowledgeable enthusiasts at its heart. This will be a prestigious annual event, inviting only the very best race series and the highest-calibre cars and drivers.

"We aim to focus on pure motor racing, over and above any add-on attractions."



Donington will host own historic festival

MARCUS PYE

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



STEVE JONES

Eclectic mix was attracted to 61st Birkett Relay Race

Having attended 33 domestic motorsport events since March - in a season started memorably with the Formula 5000-focused historic festivals at Hampton Downs and Pukekohe in New Zealand, and due to be wrapped up in Australia with the HSRCA's Tasman Revival extravaganza at Eastern Creek at the end of this month - I found that last weekend's Birkett Six Hour Relay race provided a little light relief. Not that the competitors did!

Habituees continually label the 750 Motor Club's enduro - first run at Silverstone in 1950, on a curious circuit on which the Copse and Stowe corners of yore were linked by one humungous straight - as "the best event of the year". Having contested it in the 1990s (in its Snetterton phase), I'd certainly put it among my highlights, but it takes hard work behind the scenes and relentless pressure, not to say a little luck, to do well in.

The joy of it is that you do not need a mega machine to succeed in the handicap competition (which the majority regard as the crucial bit, because anybody can win it), and more often than not in recent years one of many Caterham teams has emerged atop the scratch result, based on distance travelled.

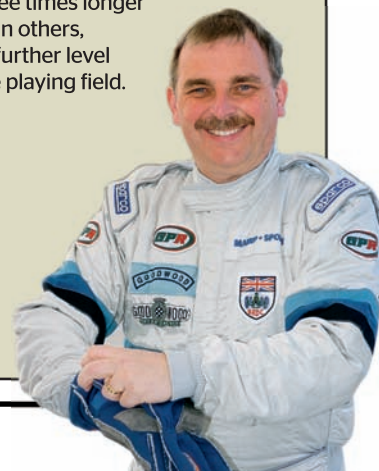
Yes, there were three very hot BMW M3s and zingy bike-engined sports racers in Saturday's 60th Anniversary offering, which rewarded clubmen with the

opportunity to tackle the 'Bridge' Grand Prix circuit, but equally there were plenty of inexpensive road-going saloons in the mix. Indeed, racers from the Production BMW Championship and the host club's Toyota MR2 series, battling with marque equities from Lotus to Subaru and pairs of Clubmans and 750 Formula teams, made for excellent sport.

With a longer circuit to play with - and the stoic marshalling force treated to freshly-made rolls and souvenir 750MC-branded flasks of soup to ward off the October chill - all went remarkably well from the start, when a damp track focused concentration. That driving standards were high is reflected in a single safety-car interlude spanning 12 minutes, as opposed to an hour's operation (in the wet) last year.

While some still contend that the quickest cars should be skimmed off to encourage owners of earlier rolling stock to enter - others talk periodically of an experimental 'classic' race to mirror the mainly pre-war fields of the early years - I felt that the balance achieved by Birkett veteran Robin Knight and his team at the organising club was about right this time. But I'd still like to see six (or at least five) car squads mandated, particularly where some faster cars can run three times longer than others, to further level the playing field.

The joy of the Birkett Relay handicap is that you do not need a mega machine to succeed"



AUTOSPORT GOLDEN HELMET

WITH THE season into its finishing straight of winter clubbies, Darren Luke is looking increasingly secure at the top of our UK/Ireland winners' leaderboard - unless Aussie FF1600 ace Jordan Skinner has an astonishing Walter Hayes Trophy. Mazda men Sheard and Roche rise the table, while Ben Winrow makes the top 12 after wins in two very different one-make series.

POS	DRIVER (CAR/CARS)	O/ALL	CL	TOT
1	Darren Luke (Radical PR6)	17	3	20
2	Jon Milicevic (Cooper T59)	17	0	17
3	Jordan Skinner (Ray GRK10)	17	0	17
4	Martin Wills (MGF)	14	2	16
5	Paul Sheard (Mazda MX-5 Mk1/Mk3)	15	0	15
6	Paul Sibley (MG Midget/MGB Roadster)	15	0	15
7	Tom Roche (Mazda MX-5 Mk1)	13	2	15
8	Oly Mortimer (Mini Cooper/Ford Fiesta ST)	13	2	15
9	Colin Tester (Ford Sierra RS Cosworth)	14	0	14
10	Darren Burke (Macon MR8)	14	0	14
11	Roger Stanford (BMW M3/Lotus Cortina)	13	1	14
12	Ben Winrow (BMW 320i/Abarth Aspetto Corse)	13	0	13

Repechage, consolation, 'overflow entry' and handicap races not included. Races must be minimum 10 miles when result is declared. Classes must have minimum six starters. Overall wins take precedence in the event of a tie, followed by average grid size. For any queries, email us at autosporteditorial@haynet.com

VAG Trophy

Golf Mk3s to join VAG grid for 2011

ORGANISERS OF

the VAG Trophy will introduce a new class for Mk3 variant VW Golf GTIs and TDIs next season.

Eight- and 16-valve versions of Golfs produced between 1992 and '98 will be eligible for the Mk3 Golf GTITDI Challenge, running to regulations based on those for the popular Mk2 Golf GTI championship.

The category's cars will use control dampers, rollcages, exhausts and tyres to control costs, but 8V cars will be permitted to use four-branch exhaust manifolds and uprated camshafts, while TDIs will be allowed uprated fuel injectors and wastegate

modifications. The aim is to create a "step in performance over the Mk2", according to series boss John Hillon.

"It should be very competitive," added Hillon, who hopes numbers will grow sufficiently in the first year for the Challenge to become a standalone series in 2012. "The cars are so cheap to buy and, because we have full grids of Mk2s, I think we'll get drivers moving across as well as some new ones coming in."

TDIs will get subsidised race entries for the first season. Hillon believes competitive cars for the new series could be sourced and built for around £4000.



Golf Mk3s will get their own VAG Trophy class



LC2 was fast but fragile

Group C/GTP

Famous Lancia returns

Car that took pole for the 1984 Le Mans 24 Hours with Bob Wollek set to return to racing in 2011 in hands of historic racer Rupert Clevely



THE LANCIA LC2 that claimed pole position for the 1984 Le Mans 24 Hours will return to racing for the first time since period in the Group C/GTP Racing series next year.

The Lancia, chassis number five, is one of a number of cars set to join the series in 2011. It has been bought by Rupert Clevely, who has previously raced the unique Group 5 De Tomaso Pantera in World Sportscar Masters.

Clevely said: "When you are buying a racing car, you want a thing of beauty and the LC2 is definitely that. This is a special car: it did a couple of years of racing,

claimed pole at Le Mans with Bob Wollek, was raced by lots of Italian grand prix drivers and then did nothing.

"My plan is to keep it as original as possible, at the same time as making it safe and durable. I want it to look from the outside exactly how it did in period."

Group C/GTP series boss Bob Berridge revealed that there could be a significant influx of new cars, including another LC2 and a Rondeau, into the series for 2011.

"We are talking to new entrants with about 15 cars between them," he said. "We are expecting grids well into the 20s next year."

Sportscar ace tries something a little larger at Brands

Ginetta G50 Cup champion Frank Wrathall leads the reversed grid British Truck Grand Final at Brands Hatch in Andy Lovenberry's Sisu SL250 last weekend. The BTCC aspirant went on to finish seventh



GARY HAWKINS

Mini Miglia

MG ace Wills makes Mini debut

REIGNING MG Owners' Club

Champion Martin Wills made his Mini Miglia race debut at Brands Hatch last Saturday ahead of a planned switch to the category in 2011.

On the pace in testing in the dry on Friday, he found the Endaf Owens-owned car a different proposition in wet qualifying. He was 13th of 16 but took a

best finish of 11th in the two dry races.

Wills, who won 16 out of 17 races en route to MGOC honours and now has his title-winning MGF up for sale, said: "I'd not driven the Mini in the wet and it's very different to what I'm used to."

Welshman Owens has put his Mini up for sale and is uncertain of his plans for next season.



Wills made his Mini Miglia debut

GARY HAWKINS

IN BRIEF

JOSH HILL continued preparations for his Formula Renault debut in the Winter Cup by testing at Snetterton with Manor last week (left). "I think I've picked up the aero pretty quickly, it's just getting used to hitting the brakes hard enough and getting the best out of new tyres," said the 19-year-old.



THE FORMULA Renault teams that Racing Steps Foundation-backed drivers Oliver Rowland and Dan Wells will drive with in the Winter Cup have been confirmed. Rowland will race with CRS Racing, while Wells will drive for Fortec.

FORMULA RENAULT BARC runner-up Mitchell Hale will step up to current UK-spec machinery when he contests the forthcoming Winter Cup with Mark Burdett Motorsport.

THE PLANNED Ford Saloon Trophy races at Donington Park last Saturday were cancelled because only four entries were received for the event.

THE VW Fun Cup World Cup meeting to be held at Silverstone on November 20 has been switched to Donington Park. Up to 60 cars are expected for the meeting, which will be the first on the Grand Prix circuit since its reopening.

MATT CHERRINGTON'S outing in last Saturday's Birkett Six Hour Relay marked the Paradigm sportscar's first race for eight years (below). Locost graduate Cherrington's TMC Motorsport team will develop the ex-Neil Burroughs car in Bike Sports next year, with a view to building a Sports 2000 Duratec evolution in 2012.



MATT WRIGLEY, 16-year-old son of former Historic F1 Champion Mike, tested at Donington Park, Mallory Park and Brands Hatch recently with Tollbar Racing, in preparation for next year's Ginetta Junior Championship.

SOMETIME TRUCK racer George Allen escaped injury when he rolled at Paddock Hill Bend at Brands last Saturday. Allen was driving son Lee's Mini Challenge title-winning Cooper S.

FORMER SCOTTISH club racer Richard Carr died in September aged just 28, following a battle with a brain tumour. The Loughborough University graduate raced a variety of cars during a short career, including Ford Fiestas, a Mallock, a Hillman Imp and a Jaguar E-type.

Tasman Cup Revival

Smith starts treble title bid with a hat-trick

KEN SMITH opened his bid to land a third successive New Zealand Formula 5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series title with a treble aboard David Abbott's second ex-Team VdS Lola T430 at Ruapuna Park last weekend.

By reclaiming the Lady Wigram Trophy in Sunday's feature, the 69-year-old Aucklander leapt above triple winners Peter Whitehead, Jim Clark and Craig Baird to equal Graham McRae's tally of four.

Smith qualified quickest of a 15-car field, featuring the Lola T400s of Reg Cook – the period T300 pilot in an F5000 for the first time in



Smith (4) joined the F5000 record books

almost four decades – and Smith's protege Andrew Higgins, plus debutant Peter Sundberg (T332). Smith then saw off practice rival Steve Ross (McRae GM1) in Saturday's opening leg. Ross led Sunday's heat

until three-quarters distance when his fire extinguisher triggered. Tony Richards (T332) and Aaron Burson (GM1) passed a sideways Sefton Gibb (T332) to join Smith on the podium. Ross also led the finale

before Smith went past. A late safety car bunched the field, but Smith won and erased former champion Chris Hyde's lap record. Ross and Richards finished next, ahead of another Revival Series champ Ian Clements.

Renault Clio Cup

Pierce avoids ruinous court bill

FORMER CLIO Cup racer Derek Pierce has avoided paying several thousand pounds in damages for his part in an incident in the Oulton Park paddock during an official test day in 2007.

A civil court in Birmingham last week found in favour of Pierce, who was sued following an incident at the Cheshire venue three years ago where a man was injured after falling as Pierce drove past him.

The man was holding up a cable in order that Pierce's Clio could drive under it. The cable became snagged on Pierce's rear spoiler and pulled the man over as Pierce drove past at low speed.

Pierce faced paying an



Pierce didn't know he was uninsured

estimated £60,000 in costs and damages if he lost the case, but the judge found in his favour. Pierce felt the series organiser's own public liability insurance should have covered him and couldn't understand why he had to face the civil action alone.

But championship manager Simon North said the organiser's insurance only covered incidents that happened

"trackside" and that competitors have been advised in the regs "as far back as 2007" to have their own third-party cover for potential paddock incidents.

AUTOSPORT understands this is common practice for all test days, not just those run exclusively.

The MSA's own public liability insurance covers circuit paddocks at licenced race meetings.

Formula BMW

FBMW Pacific title to Bradley

SINGAPORE-DOMICILED British racer Richard Bradley clinched the Formula BMW Pacific championship with a round to spare at Okayama last weekend.

The 19-year-old Eurasia Motorsport driver finished second in race one to seal the title, but was later handed victory when Yuichi Nakayama was disqualified due to irregularities with his Asia Racing Team car's differential. He then added a runner-up spot in race two, behind Malaysian Calvin Wong.

"I deferred my place at university in England to do this championship and it's been well worth it," said Bradley. "For value for money BMW Pacific is great and more European drivers should give it a go."

Bradley, who tested a GP3 car for Carlin at Estoril recently, is eyeing a Formula 3 programme for 2011.

Pickup Trucks

Pickups bullish in face of Britcar boss's Utes plan



BARC Pickups is confident for '11

PICKUP TRUCKS prime mover Sonny Howard believes the series will grow despite the announcement that Britcar will run a V8 Utes category in 2011.

Britcar boss James Tucker announced plans to run a single-make series for V8 pickup trucks last month (see AUTOSPORT, October 28), which will cater for machines with around

twice the power of the Pickup Truck's two-litre units.

But Howard believes Pickups, which was launched in 1997, will survive. "I am concerned, as James Tucker has a track record with his previous projects," said Howard, "but we also have a track record ourselves and my motto is if it ain't broke don't fix it."



Sumpter/Ritchie took GT Trophy night encounter

Lewis stars for Chad as Porsche pair wins



SINGLE-SEATER star-turned-US sportscar racer

Ryan Lewis headed the GT Trophy field for its hour-long first race last weekend, with his rapid Chad Racing Ferrari 430 looking unstoppable. That was until a drive-through penalty for an over-enthusiastic start dropped him to fifth. Undeterred, Lewis charged back to overtake the sister car of Miles Hulford for the lead, staying ahead until handing over to Paul Warren.

But just as that pair's race looked back on track, the third-placed Ultima of late-stopping solo runner Steven Brady came to the fore. Despite having trailed

Lewis by half a minute before the stops, Brady capitalised on not having to serve a handicap penalty at his visit (compared to Lewis/Warren's 40-second delay) to emerge from the pitlane with a 10s lead. He resolutely held off Warren's spirited fightback to win by a whisker.

Darkness descended for race two, with 11 cars (down from 14) venturing into the night for another eventful affair. Sadly it proved a short-lived one for Brady, whose driveshaft snapped four minutes in. There was similar frustration for Chad Racing, whose prancing horses both went lame with gearbox failures. Early pacesetter Hulford

exited first, the car stuck in fifth gear. Two laps later Lewis, having just taken the wheel, ground to a halt as he sought to work his way up the order.

Lewis's exit proved decisive for the destiny of the race, as it prompted a safety car period just as new leader Rob Barff's Ferrari and Mark Sumpter's second-placed Porsche were making ready for their pitstops. With the rest of the field already having come in, the pair took advantage to cement their lead. But it was the Porsche that benefited most as Sumpter timed his stop to perfection, allowing team-mate Stephen Ritchie to rejoin in front of the

safety car with an open road ahead of him. By the time racing resumed, Ritchie was more than a minute clear of Barff's replacement Gary Eastwood. Although the top two cars later served drive-throughs for exiting the pitlane prematurely, such was their lead that a delighted Ritchie claimed victory from Eastwood with ease. Meanwhile, a storming effort from the Ollie Bryant/Will Goff 997 completed the top three.

The Golf GTI title race came down to a nailbiting conclusion. Simon Hill headed the Class 2 contingent at the front of the field, staking his claim to the title by holding off Andy Knowlton and a gaggle of others to win a breathless first race. Hill followed that up with second in race two behind a charging James Bark, who swept past Hill and erstwhile leader Mike Thurston on the last lap to

win. But it was Craig Roberts who scooped the overall championship after a brace of Class 1 wins.

A rare outing from double VW Racing Cup champion Joe Fulbrook was rewarded with victory in the VAG Trophy, his Bora finishing clear of a tight scrap for second in which Mark Jenkins get the better of Aaron Mason and Daniel Rose. Ken Lark's venerable VW Corrado came from last on the grid after driveshaft problems in practice to take fifth.

Mike Roberts's potent MG Lola starred in both Closed Wheel outings. He stormed from the back to lead race one before retiring after a mid-race spin. Instead, an ecstatic Simon Hardwick (Jade) took victory in his maiden race. Roberts came through the pack again in race two, upping his pace as the car warmed up, before surging past Nick Bass's Jade to take the laurels.

■ By Oliver Timson

GT TROPHY (49 LAPS) 1 Steven Brady (Ultima GTR); 2 Ryan Lewis/Paul Warren (Ferrari 430 GT3); +0748s; 3 Miles Hulford/Andrew Tate (Ferrari 430 GT3); 4 Alex Martin/Rupert Martin (Ferrari 430 GT3); 5 Glynn Geddie/Andy Ruhan (Porsche 997 GT3); 6 Oliver Bryant/Will Goff (Porsche 997 GT3). **Class winners** Martin/Martin; Adriano Medeiro/Chris Bentley (Porsche 996 GT Cup). **Fastest lap** Lewis 1m07.956s (103.40mph). **RACE TWO (46 LAPS)** 1 Stephen Ritchie/Mark Sumpter (Porsche 997 GT3); 2 Rob Barff/Gary Eastwood (Ferrari 430 GT3); +1m02.425s; 3 Bryant/Goff; 4 Martin/Martin; 5 Francis Galashan/Paul Mace (Porsche 996 Cup); 6 John Dhillon/Nima Khandan-Nia (Ferrari 430 GT3); CW Galashan/Mace; Dhillon/

Khandan-Nia. **FL** Hulford 1m09.857s (100.59mph). **GOLF GTI (9 LAPS)** 1 Simon Hill; 2 Andy Knowlton; +0.219s; 3 Henry Wright; 4 James Colbourn; 5 James Bark; 6 Tony Robinson. **CW** Craig Roberts. **FL** Bark 1m26.524s (81.21mph). **RACE TWO (9 LAPS)** 1 Bark; 2 Hill; +0.489s; 3 Mike Thurston; 4 Knowlton; 5 Wright; 6 Colbourn. **CW** Roberts. **FL** Bark 1m25.634s (82.05mph). **VAG TROPHY (44 LAPS)** 1 Joe Fulbrook (VW Bora 1.8 Turbo); 2 Mark Jenkins (VW Golf GTI Mk5); +3.054s; 3 Aaron Mason (VW Golf GTI Mk5); 4 Daniel Rose (SEAT Leon Cupra R); 5 Ken Lark (VW Corrado VR6); 6 Marc Beales (VW Golf GTI Mk2). **CW** Rose; Jamie Packham (VW Golf GTI Mk2); Richard Kingsnorth (VW

Golf Mk5 R32); Tony Robinson (VW Golf GTI Mk2); Oli Danker (VW Golf GTI Mk2). **FL** Rose 1m20.805s (86.96mph). **CLOSED WHEEL FORMULA LIBRE (17 LAPS)** 1 Simon Hardwick (Jade 2); 2 Mike Field (Stohr); +20.495s; 3 Peter Ashton (Radical SR3RH); 4 John Ali (Radical Pro 6); 5 Peter Brown (Radical SR3RH); 6 Darren Cox (Caterham). **CW** Field; David Thomas (Renault Clio Sport). **FL** Mike Roberts (Lola EX257 MG) 1m06.983s (104.90mph). **RACE TWO (18 LAPS)** 1 Roberts; 2 Nick Bass (Jade 2); +12.022s; 3 Hardwick; 4 Ali; 5 Ashton; 6 John Hewitt (Stohr). **CW** Hewitt; Thomas. **FL** Roberts 1m04.466s (109.00mph).



Roberts took Lola-MG to victory

BRANDS HATCH BARC October 30-31
Doubles to Williamson and Hunter; Davey's title



Birley chases Williamson on way to 2010 crown

GARY HAWKINS

Birley loses battles but wins the war

DEFEATS FOR Rod Birley at Brands Hatch are about as rare as hens' teeth, but Nick Williamson and a bout of misfortune proved hard biters and ensured that, while Birley clinched the Dunlop/MN championship, he didn't win either race.

Saturday's safety-car-interrupted encounter, in which the two Escort Cosworths were rarely more than feet apart, was a thriller. Polesitter Williamson launched into the lead at the rolling start and there he stayed despite Birley's best efforts.

They included a body-rubbing dive down the inside into Graham Hill Bend. Clearly quicker in the twisty bits, Birley resisted the temptation to turn up the boost on his well-developed Ford as his rival outsprinted him on the straights to win by less than a quarter of a second.

Williamson said: "Rod was obviously driving for the championship, but it's still nice to beat him."

Having seen title rival and former champion Richard Brent's Peugeot 205 sitting forlornly in the gravel at Paddock, Birley knew he was assured 2010 honours.

Hoping to make amends

on Sunday, Birley was left frustrated as his car cut out while leading. Williamson went on to double his haul, while Mini Challenge champion Lee Allen was runner-up in his newly-acquired Cooper R56. Frustratingly for Birley, his car later burst into life again, but by then he'd lost four laps and wasn't classified.

After a number of years of trying, Lawrence Davey finally clinched the Legends Cars title. He held the upper hand heading to Brands and, other than a glitch in the second heat on Saturday, he wasn't out of the top two all weekend.

Four wins and a second place brought the title to the West Sussex man even before the season-concluding Sunday final. Meanwhile, Stephen Treherne — who could have denied Davey the title — was there or thereabouts, but was facing an uphill battle when a spin in the second Sunday heat sealed his fate.

Other than Davey, the other winners were John Mickel and Dean Brace, who bagged his first Legends victory, thus making amends for an off when a win was in sight at the Croft meeting.

Heading to Brands, any one of six drivers could have

clinched the Pickup Truck title, but ultimately it came down to a straight fight between seasoned old stagers Steve Dance and reigning champ Pete Stevens.

Having taken the lead at Druids on lap one, Dave Longhurst won Sunday morning's 18-lapper from Nic Grindrod and Stevens, just over half a second

blanketing the trio.

Meanwhile, Dance finished sixth to keep his title thrust on course.

Longhurst led the later race before slowing, so Grindrod took victory ahead of Michael Smith and Damien Carr. Stevens ran fifth, but a trip through the gravel at Clearways dropped him to eighth, ending his

championship hopes.

Dance was the main beneficiary and, while he initially got embroiled in battles, his pit crew kept him informed of what was needed and he eased his pace en route to a title-winning seventh.

Second place on Saturday was enough to secure the Mini Seven championship title for Paul Spark, although he was no match on the day for Max Hunter.

A poor getaway eroded Hunter's pole position (by a whopping 1.5s in the wet) advantage but, once Gareth Hunt had gone straight on at Paddock and modified the profile of his car, Hunter was never headed.

Taking notably different lines to his rivals in tricky conditions on Sunday morning, Hunter was even more impressive. The commentator's reckoning of his winning margin being "postcode not time" was an accurate reflection.

Much-of-the-way leader Kane Astin was desperately unlucky not to win the first Mini Miglia race, his engine ventilating its block late on. Race sponsor Dave Drew took the spoils from Aaron Smith who, 24 hours later, went on to claim his first-ever race win.

■ **By Dud Candler**



Smith leads Mini Miglia pack

DUNLOP/MN SALOONS (13 LAPS)

1 Nick Williamson (Ford Escort Cosworth); 2 Rod Birley (Ford Escort Cosworth) +0.177s; 3 James Pocklington (BMW M3 E46); 4 Lee Allen (Mini Cooper R56); 5 Andy Thompson (SEAT Leon); 6 Stratton McKay (Subaru Impreza). **Class winners** Allen; Thompson; Andrew Woods-Dean (Renault Megan); Nick Proudlock (Ford Escort Mk1). **Fastest lap** Birley 55.120s (78.28mph).

RACE TWO (10 LAPS) 1 Williamson; 2 Allen +4.667s; 3 Thompson; 4 Barry Rabbitt (Honda Integra); 5 McKay; 6 Woods-Dean. **CW** Allen; Thompson; Rabbitt; Richard Brent (Peugeot 206 GTD). **FL** Birley 56.295s (76.65mph).

LEGENDS SATURDAY FINAL (8 LAPS)

1 Lawrence Davey; 2 Peter Morton +0.467s; 3 Elliott Bunn; 4 Dean Brace; 5 Stephen Treherne; 6 Nick Brace. **FL** Morton 1m01.805s (69.81mph). **HEAT ONE (10 LAPS)** 1 Davey;

2 Treherne +4.923s; 3 Simon Belcher; 4 N Brace; 5 Stephen Whitelegg; 6 Morton. **FL** Davey 1m05.384s (65.99mph). **HEAT TWO (10 LAPS)** 1 John Mickel; 2 Belcher +0.034s; 3 Treherne; 4 Morton; 5 Paul Musselle; 6 Bunn. **FL** Treherne 1m02.868s (68.63mph).

SUNDAY FINAL (10 LAPS) 1 D Brace; 2 Davey +3.784s; 3 Treherne; 4 Ben Power; 5 Mickel; 6 Morton. **FL** Davey 1m04.181s (67.23mph).

HEAT ONE (8 LAPS) 1 Davey; 2 Morton +9.061s; 3 Belcher; 4 Darren Gaulton; 5 Paul O'Brien; 6 Mickel. **FL** Davey 1m06.199s (65.18mph). **HEAT TWO (8 LAPS)** 1 Davey; 2 Bunn +4.615s; 3 N Brace; 4 Treherne; 5 Mickel; 6 Morton. **FL** Davey 1m05.016s (66.36mph).

PICKUPS (18 LAPS) 1 Dave Longhurst; 2 Nic Grindrod +0.362s; 3 Pete Stevens; 4 Michael Smith; 5 Damien Carr; 6 Steve Dance. **FL** Longhurst 59.820s (72.13mph).

RACE TWO (18 LAPS) 1 Grindrod; 2 Smith +1.492s; 3 Carr; 4 Dave Briggs; 5 Phil White; 6 Longhurst. **FL** Smith 59.115s (72.99mph).

MINI SEVEN (15 LAPS) 1 Max Hunter; 2 Paul Spark +1.695s; 3 Dick Hunter; 4 Andrew Deviny; 5 James Bowers Coulson; 6 Nathan Burge. **FL** Spark 1m04.011s (67.41mph).

RACE TWO (15 LAPS) 1 M Hunter; 2 Deviny +13.452s; 3 Spark; 4 D Hunter; 5 Tristen Knight; 6 Darren Thomas. **FL** M Hunter 1m05.554s (65.82mph).

MINI MIGLIA (15 LAPS) 1 Dave Drew; 2 Aaron Smith +8.129s; 3 Kane Astin; 4 Mark Cowan; 5 Colin Peacock; 6 Owen Stinchcombe. **FL** Astin 58.370s (73.92mph).

RACE TWO (15 LAPS) 1 Smith; 2 Niven Burge +1.510s; 3 Peacock; 4 Tony LeMay; 5 Drew; 6 Sarah Munnis. **FL** LeMay 1m00.756s (71.02mph).

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DONINGTON PARK BRSCC/BRTICAR Oct 30
Another win to Gamski and Robinson in Britcar GT

Ferrari is a blur again in Britcar night race



Robinson was so fast he left his rivals trailing

WITT GAMSKI and Keith Robinson dominated again in their Ferrari F430 GTC as Britcar raced into the night at Donington Park last weekend.

The Silverstone 24 Hour victors had taken pole for the three-hour night race, but lost almost a lap to the their rivals when a safety car failed to pick up the top six cars.

John Gaw's Porsche 997 GT3 had taken the lead from Michael Millard's Proport LM3000 at Redgate on the second lap, but Millard continued to run in a safe second until he ground to halt crossing the line to complete his 17th lap.

Raphael Fiorentino's Marcos Mantis moved into second, from the Jones family Porsche 997 and Javier Morcillo's 996, and when Gaw pitted to hand over to Dryburgh with just over 43 seconds in hand, Fiorentino took charge.

When Dryburgh rejoined he was seven seconds down on Robinson's Ferrari. When Fiorentino made his own late stop, he handed the advantage to Robinson. "We lost time in the pits as we couldn't get the belts fastened again," said Dryburgh's partner Gaw.

For much of his stint Robinson was lapping more than three seconds quicker than any of his rivals and after two hours he was already three laps up on Fiorentino/Neil Huggins, with Gaw/Dryburgh third and the Jones 997 fourth.

Robinson made one more stop, but stayed in the car and as the flag came out at the end of the three hours his lead had increased to five laps. "I like the dark; I did my training in night Enduro Karting," he said.

Gaw took over from Dryburgh again for the final stint and on the 110th lap Huggins pitted, which handed second place back to the Porsche.

The Fiorentino/Huggins Marcos retained third despite a late stop for a wheel change, with Ben de Zille Butler/Mark Lemmer's Ginetta G50 taking a class win in fourth. Spanish duo Morcillo/Manuel Cintrano were fifth and Joneses Philip, Morgan and Gareth sixth after picking up three penalty laps for pitstop violations.

The Britcar Production race ran for the first half of the main event and was dominated by the BMW M3 of Mark Smith and David Cuff. "We had a leaking CV joint which made it a bit oversteery," Cuff said.

Steve Wood and Mike Jordan's Ford Mustang was second, albeit nearly a lap down.

Tom Roche and Paul Sheard were never more than a length or two apart throughout all three Ma5da MX5 Winter Cup races. The duel started from the beginning of race one, when

Not even leaking CV joint could stop Smith/Cuff BMW



they made an early and decisive break from the rest of the field. Despite a safety car intervention, Roche held his lead and managed to break away in the closing laps. "He lured me into a move that didn't work and that broke the tow," Sheard explained.

A scrap for third between Jim Edwards Jr and Jonathan Blake ended in tears after contact. Blake retired in the tyrewall, but Edwards' recovery brought him back to fourth, behind Matt Robinson.

Although Roche led race

two initially, Sheard managed to hit the front through Goddards on the second lap. His lead was shortlived and, despite Roche nosing alongside a few times, it was Roche the victor once more.

Adam Gore took Robinson for third on lap seven, while Edwards was fifth after Blake suffered gearbox failure.

Backmarkers proved decisive in the finale, helping Sheard take the lead from Roche on lap 11. Edwards finished third.

■ By Peter Scherer

BRITCAR GT (44 LAPS)

1 Witt Gamski/Keith Robinson (Ferrari F430 GTC); 2 John Gaw/Phil Dryburgh (Porsche 997 GT3) - 5 laps; 3 Raphael Fiorentino/Neil Huggins (Marcos Mantis); 4 Ben De Zille Butler/Mark Lemmer (Ginetta G50); 5 Javier Morcillo/Manuel Cintrano (Porsche 996 GT3); 6 Philip Jones/Morgan Jones/Gareth Jones (Porsche 997).
Class winners Gaw/Dryburgh;

De Zille Butler/Lemmer; Owen Thomas/Ashley Woodman (SEAT Supercopa). Fastest lap Robinson 1m08.493s (102.87mph).

BRITCAR PRODUCTION

(67 LAPS) 1 Mark Smith/David Cuff (BMW M3 E90); 2 Steve Wood/Mike Jordan (Ford Mustang) +1m00.538s; 3 Mark Cunningham/Peter Cunningham (SEAT Supercopa); 4 Richard Adams/

David Green (SEAT Cupra); 5 Owen/Thomas/Ashley Woodman (SEAT Supercopa); 6 Bernard Hogarth/Marcus Hogarth (SEAT Supercopa).
CW Adams/Green. FL Wayne Gibson (BMW M3) 1m13.020s (96.49mph).
MASDA MX5 WINTER CUP (13 LAPS) 1 Tom Roche; 2 Paul Sheard +1.376s; 3 Matt Robinson; 4 Jim Edwards Jr; 5 Adam Gore; 6 Mark Burton.

CW Jonathan Greensmith. FL Roche 1m24.212s (83.67mph).
RACE TWO (40 LAPS) 1 Roche; 2 Sheard +0.367s; 3 Gore; 4 Robinson; 5 Edwards Jr; 6 Paul Roddison. CW Malcolm Edeson. FL Sheard 1m24.452s (83.43mph).
RACE THREE (41 LAPS) 1 Sheard; 2 Roche +0.700s; 3 Edwards Jr; 4 Roddison; 5 Robinson; 6 Gore. CW Greensmith. FL Roche 1m24.307s (83.57mph).

Sheard chases Roche in Ma5da MX5 Winter Cup





SILVERSTONE 750MC October 30
Caterham squad and Mini/Evo debutants shine



STEVE JONES

The 61st annual Birkett Six Hour Relay gets underway

Ratters leaves rest in tatters

THE RETURN of Caterham ace Peter 'Ratters' Ratcliff and a slimmer four-man Nearly Six Sevens equipte was the recipe for a long overdue scratch victory in the 750 Motor Club's Holly Birkett Six Hour Relay race, but handicap honours fell to event virgins OX4R's mix of BMW Minis and Mitsubishi Evos.

Upgraded to the Silverstone 'Bridge' Grand Prix circuit – albeit with the less punishing Classic GP route into Club – for the 60th anniversary of its Northamptonshire venue debut, Saturday's race featured around 250 competitors, split among a record 60 teams.

Following last year's drubbing by Geoff Steel

Racing's quartet of muscular BMW M3s on the International layout, the parameters for entry were reset to manage speed differentials on the longer course. With fewer Radicals and a wider spread of vehicles, the sharp end of the grid looked like a Caterhamfest, as dozens of eager Seven pilots rose to the annual challenge.

Red, Green and Blue's Shane Porter made the early running (confusingly in his yellow Radical SR3) but once Ratcliff had got a handle on the damp but drying track (and the dynamic of who was who during constant overtaking), he powered ahead on lap 18 and went flat out for that elusive victory over a scintillating

1h37m marathon stint.

Despite determined challenges, Nearly Six Sevens were immovable from the top of the charts as Kevin Williams, Chris Porritt and Keith Dunn maintained the pace, and stayed out of trouble through two heavy showers, which put a premium on concentration. Their only anxious moment came when Porritt's clutch cable snapped as he headed pitward to relay the wet-shod Dunn.

"We've never got the main prize before, but after seconds in '05, '06, '07 and '08 it feels absolutely fantastic," beamed Ratters after the returning Porritt had taken the flag with two laps on the BMW

M3-strong www DOT crew, which led the chase from the second hour.

After Martin Webb's awesome Dutch Supercar Cup-contending E46 lost sixth gear, then fifth, then fourth, younger son Tom knuckled down in his earlier model and weathered the storm for www DOT, for whom elder sibling James and Caterham-mounted Carl Woodwiss kept up the momentum.

Winners in '08 and runners-up last year, Chris Hart's feisty Hart Attacks with Catchpole Clubmans squad continued the sequence with a bronze medal this time. Despite limited range and a schedule derailed by precipitation, the HAS never lost their focus and, after a mega drive by Howard Payne (Gem), who was quickest of all by far with the track at its wettest, having had to crawl back from Becketts with a puncture earlier, bested perennial rivals Special K Clubmans by two laps and two places.

The sports racers were split by the hot Caterhams of Root 49 Racing, recovering from lead man Patrick Havill

being assaulted at Club and top gun Luke Stevens being hamstrung by rain. The less modified Cater Ham & Eggs 'Megagrads' completed the top six after a brilliant run, with the Scooby Clinic Imprezas (for which the Ronnie Peterson-helmeted Andy McKenna gobbled up the Win It or Bin It Caterhams and drama magnets Double Trouble in the closing stanza) snorting after them.

Former winners Gold Arts, led off strongly from pole by Doug Newman's new signing Jon Milicevic, had an unusually poor run by their standards. The Caterham standard-bearers finished only 15th, outgunned by the Supersport models of No Punt Intended and the Kumho BMW M3s, of which Jagmeet Bhamra's looked most spectacular.

The handicap section gives everybody a chance of glory, regardless of machinery, by a process of awarding credit laps to all bar the quickest team on paper (Gold Arts) based on lap times. Ironically, defending champions The Six Potters carried number 1 on their Jaguars, but failed to trouble the top half of the scoreboard.



Newbies OX4R won Handicap with Minis and Mitsubishi Evos

STEVE JONES



Webb's 'awesome' E46 led the chase until gearbox woe struck

Cater Ham & Eggs sizzled into an early lead, with Chapmans Chariots (Lotus 7s), assorted Caterham teams and Patrick Mortell's Rogues Troopers (featuring Toyota MR2s of many flavours) giving chase. The Webb family's www DOT team and scratch leaders Nearly Six Sevens had suppressed CH&E to third by half-distance, but with No Punt Intended flying too, all four were on equal laps.

More of an unknown quantity (to themselves as well as veteran handicapper Colin Ayre), OX4R – Mini Cooper S men Gavin Bristow, Chris Oakman and Chris Loukes, bolstered by Steve Liquorish and Mark Harrison in their 4WD Mitsubishi Evos, for which the wet spells would be manna from the heavens – lurked menacingly inside the top eight from the off.

They hit the front in the fifth hour, and held off the remaining www DOT BMWs, Caterhams, and the We're Fast, They're Furious troupe of Production BMWs (headed by champion Rob Smith and Liam Crilly), despite Bristow being obliged to serve a stop-and-go penalty for a yellow flag infringement with 10 minutes remaining!

"It's a bit of a surprise really. It shows you need a good all-round team – and we managed to get the four-wheel drives out at the right time," said Mini man Bristow.

■ By Marcus Pye

GIST BIRKETT SIX HOUR RELAY HANDICAP

1 OX4R: Gavin Bristow, James Loukes (Mini Cooper S); Chris Oakman (Mini Cooper S JCW); Steve Liquorish (Mitsubishi Evo 10); Mark Harrison (Mitsubishi Evo 9) 159 laps (148+11 credit); 2 www DOT: Tom & James Webb (BMW E36 M3s); Martin Webb (BMW E46 M3); Carl Woodwiss (Caterham CSR260) 158 (153+5); 3 We're Fast, They're Furious: Nigel Olive-Jones, Mike Dugdale, Nick Barker, Rob Smith (BMW 320is); Liam Crilly (BMW 318i) 158 (138+20); 4 Win It or Bin It: Ollie Jackson, Tom Hayman-Joyce, Mike Rowland, Andrew Hawken (Caterham Megagrad) 157 (147+10); 5 Nearly Six Sevens: Peter Ratcliff, Kevin Williams (Caterham R400s); Chris Porritt, Keith Dunn (Caterham 7s) 157 (156+1); 6 Cater Ham & Eggs: Nick Frost, Nick Haryett, Andy McMillan, Trevor Carvey, Adrian Russell, David Sharpe (Caterham 7s) 156 (148+8); 7 Dawn GP: David Bryant, Rob Barnett, James Cross, Steve Lumley, Luke Austin (Toyota MR2 Mk2s) 155 (138+17); 8 RAFMSA 609 Squadron: Darren Howe (VW Golf GTI Turbo), Simon Frowen (Rover 216 GTi), Paul Waterhouse (Peugeot 405 Mi6), Bill Brown (Peugeot 205 GTi), Chris Astley (MG Metro) 155 (128+27); 9 Cochoon Volant: John Wilson, Russell Hennessy, Paul Hinson, Peter Needham (Toyota MR2 Mk2s) 155 (138+17); 10 The Four Birketeers: Damian Cottrell, Carl Swan (Peugeot 106 XSis); Mark Webster (Ford Fiesta XR2i), Paul Coulam (BMW 318i) 155 (134+21).

SCRATCH 1 Nearly Six Sevens, 155 laps in 5h59m30.75s (81.86mph); 2 www DOT: 153; 3 The Hart Attacks with Catchpole: Barry Webb (Mallock Mk23b); Peter Richings (Mallock Mk28); Mike Evans (Rage Mk1); Howard Payne (GEM 08); Jamie Champkin (Phantom P94); Alex Champkin (Vision V84/S) 150; 4 Root 49 Racing: Andrew O'Connell, Ian Fox (Caterham R400s); Patrick Havill (Caterham-Vauxhall); Luke Stevens (Caterham CSR) 149; 5 Special K Clubmans: Marcus Bicknell (Mallock Mk26), Clive Lester, Gareth Salter (Mallock Mk27s); Russell Munns (Mallock Mk28); Steven Dickens (Mallock Mk29); Brian Jordan (Mallock Mk21) 148; 6 Cater Ham & Eggs 148; 7 Scooby Clinic: Vaughan Fletcher, Andy Harvey, Peter Isherwood, Ian Froggatt, Tim Evans, Andy McKenna (Subaru Impreza) 147; 8 Win It or Bin It 147; 9 Double Trouble: Peter Davies, Peter Lawrence (Caterham Superlight Rs); Rob Chalmers (Caterham R400); Alastair Chalmers (Caterham CSR); Cameron Forbes (Westfield SEiW) 147; 10 OX4R 146. **Fastest lap** Tim Gray (Spire GTR) 1m56.24s (98.01mph).

● **DONINGTON PARK CSCC** October 31. Honda duo takes more Tin Tops glory

Ainge/Broad Integra back on Top



Ainge/Broad Honda was again class of Tin Top field

➤ **NIGEL AINGE** and Alan Broad's Honda Integra led most of the CSCC Tin Tops race at Donington Park, but only secured victory over the last nine laps after ousting the similar car of Richard Gane/Chris Adams, which had got ahead during the pitstops.

Dave Cox/Jerry Hampshire's Peugeot 306 snatched second on the last lap, when Adams outbraked himself into Goddards.

Engine problems sent Marcus Carniel's dominant Porsche 968SC pitwards just after the compulsory stops in Future Classics. Mark Koeberle's Porsche 944 Turbo was then unable to fend off Nicholas Olson's Lotus Esprit.

Despite losing out at the start, poleman Eike Wellhausen's Lister Knobbly picked off Alex Harrison's XJS at Redgate and Kevin Doyle's XJ12 into

Goddards on the second lap to head the combined Jaguars and Saloons field. A late safety car call bunched the field and prompted a slightly premature challenge from Doyle at the green flag, but Wellhausen managed to hold him off. Doyle got his win in the later night race though, after an early battle with the XJSs of Alex and Andrew Harrison.

Paul Turnbull's TVR Tuscan set the initial pace in the Swinging Sixties, but once John Muirhead's Lotus Seven got ahead he never looked back. Turnbull succumbed to pressure at Goddards on lap eight and sailed across the gravel trap as Muirhead went by. Turnbull recovered and ran second until he pitted with three laps remaining, having run out of fuel.

Three cars soon broke away in the Magnificent Sevens, with Keith Dunn

heading Mark Conroy and Carl Woodwiss. Poleman Conroy stamped his authority on the race and was ahead by lap three. Woodwiss led after his rivals' stops, but was never able to get back on the lead duo's pace after his own. Dunn managed to close onto Conroy's tail and was ready to challenge on lap 23, until he was caught out by a backmarker at Coppice and spun. He still finished a comfortable second, but Conroy was long gone.

A mixture of CSCC series came together for a night-time finale and it was the Aston Martin V8 Vantage of Joe and Rikki Cann that took the spoils. Mark Koeberle's Porsche 944 Turbo and Nigel Ainge/Alan Broad's Integra both led, but the Cann Aston hit the front into Goddards with eight laps to go and eased clear.

■ By Peter Scherer

TIN TOPS (29 LAPS)

1 Nigel Ainge/Alan Broad (Honda Integra); 2 Dave Cox/Jerry Hampshire (Peugeot 306) +14.269s; 3 Richard Gane/Chris Adams (Honda Integra Type R); 4 Nigel Tongue/John Hammersley (MG ZSR); 5 Russell Hird (MG ZR); 6 Andy Joss/Mike Wilds (Renault Clio). **Class winner** Simon Smith (Peugeot 106). **Fastest lap** Broad 1m20.752s (87.25mph). **FUTURE CLASSICS (29 LAPS)** 1 Nicholas Olson (Lotus Esprit S3); 2 Mark Koeberle (Porsche 944 Turbo) +3.907s; 3 Peter Morris/Alex Eacock (Porsche 944 S2); 4 Rikki Cann/Joe Cann (Aston Martin V8 Vantage); 5 Tim Bates/Ian White (Porsche 911 SC); 6 Tony Maryon (Porsche 911S). **CW** Koeberle; Martyn Adams (Triumph TR7 V8); Simon Lane/Bernie Chodosch (Chevrolet Camaro); Paul Connell/Lee Connell (VW Golf GTi); Phillip Goldberg (Porsche 924). **FL** R. Cann 1m19.512s (88.61mph).

JAGUAR XJS & SALOONS (10 LAPS)

1 Eike Wellhausen (Lister Knobbly Replica); 2 Kevin Doyle (XJ12) +0.977s; 3 Alex Harrison (XJS); 4 Richard Dorrin (XJ6); 5 Andrew Harrison (XJS); 6 Stewart Lyddall (XJS). **FL** Wellhausen 1m20.288s (87.76mph). **RACE TWO (11 LAPS)** 1 Doyle; 2 Alex Harrison +4.338s; 3 Andrew Harrison; 4 Rob Newall (XK120); 5 Philip Comer (XJS); 6 Simon Seath (XJS). **FL** Doyle 1m25.242s (82.66mph).

SWINGING SIXTIES (29 LAPS)

1 John Muirhead (Lotus Seven); 2 Luke Wos (Chevrolet Corvette) +26.591s; 3 Peter Thompson (Marcos 1800 GT); 4 Harry Wyndham (Jaguar E-type); 5 Richard Skinner (Marcos 1800 GT); 6 Stephen Bond (Lotus Elan). **CW** Wos; Thompson; Wyndham; Skinner; Tim Cairns (Austin Healey Progeye Sprite); Ben Gough/Iain Daniels (Marcos 3-litre); Ian Percival

(Triumph Herald). **FL** Muirhead 1m21.534s (86.42mph).

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS (31 LAPS)

1 Mark Conroy (Caterham C400); 2 Keith Dunn (Caterham C400) +18.105s; 3 Carl Woodwiss (Caterham CSR); 4 Bill Hailstone (Caterham CSR); 5 Jonathan Mitchell/Andy Bourn (Caterham C400); 6 David Rowe/James MacLachlan (Caterham R300). **CW** Dunn; Rowe/MacLachlan; Hugh Coulter (Caterham Roadsport A). **FL** Dunn 1m13.990s (95.23mph).

CSCC NIGHT RACE (28 LAPS)

1 Joe Cann/Rikki Cann (Aston Martin V8 Vantage); 2 Nigel Ainge/Alan Broad (Honda Integra) +6.747s; 3 Mark Koeberle (Porsche 944 Turbo); 4 Tony Maryon (Porsche 911S); 5 Richard Gane/Chris Adams (Honda Integra Type R); 6 Andy Yool (Ford Escort Mk1). **CW** Ainge/Broad; Ben Gough (Marcos 3-litre). **FL** R. Cann 1m22.497s (85.41mph).



Rising to the Challenge

The famous British marque's modern tin-top series introduced a new car for 2010. BEN ANDERSON explains - and races one

R56 is rapid addition to the Mini Challenge

A car built by BMW in Germany, with a Peugeot engine block, carrying a very British badge. If further evidence is needed to prove that motorsport, like most of the rest of modern life, has been globalised then look no further.

Mini's latest John Cooper Works Challenge R56 model has been around for a couple of years now, and full race-spec versions already compete in Europe, but it's taken until this year to become a fixture on UK circuits.

Now, adapted versions of the turbocharged road car sit at the top of a three-tier Mini Challenge - a series that lay at the core of the British Automobile Racing Club's 'mini-TOCA' Dunlop Great and British package, until defecting to MotorsportVision Racing at the end of this season.

The Mini Challenge (inaugurated as the John Cooper Challenge in 2001, as a path into motorsport for novices) introduced the R56 in response to competitor demand, and a diktat from Munich HQ to jump into line with Mini

racing in Europe. It's been five years since Mike Cooper (son of legendary race entrant and Mini developer John) sold the brand to BMW, and the R56's predecessor (the supercharged R53 Cooper S model) had been the 'king of the castle' since 2004.

Organisers felt the need to freshen things up, so Challenge boss Paul Harvey flew to Munich and struck a deal to safeguard his series.

"The R53 car is an old model and we needed to move on to the newer model," says Harvey. "This brings us into line with the European series. We courted the idea of bringing in the [race-tuned] Munich car, but the exchange rate made it too expensive.

"The spec is very similar and we use the same suspension, but different tyres. Our R56 uses a different exhaust and our own aero bits - spares are more readily available than for the R53."

The car has enjoyed a solid debut season at the top of the Mini Challenge tree, albeit it one afflicted by niggling reliability issues as the series toils to

adapt road technology to the race track. Four drivers (2009 series champion Luke Caudle, Scottish ace Chris Knox, Chris Smith, and ex-Ford Fiesta frontrunner Jason Richardson) have competed regularly in the R56s, with several more contesting partial campaigns. The presence of a 'guest' car has also helped swell the ranks.

This new world order won't necessarily spell the end for the still-popular S Class cars (ex-Modified Fords ace Lee Allen claimed the overall

Grids have held up well in tough climate



AUTOSPORT RACES AN R56 AT PEMBREY

A SINGLE acronym was the scourge of AUTOSPORT's guest outing in the Mini Challenge at Pembrey – ECU.

These clever little black boxes of tricks are ubiquitous on modern racing cars, doing much to further engine performance as well as improve reliability.

The trouble with the ECU on the R56 is that it's too clever for its own good. It's a 'learning ECU', which means it makes adjustments to performance while the car is running – reacting in real time to any changes in the sensor readings being fed to it. If it twigs a temperature or pressure reading that it thinks might be heading in the wrong direction, the ECU will send the engine into a more sensible band of performance in an effort to preserve it.

This would be all very well had



Anderson's Mini gave him trouble

the ECU been designed for a true-blood racing car. The trouble with the R56 is that it's really a road car – built for trips to the supermarket, but adapted for thrashing around circuits at high speed.

During a sweltering late-June weekend in South Wales, my car's computer became overly invasive – allowing the car to run cleanly for barely a lap or two before robbing it of full power.

This persistent problem spoiled an otherwise excellent machine – set-up and run expertly by Antony Williams' young and ambitious Excel8 Motorsport squad.

Only a full re-boot of the electronics before Sunday's reversed grid finale got the turbo whooshing to its full potential. Once unleashed, the R56 continued a fine marque tradition of high-jinks, 'chuck-it-in-and-boot-it' motoring.

title in one this year). This season, total grids of 18-19 on average have usually been fairly evenly split three ways, with the evergreen entry-level 'Club' Class (for less modified R50s) often providing the biggest single entry.

"We're going to let nature take its course to a certain extent," explains Harvey, "and see which class, if any, fades out. We'll let the competitors decide and keep it going as three until one is unsustainable."

"The S is very economical: for less than £10,000 that's a lot of race car, and I'm a great fan of the Club Class – it's a robust vehicle and despite having only 135bhp, it's quick enough for an introduction to motorsport."

The only immediate problem for the Challenge, which delivered some of the struggling Great and British package's strongest fields this season, is managing the speed differential between the Club cars and the 215bhp R56s. A mooted £2000 Club Class upgrade package would solve that conundrum, but create another by significantly reducing the price gap between the £5-6000 Club cars and their S Class cousins. Ready-to-race R56s are available for £27,000.

The organisers (essentially Harvey and technical guru Tony Franks – a pair of ex-John Cooper Works employees who have been involved from the start) will no doubt want to tread carefully when it comes to the Club Class. It provides an enduring link between the Challenge's ARDS course, sprints, hillclimbs, and single-race-for-novices

early days in '01, and the TOCA aspirants collective that exists in the upper classes of the series today.

"Since we got together with Ginetta [under Martin Phaff] and Radical and decided, with Dunlop's help, to put together Great and British [after leaving SRO's British F3/GT package at the end of '05] it's been very successful," asserts Harvey. "It makes a good second string to touring cars and bridges the gap."

"As organisers, we want to make sure everything looks and feels close to TOCA: scrutineering, parc ferme, television coverage [on Motors TV] for every round, being one of the first series to introduce in-car cameras – the little things we try and do to make the Mini Challenge more than club racing, and more like a mini Clio Cup."

"We provide friendly, competitive, professional racing. To get to the front of the Mini Challenge, you've got to be a pretty good driver. It's not easy – at Brands Hatch in '09 we had the first 11 cars covered by 0.5 seconds in qualifying – it was that close."

Whether the motorsport on offer in the Mini Challenge is worth the extra cost compared with regular 'clubbies' is a matter for debate. But the presence of former (Coastal Racing) and aspiring TOCA-support squads and close racing through the classes backs up Harvey's claims. Much like the brand to which it owes its name, the Mini Challenge – even with its modern international flavour – carries on commanding a strong and loyal following among racing drivers. Long may it continue. ❧

MINI CHALLENGE CLASSES



R50 - CLUB CLASS

Power: 135bhp
Original entry-level car. Not in the hunt for overall race wins, but Mini Challenge points-scoring system allows class pacesetters to fight for overall title. Luke Caudle won in 2009 competing in the Club Class.



R53 - S CLASS

Power: 210bhp
Previously the top-level car in the series, with more power and more aero than the Club Class. Is now the middle rung, but Lee Allen managed to take the overall title this year by scoring just enough S Class points.



R56 - TOP CLASS

Power: 215bhp
The latest car was introduced for 2010. It immediately became the fastest Mini Challenge machine and looks set to be the future of the series. Luke Caudle narrowly missed out on the overall crown in the R56's first season.

FINAL DRIVE

LETTERS ■ GEAR ■ ON-TRACK ■ ON-SCREEN ■ PICS ■ TECH ■ ARCHIVE

YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Let's not bash the Beeb

What short memories some people have. It was not so long ago that coverage of F1 was very poor until the BBC started reporting on the sport in a more comprehensive way. This led to a major leap forward with ITV's coverage of qualifying and race day, and now the BBC's coverage of practice, qualifying, race, and the 'red button'.

Now and again, other worldwide sporting events come along and we have to accept, very occasionally, these will affect our F1 coverage. The BBC team does a first-class job and we should do well to remember that.

Paul Miller, Hampshire

EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

What an outrageous suggestion by Gerhard Berger: that in Korea Mark Webber deliberately chose not to brake while spinning, in the hope of taking out one of his title rivals.

Aside from Webber knowing the dangers of such a move, he is just not that kind of driver.

What has made Berger so cynical about driver ethics? Is it the years he spent as team-mate to Ayrton Senna, or is he, as a friend of Dietrich Mateschitz, trying to undermine Webber in favour of Sebastian Vettel?

David Goddard
Hove

If Fernando Alonso wins the title, I hope for the sake of F1 and the credibility of the FIA he does so by more than seven points.

Yes, I am referring to the seven points gained at Hockenheim as a result of illegal Ferrari team orders.

True F1 fans found the result of the FIA hearing difficult to accept. Save a paltry fine, Ferrari has not been punished.

Is Ferrari bothered? No. Is the FIA concerned how it's perceived by the fans? It would appear not. Are the fans bothered? Oh yes!

Graeme Lovell
Warwick

The return of a good old-fashioned engine blow-up *a la* Brockbank was great to see in Korea – did you count the pistons? Can Bernie arrange more please...

Toby Bailey
By email

The treatment of Mark Webber earlier in the season (reaction within his team to the Turkey clash and confiscation of his front wing at Silverstone) has left a bad taste in the mouths of I'm sure many F1 fans.

Now we head to Brazil with a real chance that the Red Bull management will find themselves watching Vettel leading Webber followed by Alonso and with the only sensible decision they can make being to let Webber win.

What a delicious spectacle that would be!
Steve Hare
By email

AUTOSPORT.COM

TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **HORNER: BOTH DRIVERS STILL IN TITLE RACE**
2. **MARK HUGHES ON FERRARI'S KOREAN GP STRATEGY**
3. **VILLENEUVE ADMITS F1 HOPES OVER**
4. **MOSLEY: TODT MUST BE GIVEN CHANCE**
5. **WILLIAMS: HULKENBERG A FUTURE CHAMPION**

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

TOP STORY ONLINE

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH MERC IN '10

To read this exclusive feature and many others like it, log on to autosport.com/plus and choose which package you'd like. A month will cost £5.50, a year £46. Includes access to Forix – the ultimate stats website.

WIN!



ROAD ANGEL PROFESSIONAL CONNECTED

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Professional Connected – the world's only safety camera alert device to use GPRS/GSM update technology while you drive.

For more details on Road Angel please visit www.roadangelgroup.com. Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

● In last week's Korean Grand Prix results panel (p37), the number of laps completed by Timo Glock and Sebastian Buemi is incorrect: it should be 31 and 30 laps respectively instead of 43 and 42 laps. Thanks to Darren Galpin for spotting the error. It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on autosport.editorial@haynet.com

THE LATEST GEAR

The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts



RED BULL RACING F1 SCULPTURES

Enquire at info@racinggold.co.uk
redbullracing.com/art

Red Bull Racing, in conjunction with Racing Gold, has launched a collection of unique art objects, hand-crafted from components that have been used on the team's F1 cars. Each piece comes with a certificate of authenticity and details of where/when each part appeared.

Pictured left is a floor lamp made out of a polished exhaust system (buy it and you get a free factory tour!), while below are more modest gearbox filters that have become salt and pepper pots.



HAYNES 50-YEAR HISTORY
£12.99 (978 1 844 259 717)
JPressnell@haynes.co.uk

John Haynes's eponymous publishing empire is celebrating its half-century this year and the key moments of that 50-year labour of love, including the worldwide appeal of the legendary Haynes Manuals, appear in this entertaining and informative work by Jon Pressnell of our sister mag, *Classic & Sportscar*.



SHUNT - JAMES HUNT BIOG
£25 (978 0 9565656 0 0)
autosport.com/shop

Controversial and opinion-forming – just like the man himself – this warts-and-all-and-everything-in-between biog of the 1976 F1 champ is obsessively detailed and, in places, worryingly specific (5000 estimated dalliances between/during marriages – really?). It's worth looking at, but don't let it spoil your memories of a true legend.



ROSSI FORD FOCUS WRC
£27.99 (1:43 scale)
autosport.com/shop

Small-scale model maker IXO has released this Beta Tools-liveried (1970s March F1 anyone?) Ford Focus WRC used by bike king Valentino Rossi in 2007 to take his second straight Monza Rally win. The bewinged Focus has Rossi's trademark 'The Doctor' decals and his regular #46 plates.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: EIGHT-YEAR-OLD RALLY STAR



SEARCH FOR: Kalle Rovanpera.mp4 (5:22)

No, you're not going mad, but you will be feeling inadequate. Here's 2001 Swedish Rally winner Harri Rovanpera's eight-year-old son Kalle sliding around on snow and gravel. That's right: he's eight...

WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online

SILVERSTONE

Walter Hayes Trophy (HSCC)

November 6-7

Admission £8 (day); £15 (weekend)

Tel: 0844 3728 200

Silverstone is set for a packed schedule again as the Walter Hayes Trophy celebrates its 10th running. The Trophy has established itself as the one of the most prestigious events in FF1600, with fields of 120 drivers being no exception. The two-day programme includes an action-packed knockout tournament, as well as FF2000, Historic Sports Car Club Open and Closed Wheel, and Allcomers support races.



Formula Ford tops the bill at Silverstone

SNETTERTON

BARC

November 6

Admission £12

Tel: 01953 887303

The BARC's Winter Series is Snetterton's final race meeting of 2010. The form in the Formula Renault UK Winter Cup is often a useful pointer to who'll be worth watching in the main series the following year.

BRANDS HATCH

MSVR

November 6-7

Admission £12 (each day)

Tel: 01474 872331

On Saturday, the Lotus on Track Elise Trophy's season finale will mark Brands Hatch's first 1000km race in over 20 years. The fourth edition of the Victor Meldrew Trophy takes place on Sunday, which also includes Tin Tops and Intermarque support races.

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 18/19

Brazilian Grand Prix

Interlagos, Brazil

November 7

www.formula1.com



Vettel needs to maximise his Red Bull's speed at Interlagos

INTERCONTINENTAL LE MANS CUP

Rd 3/3

November 7

Zhuhai, China

www.intercontinental-le-mans-cup.com

INTERCONTINENTAL RALLY CHALLENGE

Rd 12/12

Cyprus Rally

Limassol, Cyprus

November 4-6

www.ircseries.com

FORMULA NIPPON

Rd 7/7

November 7

Suzuka, Japan

www.f-nippon.co.jp/en

SOUTH AMERICAN F3

Rd 9/9

Interlagos, Brazil

November 6-7

www.formula3sulamericana.com.br

TC2000 TOURING CARS

Rd 11/12

Buenos Aires,

Argentina

November 7

www.tc2000.com.ar

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 34/36

Texas Motor Speedway,

USA

November 7

www.nascar.com

NASCAR NATIONWIDE SERIES

Rd 33/35

Texas Motor Speedway,

USA

November 6

nationwide.nascar.com

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

Rd 23/25

Texas Motor Speedway,

USA

November 5

www.nascar.com

Television

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4

1000-1100 Sky Sports 2 &

1300-1400 Sky Sports 3

DTM

1320-1425 Motors TV

750 Motor Club: Snetterton

1425-1455 Motors TV

Ma5da MX5 Cup: Croft

1525-1625 Motors TV

Superstars: Vallelunga

2030-2100 Eurosport 2

WTCC: Inside WTCC

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5

0200-0300 Sky Sports 4

DTM

0900-1000, 1500-1600 Eurosport

IRC: Rally Cyprus day one

1155-1335 BBCi LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP first practice

1555-1735 BBCi LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP second practice

1940-2150 Motors TV

V8 Supercars: Surfers Paradise

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6

0400-0425 Five

Motorsport Mundial

0900-1000, 1330-1500, 1630-1700

Eurosport

IRC: Rally Cyprus day two

1000-1015, 1955-2010 Motors TV

Citroen 2CV 24 Hours: Snetterton

Relive the round-the-clock event.

1010-1110 ITV4

Motorsport UK

1255-1405 BBCi LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP third practice

1400-1800, 2115-0135 Motors TV

ALMS: ALMS review

1500-1720 BBC1 LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP qualifying

Who will grab pole for this crucial race?

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 7

0700-0730 Channel 4

British Rallycross: Pembrey

0735-0800, 1000-1100, 1300-1400, 2130-

2300 Eurosport

IRC: Rally Cyprus

0800-1000 Eurosport LIVE

ILMC: Zhuhai

See the beginning of this six-hour race as Le Mans heavyweights Audi and Peugeot go at it.

1100-1730 Motors TV LIVE

ILMC: Zhuhai

The conclusion of the Zhuhai 1000km race.

1510-1815 BBC1 LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP

The latest installment of the F1 title run-in.

1815-1915 BBCi LIVE

F1: Brazilian GP post-race forum

2115-2150 Motors TV

WRC: Rally World Spain

2220-0030 Motors TV

ILMC: Zhuhai highlights

2300-0000 BBC3

F1: Brazilian GP highlights

MONDAY NOVEMBER 8

1800-1900 Sky Sports 2

FIA GT1: Navarra highlights

1900-2000 Sky Sports 2 &

2330-0030 Sky Sports 3

NASCAR: Texas highlights

The AAA Texas 500.

Online

AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

BRAZILIAN GP & MOTOGP

Could the title be decided in Brazil? Either way, stay up to date with all the drama from Interlagos with news, reports, galleries and live commentary all weekend on AUTOSPORT.com. Elsewhere, the destiny of the MotoGP title was decided long ago, but keep up-to-date with Jorge Lorenzo and the rest (right) as they embark on their season finale at Valencia.



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REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage

No, Ricky, Monster sponsorship does not count as Halloween fancy dress



IN AMERICA, everything is bigger: the size of the steaks, the girth of the folks who eat them, and the lengths they'll go to celebrate a holiday.

Revved Up was also on vacation (sorry, holiday) in the US of A last weekend, which was perfect timing as NASCAR was visiting its scariest track, Talladega, on Halloween weekend.

In Britain, Halloween involves kids in rubbish costumes demanding candy (sorry, sweets) or menacing teenagers chucking eggs and flour at your front door. In America, it's carte blanche for TV production teams to go utterly mental.

In its pre-race build-up

show to the Camping World Truck Series (Camping World is an American version of Millets, sadly not a Duncan Norville fanzine), *SPEED* TV put on a 'Hallodega Special'. This – quite randomly – involved its seven-strong presenting team dressing up as characters of mid-60s sitcom *Gilligan's Island*... and the Halloween link is what, exactly?

The premise of that show was the comic adventures of seven castaways as they attempted to escape from the island where they were shipwrecked. Despite their best efforts, they continually fail to do so,

with (presumably) hilarious consequences.

So memorable was it that even Ken Schrader, one of the older truckers interviewed on the grid, admitted: "My attention span isn't long enough to remember anything at all about that show."

Anchored (no pun intended) by Krista Voda, even lady racer Jennifer Jo Cobb got in on the act, dressing up in a skimpy number. Fellow driver and former supercross star Ricky Carmichael (nicknamed 'the GOAT' for the utterly cringeworthy acronym of 'Greatest of All Time') said: "I'd feel such a weirdo if I dressed up like you guys."

Spare a thought then, dear Ricky, for Michael Waltrip. Never a shrinking violet, Mikey cross-dressed for the entire show as the character Mrs Howell.

Sporting a long dress, blond wig, hat, handbag and a pearl necklace, the two-time Daytona 500 winner resembled a cross between Dame Edna Everage and Mrs Slocombe.

On my return to Blighty this weekend, I demand to see Jake Humphrey present the entire Brazilian Grand Prix build-up on the BBC in the style of Ted Rogers in 3-2-1, and for DC and EJ to give their analysis dressed as characters from the musical *Cats*. *Revved Up*

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

Life through a lens, from Talladega to Okayama

HERE COMES A 'HORNADO' WARNING

NASCAR Truck Series veteran Ron Hornaday walked away from this spectacular flip in Saturday's race at Talladega. "Too bad we ruined a good truck," he said



COX/GETTY

"FIRST CORNER IS A 90-RIGHT INTO 90-LEFT"

Sebastien Loeb gives last-minute advice to WRC team-mate Dano Sordo before Barcelona GT Open race



THE OLD ONES ARE ALWAYS THE BEST

In last week's launch of the DTM's Munich stadium event, BMW brought along an old-school racer



COX/GETTY

...AS 'DINGER RINGS HIS BELL AT 'DEGA
AJ Allmendinger was in the wrong place
at the wrong time on Sprint Cup last lap



PRIAULX BANGS HIS OWN DRUM...

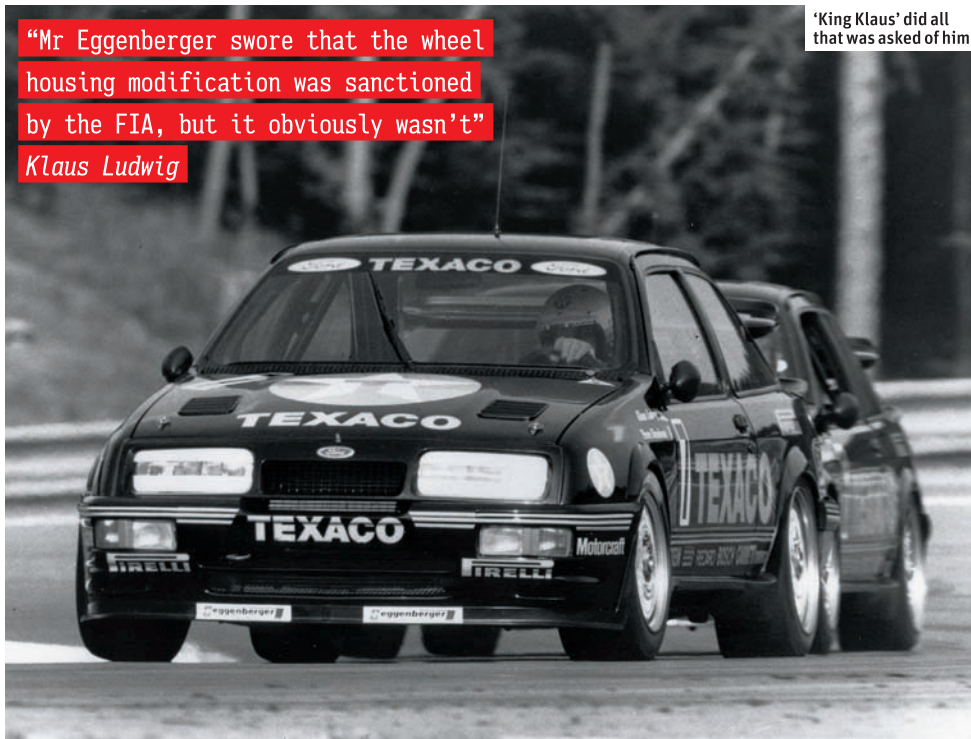
As part of the build-up to the WTCC at Okayama, BMW star Andy Priaulx found his Japanese rhythm

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The two Klauses miss out on WTCC title by a point, Fuji, November 15, 1987

"Mr Eggenberger swore that the wheel housing modification was sanctioned by the FIA, but it obviously wasn't" Klaus Ludwig

'King Klaus' did all that was asked of him



FOLLOWING A controversial Bathurst 1000, where both the Eggenberger-run Ford Sierra RS500s had been disqualified from a one-two finish for illegally modified wheelarch guards, the Mount Fuji finale of the 1987 World Touring Car Championship was a must-win race for Klauses Ludwig and Niedzwiedz if they were to claim the inaugural global tin-top title.

The team had even drafted in a third works Ford entry for this event, driven by veteran Armin Hahne and freshly crowned German Formula 3 champion Bernd Schneider, to try to ensure the Schnitzer BMW of title rival Roberto Ravaglia was defeated. Ravaglia had a six-point lead over the Klauses, so he would need a second-place finish to prevail, even if they won.

From pole courtesy of Ludwig, with the second car of Steve Soper/Pierre Dieudonne alongside, Niedzwiedz led from the start, with Soper in his wheeltracks. The team's only real opposition in terms of sheer pace was the Toyota Object TRS500 of Naoki Nagasaka and Andy Rouse.

But with the Rouse car out of the frame when delayed by a stuck wheelnut, a one-two Eggenberger finish seemed assured, even though the third Texaco-backed works car fell by the wayside with a broken axle (it had lost a lap at the start when it refused to fire up). Then, with a 35-second advantage over Ravaglia's BMW and just 17 laps remaining, disaster struck for Ford: Dieudonne

suffered a puncture and slumped to fifth.

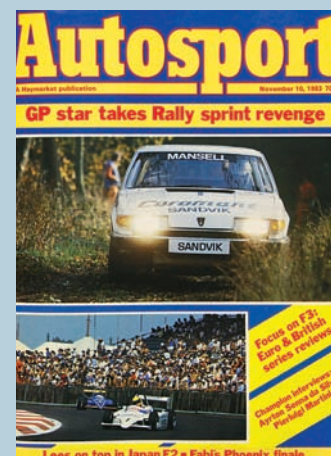
The Japanese RS500 was promoted to second, but it wasn't registered for points, so Ravaglia (partnered by Emanuele Pirro) took the second-place points haul that he needed. A phlegmatic Niedzwiedz quipped after the race: "God must have a BMW contract."

Looking back, Ludwig blames that Bathurst ruling for killing off their title hopes: "Mr Eggenberger swore that the wheel housing modification was sanctioned by the FIA, but it obviously wasn't so we lost the championship because of that. Pirelli only supplied a tyre of a certain size, to cope with the huge torque and power of the engine we had, but it basically didn't fit in the arch. Game over. Our hopes were killed."

Ludwig also blames Ford Motorsport director Lothar Pinsky, who decreed that the same drivers should share the same car all season.

"He should have split the teams up," says Ludwig. "Then, the person in the best championship position could have taken over the best-placed car. But he said that both drivers would win the championship together or not at all. There were a lot of bloody idiots around at Ford at that time, but the atmosphere between the drivers was great – they were all good guys. The cars were nice, we were driving around the world and I was earning my money, so life wasn't too bad." ❧

THIS WEEK IN...



NOVEMBER 10, 1983

IT WAS 'revenge of the racer' in the annual rally versus grand prix stars Austin Rover Ralliesprint event at Donington Park.

F1 aces John Watson, Nigel Mansell, Derek Warwick and Danny Sullivan took on rally men Stig Blomqvist, Pentti Airikkala, Jimmy McRae and Tony Pond in a three-piece competition that encompassed an autotest, a rally stage, and a race, using Rover Vitesse rally cars and circuit-racing MG Maestros.

Mansell produced superb autotest and race-winning performances to end reigning triple-champion Pond's dominance of the event on a tiebreak.

In other news, BMW confirmed it would supply four-cylinder turbo engines to the Arrows F1 team in 1984, while Penske's Al Unser Sr was crowned Indycar champion.



NEXT WEEK



The penultimate round in 2010's title thriller

BRAZILIAN GP

Full race analysis from Interlagos

On sale Nov 11

PLUS

LMS action from Zhuhai;
Wales Rally GB preview;
Superleague season review

MARK BLUNDELL

■ Marlboro 500, Fontana ■ September 28, 1997 ■ Reynard 971-Mercedes ■ Fourth Brit to win a 500-miler



Blundell beat Vasser after Greg Moore's engine blew

ONE OF the wins I'm most proud of is the California 500 at Fontana in '97. Only three Brits [Jim Clark, Graham Hill and Nigel Mansell] had won a 500-miler up to that point. Since then Dario [Franchitti] and [Dan] Wheldon have done it.

That year I won on a street course, a road course, and an oval, so it was a nice year. I had a lot of success in 500 races and Fontana was the icing on the cake.

I'd been in contention for quite a long time and we'd got the car working well. Things were really going for us until we got to just towards the end of the race. We had blisters on the rear tyres, especially the right-rear.

It was one of those calls you have to make. Do you commit to pushing hard when you can see the blisters in the rear-view mirror or do the safe thing and come in and change tyres? Every lap I'd load the car up at each end of the circuit and you could feel the lumps in the tyre. The vibration was getting worse and worse, but if I'd come in the race would have been done. Fortunately the chequered flag

"The car ran really well and we got it working. That's some of the beauty and reward of a 500-mile race - you're constantly evaluating the car and changing it"

came around quite quickly.

I was behind Greg Moore and Jimmy Vasser — about eight laps from the end — when Greg's engine let go. Jimmy lifted off completely and so did I but I reacted faster, ran

round the outside and off we went.

It was a great feeling to win a 500-mile oval race when you've been in the car for three hours and 15 minutes, and I think it was over 100 degrees. It was a

really rewarding result.

The car ran really well and we got it working. That's some of the beauty and reward of a 500-mile race. There's a lot that a driver does throughout the distance — you're jacking weight, changing tyre pressures. You're constantly evaluating the car and changing it.

When you get a car working right, and you can hang it low and hang it up high, it's some of the most enjoyable racing you'll do.

The only thing that was a little bit of a bummer was the year after they offered a \$1 million prize fund. As ever, I was in the wrong place at the wrong time! ❧

Mark Blundell was talking to Kevin Turner

IN PROFILE



MARK BLUNDELL was a star in FF1600 and FF2000 on his way up the single-seater ranks. After a competitive but winless spell in F3000 he made it to F1 with Brabham in 1991. He went on to drive for Ligier, Tyrrell and McLaren, scoring three podium finishes, before becoming a frontrunner in IndyCar. Blundell also excelled in sportscars, winning at Le Mans in 1992 with Peugeot. He semi-retired after finishing second for Bentley at La Sarthe in 2003, but returned this year with the United Autosports Audi team in the Spa 24 Hours.

**NEXT
WEEK
Tommi
MAKINEN**





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