



WORLD EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FERNANDO ALONSO

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CHASE DOWN RED BULL**

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mixed-up races"*
Robert Kubica



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- Ricciardo flies for Red Bull →



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EBREY/LAT

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Manufacturer of winning rally drivers.

Congratulations to the Škoda team on sealing victory in the IRC 2010 Manufacturers' and Drivers' Championships.



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POLE POSITION

Pirelli is bringing back oversteer



FORMULA 1 ENTERED a new era last week, when for the first time Pirelli became the sole tyre supplier.

While the rubber being used in Abu Dhabi was not the definitive version, it did conform to the philosophy to which all its compounds will be made for 2011 – namely a stronger front tyre and a weaker rear.

The idea of this is to create a balance in the cars that tends towards oversteer, which

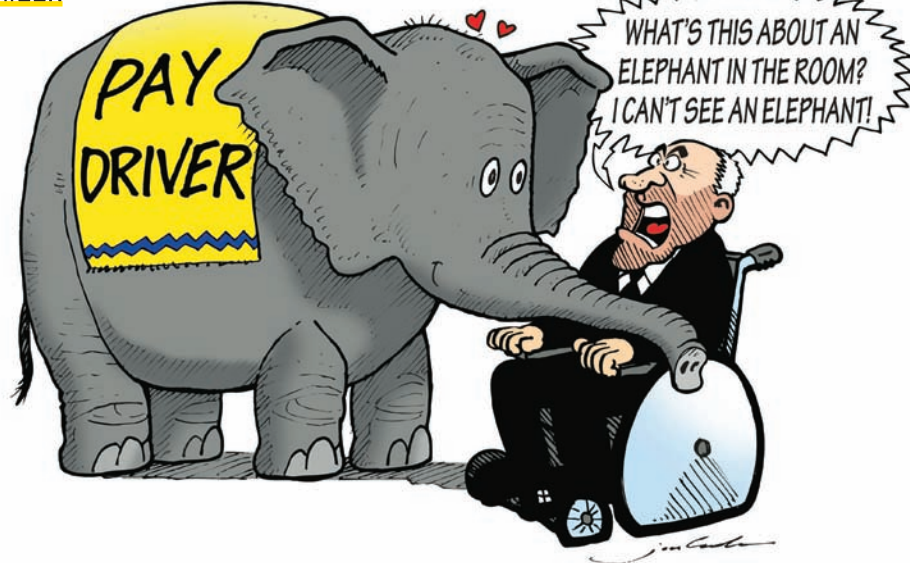
in turn ought to create more spectacular action and, hopefully, more overtaking! It also creates a clean slate for the teams to build a car around the parameters that will suit the tyres best.

This is great news, and while it would be a massive surprise if an Adrian Newey-designed Red Bull wasn't at the vanguard of exploiting this, there's equally no reason why McLaren, Ferrari or even Mercedes couldn't steal a march on the current world champion team.

Coming on the back of a season that was captivating, but lacking a little in actual on-track action, this could be exactly the tonic that Formula 1 needs.

Andrew van de Burt, editor

BAMBER'S WEEK





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McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC AWARD

Young guns' firepower

2010 McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award hopefuls Luciano Bacheta, Tom Blomqvist, Jack Harvey, Scott Malvern, Nigel Moore and Lewis Williamson were at Silverstone last week, showing off their skills in a Williams-Audi F2 single-seater and DTM Mercedes touring car. Read how they fared on page 56.

Picture: GRIFFITHS/LAT



Schumacher style suits front grip

DUNBAR/LAT

Schumacher fightback

Seven-time champion – and Felipe Massa – revel on new Pirelli tyres. Time to win again? EDD STRAW investigates

Michael Schumacher and Felipe Massa – the Formula 1 underachievers of 2010 – hope to benefit from the switch to Pirelli tyres for next season, which is set to shake up the competitive order.

Teams tried the Italian company's development rubber for the first time during a two-day test in Abu Dhabi last week. Both Schumacher and Massa, who blamed tyre troubles for poor 2010 campaigns, were impressed. The tyres have been designed to offer more front-end grip based on feedback

from F1 teams. This will suit Mercedes racer Schumacher's style.

"I feel positive about the tyres," said the seven-time world champion after his first test. "You can say the front tyre is stronger and that's going to suit my style, but what is very important is how next year's car is going to suit these tyres."

Massa blamed problems with getting his Ferrari's Bridgestone tyres up to temperature in qualifying for his poor season. He reported no such trouble after setting the fastest lap on Pirellis at Yas Marina.

"It was not bad for me, even in just one timed lap," said Massa of tyre warm-up characteristics. "I was instantly comfortable with them."

The tyre regulations will remain unchanged in 2011, with Pirelli making tyres to the same dimensions as the Bridgestones used this year. But while the Japanese manufacturer produced tyres that tended towards understeer, the Pirellis proved to generate oversteer in Abu Dhabi.

NO BIG CHANGES TO COME

Pirelli will produce new compounds based on data gathered from the 12 teams during the test. Those tyres will run for the first time on its Toyota TF109 test mule in Bahrain on December 13-16.

The construction of the tyres will not change significantly. Crucially, the strong front tyres will remain, ensuring that the characteristics seen in Abu Dhabi will not be fundamentally affected.

Pirelli research and development director Maurizio Boiocchi told AUTOSPORT: "We developed our tyres based on what the teams asked for. They asked for a stronger front and a comfortable rear. From what the FIA and FOTA [the F1 teams organisation] say this will be the common balance for the 2011 season and we are following this line. We are on target to deliver what is asked in terms of the characteristics."

As well as being good news for Schumacher and Massa, Williams veteran Rubens Barrichello was

another to show good pace during testing. Boiocchi accepts that the tyres will inevitably favour the styles of certain drivers, but that this is not deliberate.

"A stronger front tyre means that you have a much higher cornering force with the same cornering angle," he said. "That means you have a more immediate turn-in. Normally, this provides a more neutral car, or an oversteering car by removing the understeer that is due to a weak front. This suits certain drivers as some prefer driving with slight oversteer."

MIXING IT UP

The priority for teams during the test was to understand the characteristics of the Pirelli rubber in order to make changes to the design of their 2011 cars.

Renault's Robert Kubica, who drove on both days of the test, said: "The cars are built around extracting the maximum from the tyre construction and grip," he said.

Massa has a good feeling about 2011



HONE/GETTY



Massa set the pace on Italian rubber



Pirellis worked well for Barrichello

MASSA EDGES VETTEL

FELIPE MASSA topped the first test of the new-for-2011 Pirelli Formula 1 control rubber in Abu Dhabi last week. Most teams opted to use their race drivers, with Red Bull driver Sebastian Vettel second fastest after running on both days. Fernando Alonso was third fastest, topping the second day of running. All 12 teams were present, with each squad given eight sets of tyres. Pirelli is analysing the data to finalise its compounds ahead of the start of pre-season testing in February.

YAS MARINA TESTING TIMES, NOVEMBER 19-20

Driver	Team	Friday	Saturday
1 Felipe Massa	Ferrari	1m40.170s	
2 Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull	1m40.500s	1m40.825s
3 Fernando Alonso	Ferrari		1m40.529s
4 Gary Paffett	McLaren	1m40.874s	1m41.622s
5 Kamui Kobayashi	Sauber	1m40.950s	1m42.110s
6 Robert Kubica	Renault	1m41.032s	1m41.614s
7 Rubens Barrichello	Williams	1m41.425s	1m41.294s
8 Paul di Resta	Force India	1m41.615s	1m41.869s
9 Oliver Turvey	McLaren		1m41.740s
10 Michael Schumacher	Mercedes		1m41.757s
11 Nico Rosberg	Mercedes	1m41.778s	
12 Jaime Alguersuari	Toro Rosso	1m42.019s	
13 Sebastien Buemi	Toro Rosso		1m42.145s
14 Vitantonio Liuzzi	Force India		1m42.416s
15 Sergio Perez	Sauber		1m42.777s
16 Adrian Sutil	Force India	1m42.859s	
17 Timo Glock	Virgin	1m44.124s	1m44.783s
18 Jarno Trulli	Lotus		1m44.521s
19 Heikki Kovalainen	Lotus	1m44.686s	
20 Pastor Maldonado	HRT	1m45.728s	1m44.768s

TESTING POSSIBLE

Pirelli will finalise its tyre specifications ahead of the first race of the season in Bahrain, but the Italian company has the agreement of the Formula 1 Teams' Association to use the opening free practice session to test new compounds if required – subject to FIA approval.

Pirelli motorsport director Paul Hembery told AUTOSPORT: "We asked FOTA if they would consider using the Friday morning session if we did find that we needed to realign some of the compounds. It's in everyone's interest that there is something available. But we haven't discussed it as anything more than a contingency."

With changes to the rubber likely for 2012, Pirelli is also keen to find a way to continue to test. It has used a 2009 Toyota so far, but would want to upgrade to a newer car. Any such move would need to satisfy teams' desire for neutrality,



Pirelli rolled out rubber in Abu Dhabi

meaning that the use of any one team's machinery would likely be blocked.

"Our test car will run a separate programme," said Hembery. "We will need to have a test car of some sort that is acceptable in terms of screening product and new developments. While the Toyota has been an ideal test car, there are question marks going forward. I'm quite sure that we will find a solution."

Arranging several group tyre tests could also be an option, but would require changes to the in-season testing ban.

"We might see some mixed-up races. If you are able to switch on the tyres in the right way and don't have huge degradation, you won't have mixed races, unless you have technical issues and are not extracting the maximum from the tyres."

When F1 switched to a single supplier in 2007 following the withdrawal of Michelin, this shifted

the balance of power significantly. Having won the previous two drivers' and constructors' championships, Renault slumped to fourth-best, while Ferrari and McLaren thrived again.

Based on the early testing in Abu Dhabi, the arrival of Pirelli looks set to provide a similar shake-up of the order and introduce an element of unpredictability to F1.

EXPERT VIEW

JARNO TRULLI LOTUS DRIVER

There is still a lot of work to do on Pirelli's side and on the team's side on the handling of the new tyres.

The driveability needs to be improved. The rear tyres give up quickly – the medium compound dropped off after three or four laps – and they lack lateral support at slow speed. In the high-speed sections it's not too bad, but they are tricky at low speed.

On the entry and under braking, they are good and stable, but it's more of a problem from the middle of the corner to the exit. They don't seem too bad on tyre warm-up, but because the track conditions were so good, it could be misleading.

They are also a little slower than the Bridgestones. All of the drivers were saying the same thing: it's the first test so we now have some idea about the Pirellis, but we don't know what will change. Whatever happens, we will all have the same tyres and will struggle the same way.



Mark
Hughes
talks
tyres

ROOKIE F1 TESTING TIMES

Driver	Team	Nov 16	Nov 17
1 Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull	1m39.616s	1m38.102s
2 Jerome d'Ambrosio	Renault		1m38.802s
3 Sam Bird	Mercedes	1m42.985s	1m39.220s
4 Gary Paffett	McLaren		1m39.760s
5 Jules Bianchi	Ferrari	1m43.894s	1m39.916s
6 Sergio Perez	Sauber		1m40.543s
7 Oliver Turvey	McLaren	1m40.725s	
8 Paul di Resta	Force India	1m42.736s	1m40.901s
9 Pastor Maldonado	Williams		1m40.944s
10 Jean-Eric Vergne	Toro Rosso	1m42.489s	1m40.974s
11 Yelmer Buurman	Force India		1m41.178s
12 Antonio Felix da Costa	Force India	1m41.381s	
13 Esteban Gutierrez	Sauber	1m41.432s	
14 Dean Stoneman	Williams	1m41.522s	
15 Mikhail Aleshin	Renault	1m42.073s	
16 Davide Valsecchi	HRT		1m43.013s
17 Jerome d'Ambrosio	Virgin	1m43.518s	
18 Luiz Razia	Virgin		1m43.525s
19 Pastor Maldonado	HRT	1m43.750s	
20 Josef Kral	HRT		1m44.143s
21 Rodolfo Gonzalez	Lotus	1m44.924s	1m44.312s
22 Vladimir Arabadzhiev	Lotus		1m45.723s
23 Rio Haryanto	Virgin	1m49.439s	



Maldonado gave good feedback to Williams

DUNBAR/LAT

The GP2 champion is ready for F1, says team

Maldonado passes first test

Williams impressed with the performance of the man tipped to replace Nico Hulkenberg in 2011

GP2 champion Pastor Maldonado has convinced Williams that he is ready for Formula 1 after making his test debut for the team in Abu Dhabi last week.

The 25-year-old's performance in his single day with the team means that he is on the verge of signing for 2011, providing he comes up with promised sponsorship money. Maldonado is believed to be offering upwards of €15 million for the seat, but despite his reputation as a pay driver the GP2 champion has proved that he is worthy of a drive even though his credentials don't match those of outgoing driver and 2009

GP2 champion Nico Hulkenberg.

Williams hopes to finalise its driver line-up before the end of the year, and test-team manager Tom McCulloch believes that Maldonado has shown he can step up to F1.

"We gave him a lot to test, but at the same time it was a driver evaluation as well and we were interested in how he responded to what he was asked to do," McCulloch told AUTOSPORT. "He comes across as quite experienced and he was able to get up to speed pretty quickly. He wasn't taking risks, just getting quicker and quicker.

"He listened to what we told him to do and his driving style will suit F1 pretty well. It's hard to think of any negatives. On the brakes and in high-speed corners he was very strong and on the low-speed side, which is the most technical in an F1 car, it's just a matter of working out how to get the best out of the car. He was sliding the car around a little bit more than the race drivers would, but it wasn't excessive."

All of Maldonado's running was completed on the medium (prime) compound tyre and a precautionary engine shutdown during the day prevented him from completing a

planned low-fuel run on the option rubber. He also spent much of the test working on car development, including completing aero test runs.

"We had a lot of stuff to do for next year's car," said McCulloch. "We gave him a lot to do and he did all the complicated switch settings. He was polite and patient."

McCulloch added that the Venezuelan's spoken English would need to improve.

"His communication was pretty good, although his English is not as strong as our current race drivers. That will only get better with time if he's immersed in an English team."

HOW DID THE YOUNG DRIVERS COMPARE?

Red Bull junior driver Daniel Ricciardo shone in last week's Abu Dhabi young driver test, beating Sebastian Vettel's pole position time for the previous weekend's grand prix by 1.292 seconds.

A direct comparison with Vettel's pace is impossible because the track had become significantly faster since qualifying the previous weekend because of the amount of rubber laid down. Despite this, Ricciardo's speed consolidated his position as the next Red Bull junior in line to graduate to F1.

Estimates of the track improvement from GP Saturday to the second day of the test ranged from 1.5 seconds to 2.5 seconds. Both Jerome d'Ambrosio (Renault) and Davide Valsecchi (HRT) improved on their team's best qualifying lap by just over two seconds. Several other drivers also

outpaced their teams' qualifying marks, including Sam Bird (Mercedes), Luiz Razia (Virgin), Jean-Eric Vergne (Toro Rosso) and Pastor Maldonado (HRT).

Ricciardo set his time with just over one hour of the second day remaining, suggesting that his pace was in the region of seven-tenths off Vettel – adjusting for conditions.

Ricciardo has yet to finalise his programme for next year, but is understood to be in contention to make his F1 debut with Scuderia Toro Rosso mid-season. The Red Bull-owned team has committed to starting with Sebastien Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari, but has left the door open for the kind of mid-season change that it made in both 2007, when it dropped Scott Speed, and 2009, when Sebastien Bourdais was replaced.

Top debutants



DACOSTA
Force India

The 19-year-old completed 76 laps, setting the third fastest time of day one



BIRD
Mercedes

Tasked with mostly development work, impressed team bosses and showed good pace



VERGNE
Toro Rosso

British F3 champion managed 154 laps over the two days and set some strong times



VALSECCHI
HRT

GP2 race winner had two and a half hours to impress, but got up to speed very quickly

RDD set to return

RENAULT TEAM principal Eric Boullier is planning to relaunch the French outfit's junior driver programme for 2011.

The programme would be distinct from the Gravity Sports Management scheme, which Boullier also runs, and would involve three or four new drivers being recruited. Testing in an old-specification Renault F1 car could also be part of the project. No drivers have been signed to the

scheme yet, but Boullier is keen to get it running.

"It would be a way for them to spend time in the team so that they can understand the way that it works and the complexity of F1," said Boullier. "Obviously they would need to race in GP2 or World Series alongside it but there could also be properly-run F1 testing."

"Gravity is a separate programme – you can go into any team in the pit-lane, but it may be that some can step into the Renault programme."

Renault first launched a driver programme in 2002, with the likes of Robert Kubica, Heikki Kovalainen, Lucas di Grassi and Romain Grosjean all involved over the years.



Renault team will relaunch its RDD

Perez starts build-up to Sauber debut

SERGIO PEREZ made his F1 test debut for Sauber in Abu Dhabi last week ahead of his graduation to a race seat with the team in 2011.

The Mexican drove for one day of young driver running, and during the final half-day of Pirelli tyre testing. In total, he completed 137 laps of the Yas Marina circuit as the team worked to get him up to speed ahead of pre-season testing starting in February.

Sauber technical director James Key told AUTOSPORT: "We wanted to give him a feel for what set-up changes do and how the car responds, in particular the tyres. We're looking longer-term with him so we agreed that lap times weren't the most important thing. It's about making progress gradually so that he's got all the bases covered for the winter."



Perez made Sauber bow

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Two years into the in-season testing ban and Formula 1 continues to let down young drivers. Outside of last week's two-day rookie test in Abu Dhabi, the only non-race drivers with any mileage in 2010 cars this year were Paul di Resta, Gary Paffett and Fairuz Fauzy. The ban has been central to F1 cost-cutting, but the sport must offer more running to its rising stars.

Not so long ago, Friday running was the perfect showcase, also adding a gripping storyline to a grand prix weekend. Given that the first day of a grand prix weekend is lacking a focal point, how about an extra session exclusively for rookies?

At the climax of the session, create a shoot-out where each driver gets a 'qualifying' lap with the prize of an extra set of tyres for their team, which will encourage both quick drivers and teams to show their true pace. Perhaps handicap the classification based on the prior performance of cars to allow everyone a shot of winning and you have the perfect platform for a young gun – and a great story for Friday afternoon.

The format needs a little work and the cost implications

analysed but on-track running that motivates teams both to run talented young guns and show their true pace on a Friday can only be good both for F1's future and for the show.

Kubica was a Friday star



REMEMBER WHEN...

JULY 8 1984



...a Venezuelan last raced in F1? If Pastor Maldonado makes it onto the grid in 2011, he will be the first Venezuelan to race in F1 since Johnny Cecotto started his 18th and final grand prix in Dallas for Toleman



DUNBAR/LAT

HRT ran no logos in
Abu Dhabi testing

HRT readjusts after Toyota setback

Backmarker team 'will be present' from start of F1 testing, most likely with update of 2010 grid-propper

Hispania Racing Team will be ready to run from the start of Formula 1 pre-season testing in February, according to team principal Colin Kolles.

The team suffered a setback earlier this month when, due to financial reasons, a deal collapsed to run a car developed by the ex-Toyota Formula 1 team using the unraced TF110 as a base.

AUTOSPORT understands that one option being considered for

next year is to create a new car around the existing Dallara-designed F110 monocoque.

Kolles admits that the car that hits the track in February could be a machine based on HRT's current chassis. This would allow the team to get through next year and achieve financial stability.

Kolles confirmed that the team would be ready for the first pre-season test at Valencia's Ricardo Tormo circuit on February 3.

"Yes," he told AUTOSPORT. "Maybe not with the final version of the car, but with some interim car."

The Toyota project had been underway for several months. AUTOSPORT understands that CFD and windtunnel work on the mooted 2011 Hispania – informally dubbed TF111 in-house – was well-advanced. The cars would then have been built at Toyota Motorsport in a project that would have cost close to €20 million had it been completed.

Toyota released a statement earlier this month saying that the partnership had been dissolved. It is believed that the relationship could be salvaged if HRT made full payment for work done to date, along with a substantial advance payment for future work – but this is considered unlikely.

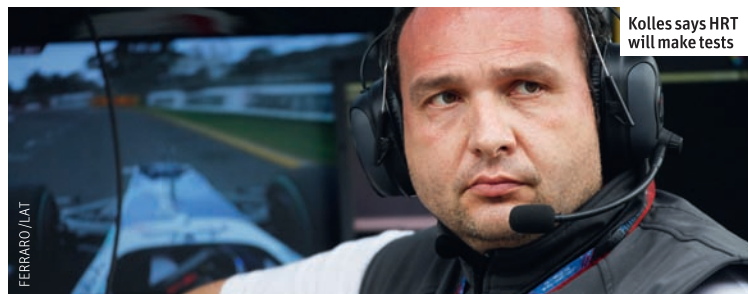
With few obvious alternatives, it is increasingly likely that the best

"We may not have the final version of the car, but some interim car"

HRT's Colin Kolles

option for the team will be to use the 2010 racer as the basis for an updated car. HRT already has deals in place to use Cosworth engines, as well as the 2010 Williams gearbox that Kolles believes is a good starting point. A new aerodynamic package plus an adjustable rear wing would create a useable 2011 car as the team will not run with a KERS hybrid system.

"We will run the 2010 gearbox next year," he said. "There's a reason for this, because of KERS and the installation. There is no big performance difference. We need a reliable good gearbox package and we have this with Williams."

Kolles says HRT
will make tests

FERRARO/LAT

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Bird tries new wing for Merc

FORMULA 1 teams used last week's young driver and Pirelli tyre tests to start work on design concepts for 2011, with Mercedes becoming the first to run an operational adjustable rear wing on track.

British GP2 ace Sam Bird ran in Abu Dhabi last Tuesday and Wednesday during the rookie test and had a heavy development workload. One of the main areas of focus was the adjustable rear wing, which will allow a driver following another car to open the slot gap from 10mm to 50mm on the straight to reduce drag.

Other teams spent time focusing on the aerodynamic performance of their cars, with Williams running sensor rakes during the four days of testing.

Williams technical director Sam Michael told AUTOSPORT: "The



Bird tried adjustable rear wing for Mercedes

main thing we concentrated on was the aero rake device, which we had at the front of the car. We also ran a pressure-tapped rear wing, but not a moveable one. That was to understand the different characteristics at different angles for next year, and the measurements around the front of the car were because of the change to Pirellis."

Many teams also ran with the

mandated 46 per cent frontward (+/-0.5 per cent) weight distribution and without the f-duct, which is outlawed next season.

It was the last opportunity that teams had to run before the start of pre-season testing at Valencia on February 3. This marks the beginning of an intensive month of track running ahead of the start of the 2011 campaign.

Webber anger at Alguersuari

RED BULL'S Mark Webber has hit out at Toro Rosso driver Jaime Alguersuari for endangering the team's drivers' title chances in last week's Abu Dhabi finale.

Webber was stuck behind the Spaniard for two laps. This possibly cost him the chance to leapfrog Ferrari's Fernando Alonso when he pitted.

"He didn't cost me the championship, but he could have cost Sebastian [Vettel]. If it meant that I didn't jump Fernando, and Petrov and Rosberg weren't there, then Fernando would have finished fourth. I find it ridiculous.

"He said the team were telling him to race me. I don't want it to come out like I'm making excuses – that's what happened."

Dutchman still courts F1

GP2 RACE WINNER Giedo van der Garde does not believe that last week's courtroom victory over Force India will have any bearing upon his chances of landing a race seat with the team.

The Dutch driver was last week awarded \$1.8m (£1.1m) after a court found that he was only provided with 2700 of the 6000km of testing that he paid the team \$3m for in its former guise of Spyker in 2007.

But van der Garde told AUTOSPORT that a Force India drive could still be a possibility.

"My manager is busy trying to get me into Formula 1 and has spoken to some teams," he said. "Whether the court case will

affect things with Force India, I have no idea."

Van der Garde has also been linked to Virgin, but said that the arrival of new backer Marussia made things more open. "We were dealing with the guys there and now there are new people on board, so we have to wait a bit to hear an answer," he said.



STALEY/GP2

Van der Garde won court case

THIS WEEK IN F1



McLAREN Team principal Martin Whitmarsh believes that the 2011 rules package will still leave room for innovation. "We have some quite inventive ideas," he said.



MERCEDES Williams refugee Nico Hulkenberg is in talks with the team. If a long-term deal is struck, he would likely sit out the 2011 racing season as reserve driver.



RED BULL Technical chief Adrian Newey believes that the Renault V8 engine continues to be the weak link in the team's package. "We know that one or two other engines have got a frozen-in advantage," he said.



FERRARI FIA president Jean Todt has suggested that the team-orders ban – most controversially courted this year by Ferrari in the German GP – will be made watertight next season. "It will be controlled by the regulations," he said.



WILLIAMS Veteran driver Rubens Barrichello believes that the team can be stronger next season after he highlighted problems with the wind-tunnel/track correlation. "The turnaround was after Istanbul [in May], when we got to the bottom of the problem," he said.



RENAULT AUTOSPORT understands that Lotus's buy-in to the team has been completed (see AUTOSPORT, November 11). The deal is expected to be announced in the near future.



SAUBERT Swiss clothing manufacturer Nabholz will supply the Hinwil-based team with clothing and accessories next year. Nabholz claims to be the world's oldest sports brand.



LOTUS Technical boss Mike Gascoyne has hit out at Group Lotus for not continuing to support the team. "We fail to understand why Group Lotus seems to want to try to kick us out," he said.



VIRGIN GP2 regular Jerome d'Ambrosio's chances of a race seat are understood to have been boosted by his impressive speed in his Renault test last week. New co-owner Marussia is believed to have a decisive say in whether the Belgian joins the team.

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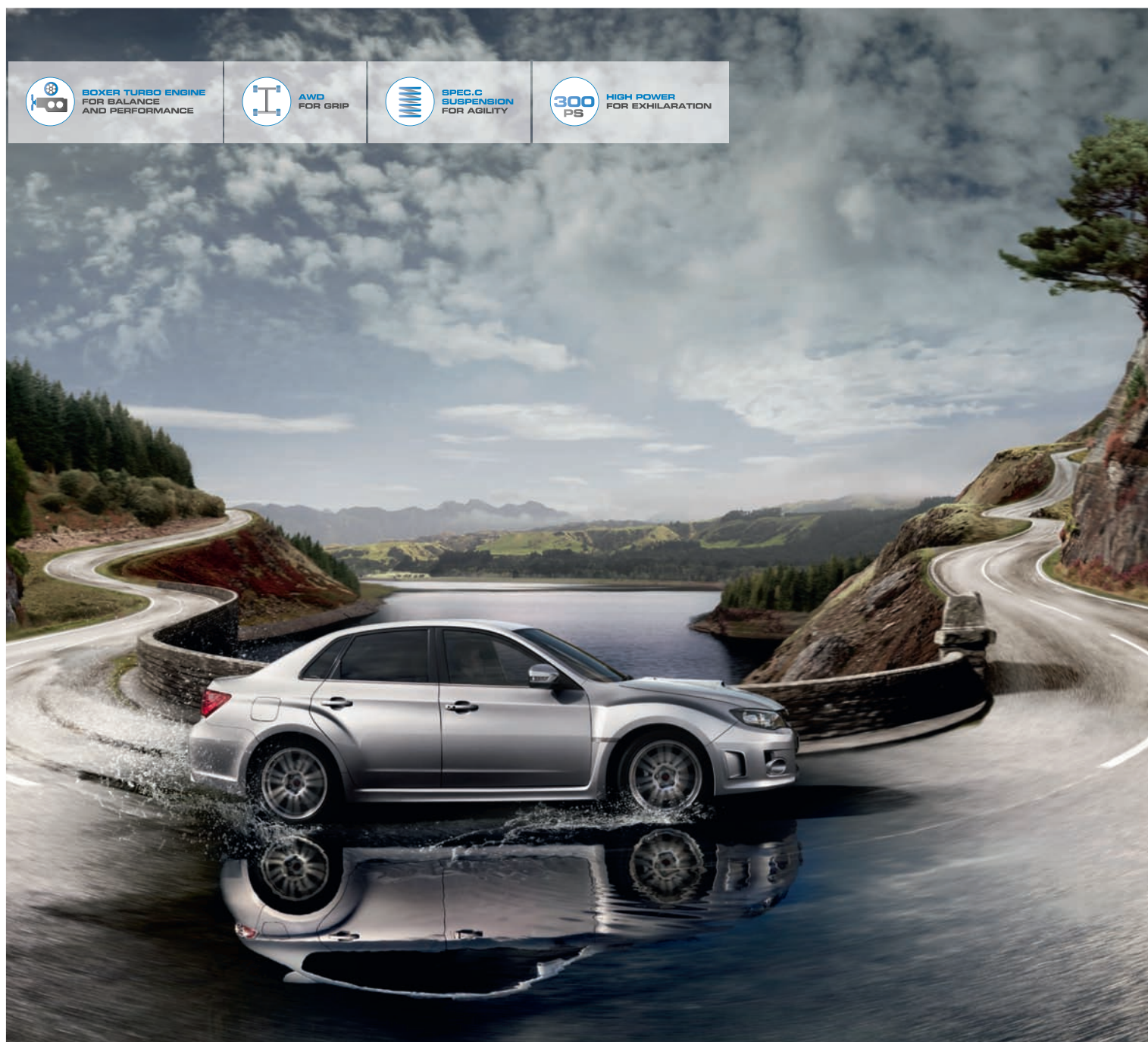
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MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

Will Michael Schumacher rethink his return to F1 if next year's Pirelli-shod Mercedes *still* doesn't suit his driving style? And if so, who will replace him?

Interesting to hear Nico Rosberg say that his initial impressions of the new Pirelli control tyres led him to believe the fronts were yet weaker than the 2010 Bridgestones. The next day he was careful to qualify those comments by saying he was sure the new car could be adapted to them, thereby bringing him in line with what Michael Schumacher was saying after he'd tried them. "We were using the 2010 car today and it will be all about how these tyres suit our 2011 car," said Michael.

This is key to what we might expect of Schumacher in the second

part of his speed in his first career. It enabled him to have the car in yaw well before the apex, allowing him to get harder and earlier on the gas. It was an apparently 'fast in/fast out' technique that left then-team-mate Eddie Irvine bewildered when he looked at the data. That technique could not be repeated with the 2010 Merc and tyre combination.

The car's wheelbase was lengthened from Spain onwards in order to move the weight distribution range rearwards, to take some load off those overworked fronts, trying to give them some spare capacity so that any front downforce increases might be translated through the tyres. It was only moderately successful in this.

These tyres had deliberately been designed by Bridgestone to be weaker than the '09 fronts. This came in response to the requests of the teams who wanted not to have to make expensive contortions to get enough weight off the car to enable them to use ballast to match up the relative power of the front and rear tyres of '09. They wanted the tyres not to create the need to get so much weight up front and Bridgestone complied.

In its original '10 car Merc had seemingly not compensated enough for this change. But even in its longer wheelbase spec, any extra frontal downforce did not seem to translate itself through the tyres – it was as if they were still somehow saturated. Ross Brawn was perplexed by the phenomenon and concluded that it was just a peculiarity of these particular tyres. "I doubt whether Pirelli could replicate that characteristic even if it tried," he

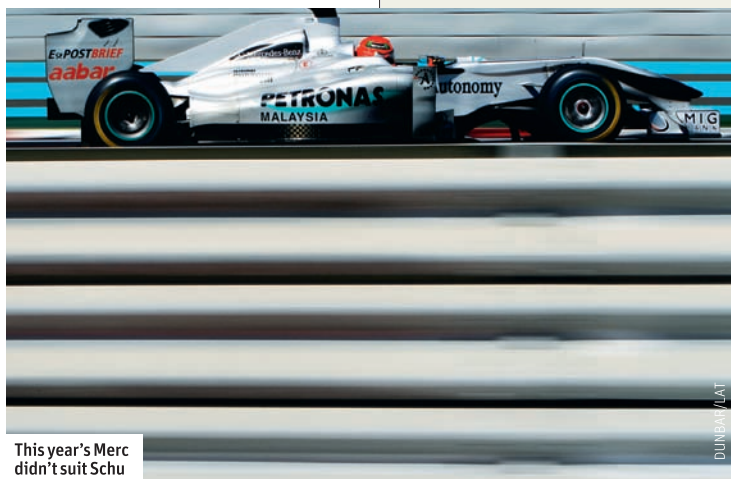
said earlier this season.

So now everything would seem to rest upon a) the '11 Mercedes getting more from those front Pirellis than the '10 car did at last week's test, b) the Pirellis transmitting any increase in downforce to the track's surface in a way the Bridgestones did not and/or c) the Pirellis being developed further between now and the beginning of the season so that the fronts are stronger.

The litmus test for Michael is then going to be the test sometime in January when he tries the new MGP 002 on whatever rubber Pirelli has developed by then. And if the car still stubbornly refuses to really load up its front tyres as Michael tries to lean long and hard onto them at the beginning of the corner? Then does he rethink?

If he does, who would step in? There are two obvious candidates: Paul di Resta and Nico Hulkenberg. The former is a Mercedes protege, already on its books, already armed with a lot of data from his Force India practice sessions and who, let's not forget, beat the current world champion as a team-mate to the Euro F3 championship in 2006. The Hulk's stock is running high on account of that spectacular pole lap in Brazil and his recruitment to the team as Michael's replacement wouldn't even involve negotiating with two different managers.

It would be a travesty if these young talents were not somewhere on the F1 grid next year. One more reason, perhaps, for Michael not to hang around too long. His previous retirement was after all hastened by what would happen to Felipe Massa's career if he did not step down. ❧



This year's Merc didn't suit Schu

DUNBAR/LAT

year of his comeback. Since the very first race he has insisted he has had insufficient front-end grip to enable him to drive the way he needs to. His way of leaning hard and long on the outer front tyre and progressively pivoting the car around it as the braking phase merged with the cornering phase was very much

"Pirelli is the key to Schuey's second year of his comeback"

GP2

GP2'S NEW LOOK

The 2011 GP2 teams got their first taste of the third-generation GP2/11 car that will be raced next year at a shakedown at Paul Ricard last week.

As well as giving the teams a chance to get a feel for the new car, the day also marked the first time that the field has run on Pirelli tyres. New teams Carlin [inset] and Air Asia also made their first appearance.

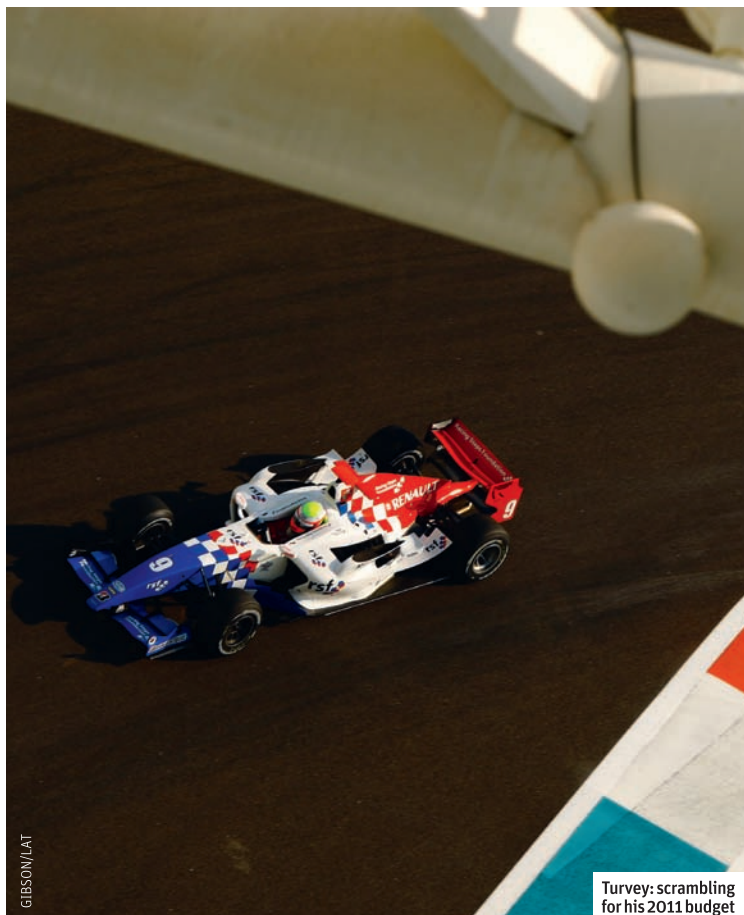
Fabio Leimer, who drove reigning champion team Rapax's car, said that first impressions of the new racer were positive.

"The new car is really nice," he said. "It has a bit more downforce than this year's one. And the Pirellis seem really consistent."

As it was a shakedown rather than a test, no times were recorded, although some teams used the outing as a chance to unveil their 2011 colours. Among them was ART [main picture], which adopted a green and yellow livery in recognition of its recent link-up with Lotus.



Max Chilton shook down Carlin's car



Turvey: scrambling for his 2011 budget

GP2

Turvey future in the balance

Budget shortfall puts Briton's prospects in doubt beyond this week's Abu Dhabi test

Oliver Turvey's 2011 campaign has been cast into doubt by a shortfall in budget.

The 2006 McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner, who scored a pole and four podiums in his GP2 rookie season with iSport this year, has been offered a day's running with Super Nova at this week's end-of-season test in Abu Dhabi, but admitted that he has no idea when he will be able to return to the cockpit after that. The deal with his previous backer, the Racing Steps Foundation, was for one season.

"Racing Steps said at the start of the year that they would only support me for one year in GP2, so at the moment I haven't got the budget to do another season,"

Turvey told AUTOSPORT: "I'm trying to find budget elsewhere. By the end of this season we were getting stronger and stronger, and by the last few rounds things were going really well. I feel I could win the championship next year, so not being able to race would be a shame."

The Abu Dhabi test, scheduled to run from Tuesday until tomorrow (Friday), was shaping up to be a frantic affair, with many drivers switching teams from day to day. Turvey was set to run with Super Nova today (Thursday), while DAMS was preparing to run eight different drivers including Sam Bird, Romain Grosjean, Jan Charouz and Pal Varhaug. The iSport line-up was due to include Robert Wickens.

INDYCAR

Lotus commits to IndyCar engine

THE INDYCAR Series expects more engine manufacturers to join up for 2013, after Lotus just made the deadline to become the third engine supplier for the 2012 season.

Series boss Randy Bernard set a deadline of last Wednesday for any manufacturers that wanted to supply engines for the first year of IndyCar's new rules package in 2012. Lotus contacted him on Tuesday asking for an extension to the deadline, which he declined. The agreement was then signed at 8pm. Bernard is

now optimistic that more manufacturers are close to signing up.

"We have interest from a lot of people," said Bernard. "The fact is we ran out of time for 2012. Most of them felt they didn't have enough time to get it completed. We have three right now, and in 2013 there definitely could be a fourth."

Bernard explained that he had not expected Lotus to commit to an engine – which will be produced by Cosworth – when he met with Group Lotus

CEO Dany Bahar recently.

"I flew out and met with some of the Lotus folks," said Bernard. "I had not met Dany Bahar yet, but I was able to spend some time with him. They were not optimistic that they would get the [engine] deal done, and I said that was fine because the aero kit will be fantastic and we look forward to having it."

"On Tuesday morning we got an email that said they were 95 per cent confident they would meet the deadline at the end of that day. Then they asked if they could get another three or four days and I told them we couldn't do that."

Bernard expects to have the 2012 engine rules finalised by January 1 of next year, and he is still pushing hard to get more aero kit builders on board for the first year of the new regulations.

"If we could announce three or four more aero kits, that would be outstanding," he added. "That's a top priority for me. I definitely want an aerospace company involved."

Lotus name will join IndyCar for 2012



GP2

Leimer set for Rapax

GP2 rookie Fabio Leimer is confident that he is close to securing a deal to race with reigning champion team Rapax in 2011.

The Swiss driver endured a mixed season with Ocean Racing Technology this year, although he underlined his pace with a sprint-race win in the opening round at the Circuit de Catalunya. He was to run all four days of this week's end of season test in Abu Dhabi with Rapax, and said that racing with the team would give him a chance to turn his experience into results.

"We had some good results with Ocean but we also had weekends where we were a bit unlucky, so we have to do our best next season," he told AUTOSPORT. "I am doing all four days [of testing] with Rapax. It's not official at the moment, we are still waiting, but it looks good for me driving there next year. Hopefully it will be finalised soon."

Rapax, which was created from the ashes of the former Piquet GP team, won the GP2 teams' title as well as taking Pastor Maldonado to the drivers' title.

GP3

More track time for GP3 in 2011

Track time during GP3 weekends is set to be increased, with plans being made for the addition of an extra practice session.

During 2010, drivers had just one 30-minute session prior to qualifying, but series organiser Bruno Michel told AUTOSPORT that he hoped to double that in 2011.

"It is a question of time when you are with Formula 1, but if there are no additional

support races we will get half an hour more of free practice for GP3, which is absolutely massive," he said.

"Track time costs a lot of money. We can have as many tests as we want, but then costs would go up."

"If we can add an extra half hour then we can give drivers extra time on track, and without any additional costs for the teams. We hope to do it at every race."



GP3

GP3 drivers may get an extra half-hour

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

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When you're a driver planning for a season in a single-make series like GP2, one of the first things that you'd take into account when choosing teams (assuming that you've sorted your budget) is history.

It's for this reason that seats with ART are so sought after, and why reigning champion Rapax's stock has shot up in the past few months. Teams spend several seasons working with the same kit, so if they can wheel out a competitive car in one season, it's a pretty safe bet they'll be able to do the same thing the following year.

The spanner in the works comes when the car changes and renders the past three years' data largely redundant. Not only does the third-generation car that awaits the 2011 GP2 grid generate its downforce in a completely different way to its predecessor, but it is also running on different tyres. In other words, it's a technical clean sheet for next year.

This presents a great engineering challenge for the teams, but some will be quicker to figure out the GP2/11 than others. The change is unlikely to turn the grid completely on its head, but it could mix things up a bit. And when you're spending the sort of money needed for a year in GP2, doubts are something you can do without. For a lot of drivers, the next few weeks will be spent trying to figure out how to avoid an expensive mistake.

New car could shake up GP2



GP2

REMEMBER WHEN...

NOVEMBER 16 1980



...a driver last won Macau back-to-back?

Geoff Lees' F1 career was best described as 'sporadic', but the Briton had more success in Formula Pacific, backing his 1979 Macau win up with a second victory the following year.

FAMILIAR GROUND

Jimmie Johnson last weekend became the first driver ever to win five consecutive NASCAR Sprint Cup championships. His second-place finish at Homestead was enough to leapfrog him past main rival Denny Hamlin, who held a slim points lead going into the weekend.

NASCAR

NASCAR Chase revamp

Series and drivers look at ways to add excitement to NASCAR's title showdowns

NASCAR chairman Brian France is still looking into ways to revitalise the Sprint Cup's Chase 'playoff' system, even though this year's title was decided in a three-way showdown last weekend.

The series has experienced a drop in TV ratings in recent seasons, and France said that ideas such as a 'winner-takes-all' finale could help to maintain excitement among regular fans while also drawing in casual viewers.

"Almost every league and tournament is taking a look at their playoff format or style," France said. "I don't know what we are going to do, if anything.

"If there is one thing we can do to simplify how we crown our champion, that would be a good thing. But the idea is to create big moments by the best teams at the end of the year, and if there's a better way to do that, we'll consider it. What I like is

a winner-take-all, and watching teams and drivers actually have to race and beat each other."

Leading drivers shared France's desire for change, although their focus was more on the tracks than the format.

Denny Hamlin, who lost the points leader in the Homestead finale, said: "I'd like to see a little bit more diversity in the racetracks. I don't think the last 10 weeks should be the same race tracks over and



Hamlin wants road courses in the Chase

over and over again. It should rotate around. I think that would help particular race markets get better. You have it end at different places, have it start at different places, maybe throw a road course in there. It's part of our regular season, why shouldn't it be part of our regular [Chase for the] Championship?"

NASCAR

Petty saved but downscales

Two Sprint Cup cars for RPM next season



Ambrose (right) joins RPM for 2011 season

RICHARD PETTY Motorsports has confirmed that it will be reduced from four cars to two in next year's NASCAR Sprint Cup.

Financial problems had led to widespread speculation over the team's future in recent weeks, but a statement issued on Monday confirmed that it would continue to race in 2011, although it would be stripped down to just two entries.

AJ Allmendinger will continue to drive the #43 car, while new arrival Marcos Ambrose will step into the #9.

Team patriarch Richard Petty said in a statement: "Richard Petty Motorsports has completed its restructuring process and is now in the process of moving forward. RPM will shift from running four cars to two in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, and that is never easy for the people involved."

The team ran Fords for Kasey Kahne,

Elliott Sadler, Paul Menard and Allmendinger this year, with Aric Almirola taking over Kahne's car after he shifted to Red Bull Racing last month. It is unknown how many staff will be laid off as a result of the cutback.

The team's financial problems became precarious after majority owner George Gillett's sale of Premier League football club Liverpool yielded far less money than he had hoped for, and in recent weeks the squad was reported to have fallen into debt with engine supplier Roush Fenway Racing.

RPM was formed out of a merger between Petty Enterprises and Gillett Evernham Motorsports at the beginning of 2009, and Yates Racing also became involved this year. Petty was reduced to a minor stakeholder, although it is understood that the seven-time NASCAR Cup champion has been working towards reclaiming control of the organisation.

IN BRIEF



TUNG INDYCAR DEAL CLOSE

GP2 racer Ho-Pin Tung (above) is closing on a switch to the IndyCar Series. The Dutch-Chinese driver tested for Alex Tagliani's FAZZT squad at Sebring last week, and the team is hoping to expand from a single-car effort for 2011.

SUPERSTARS FOR DONINGTON

The Superstars Series will have a British event for the first time next year after Donington Park signed a deal to stage the fourth round of the Italian-based touring car championship. A June 18-19 date has been confirmed.

AUTO GP/WTCC TIE-IN

Auto GP will support selected rounds of the 2011 World Touring Car Championship following the departure of Formula 2. The series will join the Monza, Marrakech, Donington, Oschersleben and Valencia WTCC rounds, as well as running a stand-alone street race in Bucharest in August.

RICHARDS UNDERGOES SURGERY

V8 Supercar driver Jason Richards is recovering after surgery to remove two tumours from his stomach. The three-time Bathurst 1000 podium finisher will sit out the rest of the season, with endurance driver Andrew Jones filling his seat in the Brad Jones Racing-run BOC Holden.

HIGHCROFT TESTS NEW ENGINE

Two-time American Le Mans Series champion team Highcroft Racing put the new twin-turbo HPD LMP2 engine through its paces in one of its HPD ARX-01c chassis at Kershaw in South Carolina. The new package completed more than 400 miles with Simon Pagenaud driving.

DTM SPLITS WITH DUNLOP

DTM organisers have agreed with Dunlop that the company will no longer supply tyres to the series after this year. Dunlop has been the sole tyre manufacturer in the series since 2000, and Hankook is currently the favourite to land the deal for 2011.

BOTTAS MAKES GP3 SWITCH

Williams-backed Finn Valtteri Bottas will race for the championship-winning ART GP3 team next season. Bottas, 21, drove for the French outfit – which will race as Lotus ART in 2011 – in F3 for the past two seasons, winning the F3 Masters event twice.

BMW to recruit from outside

BMW EXPECTS to recruit one driver from outside of its current line-up for its return to the DTM in 2012.

The manufacturer's motorsport director Mario Theissen said last month that he would prioritise speaking with his currently-contracted drivers before evaluating new signings. While that process is ongoing, he hinted last weekend in Macau that BMW will probably have one spare seat for 2012. "We have started to think

about our drivers," said Theissen. "We are talking to our current drivers, but there is no rush. We will first focus on our current drivers, and then see if there are open cockpits. Currently we expect that we have to field six cars. If this is the case, there will be an open cockpit for an external driver."

Theissen added that he expects BMW to have its first car ready for a shakedown in May, before proper testing begins in June. But he added

that it will have to build a new engine for the DTM, despite having eligible units in its range already.

"We have to design a new engine," he said. "Currently we have two four-litre V8s – the original M3 GTR engine and the one in the current M3 GT2 – but neither of them would be competitive in the DTM. So we have to do a new one based on the knowhow of the existing engines."

"On the car side, the regulations are fixed now so

the design phase is underway and it looks to me like we can expect a rollout in May. With car design, the preparations are on schedule."

Theissen added that BMW had still not decided on its continuing involvement as a factory squad in the World Touring Car Championship for next year.

"We are discussing it," he said. "We have a plan, we have ideas, but we don't have a decision."

Theissen might look beyond current drivers for DTM



TOYOTA

No verdict for Toyota

TOYOTA HAS has postponed the decision on its international motorsport future.

The Japanese manufacturer had been due to decide on the arena in which it would compete post-Formula 1 this month. It has now revealed that this decision has been delayed courtesy of the world economic situation.

A spokesman for Toyota Motorsport, which is scheduled to mastermind the forthcoming project from its Cologne headquarters in Germany, said: "There were meetings but there was no definite conclusion because of the economic situation. Things should become clearer in March."

Toyota revealed to AUTOSPORT (September 30) that its motorsport return will be focused on a profit-making customer programme. It admitted that building a car to take on Porsche and Ferrari in the GT Endurance category, which until this season has been known as GT2, is the most likely possibility.

O'Young will race in Shanghai



DTM

Hong Kong racer in at Audi

DTM NEWCOMER Darryl O'Young is expecting a baptism of fire this weekend as he fills in for the sacked Alexandre Premat at Audi.

The World Touring Car Championship racer was named as part of Audi's line-up for this weekend's Shanghai finale after the manufacturer announced that it had dismissed Premat prior to the end of his contract.

AUTOSPORT understands that the Frenchman angered Audi by running the New York Marathon just one week after his huge accident at Adria, against doctors' orders.

"I know what the standard in DTM

is like," said Canadian-born O'Young, who races under Hong Kong nationality. "I've done all I can to make myself ready for it, but I know that going straight into a race weekend without a test is going to be very difficult."

The DTM's push for a presence in China has led to rumours that Audi and Mercedes will agree to both run an Asian driver next year. Mercedes already has CongFu Cheng in its ranks, but O'Young played down talk that he had a deal agreed for 2011.

"I'm excited to be involved in the DTM and look forward to whatever might happen," said O'Young.

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BACK FOR SECONDS

Edoardo Mortara made history last weekend by becoming the first driver ever to win the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix twice. The F3 Euro Series champion is preparing to test an Audi ahead of a possible DTM programme in 2011, but has not ruled out returning to Macau to try for a third win.

➔ P32 MACAU F3 REPORT

FORMULA 3

F3 World Cup plan

Macau could form part of new global title for junior category

The Macau Grand Prix will likely form part of a new Formula 3 World Cup if the FIA agrees to plans being drawn up by event organiser Barry Bland.

Bland was recently appointed as the FIA's single-seater commissioner, a new role created to help the world motorsport governing body rationalise the junior single-seater ladder.

Although Bland would not be drawn on which F3 races might make up this new 'world championship', AUTOSPORT understands that the Macau F3 GP, the Masters of F3 at Zandvoort, Patrick Peter's revived Pau F3 street race, the

new Korean F3 Superprix at Yeongam, and single events from British F3 and the F3 Euro Series are all in contention to make up the calendar.

Bland said: "It will be a series of races, but has to be approved by the [FIA] World Council.

"It would be FIA recognition of F3, with a trophy awarded to the winner, and details will come out after the next World Council meeting in December. We would probably have about five events, which will be nominated in due course."

Carlin team boss Trevor Carlin is wary of the increased costs such a championship could create at a time when the FIA and Formula 3 teams and organisers are trying to reduce expense.

"It's a good idea, but what you wonder is how everyone is going to pay for it," he said. "It's at least four races on top of your [normal] championship, so it's another £100,000. When you consider there are nine events in GP3, that's another half a championship again."

"It's possible you might get somebody who just wanted to do these races," continued Carlin. "Would you rather have £100,000 in your pocket or the title of world champion?"



Proposed F3 World Cup would include Macau

F3 EURO SERIES

Signature eyes UK

THE BOSS of the Signature Formula 3 team believes that the Euro Series will survive the loss of rival ART Grand Prix, but says that he would consider switching to the British championship if the Euro Series dies.

ART chief Frederic Vasseur's decision to quit the Euro Series has robbed the championship of its most successful team, and a potential four-car line-up, at a time when the series is struggling to attract drivers.

But Signature supremo Philippe Sinault believes the measures taken by Euro Series promoters to relax testing restrictions and run more races on Formula 1 circuits will help the category grow.

"It's bad news for sure," Sinault told AUTOSPORT. "It was, for seven years, my main motivation to beat Frederic so now I have to find a new one!"

"But I think the Euro Series can survive because Mercedes and Volkswagen made a huge effort. For them, the Euro



Signature will miss racing ART

Series is a good platform for competition and promotion because the DTM is there.

"In sport, in love: only when you have an emergency do you have a revolution. But there has been good reaction from the promoter, which makes us more confident."

If the Euro Series fails to attract enough entries to remain viable, Sinault said competing in British F3 would "be my main target, but my priority is absolutely to stay in Euro Series."

➔ P52 GOODBYE ART

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Top names want to try classic stages again

IRC

Legends set for Monte centenary

Former Monte Carlo Rally winners Didier Auriol and Francois Delecour planning a comeback for 2011 IRC opener

Legends from across the sport are lining up for next year's centenary Monte Carlo Rally.

Former Formula 1 world champion Kimi Raikkonen has been linked to a Monte debut in a Peugeot 207, while Frenchmen Didier Auriol, who won the event three times, and Francois Delecour who triumphed in 1994, are also chasing an entry for the January 19-23 outing. Dani Sordo has been offered a Peugeot 207, while Toni Gardemeister is also seeking a return to the French Alps.

Despite being away from top-flight rallying since 2002, Delecour is convinced he has the chance to win if his deal to drive a 207 comes off.

"Nobody knows those stages like me," he said. "I know stages like Burzet and Moulinon very, very well. This will be a hard, hard rally, but it is the challenge of this rally which gives me the chance to win. At the moment, my deal is 80 per cent there, but I won't do it unless it is perfect. It means a lot to have the chance to go and compete again for this rally – particularly in this year when it is 100 years old."

Auriol, who is also looking to conclude his deal this week, was slightly more modest in his expectations of a result, saying he would be chasing a podium.

"The rally is going back to its old philosophy and I would like to do it," said Auriol. "And I will try to

have a top-level car. If that is possible then I try for the podium because I remain competitive."

Delecour and Auriol will face the cream of the IRC, including defending champion Juho Hänninen and top British driver Guy Wilks.

Wilks was delighted to hear about the exciting entry list, saying: "It's absolutely fantastic if it happens. They are all legends in their own right and the attraction of Monte Carlo, particularly on such a special year, means you can see why they want to do it."

Raikkonen admitted that, like the rest of his rally plans for next year, his Monte entry remained uncertain. He added: "I don't have

any plans fixed for next year yet. Monte Carlo is a really classic event for any rally driver, but there's nothing sorted."

Satellite giant Eurosport will film all 13 special stages of the event live.



Delecour reckons he can win Monte

WWW.MCKLEIN.DE

WRC

Sordo waiting on 2011 offer from Ford

DANI SORDO will not commit to the offer he has from Mini for next season until he is sure there is no chance of a deal from Ford.

Sordo says he has been flattered by the attention from Mini, but he added that his priority was to compete on as many rallies as possible next year.

"I will wait a little bit for Ford, but not long," said the Spaniard. "It's not

fair to Mini. Nothing is decided at the moment, but Mini is a good idea – with a big company like BMW behind it. I would like to develop the car, that's a good thing, but I also need to be driving a lot next year as well and this is not the full programme."

Sordo is expected to test the Mini for the first time before the end of the month. Another driver linked to a

test in the Countryman WRC is former Formula 1 world champion and Citroen driver Kimi Raikkonen.

A Mini drive could offer the Finn less pressure, with a bigger focus on testing and development away from the rallies. A positive would be the potential tie-in with his sponsor Red Bull and the expected 2012 deal between the drinks firm and Mini.



Sordo signed off from Citroen with Monza win

WRC

Ogier wary of number-two status at Citroen

SEBASTIEN OGIER has talked of his desire to avoid "falling into the number-two spot" when he starts his first full season alongside Sebastien Loeb at Citroen next year.

Loeb has enjoyed undisputed number-one status at Citroen for at least five seasons – Carlos Sainz might have laid claim to joint number-one when he was with the team in 2004 – but next year Ogier says he will fight for equal status throughout the year.

Citroen's team principal Olivier Quesnel says his two cars will, as usual, start the year equal. But, when one driver moves ahead, the team will rally behind the stronger title prospect.

Ogier said: "We start the season equal and my goal is for it to remain



Ogier will be keeping an eye on top man Loeb

like that as long as possible. I will do everything not to fall into the position of the number two."

Loeb has admitted in the past that running two headline drivers will be

tough for Citroen. He said: "If Ogier is beating me, what are they going to do? It's difficult to ask me to be number two when I have won the rallies and championships."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

DAVID EVANS
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It was a throwaway line from Citroen team principal Olivier Quesnel that got me thinking while tucking in to a third helping of tiramisu at Pirelli's fabulously Italian end-of-term party.

I asked Quesnel what he'd thought of three years on Pirelli's.

"We never knew they were there," was the reply. Crikey!

I know his countrymen at Michelin will replace the Italians for 2011, but I'd expected a slightly more considered response. Seeing my surprise, Quesnel went a little further.

"We never knew they were there because we never had a problem with them," he said. "The tyre was always perfect for us. We are sorry for them going."

It's well known that when Pirelli signed up as a sole tyre supplier for WRC, Citroen was the team with the most doubts. Previously, Citroens had sat on nothing but French rubber and they were, understandably, suspicious about working with a new company who had much better relationships with all the other teams. What a difference three years makes. And it wasn't just to the management. Sebastien Loeb was pretty chuffed, too.

During Rally GB, Loeb offered Pirelli's PR man the dream line while chatting about Jari-Matti Latvala's tyre 'issue' at the end of Friday. "I thought," said Loeb, "he must have hit a bank or something. You just can't puncture Pirelli..."



Rare sight: Pirelli puncture

IN BRIEF

CRONIN IN 2011 DOUBT

Double British Rally champion Keith Cronin has denied speculation that he has retired from the sport. Cronin (right) had been linked to a Proton seat for 2011, but being unavailable at the start of next year has cast that into doubt. Proton's Chris Mellors said: "It's difficult when you're trying to plan for the season, if the driver has other commitments."



start in Sweden, cross the border competitively, rally through Norway for 10 miles before returning back across the border to finish back in Sweden. It will run twice on day one.

HIGGINS FOR US MOVE

Mark and David Higgins have both been linked to Subaru Rally Team USA ahead of next year's Rally America series. The team's regular driver Travis Pastrana has left after winning four straight titles to begin a career in NASCAR, leaving a vacancy in his Impreza WRX.

BARKER FOR M-SPORT GIG

New Zealand's Stephen Barker won last week's Fiesta Sport Trophy shootout in Cumbria. Barker will now embark on a year-long contract to work at M-Sport, while travelling to and working on selected European rounds of next year's WRC.

SWEDEN HEADS TO NORWAY

Next year's Rally Sweden will include mileage in Norway, as previously reported by AUTOSPORT. There will be one 11.5-mile stage on the opening day (February 11) of next year's event. The stage will

HIRVONEN LAUDS HUNT

Ford WRC driver Mikko Hirvonen admitted he was impressed with Englishman Harry Hunt at last week's Fiesta shootout. Hunt, who has captured three rally titles in his first full season in the sport, drove the Fiesta S2000 with Hirvonen alongside. The Finn said: "He's got a lot of potential. This is his first full year, so he's only going to get better with the more experience he gains."

BRITS FOR RAC RALLY

This year's Roger Albert Clark Rally starts from Pickering Showground at 1800 tomorrow (Friday). The event runs through the Yorkshire, Kielder and Scottish Border forests before finishing in Carlisle on Monday evening. Former British Champions Mark Higgins and Gwyndaf Evans will be among the frontrunners in their Ford Escort Mk2s.

WRC

Tanak in line for long-term Ford move



Tanak has impressed M-Sport boss Wilson

PIRELLI STAR Driver Ott Tanak has been linked to a long-term contract with M-Sport from next season.

The Estonian won his second Production Car WRC round of the season on this month's Rally GB and his speed through the year has caught the eye of M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson.

"I have been impressed with what Ott has done this year," said Wilson. "We're in the late-ish stages of negotiations."

Tanak's mentor Markko Martin also denied any deal had been done, adding: "Yes, there are some talks, but nothing more. Ott has driven in Group N this year, but for next season we're looking for Super 2000."

Speculation has also linked Tanak to a Mini drive. He has tested the Countryman WRC, but a Ford option in S2000 next year and possibly the official team from 2012 is also said to be on the table.

BIG NUMBER

27,995

The number of tyres Pirelli has supplied to the World Rally Championship in its three-year contract to supply all four-wheel-drive cars in the series. Of those, just 43 suffered punctures.

Alonso

“Ferrari and I will not give up”

The title-loss pain of 2010 won't last long – Ferrari and its star driver will bounce back. *JONATHAN NOBLE* hears it from the horse's mouth

Less than 12 hours after Fernando Alonso breezed into the Yas Marina paddock on Abu Dhabi race morning with the confident look of a man eager to embrace his destiny, his return journey to the outside world that night was a sombre affair.

The steely determination in his eyes as he bounded towards the Ferrari team offices in the build-up to what was surely going to be his crowning glory with his new Maranello employers had been wiped away by *that* wrong

strategy call. Now all that was left was sadness and frustration.

Yet despite the weight of disappointment the Spaniard will feel for weeks to come over those five missing points over 19 races that would have made him a three-time champion, it will eventually be replaced with that feeling of 'home' that has comforted him for much of this year.

For however much he has felt pain at the last-race heartbreak, Alonso has been steadfast in his view that 2010 marked not the biggest disappointment of his career – for surely this was the

closest he has been to the title without clinching the deal – but the best year he has had in F1.

“It was hard to finish second but it's the same thing for the losing finalist at Wimbledon or in the World Cup,” he says. “We will try again next year. We are Ferrari and we must fight for every championship we go into. Next year will be no different and we will fight until the last race. Second is still very good and we can take a lot of positives.”

Alonso is a fierce competitor – a man who does not know how to give anything less than 100 per cent in his ►

MUBADALA
ABU DHABI

INTERVIEW
FERNANDO ALONSO





Dream debut: Alonso and Ferrari won Bahrain



The team-order banter began in Australian GP



“Every morning I wake up, I look in the mirror and smile because I am part of this team. Ferrari is a way of life, a religion”
Fernando Alonso

◀ pursuit of glory. Yet for all his no-compromise attitude towards being the best on track, he is a man who has found that happiness cannot simply be judged on results. Remember his feeling of being ‘alone’ at Renault while en route to his 2006 crown?

That is why despite the highs (he says winning at Monza) and lows (crashing in practice at Monaco) of his maiden Ferrari campaign – and the fact it was Sebastian Vettel and not him who was champion – he still found elements of life at Maranello that were much more important to him.

“I still wake up every morning with a smile,” he says. “Being a Ferrari driver, I think I found in this team all the values that I also have – the determination, professionalism, a friendly team and a happy one as well.”

“I think we never gave up, so this team also showed me how professional they are and how they work. All this philosophy and all this approach to a championship or to a weekend is the first time I have had that in my career. So as I said, every morning I wake up, I look in the mirror and smile because I am part of this team.”

Indeed, ask him about the aura of

Ferrari, and he is wide-eyed.

“It is not a normal F1 team. It is much more than that. It is a philosophy. It is a way of living for some people and a religion for the Italian fans as well. So, it was a surprise for me in a way how big Ferrari was. You know when you arrive to Ferrari it is a different world, but it is maybe more than that.”

For all of Alonso’s qualities as a top-line grand prix driver, and his stardom around the world, he remains a shy and humble character. When he speaks to the press, and throughout this interview, there is very little in the way of eye contact.

Sometimes such a shy attitude can be mistaken for arrogance. But for all his foibles it would be wrong to put him in that category – even though he is certainly a complex character. For him, he senses little magic in what he does. In his mind, he is just an ordinary boy from Oviedo who has happened to find himself in a job that he is very, very good at.

Push him to define the role that he has played at a team that replaced Kimi Raikkonen because it wanted a ‘leader’ and it becomes more of a



Italian GP win was the high point for Alonso...

...while Monaco practice shunt was the low point



Ferrari took a while to get its f-duct working

Alonso's #1 status was confirmed in Germany



struggle for him to eulogise.

"My mission, my job, is to drive the car," he says. "I am sure there are things that I learned from Ferrari, in terms of approaching weekends, in terms of strategy, in terms of set-ups and evolution of the car – that for me were new. There were for sure some things that I learned in the past, with the previous experiences for me, that I said to them probably they took some notes and maybe it helped them as well to change some things. All the information and the past experience is always helpful for a new future."

Yet Alonso concedes that there were times when he had to rally the troops. Not in the sense of rapping them over the knuckles for the mid-season wobbles that nearly put him out of title contention, but in making sure the new people he worked around really believed in him.

"There were bad times in the season, like after Valencia and Silverstone where we were back in the points and it was time to show them that I was not giving up," said Alonso, reflecting on his 'confident I can still win the title' remarks that he made after the British GP, even though he was at that stage ▶

ALONSO AND THE BRITISH PRESS

EVER SINCE that troubled year alongside Lewis Hamilton at McLaren in 2007, Fernando Alonso has not exactly been the darling of the British media.

His actions in Hungary that year and role in his then team's spying affair singled him out as a 'villain' of the piece – and he has struggled to shake off that reputation ever since.

The involvement of Renault in fixing the Singapore GP in 2008 to help him win did little to quieten the sceptics among the 'Fleet Street' boys and, when a heartbroken Felipe Massa was told to move aside for Alonso at Hockenheim this year, those old wounds reopened.

That was why Alonso found himself on the receiving end of some pretty tough questioning at the post-race German GP press conference from the British media – which still rankles

among certain factions of Ferrari as having stepped over the line of acceptability.

At the time, and ever since, Alonso has batted away all the British media's criticisms – and he does not mince his words when asked about whether their approach post-race at the German GP was an annoyance.

"No, I think it was... it was their problem," he says. "In a way I feel sorry for them because probably they don't have a good or happy life, as some of us have now at the moment. It is the way they react and, as I said, it is a shame but for us it was not a problem.

"In a way the good relationship of how united Ferrari is – and we prove that every weekend – is not a good thing for some people. And they don't like too much this unity. That is their problem not ours."

The Spaniard isn't bothered by the press



◀ 47 points adrift of then leader Lewis Hamilton.

"I knew that Ferrari will never give up because Ferrari is here to win every weekend, but I was making sure that they understood that I would never give up as well. I am new in the team and for sure next year I will not need to say anything because they will know me better, but this year sometimes it was better to say that."

There had of course been no need for such comments on the eve of the season when things appeared to be going so well. Throughout winter testing the view from other teams was that it was Ferrari, and not Red Bull, that was the strongest. The F10's long-run pace was stunning and the combination of a quick car and a fired-up Alonso meant the car came into 2010 very, very strong.

F1 is as much a car-development race off track as it is a competition between men on it. And the story of 2010's technical progress was not about front-wing evolutions or aerodynamic tweaks but of the f-duct and the blown diffuser – two concepts that Ferrari came into the season without.

It put Ferrari on the back foot in the early stages of the season as it sought to develop its own versions, and it was not until mid-season that the team finally had both elements working properly. But in getting them on the car, Ferrari had to divert resources away from the normal updates it would have brought on board.

"Obviously we started the season very strong," says Alonso. "In winter testing and in Bahrain we had a very competitive car, and then we lost a couple of months developing and trying to get the f-duct and the exhaust system working.

"With the exhausts we had some previous thoughts about that in the winter, but the blown rear wing was a surprise, in a way, that the system was allowed. It is something that people don't talk about too much when they talk about 2010, but it is okay.

"Obviously we were making progress but we were behind in two big aspects of the car evolution – the f-duct and the exhaust system. There was already one team with the f-duct since the beginning of the season and already one team with the exhaust system from the beginning, so we were always in catch-up mode. It was never enough.

"We knew there would be a couple of races with some difficulties but our mission was to score as many points as possible until we had a competitive car and we could fight again for victories. We tried our best and I think around Valencia or Silverstone, our car was at a very good level of competitiveness."

By the time the team rolled into Hockenheim, it was clear that Alonso

had to start winning if his thoughts of the championship were to be realised. That win came, but in hugely controversial circumstances as Felipe Massa was effectively ordered to move over and sacrifice the win – on the first anniversary of the qualifying crash in Hungary that nearly killed him.

It was not the first time that the Alonso/Massa relationship had come under stress, for as early as race two in Australia there was the first hint of frustration at the team situation – Alonso was vocal over the radio about losing time behind the Brazilian.

There was talk that Alonso had vented his true feelings about the situation during a subsequent heated meeting at Maranello where he had made it clear that if Ferrari really wanted to win the title it could not afford to compromise either man on track purely in the interests of fairness.

Shortly afterwards, he took matters into his own hands in China when he aggressively bullied his way past Massa

"Ferrari will never give up – they are here to win every weekend. I made sure they understood I would never give up"
Fernando Alonso

on the entry to the pits. My way or the highway clearly...

Alonso will not get drawn into the Australian situation, though. As we saw so frequently after Hockenheim (see sidebar), he wants to waste little time debating in public the relative rights and wrongs of moments of tension with the media.

"In a way Australia was a good result," he says. "It is strange, and sometimes difficult to see, that in Australia there was more talk about my laps behind Felipe than the start, when I crashed with Jenson Button and I spun. It seems people forget this moment, that I was last on the first lap, and then they spend too much time talking about the laps behind Felipe."

Yet Alonso clearly thrives on being the loved one – and it would be wrong to suggest that when he talks about equality he wants one driver to be treated more equally than the other. In his mind, total equality means that if he is quicker than his team-mate in the race and yet is stuck behind him for position, then the team has to swap their order. To hold him back, to compromise his own opportunities, would be unfair team orders.

Alonso is a no-compromise man. Racing is simple to him: go out there with a team you love and give it your best. If the team gives him everything, he gives everything back, too. It was why the season ended with that remarkable run of form that included wins in Italy, Singapore and Japan.

However, he is a man who will not waste time on the peripheral matters of life as a grand prix driver. Offer him something that will give him one tenth of a second and he will bite your hand off; waste his time with something that provides no performance advantage and he lets you know.

That is why even through the difficult times in 2010, when he found himself again at the centre of controversy for getting a team working for him, he didn't care what the public or the media thought. What Ferrari thinks is all that matters – which is why he spoke out mid-season about his belief in the title. Ferrari is the centre of the universe to him – which is why it probably hurt so bad after Abu Dhabi. The rest of the world? He couldn't give a damn.

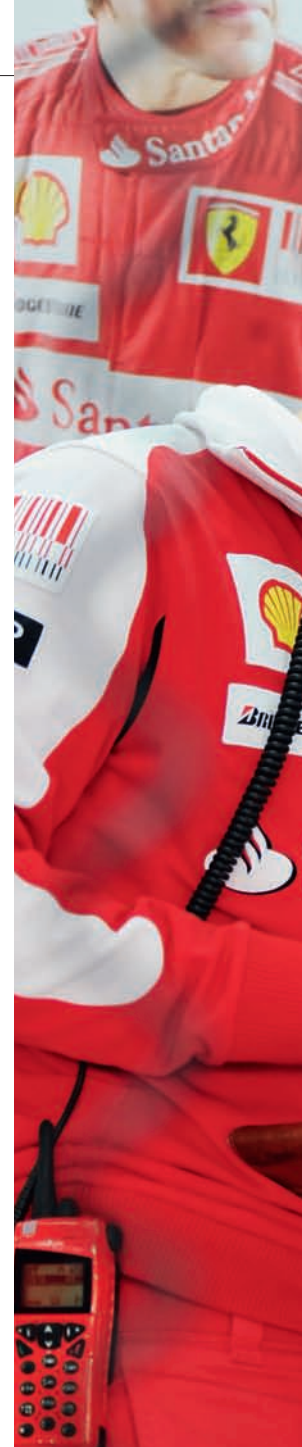
"It is part of sport and part of success probably," he smiles when asked about the hero/villain status he has around the world. "I read the other day that [basketball players] Kobe Bryant and LeBron James are the two men with the least popularity in the USA. And that says many things.

"When you are doing well and having success for whatever reason, people don't like you too much. When you are P18 in every race, you are such a nice man! So, hopefully I am a very bad man in the future as well..."

Alonso has found his happy place in Formula 1. And, when the Abu Dhabi disappointment recedes, his rivals had better watch out. ☒



Shunt in wet Belgian GP derailed title bid



Deep in thought with engineer Andrea Stella

EARLY PROMISE FULFILLED

IN THE wilderness between the protective cocoon of the race team and his personal inner-circle, to most of the world Fernando Alonso is a quiet, almost diffident character. He shies away from eye contact during interviews and his demeanour remains unchanged whether he has had a good or a bad day. Like Ayrton Senna, he brings a piercing intensity to his work, but unlike the great Brazilian that isn't a burden he bears away from the car.

Mike Gascoyne, who as Renault technical director, worked closely with Alonso during his formative F1 years and recognised the mark of greatness.

"In his first test for Renault, he didn't drive on the first day but he was there," says Gascoyne. "He spent the day out the back kicking a football against a garage wall – he's very good and has all the tricks! The next day, we had a problem with the car, so he had to

wait for an hour. He started kicking the football again and you wondered if he was taking it seriously. Then he got in the car and in the first outing he did he was on the pace of the regular drivers. If you can be that relaxed, then jump in the car and do that, you're seriously good."

While guiding Alonso to his first F1 pole position (in Malaysia '03) and victory (in Hungary the same year), Gascoyne found himself accepted into the Spaniard's inner circle.

"If he respects you, you're in for life," he says. "If he doesn't, you don't exist. He's not an ebullient, outgoing sort of guy. He's quiet and focused. And he wondered if he could handle it as an 18-year-old kid, but he can. He's not about shouting – he's focused and would sell his grandmother for a point, much like Michael Schumacher, but he's also very loyal and friendly."

Edd Straw



Gascoyne rated Alonso in early Renault days

Ferrari set the pace in 2010 winter testing



MACAU

 China
November 18-21
Macau Formula 3
Grand Prix



AT A GLANCE

- Winner **Edoardo Mortara**
- Qualification race **Edoardo Mortara**
- Pole position **Edoardo Mortara**
- Fastest lap **Edoardo Mortara**



Mortara takes his bow after great F3 sign-off

Mortara's perfect time Signature

No-one had won the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix twice before - until Signature Volkswagen driver Edoardo Mortara made it two on the bounce last weekend



Two for Mortara, as he beats Vanthoor home

QUALIFYING

Bottas finds no tranquility at Solitude

Mercedes man Valtteri Bottas took the fight to the dominant VW-powered Signature Dallaras during practice and qualifying, but ultimately came up short in a crash-affected crucial final session.

Bottas was mighty through the mountainous middle sector, but clouted the wall heavily in the Solitude Esses and broke his suspension. His Prema team effected repairs and Bottas rejoined with enough time for one final salvo.

He "gave it everything" and his lap with bent steering was fast, but not quite enough to topple reigning Macau champ Edoardo

Mortara, who took pole by 0.218 seconds.

"I was pretty lucky because Valtteri was slightly faster than me," said Mortara. "The track was really difficult and I had oversteer in the middle sector. I was absolutely on the limit and he was still a couple of tenths faster than me there. It's pissing me off to be honest because the middle sector is my sector!"

Laurens Vanthoor briefly sat on pole, but fell back to third. Daniel Abt and Marco Wittmann made it four Signature cars in the top five, while Bottas's Prema team-mate Roberto Merhi rounded out a top six covered by 0.8 seconds.

Finnish ace Bottas took the fight to Signature



RACE RATING

★★★★★

Some impressive drives, but not the epic lead fight everyone was hoping for

“To have a driver like him is something special. It raises our level”

Prema team manager Rene Rosin pays tribute to Valtteri Bottas

REPORT MACAU F3 GP



Ben Anderson reports

To be quick at Macau, you have to be super-committed through the Guia circuit's long, winding and mountainous middle sector.

Edoardo Mortara rules the roost in this part of the track, and it was his sublime commitment and wall-skimming speed on the run from San Francisco Bend to the Melco hairpin that carried the Euro Series champion to his second consecutive F3 GP victory last weekend in his VW-powered Signature Dallara.

The Italian was on pole, thanks to a comfortable win in Saturday's qualification race, and managed to hold his advantage on the long drag to Lisboa.

But his first attempt at breaking away through his favourite part of the course was thwarted by spending the second lap behind the safety car.

A startline shunt, triggered when GP3 frontrunner Rio Haryanto and Brazilian Lucas Foresti were slow away, accounted for the Indonesian, his Double R Racing team-mates Michael Ho and Alexander Sims, and Hitech's Carlos Munoz.

It left debris littered across the track and, when Daniel Juncadella also crashed at Lisboa, officials were left with little choice.

Mortara became a sitting duck at the lap-three restart. Macau rookie Daniel Abt and 2009 German F3 champion Laurens Vanthoor both went by their Signature team leader at Lisboa, and Mortara narrowly avoided tagging Vanthoor as they accelerated towards San Francisco Bend.

Abt's lead lasted just four more corners before he crashed heavily through the rapid right-left combination at Paiol. “We changed the aero configuration to a bit less downforce,” said Abt, who escaped his battered Dallara with only sore knees. “Normally that corner is easy flat, but as I went in I just understeered and touched the wall.”

Sensing something might happen ahead of him, Vanthoor backed off and avoided collecting his crashing team-mate. The Belgian therefore assumed the lead as the safety car made another cameo.

The safety car was necessary, but robbed Vanthoor of the chance to use Abt's crash to break from the pack. The flashing

British champ Vergne could not challenge



amber lights led the pack until lap seven while the track was cleaned. Then came the crucial moment that ensured Mortara would become the first man to win the Macau F3 GP twice.

Vanthoor was too aggressive at the final corner and had to back out of the throttle to avoid hitting the wall before the restart. This helped Mortara outdrag him on run out of Mandarin before the team-mates braved it out again on the brakes at Lisboa. Having gone round the outside to lead, Mortara went into maximum-attack mode

through the middle sector. Vanthoor couldn't keep up. Mortara finished the lap 1.2 seconds clear and broke the tow. The race was over.

“It was a case of pushing as hard as I could, even harder than in qualifying,” said Mortara of his spellbinding commitment on that critical lap. “I pushed 120 per cent and almost touched the walls in every corner.”

Any decent martial-arts film usually involves an apprentice learning from a sensei. In Macau, the ‘master’ Mortara acted as tutor to Signature's young

guns, helping them get up to speed quickly in practice so the team could work on fine set-up adjustments at a much earlier stage than some rivals.

As rookies, Abt and Euro Series runner-up Marco Wittmann concentrated on learning what they could from their Italian team-mate. This being his third (and most competitive) visit to the former Portuguese colony, Vanthoor was more concerned with trying to beat Mortara. He got closer to his team-mate's pace as the weekend wore on, but still finished it a couple ▶

THE INSIDE LINE

Abt fights hard in combat as Brits tangle at the start

➤ The expected first showdown between Finnish hotshoe Valtteri Bottas and pre-event favourite Edoardo Mortara failed to materialise during Saturday's qualification race.

Bottas made a good start from second on the grid, but found himself hemmed in by a Signature armada on the run to Lisboa. Macau rookie Daniel Abt used the slipstream to jump into the lead, but thought better of braving it through Turn 1 with team-mate Mortara. “I had a really good start but didn't want to crash,” said Abt. “I was letting him through just to take the second place.”

Abt spent most of the race driving in his mirrors, which backed up Mortara's main rivals. This allowed the Italian to make a decisive break through the mountain and he finished the first lap over two seconds clear. Game over.

Bottas tried to take Abt for second on the next lap but got blocked and

then passed by Signature's Laurens Vanthoor at Lisboa. The Belgian jumped his German team-mate on the next lap and set off in vain pursuit of Mortara.

“I pushed a few laps to try to get the gap down,” said Vanthoor. “Then I backed off because it's a qualification race and it's important to finish.”

As the leading pair escaped, Bottas found himself shuffled back to fifth behind Prema team-mate Roberto Merhi. The Spaniard ran the same downforce levels as his Finnish running mate, but seemed to struggle less on the long straights. It took him several laps, but eventually he bullied his way past Abt by going round the outside at Lisboa with two laps to run. He threw his good work away on the next lap though. A battling Abt and Bottas surprised Merhi

by diving down the inside at Lisboa and relegating him to fifth. The Spaniard then clouted the wall, punctured his right-rear tyre and bent the suspension.

As Abt held Bottas at bay to complete a Signature 1-2-3, Merhi crawled home in 22nd place, his chances of a strong result in the feature race ruined.

Marco Wittmann was a lonely fifth, as Renger van der Zande held off charging British F3 champ Jean-Eric Vergne.

Alexander Sims, James Calado and Oli Webb were all eliminated in a first-lap MSA Team UK shuntfest. Calado lost it though Mandarin and collected the hapless Sims, while Webb outbraked himself into Lisboa trying to avoid the chaos. Chinese racer Adderly Fong narrowly avoided collecting Calado's errant left-rear wheel in the chaos.

Abt got involved in hair-raising battling



“If I’d qualified fourth or fifth in Britain I’d be pissed off. But here I’ve just got to get in the top 10!”

Oli Webb finds himself readjusting his horizons in Macau



Sad end to Macau for Oli Webb

Vanhooer races through back streets of Macau



Da Costa leads from Rosenqvist, Juncadella



KEY MOMENTS

QUALIFYING Bottas clouts wall in Solitude Esses, and can't beat Mortara in patched-up car
RACE 1 Abt slithers into second at first corner, allowing Mortara to escape as he backs up pack
RACE 2 Vanhooer makes mistake at restart, and Mortara is through

Van der Zande did a good job for Motopark



THE INSIDE LINE

Disaster for Sims and Double R

⤴ Alexander Sims came to Macau as a man on a mission, but endured the sort of rotten luck that would have made Wile E. Coyote wince.

Hoping to make up for a disappointing second season in the F3 Euro Series this year, Sims rejoined the Double R squad with which he contested last year's Macau F3 GP.

Things got off to a bad start when the Brit hit the wall at Fisherman's Bend in the first practice session, before his HWA-Mercedes motor grenaded in the afternoon's provisional qualifying session, meaning an automatic 10-place grid penalty for an engine change.

Sims struck the wall again at Maternity Bend during Friday's second free-practice session, before a rear wishbone came out on his first lap in

Saturday morning's crucial second qualifying period. Fixing this changed the car's suspension geometry, lowered the rear of the car and gave Sims chronic understeer.

He finished up 12th fastest, but started the qualification race 22nd after applying his penalty. He made it as far as Mandarin on the first lap before getting wiped out by James Calado's 160mph accident.

With Sims now starting dead last for the main race, the team decided to go for broke and run absolute minimal downforce. This time, he only made it a few yards off the grid before wedging his Dallara into the back of team-mate Michael Ho.

"It all started when he pushed a nun down the escalator at Heathrow," joked

Use a magnifying glass, and you'll see Sims on opposite lock!



Double R team manger Malcolm Swetnam. "This was supposed to be a bit of a renaissance after a bad season

for both of us. I hadn't been to Macau since 1991 and I think I'll wait another 20 years before coming back!"

"It's annoying - I shunted at one of the easiest corners"

James Calado kicks himself after qually-race crash



Calado: not a scratch on his car in this pic

REPORT MACAU F3 GP

◀ of tenths shy.

"He did some good laps, which I couldn't follow," said the runner-up. "I really wanted to win, but have to admit Edoardo was faster than me. He did a better job and deserves to be in the history books."

Mika Hakkinen protege Valtteri Bottas was the only man who looked capable of taking the fight to Signature in the main race and finished up with a mightily-impressive podium. The Mercedes man joined up with Italian squad Prema Powerteam, and without so much as a shakedown test he was immediately on the pace. The Finn's speed through the monstrous middle sector sometimes eclipsed Mortara's, but his car ultimately lacked vital pace on the long straights before Lisboa.

"It can't be drag because we ran the smaller rear wing and less downforce to try and be quicker in the slipstream," said Bottas. "Maybe they have a bit more power at the end of the straight, because the

slipstream just seemed to stop as I got closer."

Bottas fell behind Wittmann after the lap-seven restart, before he reasserted himself at Lisboa on the next lap. The flying Finn closed down Vanthoor, but ran out of time to challenge for second.

Bottas's Prema team-mate Roberto Merhi hoped Macau would boost his confidence after a disappointing Euro Series season with Mucke. He looked strong in Saturday's qualification race, where he ran as high as third, but hit the wall and ruined his good work. He started 22nd in the final and carved his way through brilliantly to eighth, just ahead of impressive Macau debutant Felix Rosenqvist, whose Performance Racing team did a great job with just a little help from VW stablemate Signature.

Behind Wittmann's fourth-placed Signature Dallara came F3 veteran Renger van der Zande. The Dutchman's vast experience helped Timo Rumpfkeil's Motopark team to a strong

fifth on its Macau debut.

"We ran a bit too much wing in the race but I think we did a great job," said van der Zande, who endured a tough debut season in GP3 this year. "Signature is the best - that is clear. But if you take them away only Bottas was in front."

Van der Zande won a fight with Carlin's Antonio Felix da Costa, who recovered from a costly qualifying crash to round out the top six. "In free practice I had two punctures," said the Euro Series rookie champ. "In the race everyone had

two or four new tyres and I had none. In the last few laps I was nowhere, but P6 is not bad."

British F3 champion and Toro Rosso rookie F1 tester Jean-Eric Vergne overcame severe jetlag and the only crash of his F3 career in qualifying to finish seventh. He built up speed sensibly but fell away in the race that counted. "I wasn't fast," rued the Frenchman. "We ran low downforce and I was losing everything in the middle sector. I have enjoyed racing at Macau, but this is not the way I

wanted to finish the season."

His chief British championship rivals James Calado and Oli Webb endured torrid Macau debuts. Racing Steps Foundation man Calado spent too much time in the barriers to get the most from his Carlin-run Dallara, while Fortec pilot Webb struggled for pace all weekend and also made some costly visits to Macau's unforgiving walls. As Macau's record-breaking winner Mortara will tell you, skimming them without shunting is the key to success. 🏆

Abt (leading) and Vanthoor jump Mortara



RESULTS

Macau Grand Prix, Macau Guia Circuit (PRC), November 18-21

GRID	
2 VANTHOOR	1 MORTARA
4 BOTTAS	3 ABT
6 V.D.ZANDE	5 WITTMANN
8 HUERTAS	7 VERGNE
10 JUNCADILLA	9 DA COSTA
12 NASR	11 ROSENQVIST
14 HARYANTO	13 JAAFAR
16 MUNOZ	15 FORESTI
18 SUZUKI	17 KUNIMOTO
20 SEKIGUCHI	19 BULLER
22 MERHI	21 YAMAUCHI
24 HO	23 FONG
26 IMPERATORI	25 SATO
28 WEBB	27 LLOYD
30 SIMS	29 CALADO

MAIN RACE - 15 LAPS, 57.042 MILES					
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Signature	DVW F309	39m30.753s	1
2	Laurens Vanthoor (B)	Signature	DVW F308	+2.120s	2
3	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Prema Powerteam	DMB F308	+3.156s	4
4	Marco Wittmann (D)	Signature	DVW F308	+6.230s	5
5	Renger van der Zande (NL)	Motopark Academy	DVW F308	+10.631s	6
6	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Carlin	DVW F308	+13.173s	9
7	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Carlin	DVW F308	+16.508s	7
8	Roberto Merhi (E)	Prema Powerteam	DMB F308	+19.313s	22
9	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Performance Racing	DVW F308	+20.343s	11
10	Carlos Huertas (CO)	Hitech Racing	DVW F308	+21.362s	8
11	Felipe Nasr (BR)	Double R Racing	DMB F308	+22.994s	12
12	Alexandre Imperatori (CH)	Toda Racing w/KCMG	DH F308	+23.926s	26
13	Hideki Yamauchi (J)	Hanashima Racing	DT F308	+25.486s	21
14	Jazeman Jaafar (MAL)	Carlin	DVW F308	+25.989s	13
15	Will Buller (GB)	Fortec Motorsport	DMB F308	+31.563s	19
16	Yuji Kunimoto (J)	TOM'S	DT F308	+36.143s	17
17	Rafael Suzuki (BR)	TOM'S	DT F308	+36.621s	18
18	Oli Webb (GB)	Fortec Motorsport	DMB F308	+41.413s	28
19	James Calado (GB)	Carlin	DVW F308	+41.753s	29
20	Yui Sekiguchi (J)	Three Bond Racing	DN F308	+46.198s	20
21	Adderly Fong (PRC)	Sino Vision Racing	DMB F308	+46.336s	23
22	Lucas Foresti (BR)	Fortec Motorsport	DMB F308	+46.731s	15
23	Hywel Lloyd (GB)	CF Racing w/Manor	DMB F308	+49.720s	27
24	Kimiya Sato (J)	Motopark Academy	DVW F308	+52.555s	25
R	Daniel Abt (D)	Signature	DVW F308	2 laps-accident	3
R	Daniel Juncadella (E)	Prema Powerteam	DMB F309	0 laps-accident	10
R	Rio Haryanto (RI)	Double R Racing	DMB F308	0 laps-accident	14
R	Carlos Munoz (CO)	Hitech Racing	DVW F308	0 laps-accident	16
R	Michael Ho (PRC)	Double R Racing	DMB F308	0 laps-accident	24
R	Alexander Sims (GB)	Double R Racing	DMB F308	0 laps-accident	30

Key: D=DaRrta; W=VolksWagen/Spiess; MB=Mercedes Benz/JHA; H=Honda/Toda; T=Toyota/TOM'S; N=Nissan/Tomei

Key: D=Dallara; VW=VolksWagen/Spieß; MB=Mercedes Benz/HWA; H=Honda/TDA; T=Toyota/TOM'S; N=Nissan/Tomei

Q RACE GRID	
2 BOTTAS	1 MORTARA
4 ABT	3 VANTHOOR
6 MERHI	5 WITTMANN
8 V.D.ZANDE	7 ROSENQVIST
10 VERGNE	9 JUNCADILLA
12 HUERTAS	11 DA COSTA
14 LLOYD	13 JAAFAR
16 IMPERATORI	15 NASR
18 CALADO	17 SUZUKI
20 SIMS	19 WEBB
22 HARYANTO	21 MUNOZ
24 KUNIMOTO	23 FORESTI
26 HO	25 SATO
28 BULLER	27 SEKIGUCHI
30 FONG	29 YAMAUCHI

QUALIFYING RACE - 10 LAPS, 38.028 MILES			
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GRID
1	Mortara	22m14.842s	1
2	Vanthoor	+2.342s	3
3	Abt	+9.414s	4
4	Bottas	+9.647s	2
5	Wittmann	+18.766s	5
6	van der Zande	+20.001s	8
7	Vergne	+20.709s	10
8	Huertas	+21.312s	12
9	da Costa	+26.268s	11
10	Juncadella	+27.576s	9
11	Rosenqvist	+31.265s	7
12	Nasr	+35.510s	15
13	Jaafar	+36.516s	13
14	Haryanto	+43.046s	22
15	Foresti	+50.375s	23
16	Munoz	+50.894s	21
17	Kunimoto	+51.266s	24
18	Suzuki	+52.066s	17
19	Buller	+53.481s	28
20	Sekiguchi	+53.732s	27
21	Yamauchi	+53.956s	29
22	Merhi	+55.035s	6
23	Fong	+56.503s	30
24	Ho	+1m03.691s	26
25	Sato	-1 lap	25
R	Imperatori	8 laps-off course	16
R	Lloyd	2 laps-accident	14
R	Webb	0 laps-accident	19
R	Calado	0 laps-accident	18
R	Sims	0 laps-accident	20

Main race: Winner's average: 86.61mph. Fastest lap: Mortara, 2m11.480s, 104.12mph. Qualifying race: Winner's average: 102.56mph. Fastest lap: Vanthoor, 2m11.934s, 103.76mph. R=Retired. * = grid penalty.

MACAU

CHINA
November 19-21
WTCC
Round 11/11



AT A GLANCE

- Winners **Rob Huff/Norbert Michelisz**
- Pole position **Huff**
- Fastest laps **Huff x2**



Huff, Ray Mallock and Muller celebrate titles

Huff stands tall but falls short

Pole position, a third Macau victory and a brace of fastest laps weren't quite enough to give Briton Rob Huff second in the championship around the famous Chinese street circuit



Huff took third Macau win in as many years

QUALIFYING

Huff secures top spot as rivals mess it up

The antics of Friday's Q1 session (see sidebar) meant the drivers had an 8am start for Q2, on what should have been a Saturday off. Rob Huff had been quickest all through practice and was up there again – nine tenths ahead of everyone after the first Q2 runs. Augusto Farfus got a provisional front-row slot but, having exhausted his four new tyres doing so, had to watch the final shootout as a spectator in the pits.

Huff found another tenth and was safe on pole, but a battle erupted behind. Yvan Muller set no time on his first run after making an uncharacteristic mistake and hitting the wall at Lisboa. He bounced back to take second, only to be nudged off the front row by Norbert Michelisz. Muller got it back when the SEAT driver was penalised for missing the weighbridge the previous day. That gave Tiago Monteiro fourth – top SEAT driver.



Huff dominated practice and qualifying for pole

There was no title decider at Macau this year – at least not a proper one – but that didn't stop one of the motorsport world's most unusual events from throwing up a moment or two of surprise and drama.

Yvan Muller had effectively become champion between events, thanks to BMW's exclusion from the previous round in Japan, and he was crowned simply by turning up in Macau. Chevrolet also sealed the manufacturers' honours, but it would have taken a pretty catastrophic weekend for it not to.

Yet there was still plenty to play for, with Gabriele Tarquini, Andy Priaulx and Rob Huff all having an eye

on the runner-up spot, and more than a couple of drivers looking to end the season with a boost. And then there were the novelties of Macau – qualifying running into the dark thanks to multiple crashes, a typical road block and traffic jam on Sunday, and a second new winner for the series in as many events (following Colin Turkington's promotion to victory post-Japan).

After barely making it through qualifying at all – with four red flags in one segment alone – the field continued in much the same style at the start of the first race. It only made it to the first kink on the long main drag before the first incident erupted. Macau specialist Andre Couto

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Even scooter racing would be brilliant at Macau. The circuit delivered action on every front

"I couldn't have chosen a better place to have my first win than Macau"

Norbert Michelisz

REPORT WTCC MACAU



Steven English
reports

Michelisz broke his series duck in race two



Poulsen took race-two pole but soon lost lead



KEY MOMENTS

RACE 1 Keeping the lead at the rolling start was as tough as it got for Huff

RACE 2 The laps Huff lost behind Farfus denied him a challenge on Tarquini for the runner-up spot

later, pole-sitter Huff led unchallenged from Chevrolet team-mate Yvan Muller, with Tiago Monteiro leading Augusto Farfus and Tarquini in third. Norbert Michelisz was sixth and, behind him, Tom Coronel was challenging independent leader Darryl O'Young and Fredy Barth for seventh on the way down from Mandarin Bend.

O'Young braked earlier for Lisboa than he would have on a normal racing lap, with everything up to temperature, and Coronel hit him from behind – pitching him into the barrier. The Chevrolet Lacetti was then out of control, unable to slow down, and collected Barth on its way into the wall.

The wrecks were removed without the need for another safety car, but the yellow flags in the area made Tarquini wait a couple of laps before he could threaten Farfus. But once the restrictions were lifted he blasted past the BMW on the way out of Mandarin and easily held the place at Lisboa.

Michelisz and Coronel later passed Farfus, but the Brazilian got one of the places back when Coronel had to serve a drive-through penalty on the penultimate lap for his contact with O'Young. His delay allowed

Menu to recover to seventh and gave eighth-placed Kristian Poulsen pole position for the second race.

Meanwhile, up front, Huff was taking it easy in the lead while team-mate Muller only had to repel a brief intrusion from Monteiro. But the newly-crowned champion had to do no more than hold the inside line on the run down to Lisboa, and Monteiro dropped back after that.

The final lap of the race was run behind the safety car – because Henry Ho had crashed in the mountain section – ensuring that Huff would hold on to tie with champion Muller on three wins this season.

The second race of the day, held just 15 minutes after the first, was a test of several teams' ability to turn around damaged cars. Despite several incidents in the first race, only two cars didn't make the start of the second – with Priaulx even having rejoined for the closing laps of the first.

The later race also provided the better action, a novel winner and the trusty Macau road block.

The front-row starters were quickly out of the picture as a clutch failure left Menu stranded on the line and Poulsen dropped swiftly down the order. ►

moved up on Priaulx's outside and drew ahead, for something like ninth place, at the left kink. But the pair made contact as Couto came across and both spun into the inside wall. SUNRED's Michel Nykjaer was collateral damage as his SEAT was also eliminated.

The safety car had to be deployed and the field was led through the pitlane while the circuit was cleared. Before the leaders had been picked up, however, Alain Menu understeered into the tyre wall at Lisboa and was 15th by the time he'd rejoined.

At the restart, three laps

THE INSIDE LINE

Qualifying postponed as darkness falls on Macau

Yvan Muller's two World Touring Car titles with different manufacturers wasn't the only landmark this season. At Macau, the WTCC achieved its longest-ever qualifying session. Q1 was already running late on Friday afternoon, due to lengthy barrier repairs following a support-race crash. It wasn't running for long before Tom Coronel triggered the first red flag when he crashed at Fisherman's – cue another long delay while repairs were made to the barrier – so long that his badly-damaged SEAT was ready to rejoin the session before the end.

Shortly after the restart, Andy Priaulx tore the front-left wheel off his BMW when he hit the wall at the final corner. He escaped the scene and parked in the pit exit, so no red flag was required.


But seconds later, independent Masaki Kano spun his BMW at the same spot and the session had to be halted again while he was retrieved from the middle of the circuit.

Only a lucky few had got a timed lap in, and before many more could, Kristian Poulsen ripped a wheel from his BMW at Paiol, with Sergio Hernandez crashing to avoid debris.

The session had been running for more than two hours by the time the cars were released again – with darkness falling. At least there was time for a few more laps, but then Coronel crashed again – this time at Police. Enough was enough. That was the end of Q1 and the final Q2 shoot-out was delayed until Saturday morning, when Rob Huff continued his domination.

Delayed Q1 was still going on as darkness fell





SMILE.



MEET THE CHEVROLET CRUZE, WINNER OF THE 2010 FIA WTCC.

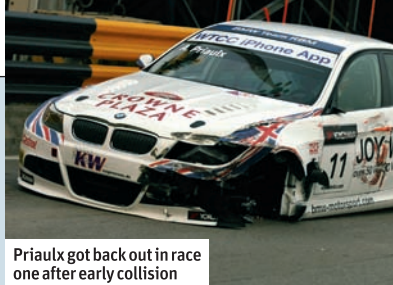
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"I couldn't fight for the title due to incidents out of my control, but I really look forward to 2011..."

Third-placed Rob Huff fires a warning shot to rivals about next year



Priault got back out in race one after early collision

REPORT WTCC MACAU



Michelsiz put Hungary on the winners' map

◀ Farfus didn't make a great start from third either, so it was Michelsiz who led into Lisboa, with Tarquini behind from fifth.

The Hungarian hadn't had much time to break away when the race was red flagged with the track fully blocked at Police.

Andrei Romanov had crashed at the notorious right-hander, with his

car left broadside across the track. O'Young, Barth and both Yukinori and Nobuteru Taniguchi all crashed into either each other or Romanov and ensured the road was completely blocked.

When those cars had all been removed the seven trapped, but perfectly healthy, cars made their way back to the grid to line up for the restart.

That was the biggest test for Michelsiz, who had started on the front row of reverse-grid races four times this season but only led a total of three laps prior to Macau. But he negotiated the first lap safely clear of Tarquini and began to edge further away.

With the leaders spreading themselves out, attention was drawn to the squabble for third – in

which Farfus was struggling to hold off a line of chasing Chevys and SEATs behind.

Muller had already opened the door for race-one winner Huff, to aid his chase of Tarquini and the runner-up spot in the championship, so it was the Briton applying the first pressure on Farfus.

On his first attempt to outmanoeuvre the BMW on the way to Lisboa, Huff's only option was to take the outside. Farfus defended easily, with a bump in the rear mid-corner. Huff was shown the black and white flag next time round, yet the move repeated itself exactly – Farfus getting to the apex first and Huff giving him a shove.

But on the third attempt, Farfus slipped up. Finding his BMW a handful, he drifted wider than usual out of Mandarin and gave Huff all the invitation he needed to stick his nose down the inside. Farfus had to give up the place and concentrate on making sure he didn't lose more ground to Muller and Monteiro behind.

The cycle repeated itself with the other Chevrolet for the next two laps, with the

BMW holding firm and the Cruze tapping its rear in Lisboa, until eventually the bumper worked loose.

Now dragging debris behind, Farfus had to touch the brakes on the way into Mandarin. It gave Muller enough of a run to drive around the outside. Coronel also managed to find a way past the battle-worn RBM car before the end.

Meanwhile, Huff had been charging up towards the leaders – where Michelsiz remained a second or so clear of Tarquini. As things stood, Tarquini would hold onto his second place in the points with their scores even – Huff had to pass him to beat him and, although he closed up fast, he ran out of time.

That left Michelsiz untroubled to claim his and the Hungarian-based Zengo Dension team's maiden WTCC win.

"When I saw the red flag [at the end of the first lap], it was strange," admitted Michelsiz. "I was quite calm waiting on the grid – I knew I had the pace to stay in front. I'm really happy that this is what happened." ☑

RESULTS

FIA World Touring Car Championship, Macau (PRC), November 19-21, round 11 of 11

GRID	
1 HUFF 2:31.321	2 MULLER 2:31.773
3 MENU 2:31.862	4 MONTEIRO 2:31.946
5 FARFUS 2:32.222	6 TARQUINI 2:32.222
7 MICHELISZ 2:31.728*	8 PRIAULX 2:32.478
9 O'YOUNG 2:33.185	10 COUTO 2:37.073
11 BARTH 2:34.045	12 NYKJAER 2:34.190
13 CORONEL 2:34.191	14 HERNANDEZ 2:34.689
15 TURKINGTON 2:35.246	16 ENGSTLER 2:37.094
17 Y TANIGUCHI 2:39.267	18 CAMPANICO 2:40.315
19 HO 2:40.396	20 N TANIGUCHI 2:40.897
21 POULSEN 2:42.455	22 BENNANI 2:37.984*
23 CHEN 2:40.840*	24 MERSZEI 2:45.002
25 ROMANOV no time	26 MA no time
27 KANO 2:45.574*	

RACE 1 - 11 LAPS, 41.831 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Rob Huff (GB)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze LT	35m34.840s	1
2	Yvan Muller (F)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze LT	+0.366s	2
3	Tiago Monteiro (P)	SR-Sport (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon TDI	+0.631s	4
4	Gabriele Tarquini (I)	SR-Sport (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon TDI	+0.909s	6
5	Norbert Michelisz (H)	Zengo-Dension Team	SEAT Leon TDI	+1.306s	7
6	Augusto Farfus (BR)	BMW Team RBM	BMW 320si	+1.967s	5
7	Alain Menu (CH)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze LT	+2.564s	3
8	Kristian Poulsen (DK)	Poulsen Motorsport	BMW 320si	+2.823s	21
9	Franz Engstler (D)	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	BMW 320si	+3.503s	16
10	Mehdi Bennani (MA)	Wiechers-Sport	BMW 320si	+3.998s	22
11	Sergio Hernandez (E)	Scuderia Proteam Motorsport	BMW 320si	+4.614s	14
12	Tom Coronel (NL)	SR-Sport (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon TDI	+4.770s	13
13	Yukinori Taniguchi (J)	Bamboo Engineering	Chevrolet Lacetti	+8.465s	17
14	Cesar Campanico (P)	Team Novadrivier Total	BMW 320si	+8.961s	18
15	Andrei Romanov (RUS)	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	BMW 320si	+9.439s	25
16	Nobuteru Taniguchi (J)	Scuderia Proteam Motorsport	BMW 320si	+13.059s	20
17	Kevin Chen (TPE)	Scuderia Proteam Motorsport	BMW 320si	+24.421s	23
18	Philip Ma (PRC)	Jacob & Co Racing Team	Honda Accord	+26.043s	26
19	Joseph Merszei (PRC)	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	BMW 320si	+27.592s	24
20	Masaki Kano (J)	Liqui Moly Team Engstler	BMW 320si	-1 lap	27
21	Henry Ho (PRC)	Ho Chun Kei/Sports & You Asia	BMW 320si	8 laps-accident	19
NC	Andy Priaulx (GB)	BMW Team RBM	BMW 320si	-4 laps	8
R	Darryll O'Young (PRC)	Bamboo Engineering	Chevrolet Lacetti	4 laps-accident	9
R	Fredy Barth (CH)	SEAT Swiss Racing by SUNRED	SEAT Leon TDI	4 laps-accident	11
R	Colin Turkington (GB)	Team Aviva-Cofco/WSR	BMW 320si	4 laps-transmission	15
R	Andre Couto (PRC)	SR-Sport (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon TDI	0 laps-accident	10
R	Michiel Nykjaer (DK)	SUNRED Engineering	SEAT Leon TDI	0 laps-accident	12

RACE 2 - 10 LAPS, 38.028 MILES			
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GRID
1	Michelsiz	54m37.415s	4
2	Tarquini	+1.193s	5
3	Huff	+1.543s	8
4	Muller	+10.886s	7
5	Farfus	+14.675s	3
6	Coronel	+14.894s	12
7	Priault	+15.716s	22
8	Monteiro	+16.360s	6
9	Hernandez	+20.951s	11
10	Engstler	+25.099s	9
11	Nykjaer	+43.156s	26
12	Bennani	+47.302s	10
13	Turkington	+1m01.671s	27
14	Chen	+1m47.235s	17
15	Ma	+1m52.404s	18
16	Campanico	8 laps-accident	14
R	Kano	6 laps-accident	20
R	Poulsen	4 laps-accident	1
R	Merszei	3 laps-accident	19
R	Menu	2 laps-clutch	2
R	Romanov	0 laps-accident	15
R	N Taniguchi	0 laps-accident	16
R	Y Taniguchi	0 laps-accident	13
R	Barth	0 laps-accident	25
R	O'Young	0 laps-accident	23
NS	Ho		21
NS	Couto		24

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Muller	331
2	Tarquini	276
3	Huff	276
4	Priault	246
5	Monteiro	177
6	Menu	173
7	Farfus	167
8	Coronel	136
9	Michelsiz	104
10	Turkington	97

INDEPENDENTS' TROPHY		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Hernandez	156
2	Engstler	127
3	Poulsen	117
4	O'Young	104

KEY R=Retired; *=grid penalty. **Race 1** Winner's average: 70.54mph. Fastest lap: Huff, 2m33.560s, 89.15mph. **Race 2** Winner's average: 41.77mph. Fastest lap: Huff, 2m32.766s, 89.61mph.

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IN BRIEF



NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Kyle Busch took victory in the final race of the season at Homestead. Busch outduelled Kevin Harvick to clinch the win.

NASCAR TRUCKS

Busch also finished his first season as a NASCAR Truck team owner by claiming his eighth victory of the year. He secured the win by passing race leader Ron Hornaday on a restart with four laps remaining.

FUJITSU V8 SUPERCARS

Steve Owen all but claimed the title with two wins at Sandown. Privateer Taz Douglas took his first FV8 win in race three.

V8 STOCK CARS

Caca Bueno got a lucky win at Brasilia after runaway leader Ricardo Mauricio dropped out with a puncture on lap 30. Max Wilson's drive from seventh to second puts him just two points clear of Bueno in the standings.

VALLELUNGA 6 HOURS

AF Corse's Alessandro Garofano, Luca Rangoni and Marco Mapelli drove their Ferrari 430 GT to victory in the Vallelunga 6 Hours. Giancarlo Fisichella had been leading in another AF Corse entry but spun with 23 minutes to go.

FORMULA BMW PACIFIC

Carlos Sainz Jr and Tom Blomqvist (on his BMW debut) made it two sons of ex-World Rally champions on the podium in Macau. Sainz won from Tomoki Nojiri, as Blomqvist headed a scrap for third.

NASCAR SPRINT CUP HOMESTEAD (USA), NOVEMBER 21, RD 36/36

Johnson tears up the history books – again

Jimmie Johnson's place in NASCAR history was reinforced when he secured an unprecedented fifth consecutive title at Homestead last weekend.

The Hendrick Chevy driver went into the race trailing Denny Hamlin by 15 points, but things fell Johnson's way from the start. He qualified sixth to Hamlin's 37th, and Hamlin's chances took a further dive when he was forced to pit for repairs to his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota following contact with Greg Biffle.

Once he returned to the

track, Hamlin made an impressive comeback to climb back into contention, only to fall off the lead lap while making his final stop under green flags. By the time he got his lap back it was too late, with Johnson cruising to a comfortable second-place finish behind long-time race leader Carl Edwards (Roush Fenway Ford) to retain his crown.

Outside contender Kevin Harvick needed to win the race to steal the title and, when the Richard Childress Chevy driver took the lead following pitstops during

Johnson's title streak continues



the seventh caution period, it looked like he might have had a chance of creating an upset. That was derailed by a penalty for speeding in the pitlane, but Harvick charged back through the field to finish third behind Johnson, ahead of Aric Almirola.

● Gary Lee Edgington

RESULTS

1 Carl Edwards (Ford Fusion), 267 laps in 3h09m50s; 2 Jimmie Johnson

(Chevrolet Impala), +1.608s; 3 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet); 4 Aric Almirola (Ford); 5 AJ Allmendinger (Ford); 6 Kasey Kahne (Toyota); 7 Ryan Newman (Chevrolet); 8 Tony Stewart (Chevrolet); 9 Matt Kenseth (Ford); 10 Greg Biffle (Ford). **Final points** **1 Johnson**, 6622; 2 Denny Hamlin, 6583; 3 Harvick, 6581; 4 Edwards, 6393; 5 Kenseth, 6294; 6 Biffle, 6247; 7 Stewart, 6221; 8 Kyle Busch, 6182; 9 Jeff Gordon, 6176; 10 Clint Bowyer, 6155; 11 Kurt Busch, 6142; 12 Jeff Burton, 6033.

V8 SUPERCARS SANDOWN (AUS), NOVEMBER 20-21, RD 13/14

Dumbrell lifts a weight off his shoulders

Paul Dumbrell followed up his career-best second place in Tasmania a week ago with his first V8 Supercar win at Sandown in his Rod Nash Racing Ford. The Melbourne driver won on Saturday and looked capable of following it up on Sunday, until a bad pit call left him to recover from near-last to seventh.

Mark Winterbottom took over when Dumbrell found himself trapped behind a safety car. But, on the softer, faster Sprint tyre, James Courtney took and held the lead, also retaking the points lead from Jamie

Whincup in the process.

Results aside, the story of the weekend was the crashes that caused both races to be stopped. On Saturday, Garth Tander speared off on the opening lap and hit a tyre barrier at over 100mph. A day later, his HRT team-mate Will Davison went off at exactly the same spot.

● Phil Branagan

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Paul Dumbrell (Ford Falcon FG), 32 laps in 39m19.61s; 2 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore VE), +0.21s; 3 Mark Winterbottom (Ford); 4 James Courtney (Ford);

5 Russell Ingall (Holden); 6 Lee Holdsworth (Holden). **Race 2** **1 Courtney**, 65 laps in 1h51m43.62s; 2 Winterbottom, +1.55s; 3 Whincup; 4 Holdsworth; 5 Steven Johnson

(Ford); 6 Tim Slade (Ford). **Points** **1 Courtney**, 2932; 2 Whincup, 2879; 3 Winterbottom, 2729; 4 Craig Lowndes, 2567; 5 Garth Tander, 2382; 6 Shane van Gisbergen, 2262.



Dumbrell got his first win



CURRENT
STANDINGS

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Sebastian Vettel | ↔ | 24,200 |
| 2 | Mark Webber | ↔ | 22,079 |
| 3 | Sebastien Loeb | ↔ | 21,754 |
| 4 | Fernando Alonso | ↔ | 20,467 |
| 5 | Lewis Hamilton | ↔ | 19,217 |

Ranking the world's best drivers

WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Paul Dumbrell's maiden V8 Supercar win after nine years of trying elevated him 45 places to 249th, but title contender Craig Lowndes (165) went the other way, falling 12 spots. Carl Edwards's second Sprint Cup win in a row elevated him more spots to 13th.

To see the full list, visit castroldriverrankings.com



SARRAZIN: SPORTSCAR STAR?

Has a second Le Mans Series title elevated Stephane Sarrazin to sportscar great? GARY WATKINS decides

So Stephane Sarrazin won this season's Le Mans Series title. So what! He damn well should've. The Frenchman raced the only turbodiesel LMP1 entered in the full championship, the ORECA team's Peugeot, in four of the rounds and a factory Pug in the other. It's hardly worth discussing the whys and wherefores of his success. Better to try to answer the question: is Stephane Sarrazin right up there among the world's best sportscar drivers?

Sarrazin admits that the road to the 2010 LMS title "wasn't very exciting", but it did add another major success to an already bulging CV that goes some way to answering that question. He won the LMS together with Pedro Lamy back in 2007, again against limited opposition if you don't count his Peugeot team-mates, but more significantly has two victories in the Petit Le Mans endurance at Road Atlanta, notched up this year and last, to his

name. Then, there's his hat-trick of poles for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Nor should we forget that Sarrazin is a true sportscar all-rounder. He was a multiple class winner aboard a factory Aston Martin DBR9 in the American Le Mans Series in 2006 and won the Spa 24 Hours with the Vitaphone Maserati squad in 2008.

There isn't much missing from Sarrazin's CV, with the obvious exception of victory at Le Mans.

There's no doubt that he has the pace, too. That record-equalling run of three poles is testament to that. Sure, he was the driver Peugeot wanted to get the pole, but only after he'd done the job in the first year of the 908 HDi back in 2007.

"He got the pole the first year," explains former Peugeot Sport team manager Serge Saulnier, the man who brought Sarrazin to the team, "so it made sense to keep him on in that job." Saulnier, one year on from a not-

entirely-amicable departure from Peugeot, says it is difficult to split the cream of the 908 line-up – the likes of Sarrazin, Franck Montagny, Nicolas Minassian and Sebastien Bourdais – in terms of outright pace.

"They're all more or less at the same level," he says. "Bourdais stands out because he has an amazing capacity to save fuel, while Sarrazin has an amazing consistency. He's a guy who never makes mistakes."

Point out that one of his rivals from



Sarrazin and Peugeot were denied at Le Mans

ALL PICS: L'EMEUR/DPPI



Has Sarrazin joined sportscar greats?

another factory team describes Sarrazin as “fast but fragile”, and Saulnier sounds shocked. There was a high-profile mistake that ultimately cost Peugeot the 2008 LMS manufacturers’ crown – his ill-judged around-the-outside move on Rinaldo Capello at Silverstone in 2008 – but Saulnier says that he can’t remember another mistake from the 35-year-old during his Peugeot career.

“Stephane is actually a very nervous person,” says Saulnier, “but he has very good self-control in the car.” Throw some of the names of the other Frenchmen at Saulnier and he concedes: “They’ve all made mistakes,

especially in traffic.”

Bourdais, of course, lost himself, Sarrazin and Montagny victory at Le Mans in 2009 courtesy of a needless incident with a GT2 car and was again in a collision with a Porsche at last month’s Zhuhai 1000Km, the finale of the new Intercontinental Le Mans Cup. Montagny, meanwhile, made a gaffe with spectacular consequences at this year’s Spa 1000Km.

ORECA boss Hugues de Chaunac, who asked Sarrazin to join his semi-works squad for the 2010 LMS opener at Paul Ricard, agrees with Saulnier.

“When Stephane is in the car, you have 100 per cent confidence,” he says.

“You know he is going to be quick and make no mistakes.”

Aston Martin Racing team principal George Howard-Chappell is another paid-up member of the Stephane Sarrazin fan club. He brought the Frenchman into the AMR line-up in 2006 at a time when he was also competing in the World Rally Championship with the Prodrive-run squad’s sister Subaru team and was immediately impressed.

“He’d never seen Sebring before and had never driven the DBR9,” recalls Howard-Chappell, “yet he was bang on the pace inside 20 laps.

“Stephane is fast, consistent, technically strong and a real team player. If you were a new manufacturer coming into sportscar racing, he’d be among the first three or four drivers on your list to call.”

A Le Mans victory is all that Sarrazin requires to cement his place among the world’s sportscar elite, and he’s desperate to do it after two near misses, most notably this year when he Montagny and Minassian were nearly two laps clear when engine failure hit. So much so that he was happy to pander to fate back in June.

“In the history of Le Mans, the race hasn’t been won so many times from pole position,” he explains. “I thought I’d try to win it without being on pole, so I didn’t push so hard in qualify.” That’s quite an admission, but it’s a tactic he won’t repeat after heartbreak in 2010. Sarrazin isn’t going to offer anyone any favours come qualifying at Le Mans next June. ☒

ORECA gave Sarrazin a semi-works Peugeot seat

TOP 10 GT2 DRIVERS Gary Watkins picks his best-performing 2010 drivers from GT2

1 MARC LIEB



Gets the top spot for his amazing consistency in an ageing car that wasn’t anywhere near a match for the Ferrari 430. **Defining moment** Amazing pace over second half of the race at Ricard – with a broken shocker!

2 GIANMARIA BRUNI



Once again proved he’s consistently the world’s fastest Ferrari 430 driver. Deserved more from a frustrating year. **Defining moment** Comeback drive to second at Spa when it looked like AF Corse were cheated out of a lap.

3 RICHARD LIETZ



Is Lietz getting better and better as he finds his feet within the Porsche factory set-up? On the evidence of the 2010 LMS, the answer is yes. **Defining moment** Top effort in tricky conditions on the way to victory at Spa.

4 TONI VILANDER



Stepped up to the plate and made the most of opportunity as a car leader at AF Corse. Those who doubted his talents had to finally shut up. **Defining moment** Being handed the keys to the second AF Corse Ferrari 430.

5 JAIME MELO



Paired with Bruni on both sides of the Atlantic, Melo had a chance to prove he’s every bit as good as his team-mate. He didn’t quite take it. **Defining moment** Aston chase at Silverstone proved the fire is still there.

6 ROB BELL



The former LMS GT2 champion proved he was no one-trick pony after going from a Ferrari to an Aston Martin with JMW. **Defining moment** Class pole on home ground at Silverstone after a difficult start to the season.

7 DARREN TURNER



Little or nothing to separate on-loan factory Aston driver Turner and JMW team-mate Bell. Both drivers who worked well together. **Defining moment** Amazing pace in his first stint at Algarve – was the fastest GT2 driver on track.

8 PATRICK PILET



Proved again he’s among the fastest Porsche drivers, but things moved on in the LMS and he was never going to win races with team-owning co-driver. **Defining moment** P3 in Hungary was as good as it would get.

9 RICHARD WESTBROOK



Westbrook’s ProSpeed team took a long time to get to grips with the LMS and Michelin’s development tyre after its delayed switch from FIA GTs. **Defining moment** Leading the way for Porsche at the Silverstone season finale.

10 GIANCARLO FISICHELLA



The former F1-winning Italian struggled at first, but was on the pace after two races with Risi in the ALMS mid-year. **Defining moment** Silverstone pace proved all he needed was seat time to get to grips with GT racing.

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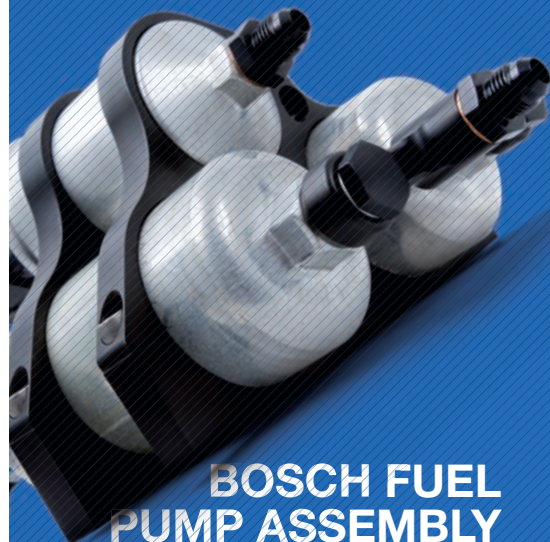
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Ricard opener caused problems for many

DOUBLE DOUBLE POINTS: DOUBLE TROUBLE

The decision to offer double points at the Paul Ricard opener spoiled some teams' title aspirations, writes GARY WATKINS

A few ill-conceived words in the rulebook had a dramatic effect on the 2010 Le Mans Series. The offending clause as good as rendered the most competitive class a no-contest and had a part to play in the destination of the title that mattered most.

It was never the intention that the Paul Ricard 8 Hours should offer double points but, for reasons described further on, it did. And that meant a no-score or just a bad result in France was a major handicap to overcome in a five-event series.

The AF Corse Ferrari squad was the pre-season favourite for the GT2 title after swapping over from FIA GTs and installing Gianmaria Bruni and Jaime Melo aboard its lead 430 GT. Yet the

Italian team wrote off its title chances after it non-finished at Ricard.

A distant fourth place for LMP1 title favourites, ORECA drivers Nicolas Lapierre and Olivier Panis, ultimately led to a shift in the ORECA's team line-up. Factory driver Stephane Sarrazin, who'd joined them at Ricard, had to be brought back into the line-up after a non-finish for ORECA at round two at Spa left them trailing a long way behind Ricard winners Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello in the points.

The Audi duo weren't going to be doing the full series, but ORECA opted not to take any chances in its pursuit of the drivers' title. It was clear that the German manufacturer would be back for the Silverstone finale and, at least according to the organisers, there was

a chance that it might turn out at the Hungaroring in August.

When it was announced that the series would kick off with an eight-hour race at Paul Ricard in 2010, it also revealed that it had plans for even longer races in the future. And that those races, if 50 per cent longer than the regular 1000km events, would count for double points. A clause to that effect was inserted into the regulations.

It wasn't the intention that Ricard should count double – LMS bosses confirmed that when AUTOSPORT enquired. But a race, uninterrupted by safety cars, on a quick track, meant the first three cars went beyond the magic 1500km mark.

The effect of the double-points ruling was nowhere more apparent than in GT2. Felbermayr-Proton Porsche drivers Marc Lieb and Richard Lietz ▶



GARY WATKINS
International editor-at-large

CLASSIC ISN'T A description that describes the 2010 Le Mans Series. Confusing would be a better word, and the reason was the in-and-out campaigns by the Audi and Peugeot factories.

Audi took in three of the five races, Peugeot just two. That created a two-tier LMS that will continue into next season as the new Intercontinental Le Mans Cup turns from this year's three-race pilot series into a full-blown seven-event championship. Three events from the LMS calendar will be ILMC points-counters, and they are the ones where the Peugeot 90X and the Audi R18 will be on the grid. The other LMS races will

be second-class events.

And that's the problem of the ILMC. The advent of what is effectively a world endurance championship should be welcomed, but there's an inevitable side effect.

The cake can only be sliced so many ways and, sticking to the baking metaphor, the LMS will be icing-free for the races.



Audi v Peugeot: only in ILMC



Lieb/Lietz Porsche benefitted in GT2

◀ gained a giant headstart on the duo that should have been their closest rivals when they won and the lead AF Corse Ferrari went out early with a freak driveshaft failure.

Any chance of an AF fightback disappeared at Spa. Bruni and Melo would have won had they not controversially been docked a lap when the race was temporarily halted thanks to a power cut. Worse still, Lieb and Lietz won again to extend their lead.

ORECA finished fourth at Ricard after losing nine laps when an airjack failed in the opening hour. Or to put it another way, the French team dropped 11 points to McNish and Capello. That gap extended to 23 points after a DNF at Spa and the Audi duo finished third

with Tom Kristensen.

Sarrazin and Franck Montagny, meanwhile, had finished second. That meant Sarrazin was only eight points behind the Audi pair, hence the decision to bring him back for the remainder of the LMS races.

The only class worth mentioning that wasn't affected by the Ricard decision was LMP2. The Strakka and RML teams finished one-two in France, the latter getting the nod in the championship courtesy of a 100 per cent finishing record.

That was only a small mercy. What happened at Ricard was inexcusable. Imagine the Formula 1 grid lining up not knowing how many points they were racing for! ❗

STRAKKA STAR

KANE: MORE THAN ABLE



Kane (r) is as quick as Watts (l)

BRITAIN proclaimed a new sportscar hero in 2010, but it undoubtedly overlooked one of the unsung kind. Danny Watts grabbed the headlines at the wheel of the Strakka team's HPD LMP2 contender. Team-mate Jonny Kane just did what he's always done: put his head down and got on with it.

The publicity centred on Watts. That was partly down to an unbroken run of six poles (five in the LMS and one at Le Mans) and partly down to an amazing triple stint at the end of the Paul Ricard race that sealed the duo and team boss Nick Leventis an unlikely comeback victory. Yet a look

at the lap averages through the season suggests that there was nothing to choose between cheeky-chappy Watts and the more taciturn Northern Irishman.

Sometimes one had the edge over the race distance, sometimes the other. But it is worth pointing out that Kane often did the donkey work. He usually started the race and drove more than his fair share in the dark courtesy of Watts's aversion to night-time driving.

That's all in a day's work for Kane, as is ignoring the media fanfare around more high-profile team-mates.

The 37-year-old just gets on with it.



Algarve victory helped ORECA's points deficit

2010 LE MANS SERIES - LMP1

POS	DRIVER/ NATIONALITY	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
1	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	ORECA/Peugeot	Peugeot 908 HDi	4	2	1	4	2	78
2	Nicolas Lapierre (F)	Team ORECA Matmut	Peugeot 908 HDi	4	R	1	4	2	63
3	Rinaldo Capello (I)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R15-plus TDI	1	3	-	-	3	57
4	Vanina Ickx (B) Franck Mailleux (F) Pierre Ragues (F)	Signature-Plus	Lola-Aston Martin B09/60	6	8	3	3	6	55
5	Neel Jani (CH) Nicolas Prost (F)	Rebellion Racing	Lola-Judd B10/60	7	R	2	2	5	52
6	Allan McNish (GB)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R15-plus TDI	1	3	-	-	R	45
7	Andrea Belicchi (I) Jean-Christophe Boullion (F)	Rebellion Racing	Lola-Judd B08/60	3	6	4	R	10	44
8	Olivier Panis (F)	Team ORECA Matmut	Peugeot 908 HDi	4	R	1	4	-	39
9	Greg Mansell (GB) Leo Mansell (GB)	Beechdean Mansell	Ginetta-Zytek GZ09S	8	-	-	1	7	34
10	Adrian Fernandez (MEX) Stefan Mucke (D) Harold Primat (CH)	Aston Martin Racing	Lola-Aston Martin B09/60	2	-	-	-	R	28

2010 LE MANS SERIES - LMP2

POS	DRIVER/ NATIONALITY	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
1	Tommy Erdos (BR) Mike Newton (GB)	RML	Lola-HPD B08/80	3	2	1	4	4	75
2	Jonny Kane (GB) Nick Leventis (GB) Danny Watts (GB)	Strakka Racing	HPD ARX-01c	1	R	R	1	1	69
3	Mathieu Lahaye (F) Jacques Nicolet (F)	OAK Racing	Pescarolo-Judd 01	4	4	4	3	6	53
4	Richard Hein (F) Guillaume Moreau (F)	OAK Racing	Pescarolo-Judd 01	2	3	R	7	3	52
5	Thor-Christian Ebbsvik (N) Karim Ojeh (SA)	Team Bruichladdich	Ginetta-Zytek GZ09S	5	R	2	5	8	46
6	Miguel Amaral (P) Olivier Pla (F)	Quifel-ASM Team	Ginetta-Zytek GZ09S	R	1	R	2	2	44

2010 LE MANS SERIES - GT2

POS	DRIVER/ NATIONALITY	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
1	Marc Lieb (D) Richard Lietz (A)	Team Felbermayer Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	1	1	3	1	5	87
2	Jean Alesi (F) Giancarlo Fisichella (I) Toni Vilander (FIN)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT	3	3	2	4	12	66
3	Martin Ragginger (A) Christian Ried (D)	Team Felbermayer Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	2	8	5	7	10	55
4	Gianmaria Bruni (I) Jaime Melo (BR)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT	R	2	1	-	1	50
5	Raymond Narac (F) Patrick Pilet (F)	Imsa Performance	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	7	5	10	3	6	47
6	Andrew Kirkaldy (GB) Tim Mullen (GB)	CRS Racing	Ferrari 430 GT	R	6	8	2	4	40
7	Luis Perez Companc (RA) Matias Russo (RA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT	5	11	6	8	9	38
8	Peter Dumbreck (GB)	Spyker Squadron	Spyker C8 Laviolette GT2-R	8	7	9	9	7	38

GT1: 1 Gabriele Gardel (CH)/Patrice Goueslard (F), Larbre Competition Saleen S7R
FORMULA LE MANS: 1 Andrea Barlesi (B)/Gary Chalandon (F), DAMS

KEY TO RACES: 1 Paul Ricard, April 11; 2 Spa-Francorchamps, May 9; 3 Algarve, July 17; 4 Hungaroring, August 22; 5 Silverstone, September 12. **POINTS SYSTEM:** 15-13-11-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1, with double points for races lasting more than 1500km (ie Paul Ricard). One point for pole position. Bonus points for not changing engines.



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INTRODUCING

Carlos Sainz Jr

The rally legend's son is making swift progress up the junior single-seater ladder



Most of you will recognise the name. Before the emergence of Fernando Alonso, double world rally champion Carlos Sainz was Spanish motorsport. So his son's emerging motorsport career is no surprise. That it's flourishing away from the special stages is less expected, however.

"I love rallying! It's one of my hobbies, but I prefer racing."

Carlos Sainz Jr's journey began at his father's indoor kart track, at the age of 10. "I really enjoyed myself, going there to have some fun", he says. "It was playing, nothing serious. Then one day, I said to my father, 'I think this is my dream. My dream is to be a Formula 1 driver.'"

This dream gained momentum in 2009 when Sainz won the Junior Monaco Kart Cup, whose former winners include Sebastian Vettel and Robert Kubica. Not

long after, Red Bull offered Sainz a test in a Formula BMW single-seater, and latterly a seat for the 2010 European Series.

"That was a great boost," he says. "I thought, 'Okay, now I have this great opportunity. I have to give everything to succeed.'"

In April this year, Sainz competed in his maiden car race, and stunned onlookers by finishing second. Despite entering only four rounds of FBMW's Pacific series, he went on to win twice and take two podiums. "After two races, I was leading the championship! But I was driving as a guest, so the points didn't count." The young Spaniard took more podiums in the European Series, but his spectacular win at Silverstone remains a season highlight.

"Sometimes you have some opportunities, and think, 'This is mine!' I took both poles, and thought, 'Okay, half of the job is

done.' But then in the first race, I made mistakes and finished third. So I thought, 'Now I give everything. If I crash, I crash. But I have to win!' And I did it!" Sainz repeated his earlier error in race two, but tracked, caught and outraced eventual FBMW champion Robert Frijns, setting the fastest lap en route to victory: "I've watched the overtake about five times!"

Sainz scored points in every round bar one on his way to fourth overall. His goal is still championship glory, albeit now in Formula Renault 2.0 with frontrunners Koiranen Bros.

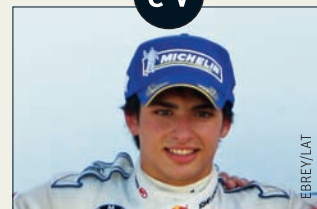
"I think how lucky I am to have a two-time world champion father by my side to help me. I have a good relationship with him – we are very good friends.

"I must win the championship. If I don't, I will not be happy."

Strong words, but then Sainz is all too familiar with pressure, and he's out to prove himself.

"Okay, I'm Junior, but I'm creating my own name, and I want to succeed as Carlos Sainz." ❧

CV



NAME Carlos Sainz Jr
BORN September 1 1994
2010 Fourth in Formula BMW Europe – one win and four podiums; two wins in FBMW Pacific and two podiums; two races in Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 – one podium; two races in European F3 Open – one podium; winner of Macau GP FBMW support race
2009 Winner of the Junior Monaco Kart Cup; runner-up in European KF3 Karting Championship; runner-up in Spanish KF3 Karting Championship
2008 Asia-Pacific KF3 Karting Champion; runner-up in Spanish KF3 Karting Championship
2006-2007 Karting

"I think how lucky I am to have a two-time world champion father by my side to help me"



ART AND SOUL

F3 superteam ART made the Euro Series its own for eight years, but now it's moving on. *By GLENN FREEMAN*

Two weeks ago the unthinkable happened: ART Grand Prix, a team that is synonymous with success in Formula 3, announced that it was pulling out of the category with immediate effect. It's a devastating blow to the F3 Euro Series, a championship that the French squad won six times in the past eight years. But it was not a decision taken lightly. Yes, ART also won the first GP3 championship with Esteban Gutierrez this year, but for team boss Frederic Vasseur, leaving F3 behind was a tough call to make.

"This was my 18th year in Formula 3 – I built this whole company up on F3," says Vasseur. "Everybody here was always so enthusiastic about it."

On the surface, it looks like ART has picked up its toys and left the playground because Signature and Volkswagen brought its run of



consecutive titles to an end in 2010. But the team was gracious in defeat this year, and would have been happy to do battle again in 2011 if the Euro Series was in better health.

"I couldn't take a risk on F3," Vasseur adds. "For the company it would be the worst case if we got to February and suddenly there was a problem with the F3 programme. We had to take the decision now."

That decision brings down the curtain on an era that spanned more than 150 races since ASM (as it was previously known) joined the Euro Series when the French and German championships merged for 2003.

Theophile Gouzin, the team's leading engineer who joined in 2004, worked with the likes of Adrian Sutil, Sebastian Vettel, Romain Grosjean and Jules Bianchi among others. And he admits that the news was as hard to take for ART's staff as it was for the boss to make the call in the first place.

"Everybody was very sad to hear that we were stopping F3," he says.

"It is the heart of the company, the category on which we based our name. It is disappointing that the major organisers in F3 didn't react quickly enough to the rising costs. But who knows, maybe we hurt the Euro Series because we won too much."

Six years of dominance hardly seemed on the cards when ASM won just a single race in 2003. But a year later the team had its first title with current DTM race winner Jamie Green, who unlike those that followed in his footsteps, had to take a bit of a risk in signing for ASM.

"I remember doing an official Euro Series test with them in 2003 and thinking, 'This is a good car,'" says Green. "But nobody knew what was going to be the car to have for 2004. Prema won the 2003 title, while Mücke were also looking good. As it turned out, we got the ball rolling in 2004."

After Green's title the French team went unbeaten until this year. And the Briton believes that one of the keys to all of that success was how the



Sixth straight title:
Jules Bianchi in 2009

engineers worked with their drivers.

"They were very good at educating the driver in how to be fast, rather than just showing you a data trace and telling you that your team-mate was faster in certain places," he says. "When you've not been out of karting for long you don't always know how to go faster, but they would suggest things to try. There's things they taught me about analysing the way you drive that I still use today."

Lewis Hamilton made it back-to-back titles in 2005, when the team won 17 out of 20 races. That prompted the Euro Series to adopt reversed grids for its second races ▶

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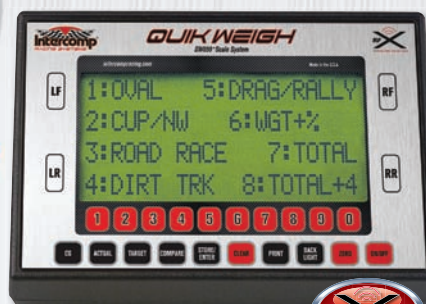
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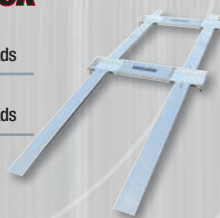
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ALL PICS: F3 EURO SERIES

◀ from 2006 onwards, but the win tallies remained in double figures for the next three seasons.

Force India F1 driver Adrian Sutil, who finished second to Hamilton that year, says he was blown away by the difference between the rest of the grid and what was then called ASM.

"It was like a little Formula 1 team," Sutil says. "They were the superteam, and from the moment you went near one of their cars you could see that everything was perfectly prepared. The difference in performance between us and the rest in 2005 was huge sometimes, and I just didn't think that was possible in F3."

Many of the rivals that were on the end of these lashings each year did their best to spread conspiracy theories about the team's supposed unfair advantages. But Manor Motorsport boss John Booth accepts that Vasseur's men just did the best job.

"All this talk of spending days on end with windtunnels and other tricks is bollocks," says Booth, who witnessed Hamilton and Paul di Resta move from his team to ASM and win the title.

"You didn't need to be a rocket scientist to see that Lewis and Paul were ready to go for the championship, and I'm sure they could have done it with us. But ASM were the best team, there is no question. They were good everywhere, and the package they had for the [Euro Series] Kumho tyres was practically unbeatable.

"They did a superb job, and that was down to the thoroughness of their preparation. We had a massive shock when we arrived in the Euro Series [in 2004] – we didn't realise how good it was. And maybe we were a couple of years behind. We had our chances to beat ASM, but we didn't take them."

Landing a drive in one of ART's Dallaras was not a guarantee of success. The team developed a very particular set-up as the years went on, and for the drivers it was usually a case

of getting used to driving the car in a different way. As Booth puts it, it was an idea that "broke a few along the way".

But as the team's roll call suggests, those drivers who could adapt were often unstoppable.

Nico Hulkenberg, champion in 2008, says: "The whole attitude of the team is very professional. They have a philosophy that they work to and everything is well structured. They teach you to push the car to the limit, every corner of every lap. They were never standing still, they always had new things, or different options to try. They were so focused on always improving the car."

In the end, it took a big investment into the Signature team from Volkswagen to topple ART. Not only did the manufacturer extensively develop its powerplant, but it also undertook a major windtunnel programme to give Signature a phenomenal aerodynamic package. That, coupled with a slightly below-par season for ART and several errors from lead driver Valtteri Bottas, brought the run to an end. But there was one reminder of the good old days in 2010, as ART cleaned up all weekend at Oschersleben, a track where mechanical grip is far more important than aero performance. As Edoardo Mortara clinched the title for Signature that weekend, ART was able to remind its rivals that there were some areas of F3 engineering where it was still the king.

Regardless of the name, ASM/ART's time in the Euro Series will never be forgotten. Vasseur isn't ruling out a return in the future, but for now he's looking forwards, not backwards.

"We never expected this success," says Vasseur. "When we joined the Euro Series the German teams were very impressive and it was a big challenge to reach the same level. They were good times, but okay, now we turn the page..."

ART BY NUMBERS

2003-10
Races 158
Wins 76
Titles 6

ASM/ART has won 48 per cent of all F3 Euro Series races that have taken place. During its title winning years from 2004-09, it won 59 per cent of the races

F1 driver's career lifeline

SUTIL'S SAVIOUR

ADRIAN SUTIL believes that were it not for a one-off drive with Frederic Vasseur's ASM Formula 3 team at the end of 2004, he wouldn't now be a veteran of four seasons in Formula 1.

Sutil had registered just two top-10 finishes in 18 attempts for the struggling Kolles team in '04. But he moved to ASM for the Hockenheim finale to fill the seat vacated by the injured Eric Salignon. Back in the days of qualifying sessions for both races, the young German shocked the paddock as he took pole for race two.

"In 2004 I was trying to convince people that the problem had been the car and not me, because I was having a bad season," says Sutil. "From the moment I got the pole position for ASM I was in love with this team. I was so surprised, the car was so different to what I was used to.

"I must say a big thank you to ASM, because they saved my career. It's a shame they are leaving F3, but I'm so happy I was a part of that team."

An accident and an engine problem cost him a strong result that weekend, but Sutil had proved a crucial point.



ASM/ART F3 EURO SERIES ROLL OF HONOUR THE CHAMPIONS

2004 Jamie Green



2007 Romain Grosjean



2005 Lewis Hamilton



2008 Nico Hulkenberg



2006 Paul di Resta



2009 Jules Bianchi



NOT FORGETTING...

Sebastian Vettel



Alexandre Premat,
Bruno Spengler,
Adrian Sutil,
Sebastian Vettel,
Giedo van der Garde,
Kamui Kobayashi,
Esteban Gutierrez,
Valtteri Bottas,
Alexander Sims



Formula Renault ace Williamson tries F2



Moore jumped into F2 car as Palmer Audi champion



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SILVERSTONE

Many British stars, from 2009 F1 world champion Jenson Button to Indycar star Dario Franchitti, have won the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award. *BEN ANDERSON* reviews this year's contest

The battle for the 22nd McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award is arguably the closest fought in this prestigious contest's celebrated history.

All six finalists earned their place in the shoot-out by excelling in junior single-seaters this season, and the chosen half dozen all performed impressively during the two-day driving evaluation on the new Silverstone South circuit last month.

That hasn't always been the case in the past, but Formula Renault UK

champion Tom Blomqvist, his defeated title rival Lewis Williamson, FRenault Eurocup runner-up Luciano Bacheta, Formula BMW Europe runner-up Jack Harvey, Formula Palmer Audi champion Nigel Moore, and British Formula Ford runner-up Scott Malvern can all feel proud of the job they did.

Their efforts were all the more laudable when you consider a doubling of the £50,000 prize to £100,000 was announced halfway through the assessment, which raised the stakes considerably. This only increased each driver's desire to rise above the rest and claim the McLaren F1 test, Puma racewear for a year, full BRDC

membership, an exclusive TW Steel watch, and media training from Lee McKenzie on offer to the 2010 winner.

The use, for the first time, of a fleet of Jonathan Palmer's FIA Formula 2 cars was a move designed to make assessing the drivers easier. The plan was to give the finalists more track time, put them through a more thorough and rigorous driving assessment, and minimise the impact of changing weather on the results.

Each finalist received their own F2 car, engineer and mechanics for the two days – the first of which was dry. The six drivers were split into two groups of three and spent the first morning



Tools for the test: DTM Mercedes and F2 racer

completing two 30-minute test and practice sessions each to get acclimatised. After their initial 30-minute run, each driver was allowed to work with his engineer to improve his car and this continued during some extended running in the afternoon.

Rain arrived for day two as the chosen six were lumped together and sent out for two tricky 15-minute qualifying runs. All the drivers were given six 50bhp overboosts for the second of the two eight-lap runs, to use at their discretion, while Jonathan Kennard provided the benchmark times. The final F2 run was held in the worst conditions of all the single-seater sessions. This time the drivers were judged on consistency. With standing water at almost every part of the track, trying to put a sequence of quick laps together without mistakes was no easy task.

Although designed to make their lives easier, this new format arguably made picking a winner tougher than ever for this year's panel of six judges, chaired by veteran of 146 grands prix Derek Warwick, and including double BTCC champion Jason Plato, DTM ace Jaime Green, veteran commentator Ian Titchmarsh, and AUTOSPORT's Marcus Pye and Kevin Turner.

Titchmarsh says: "Because we had, as often, mixed weather conditions, having all the cars on-track at the same time levelled the playing field.

"There was also very limited pre-event testing, unlike previous years when people seemed to almost try outspending each other on F3 testing."

After a year's absence, the Mercedes DTM car also returned. Each driver got



Drivers also had a go on the Cruden Hexatech simulator

three consecutive timed runs aboard the ex-Mika Hakkinen 2007-spec tourer – run this time by factory squad HWA in 2010 title contender Paul di Resta's livery. The drivers also had runs on Cruden's Hexatech simulator.

Ex-Toleman, Renault, Lotus and Arrows/Footwork F1 driver Warwick says: "I keep being asked what we are looking for. The answer is simple – the next Lewis Hamilton, or Jenson Button."

Next Sunday night, the sport's great and good attending the AUTOSPORT Awards at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London will find out who our judges think is 2010's best young British single-seater driver. But only time will tell whether they have found the future F1 superstar they are looking for... ❧

A BIG THANK YOU...

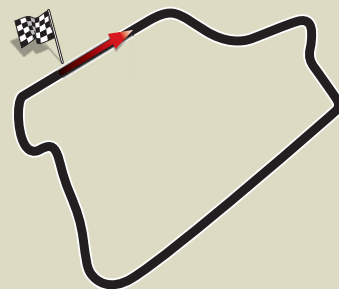
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INSIGHT

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC AWARD

Circuit guide



Lap distance: 1.969 miles

The evaluation moved from the GP circuit to the new Silverstone South for 2010.

The fast Stowe right-hander leads into the technically challenging Vale and Club sequence. The drivers then blast down the back straight before turning fast right at Abbey. A quick left at Farm Curve follows, before the drivers brake hard for the right-hand hairpin at Village. There is a bumpy braking zone for the right at Link, which sends the drivers back onto the Hanger straight to complete the lap.

Car guide



F2

Jonathan Kennard: "The biggest thing they have to learn is the turbo – you have to get it spinning before really nailing the throttle."

Power 425bhp (480bhp with boost)

Engine 1800cc, four-cylinder turbo

Weight 560kg



DTM

Jaime Green: "The car has lots of downforce, lots of power and weighs over 1000kg. It also has carbon brakes, which need to be heated up properly. It takes some getting used to..."

Power 476bhp

Engine four-litre, normally aspirated V8

Weight 1070kg



P58 MEET THE SIX

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Luciano Bacheta, 20

FRenault Eurocup runner-up

"To go up against five of the best drivers in the country and be judged by the most influential people in [British] motorsport, you can't ask for much more. Not being able to see the results from each session adds a new dimension of pressure. It's information we're used to having on demand! I think it went well in terms of my performance. Every time I got in the car I was competitive. The DTM car just encourages you to push hard."



Tom Blomqvist, 16

Formula Renault UK champion

"It was an awesome experience. I had a lot of fun and hope it went well. My [F2] engineer was happy and I got on well with him. I think I got to grips with the F2 car quite quickly and felt comfortable from the get go. The turbo is quite a challenge – you have to anticipate the lag and react with it when it kicks in. The DTM took longer than I hoped, but I was quick in the end. I'm the youngest guy but it's not going to stop me achieving what these guys can."



Jack Harvey, 17

Formula BMW Europe runner-up

"I was pretty happy with how it went, but it's hard to know how it actually went when you don't know how fast everyone else was. Because the DTM and F2 cars are not the cars we're always in it can be difficult to keep looking for the time. You are looking for half a tenth in your own car, but here you can go a couple of tenths faster in one corner. You know you are being judged but you have to put that at the back of your mind."



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Scott Malvern, 21

British Formula Ford runner-up

"It's been a massive learning curve. Trying to get my head around the aero and trust it – I've never had that before. I don't think I got the most out of the cars, but moving from one foot to the other for braking, changing the technique for braking, learning the way the car reacts at different speeds, the adjustments you can make in the car, the boosts – it's all alien to me! I knew I wasn't going to be the fastest because I had more to learn than the others."



Nigel Moore, 18

Formula Palmer Audi champion

"It's been an absolutely mega two days – a big, big learning curve and I'm going to walk away with so much from the experience. Driving two cars with a lot of aero has improved me all round, just getting a feel for them, the speed, the grip, the size. My breadth of experience helped so much in the DTM car, but I've got no single-seater aero experience. I just wanted to listen and learn; I've met some top people. I hope it's all going to be worth it."



Lewis Williamson, 21

Formula Renault UK runner-up

"I feel like I've learned quite a lot for sure. It felt good to do a good job in the dry and get the F2 car on the limit. I felt like it went quite well in the wet too, but it's difficult to say. Every lap was different with the puddles that were there. You have to just get on it by yourself and not worry about anyone else. It's important to work with the engineer and adapt with him as quickly as possible. I didn't come here to do anything different – just be yourself."

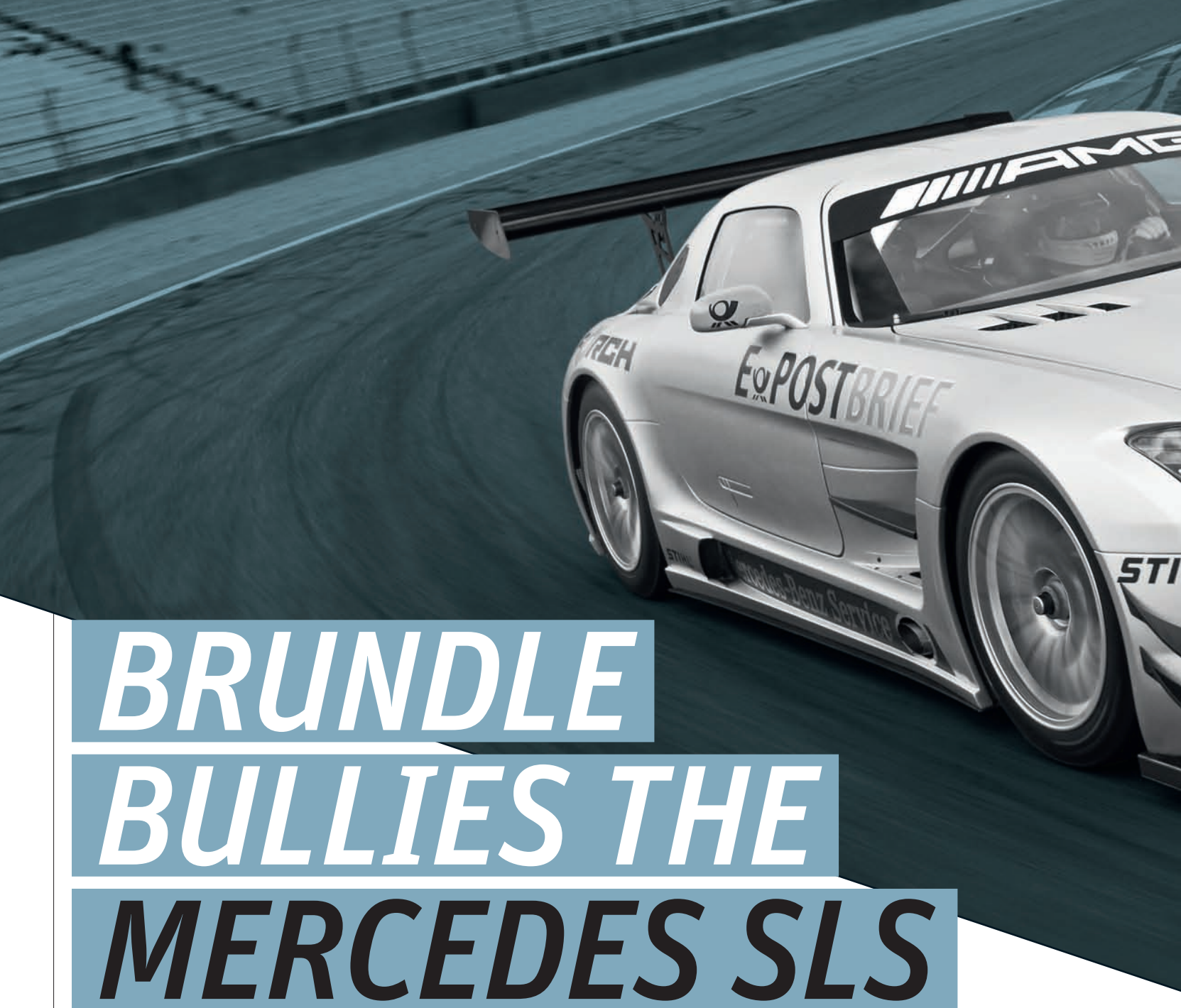


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BRUNDLE BULLIES THE MERCEDDES SLS

AMG's new SLS racer will be taking on other top marques in GT3 racing. Former world sportscar champion *MARTIN BRUNDLE* gives it a try-out

Let me start this with an admission: when I made my way to Heathrow to fly to Germany for this test, it felt like I'd only been back in the UK for five minutes since returning from the Singapore Grand Prix. I was wondering what I was thinking agreeing to test the new Mercedes SLS GT3 car, but as soon as I arrived at Hockenheim and saw it sitting there I realised it was well worth the trip. Driving a Mercedes on this track, prepared by the crack HWA outfit, you can't go wrong.

Obviously I have an interest in sportscar racing having done so much of it, and if you look at my career my

greatest successes were in sportscars. I still have a passion for it, and what's going on at the moment is very interesting. Sportscar racing has always been cyclical – manufacturers come in, there's a massive fight, and then it gets too competitive and it all goes bang. The costs get too high, they all run away, and everything falls apart. But clearly we're on an upslope again now, and in the GT ranks that means the likes of Ferrari and Porsche are being joined by other grand names such as Mercedes, BMW, Lamborghini, Ford, and possibly even McLaren.

Whenever I get back in a sportscar I remember what I consider the ultimate racing car – the Ross Brawn-designed Jaguar XJR14, which was extraordinary. It was just a flying wing, a brilliant

racing car. On a long run I would challenge myself and the car, it was a case of, "Okay, so you can handle that, but what about this corner flat-out?" It was incredible. I remember driving it at Monza when the track was dry at one end and wet at the other, and on the wet parts you could just nail it, even on slicks, and there were rooster tails coming out of the back.

So that's my reference point, and if I'm honest, my vision of these lower-spec GT cars has always been that they wallow a bit, and are just sloppy, make-believe racing cars. But that made me want to drive one.

My first impression of the SLS is how beautifully manufactured and finished it is, considering the version I drove was still technically a prototype.



I shouldn't be surprised – this is Mercedes after all – but you still expect to see the odd bit of tape here and there, some loose wires, or maybe a hole somewhere that was drilled but isn't required anymore. But the finish is immaculate inside and out. So before you even get into it you've got confidence that it's a quality product.

When you get in, all the controls are where you expect, and they do what you expect. You drive down the pitlane, and as soon as you take to the track the car always does what you think it will do. There are no big surprises, so it's easy to forget that you've got 1400kg of car underneath you.

For the first lap or two I attacked too hard, and the car was just sliding. I was forgetting how much mass I was dealing with. It's two and a half times heavier than a Formula 1 car, so you have to drive it accordingly. But you quickly settle in and start attacking.

The back end tries to get away from you on the throttle, but if you get a corner wrong there's a tendency for power understeer, which I suspect

the HWA guys will dial out anyway. But for now it means that you really have to get the nose into the corner, pick the throttle up, and drive the rear of the car like that. The fact that I was able to attack after such a short time in the car tells me everything I need to know about the SLS.

My fellow ex-grand prix driver and former team-mate Ivan Capelli was at the test with me, and he said that he felt the long front end on this car gave it a pointy handling characteristic. But I didn't find that at all. One thing I did notice was that I didn't realise how long it actually was until the mechanic waiting for me as I returned to the pits jumped backwards as I came to a stop! You have to remember that you've got this big 6.3-litre V8 engine in front of you, and about another metre more after that. You basically have to guess where the front end is, a bit like you would in a Jaguar E-type.

As I've already said, you can get the back out on the slow corners, but you've really got to work the steering, brakes and gearshift properly to get

the nose in on corner entry. It will go in nicely, but if you miss the precise moment then you are fighting to stop the car from washing out on the exit.

Once you're out of the corner, the power delivery is very linear. There's a lot of torque, and because of the restrictors for GT3 cars it's a bit breathless at the top end. You always feel like you want to hang on to a gear for a bit longer but you quickly realise that you might as well use the torque lower down the rev range.

This obviously isn't an all-out 'wing car', but it does have downforce. The front splitter and rear wing are impressive to look at, and you notice the effects of them in the car. Through a quick corner, such as Hockenheim's Turn 1, the car is absolutely fine. You just arrive, brake as little as possible, flick a downshift on the paddles and balance the car on the throttle. It jumps around a bit on the kerbs, but you never feel like it's going to deposit you in the barriers. It's made quite a challenging corner into simply an arrive-and-drive experience, you just get on it. The same goes for the kink before the Mercedes Arena; it's easily flat-out, but that's only because of the downforce generated at that speed.

You wouldn't have that stability through the high-speed stuff without the downforce, and you wouldn't be able to brake as aggressively as well. You quickly learn to banzai the braking zones, and by that I mean you really can be outrageously late on the brakes. It's a shame that because of my dodgy left ankle I can't left foot brake to really get the best out of this car's system. It ►

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Endurance - Heavyweight



Chris Hackworth (Champion)
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The STR Cup, inspired by the legendary Australian V8 Supercars is a new exciting series which will see Vauxhall VXR8s (Holden) competing head-to-head alongside other VXR's in this one make series.

Organiser, Shawn Taylor, aims to keep budgets low by restricting modifications in the three classes. Drivers can start out at a production-based level in the VXR Corsa, VXR Astra or a 450 bhp V8 all running on Dunlop slick tyres. The Corsa and Astra classes will be open to teams to enter, whilst the VXR V8 (Holden) will be built and run with arrive and drive packages subsidised to £49,995 + vat or teams can rent the race vehicle for the race rounds for £38,995 + vat. There is also the option in all classes for two drivers to split the rounds.

The arrive and drive package for the V8's will be run by Shawn Taylor Racing (STR). STR can also provide race engineering support for drivers in the Corsa and Astra classes. There are however, only a limited number of spaces available for the arrive and drive VXR V8 package.

Drivers will also be able to take part in STR's innovative driver development

programme alongside Cosworth, KW Suspension and a team of ex-Formula One, Le Mans and Touring Car drivers / instructors both on track and at STR's private circuit to help make a closer fought series.

The current V8 Class will provide a financially viable route for V8 enthusiasts who want to experience the fun, excitement, horsepower, sound and challenges of a low grip, rear wheel drive fast muscle car. Taylor says "we've had lots of input from Aussie V8 teams over the last year to retain the exciting features which the V8's have a reputation for".

There will be six race weekends consisting of 12 rounds (possibly 18) forming part of the Dunlop Great and British Festival.

The Series aims to increase spectators at the circuits by getting them more involved and up close and personal to the race cars and drivers, whilst also allowing them to experience the thrills and sounds of the cars slidding out of corners and close action-packed racing.

Plans are also underway for an additional 650 bhp V8 Supercar Class in 2012.



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SLS RACE PROGRAMME

TRACK TOPICS

THE MERCEDES SLS GT3 has started its racing life by following in the footsteps of its C-class DTM cousin. It took Merc legend Bernd Schneider all of two corners to give the SLS its first collision with an Audi (R8) on its debut, and the car took victory at just the second time of asking with Thomas Jäger and Christopher Haase at the wheel.

So far, the race programme for the SLS has taken in three races on the Nurburgring Nordschleife, and the Dubai 24 hours is next up. Schneider, who has been at the forefront of the development programme for the road car and the GT3 racer, is pleased with what Mercedes has come up with.

"The first car we had was already quite promising," says Schneider. "But in GT3 there are many sides to think about – the costs are important, and you want a good car but if you make it too good then you get too many

restrictions from the FIA.

"We didn't want too many handicaps, and we focused on making the car easy to drive for customers who are not professional drivers."

Racing on the Nordschleife isn't the most accurate performance barometer for a new car. But Schneider, who had not raced on the 14-mile monster since 1993, is pleased with how the SLS stacked up against the competition.

"Compared with other cars, we are really satisfied with what we've achieved," he adds. "The car has more potential, but I'm happy with what we have put together."

SLS won second race at the 'Ring



GT3: MERC'S RIVALS



Porsche 911 GT3-R



Aston Martin DBRS9



Lamborghini Gallardo GT3



Chevrolet Corvette Z06R



Ford GT



BMW Z4 GT3

Top left: SLS is powered by AMG 6.3-litre V8 engine. Middle: sportscar veteran Brundle was curious to try up-and-coming GT3-class racer. Bottom left: SLS is first Merc sportscar since 1999 Le Mans racer. Below: rear wing gives good downforce



◀ was taking all of my might to hit the pedal hard enough with my right leg!

Another reason you can attack the braking zones so much is the gearbox system on this car. I don't mind a sequential lever like they have on DTM cars, but the paddle shift in this car is brilliant. It's like a Formula 1 car, you can't screw it up, you can't miss a gear. It takes away some of the variables, which enables you to concentrate purely on being fast and consistent. You can fine tune your driving. Back in the days of fumbling with a gear lever in F1, your main concern approaching a corner and in the braking zone was, "is it in gear?"; then you thought about everything else. Take that away and it's easier to avoid mistakes.

I found a second between my two runs in this car, and there's easily another second to be found from

what I'm told was quite a quick pace. And the fact that I can talk like that after just a few laps tells you how sorted this car is. It's not a battle – it's a predictable racing car and gives you a platform to build on very.

Safety is a key part of racing cars today, and if I was a wealthy amateur wanting to do a bit of racing I would be a lot happier in this car than in a rear-engined Porsche, for example. You get a sense of security from this car. The only concern is to make sure that doesn't turn into a false confidence.

I can imagine a grid of these cars being exciting to watch. They're noisy, they move around, and you can have a bit of contact. Providing they can get some big events, like Le Mans, Silverstone, Spa, Petit Le Mans, you could have some impressive sportscar events with these beasts. ☑





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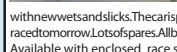
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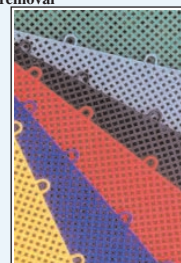
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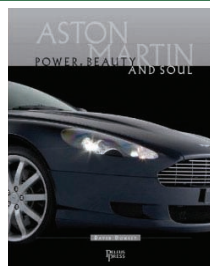
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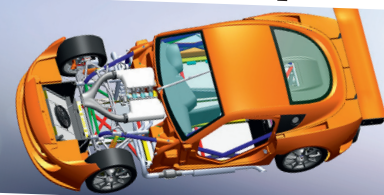
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Porsche launches Nordschleife World Cup



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AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com

WHAT A BRILLIANT idea.

Combining arguably the greatest race circuit in the world with one of the all-time classic GT cars, the Porsche World Cup should be one of the highlights of the 2011 season.

I've always liked the thought of bringing different series together for a festival-style event, and Porsche's effort should be particularly good because the level of some of the feeder series – most notably the Supercup and German Carrera Cup – is so high. The British championship might not have been quite as competitive this year (despite big grids), but with big teams like Triple 8 and Team Dynamics joining in that could soon change.

The best chance of a British victory could nevertheless come from outside our championship. Nick Tandy finished as runner-up in the Supercup and German Carrera Cup in his first full year in Porsches. He has experience of the circuit and the latest 3.8-litre Cup car, and the Konrad team should know a thing or two about what to do with the car. No pressure there then Nick...

Talking of pressure, one wonders how much more the junior step of the single-seater ladder can take. Just a week after the end of FPA, we have Formula Abarth looking to run a British series (see page 83).

The Tatuus-built cars look good, but wouldn't it be nice to see just how strong Formula Renault UK and British Formula Ford could get if drivers didn't have myriad other options to choose from?

Extra contact details

Ben Anderson, editorial assistant
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

Porsche Carrera Cup cars from different nations to go head to head in 2011

PORSCHE HAS announced a Carrera World Cup event, to be held at Nurburgring's Nordschleife circuit next year.

The race will take place on Saturday June 25 at the Nurburgring 24 Hours, a race the German marque has won 10 times. It will be open to 2007-2009 3.6-litre (400-420bhp) Carrera Cup models and the latest 3.8-litre (450bhp) cars, which will be introduced into the British series for 2011.

It is hoped runners from the 18 national Carrera Cups, including France, Italy and the UK, will enter. The event will also be a points-paying round for the Scandinavian and German series.

The World Cup will be a six-lap race, totalling nearly 100 miles, and 200 entries are expected.

Porsche Sweden MD Bosse Janson said: "The combination of Nurburgring Nordschleife, the most challenging track in the world, Porsche Carrera World Cup,

the biggest cup race in the world, and the atmosphere of the 24 Hours creates an unbeatable concept."

BRITISH TEAMS' INTEREST

Although the meeting will not be part of the Carrera Cup GB, and the Croft round will take place the weekend before, British teams have welcomed the event.

Stuart Parker, whose Team Parker Racing squad has raced in the Nurburgring 24 Hours as well as being a Carrera Cup frontrunner, confirmed he hoped to enter. "I think it's a cracking idea," he said. "It's a mega circuit and it'll be a unique experience for the drivers."

"You almost want it to be a round of the championship. We will definitely be there supporting it."

David Bartrum, boss of the leading Motorbase Performance squad, said: "If it's something Porsche are doing in a serious manner, then it's definitely something we'd like to be involved with.

It all depends on whether our drivers have the budgets to do it, and whether the timing works for them too."

To encourage Nordschleife novices, an intensive two-day training course will also be provided in the week leading up to the event. Former Porsche works driver Sascha Maassen will be chief instructor.

DRIVERS READY TO GO

Leading Porsche drivers also welcomed the move. Supercup and German Carrera Cup frontrunner Nick Tandy, who raced on the Nordschleife in a VLN event this year, plans to race with Konrad Motorsport.

"It's a very cool idea," he said. "It's not often you get a chance to drive on the Nordschleife and with 200 of the same cars out there it should be awesome."

"Everyone who has a Cup car will be desperate to do it and we hope to be there – that's why we did the VLN race."

Tim Harvey, who secured his second Carrera Cup GB crown this year, likes the concept, but suspects it will be hard to beat Nurburgring specialists.

"It will be great fun, but I can't see that I'll have a chance of winning it because it will be dominated by German or German-domiciled drivers who know the circuit like the backs of their hands," he said. "I've driven there on and off, but even if we get testing, in a close one-make championship we will not be on the pace."



Porsche hordes will head to Nurburgring

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Ginetta GT Supercup

Ginetta reveals Supercup plan

British marque will run new G55 and current G50 together in 2011 TOCA-support series

GINETTA HAS confirmed that it will allow its current G50 to race alongside the new G55 in the renamed Ginetta GT Supercup in 2011. The British sportscar constructor will introduce the G55 as a GT3-level machine for its TOCA support series, previously known as the G50 Cup.

There had been concerns that running the 370bhp G55 with the 300bhp G50 could create problems (see AUTOSPORT,

October 14), but Ginetta boss Lawrence Tomlinson is confident the two-tier approach will work.

"We believe it will offer more options for the existing teams to attract drivers onto the grid," he said. "The G50 class will offer a car for those wanting to learn how to race a rear-wheel-drive GT."

"The majority of the parts will carry over from the G50, so teams don't need to invest huge amounts in new spares."

The new car will cost £75,000, while G50s can be upgraded to G55-spec for £25,000. Several teams, including frontrunners Century Motorsport and Total Control Racing, have confirmed interest in the G55, which will be launched at AUTOSPORT International in January.

Tomlinson hopes the model will help drivers progress in GT racing. "The G50 has proved itself as a real stepping stone into the GT4 arena," he said. "By

introducing the G55, I want to expand our career ladder even further and offer a route into GT3."

Ginetta has also announced prizes for its various 2011 champions. The Ginetta Junior champion will win a free lease on a G40 (for the Ginetta Challenge) or G50 (for the GT Supercup), the top Challenge runner will win a free lease on a G50, and the winner of the G50 class in the GT Supercup will win a free lease on a G55.

Latest CAD image of Ginetta's G55 GT racer



Many parts will be common with G50 model



EBREV/LAT

Goodwood

British F3 heads to Goodwood

SIXTY YEARS of Formula 3 will be celebrated at the Goodwood Festival of Speed next season, with a selection of cars tracing its history from the 500cc motorcycle-engined machines of the 1950s to a current high-tech chassis.

For the first time, the current British championship leader after June's planned rounds at Brands Hatch will get the chance to drive their car up the hillclimb course on July 1-3, with two runs each day before a total audience of around 150,000 enthusiasts.

Series promoter SRO hopes this run will form part of a wider celebration of the category at Goodwood in the series'

Diamond Jubilee year. A race for early one-litre F3 cars (from 1964-66) could also be incorporated in September's Revival meeting.

British championship manager Lisa Crampton said: "It [the Festival] is a nice stage to put F3 on. Goodwood is your traditional British motorsport event and to have an F3 car go up the hill to celebrate 60 years will be great."



Top British F3 runner will drive at Goodwood

British Formula Ford

Rapid Lusty impresses Jamun

FORMER IRISH FF1600 star Raymond Lusty is one of the drivers in the running to join leading British Formula Ford squad Jamun Racing for next year after a strong test at Brands Hatch last week.

Lusty, an FF1600 frontrunner in 2009, is aiming to raise the budget to race one of Jamun's four Duratec-powered Mygales in '11.

Jamun boss James Mundy said: "He had never driven a Duratec before and was very impressive. It was difficult conditions and his driving needs refining, but he was quick and if he was to get the budget we'd run him like a shot."



Lusty impressed Jamun at Brands

Among the other drivers that Jamun has tested are Jake Cook, who competed with Getem Racing in the series this year, and Antti Buri. AUTOSPORT understands that the Finn is weighing up whether to stay with Enigma Motorsport for a second season or join Jamun.

Mundy said: "Antti's got good potential and we'd like to run him."

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British Endurance Championship

Former British GT frontrunners
commit to endurance challenge

BRITISH GT race winners Craig Wilkins and Aaron Scott will contest the new British Endurance Championship next season in a Ginetta G55.

Wilkins and Scott joined British GT in 2008, but Wilkins withdrew his GT3 Racing team from the series this year as its Dodge Viper became uncompetitive. Scott is a Britcar GT regular and the duo has now committed to the renamed championship in 2011.

"After enjoying success in British GT we are all looking forward to a new challenge," said Wilkins. "I like the format of the three-hour endurance races and the ethos that Ginetta have to their customers and cars."

"We have a good team and we learned a lot this season that I hope will give us a good basis for 2011."

Scott added: "The British Endurance Championship, with the backing of the MSA, will be a good place to be in 2011. I have enjoyed a lot of success in Britcar and I hope we can challenge for the title."

GT3 Racing will also contest the Dubai 24 Hours in January, with a G50. Wilkins and Scott will be joined by Tommy Dreelan, Leigh Smart and Andy Ruhan in the line-up.

Brit GT Viper will be swapped for enduro G55



Silverstone Classic

Jags to star on revised Silverstone

THE 2011 Silverstone Classic will switch to the current Grand Prix circuit for the first time, as the previous Bridge version will no longer be licensed by the MSA.

The 21st in a series of summer events at the venue that dates back to the inaugural BRDC Historic Festival of 1990, the 2011 Silverstone Classic will feature 20 races and a wider range of family entertainment.

While the race line-up has yet to be finalised, a feature event in a special series marking 50 Years

of the Jaguar E-type – with a race at September's Goodwood Revival the jewel in its crown – and the return of the Group C sports-prototypes of the 1980s are confirmed.

Following the appearance of a number

of 'new-build' E-types on track over the past 12 months, more have been commissioned from specialists in the UK for the series. As many as 25 E-types to 1964 lightweight specification are set to be on the grid, alongside original racers.



E-types will feature at Classic in 2011

Formula Ford

European push for Formula Ford

FORMULA FORD has launched a four-round EuroCup for 2011.

The Zandvoort F3 Masters meeting will be part of the calendar, which category promoter RacingLine hopes will also include trips to Spa, Brands Hatch GP and Zolder.

The EuroCup meetings will not clash with British Formula Ford rounds, to enable teams and drivers to contest both. It is hoped Benelux

and Scandinavian Formula Ford runners will also take part.

Ford of Europe motorsport chief Gerard Quinn said: "We are delighted to be able to give Formula Ford a European showcase in which to display its many strengths. The four EuroCup events will provide valuable circuit experience for youngsters and build a platform to reintroduce FFord to other countries."

MARCUS PYE

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



Craft won two-litre title in Crowne Lola

The Historic Sports Car Club's ever-increasing commitment to revisiting motor racing history is strengthening core values as it glides towards its Golden Jubilee in 2016. Under Grahame White's astute leadership, the Silverstone-based organisation's season ended with Saturday's awards dinner at Whittlebury Hall.

As has become tradition over recent years, a guest of honour made the presentations. Thanks to White's old chum Chris Craft, an unprecedented 200-plus attendees were treated to the insight of perhaps the most relevant all-rounder yet in a stellar series that has included Richard Attwood, Derek Bell, Vic Elford, David Hobbs, David Piper and Brian Redman.

Cornish-born Craft, 71, worked for Ford's fledgling competitions department in the late 1950s and started racing an Anglia in '61. Perhaps unsurprisingly the long-time 'Essex Boy' has a soft spot for the 105Es that star in the popular HSCC/HRSR ByBox Historic Touring Car championship, but Chris soon graduated to Lotus Cortinas, and subsequently excelled in Broadspeed Escorts.

His career blossomed in sportscars, from Derek Bennett's immortal Chevron B8 design (a personal favourite that cleans up in today's Guards Trophy series) through Lola T70s and Alain de Cadenet's Ecurie Evergreen's Cosworth DFV-engined McLaren

M8C ("a fabulous car") to Ferrari 512 and Porsche 917 in the '70s alone.

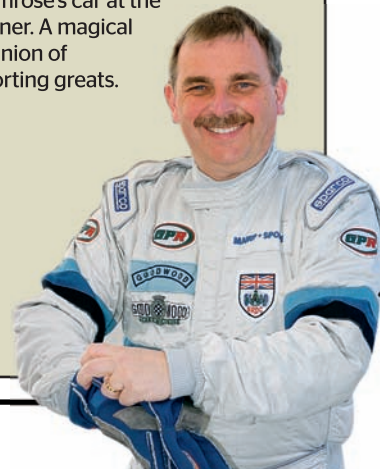
Craft also tried his hand in single-seaters (with Italian marques BWA and Tecno) in F3's one-litre screamer days – which live on in the HSCC's Classic Racing Cars series and on a wider stage, now that Monaco has espoused them anew – and F5000, enthusiasm for which continues in the Derek Bell Trophy.

His only F1 World Championship start was in Ecurie Evergreen's Brabham BT33 in the 1971 US GP.

Gordon Murray (with whom Chris started the bike-engined Rocket road racer project in the '90s) used the F1 Brabham's corners in the design of the Duckhams Special that raced at Le Mans, and later formed the basis of Colin Hawker's wonderful Toleman Group DFV super saloon. Craft competed at La Sarthe 14 times, the last in '84 with a very second-hand Porsche 956.

But some of his most enjoyable racing came in the European two-litre Sportscar series, in which he raced Lola T212, Chevron B19 and Abarth Osella PA2 either side of the 1973 season, when he won the title in Martin Birrane's Crowne Racing T292. To celebrate Chris's participation in the HSCC awards evening, and the birth of a new series for the cars, Lee Maxted-Page and Andy Prill displayed Neil Primrose's car at the dinner. A magical reunion of sporting greats.

“Some of Craft's most enjoyable racing came in European two-litre sportscars, and he won the title in 1973”



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IN BRIEF

CATERHAM WILL launch a French Academy next season. The established UK (left) scheme has already sold out two 28-car grids for 2011.



FORMER BRITISH Formula Ford champion Wayne Boyd tested a Mark Bailey-run Spectrum at Silverstone and Rockingham last week. The Australian-built chassis could return to the championship in 2011.

A NEW squad, Generation AMR, has been nominated as the official Aston Martin Junior Team. David Appleby's team will run a V8 Vantage in the 2011 GT4 European Cup for his son James and fellow club racing Aston ace Ant Scragg.

TWO SMART cars appeared at Brands Hatch's RaceCar Live last weekend (right). They will be part of the new 4two Cup series for the city cars next season.



BRITISH GT promoter SRO has confirmed that the 2011 calendar will include a greater number of long races. There will be three two-hour races, at the Oulton Park season opener, Snetterton 300 and Silverstone GP, as well as a three-hour event at Donington Park GP. Brands Hatch, Spa and Rockingham will each host two one-hour races.

FORMER GRAND Prix racer Arturo Merzario was reunited with the Iso Marlboro Cosworth that he raced in 1974 and '75 for Frank Williams during last Wednesday's general test at a wet



Donington Park. The car (left), raced more recently by James Hanson, was also known as a Williams FW03.

GINETTA RACER Julian Barratt tested a Reflex Racing G40 at Donington, and is considering returning to the Ginetta Challenge in 2011 after a season's lay-off.

HISTORIC RACER Denis Welch is to rejoin Formula Junior grids next season at the wheel of a Lotus 22. Welch also plans to appear in HSCC Guards Trophy rounds in his Lotus 23B sportscar.

THE BRSCC'S Anglesey meeting will go ahead this weekend. There had been doubts due to an initial lack of entries, but there will be double-headers for FF1600s, Sports/Saloons and Caterhams. The club has confirmed it will accept entries up to the meeting on Sunday.

Formula Abarth has been strong in Italy



Tatuus chassis are heading to Britain



Formula Abarth

Formula Abarth targets Britain

New junior category to take on FRenault UK; AWR first Brit team to commit

FORMULA ABARTH will hit Britain in 2011 as the junior single-seater category expands after its inaugural season.

The Italian Formula Abarth championship attracted strong fields in the country fell. A British series and European contest are now planned.

Italian firm Tatuus, which lost the Formula Renault contract at the end of 2009, build the cars, which are powered by a 180bhp 1400cc turbo. They are expected to run at British F3/GT events.

Paolo Callea, who helped bring the Trofeo Abarth concept to Britain, could not go into detail but said: "We are working hard on this and more news will be issued soon."

Andy Welch, who has engineering experience in Formula Renault and Formula Master, has already committed his AWR squad to the category. He will link up with Jenzer Motorsport, which was a frontrunner in the Italian championship this season.

"I have great faith in Tatuus, and

Formula Abarth's opportunities for testing mean it is the ideal series for young drivers in the UK to learn their trade in a competitive environment," said Welch, who will run cars in both the European and British series.

Renault UK motorsport manager Tim Jackson said: "Competition is always a good thing. We always thrived on it – it keeps everybody sharp, and there's always room for something new, especially if they have the long-term view we had when we arrived in 1990."

Fun Cup

Belgian team beats Brits late on in World Finals

BRITISH SQUAD Team Honeywell narrowly missed out on a win in the Fun Cup World Finals at Donington Park last weekend.

It was the first meeting on Donington's GP loop since it reopened and 59 teams from Belgium, France, Germany and the UK started.

After fog delayed the start,

the Honeywell car – driven by Neil Plimmer, Geoff Fawcett and Lance Robson – ran consistently in the top six and led the UK contingent.

The team's VW Beetle silhouette lost the lead when it initially failed to restart at its final pitstop, but Fawcett charged back to the front when he rejoined. He led

onto the final lap, only to be delayed by traffic enough to be jumped by the Belgian RDR Sport 2 car of Ronnie Latinne, Michael Albert, Marden Benjamin and Damien Dupont by 1.1

seconds after five and a half hours of racing.

Radical ace Derek Johnston, Ginetta racer Joachim Ritter and veteran Nigel Greensall were first petrol-powered entry home.

Honeywell crew headed UK teams



Formula Renault UK

Australian Vee ace looks to Formula Renault UK



Cross has been a star in Australian Formula Vee

AUSTRALIAN FORMULA VEE champion Kent Cross is targeting a Formula Renault UK campaign for 2011.

Cross was the Formula Vee 1200 state and club champion for the second consecutive year in 2010, driving a Manta chassis. He now wants to begin racing in Europe and is currently talking to several Formula Renault squads for

his graduation to slicks and wings.

"Moving to the UK is the best way for me to continue with my career," said the 17-year-old. "Getting noticed in Europe is a much bigger achievement – the challenge of beating the best will propel me forward."

Cross hopes to begin testing after he moves to the UK in January.



Perfect Porsche wins as Ferrari falters

Porsche racer David Ashburn beat all the Ferraris in British GT *By KEVIN TURNER*

Porsche against Ferrari. It's one of the great motorsport duels and British GT provided another setting for their battle in 2010. Before this year, Porsche's presence in the series had been sporadic for some time and there had been no wins since 2007, but the latest 997 GT3R was a formidable weapon. It allowed Trackspeed boss David Ashburn to take the crown, leaving the Ferrari hordes to miss out. The Italian marque is still waiting for its first GT3 title in Britain.

Ashburn managed to banish many of the errors that have dogged his previous efforts and the experienced gentleman racer used a sequence of quick drivers to bolster his attack.

Supercup racer Siso Cunill partnered Ashburn at the Oulton Park opener, helping him to a podium, and former

factory driver Richard Westbrook stormed to second – behind the ridiculously rapid Reiter Lamborghini – at Spa's enduro event. But it was Scottish ace Glynn Geddie who became Ashburn's regular co-driver.

Ashburn, aided by how easy the new Porsche is to drive, was usually among the quickest of the gentleman racers, while Geddie was able to hold his own against the pros. The result was four wins, plus a second and a third for the pairing, enough not only to give Ashburn the title but secure Geddie second despite missing three races.

Ashburn's life was made easier by the occasional presence of a second car. Westbrook in particular starred, showing a clear pace advantage over Geddie. At both Silverstone – probably the best Brit GT race in years, including

Darren Turner and Rob Bell as well as Westbrook and series benchmark Allan Simonsen – and Brands Hatch he rode shotgun for the lead car.

Nevertheless, the title wouldn't have come so easily had it not been for the troubles of Trackspeed's rivals. After spending 2009 learning the new Ferrari 430 Scuderia, MTECH came into the season expecting to challenge. Matt Griffin and Duncan Cameron made a strong combination and things looked good after a double at the Oulton opener.

Rockingham apart, where the Ferraris chewed up their Avon tyres, the quickest 430s were always in contention with the Porsche on pure pace, but bad luck and poor reliability derailed MTECH's efforts. A puncture at Spa lost Griffin/Cameron a possible podium, a pitlane infringement dropped them to fifth in race one at Rockingham, myriad problems struck at Silverstone, and another top-three finish was lost at Snetterton when a tyre blew.

MTECH's Brands Hatch weekend – where they suffered power steering failure and another puncture in race one, and were hampered by wiring loom problems in the second race – seemed to sum up its season. It also allowed Ashburn to clinch the title a round early. "When the car was running well I think we were the quickest pairing, but Trackspeed did a great job," says Griffin, who finished the year with three wins.



Bad luck hurt
Griffin/Cameron



Various other Ferrari drivers also showed race-winning pace, but none was able to put together a title challenge. Simonsen was once again a class act and revelled in the new Scuderia. He scored pole in three of the eight pro qualifying sessions and only Griffin was consistently able to challenge him on race pace (the duo scored three fastest laps each; nobody else took more than one). As ever, though, Simonsen's paymaster Hector Lester wasn't able to live with the pace of the quickest gentleman drivers and he tended to leave the Dane too much to do. It was fitting that, after four second places, Simonsen was able to take one of his trademark comeback victories when others hit trouble in the Donington Park finale.

Adam Wilcox (in Phil Burton's car) and Tom Ferrier (Chad) were the other quick Ferrari men. Wilcox scored two poles, but usually couldn't quite match Simonsen and Griffin, while Burton was closer to Lester's level than Cameron's.

Like MTECH, Chad was struck by reliability problems, and tended to lack the driver line-ups to run at the front. There were two exceptions: at Snetterton, Ferrier was partnered with former Mosler driver Dan Brown, rather than regular co-driver Paul Warren. Brown's season was, overall, a disappointment, but at Snetterton he flew. The result was a win and a second.

Only gearbox problems stopped

Porsche Carrera Cup ace Stephen Jelly and Ginetta G50 Cup frontrunner Benji Hetherington adding a second Chad win at Donington.

Reigning champions David and Godfrey Jones again proved competitive with their rapid Ascari KZ1R and should have brought a third manufacturer into the title hunt. Arguably the most evenly matched pairing, the twins were also helped by David taking pole in four of the five 'gentleman' qualifying sessions. Unlike 2009, however, they were struck by poor reliability. The engine was the main bugbear, causing non-starts at Spa and Rockingham, and putting them out of the first Snetterton race. Ultimately, they finished just five of the 13 races, and won three of them.

In the hands of '07 champ Alex Mortimer, RPM's Ford GT was still capable of running at the front, but neither Philip Walker nor Peter Bamford were quick enough.

The Aston Martin DBRS9s are beginning to show their age, but Turner, Michael Bentwood (Barwell Motorsport) and Stuart Hall (Vantage Racing) all showed it still has a good turn of speed on fast, flowing circuits, if not the tyre preservation.

The GT4 class became the G4 category for 2010, to allow Supersports cars to compete. Class of the field was the balanced Speedworks Ginetta G50 pairing of Jamie Stanley/Christian Dick, and the rapid ABG Motorsport KTM

2010 British GT Championship

Pos	Driver	Team	1/2	3/4	5	6/7	8	9/10	11/12	13	Points
1	David Ashburn	Trackspeed Porsche 997 GT3R	5/3	3/R	2	1/1	1	4/9	1/5	2	107
2	Glynn Geddie	Trackspeed Porsche 997 GT3R	-	3/R	-	1/1*	1	4/9	1/5	2	81
3	Matt Griffin/Duncan Cameron	MTECH Ferrari 430 Scuderia	1*/1	2/R+	6	5/2	10	8/1	6+/6	3	75
5	Hector Lester	Rosso Verde Ferrari 430 Scud	2/2	7/R	10	-	2	2/6	R/DNS	1	65
6	Allan Simonsen	Rosso Verde Ferrari 430 Scud	2/2*	-	10	-	2	2+/6	R/DNS*	1*	63
7	Philip Walker	RPM Ford GT/Trackspeed 997	-	-	5	3/R	4	3/7	2/3	7	50
8	Adam Wilcox/Phil Burton	Predator/Burton Ferrari 430 Scud	6/7	6/3*	7	8/5	8	9/5*	4/4	5	47
10	Tom Ferrier	Chad Racing Ferrari 430 Scud	7/6	R/4	R	4/R	11	1/2	R/2+	-	41
11=	David Jones/Godfrey Jones	Team Pyro Ascari KZ1R	R*/R	1*/1	DNS	DNS/DNS	7	R*/3	R*/1	-	40
11=	Richard Westbrook	Trackspeed Porsche 997 GT3R	-	-	2	-	4*+	-	2/3	-	40
14	Alex Mortimer	RPM Ford GT	-	-	5	3/R	5	3/7	-	7	34
15	Martin Short/Gregor Fisker	Rollcentre Mosler MT900R	-	-	-	2*/6	12**	6/4	-	4	29

17= Daniel Brown, Chad Ferrari 430 Scuderia, & Michael Bentwood/Paul Whight, Barwell Motorsport Aston Martin DBRS9, 26; 20 Paul Warren, Chad Ferrari 430 Scuderia, 23; 21 Peter Kox/Marc Hayek, Reiter Lamborghini Gallardo (winners of Spa enduro), 20; 23 Craig Wilkins/Aaron Scott, GT3 Racing Dodge Viper, 19; 25= Andrew Howard, Barwell Beechdean Aston Martin DBRS9, & Juan Garriz/Jose Balbani, Chad Ferrari 430 2008, 16; 28= Darren Turner, Barwell Beechdean Aston Martin DBRS9, & Oliver Bryant/Oliver Morley, Trackspeed Porsche 997 GT3R, 12, etc.
GT4 POINTS: 1 Christian Dick/Jamie Stanley, Speedworks Ginetta G50, 70.5; 3 Rory Butcher/Benjamin Harvey, ABG Motorsport KTM X-Bow, 38; 5 Nathan Freke/Vibe Smed, Century Motorsport Ginetta G50, 37; 7 Chris Bialan/Simon Mason, Piranha Motorsport Lotus 2-Eleven, 32.5, etc.
 Note: Results show finishing positions in GT3, irrespective of overall classification.

SEASON REVIEW BRITISH GT

DRIVER RANKINGS



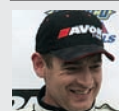
1 Allan Simonsen

Only Griffin could challenge Simonsen and the Dane usually seemed to have the edge. Showed his class when Westbrook and Turner rocked up at Silverstone.



2 Matt Griffin

The quickest of the title protagonists, Griffin didn't do a lot wrong in 2010. No poles, but his race pace was strong, when bad luck wasn't striking the MTECH team.



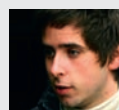
3 Richard Westbrook

Would probably have been higher up this list if he'd done more than four races. Should have won at least twice and showed just how quick the latest Porsche is.



4 Glynn Geddie

Okay, so Westbrook was faster, but this was still a fine first season in British GT for Geddie. Was the linchpin of Ashburn's title assault, taking a pole and four victories.



5 Alex Mortimer

Didn't do the whole season and never had a competitive co-driver, but Mortimer always pushed on in sole Ford. Showed courage after death of father Rob to lead team.



6 Tom Ferrier

More often than not, Ferrier led Chad's attack. Rarely matched Simonsen and Griffin in qualifying but he was good in the races and deserved win with Brown at Snett.

X-Bow of ex-FF1600 ace Rory Butcher and Benjamin Harvey. Sadly, the KTM did not complete the year, leaving Speedworks to take the title easily, despite the best efforts of reigning G50 champion Nathan Freke, who was quick but hampered by co-driver Vibe Smed.

There will be more classes next year and, with popular series manager Benjamin Franassovici at the helm, British GT looks set to continue its emergence from the doldrums of '09. 🏁

Speedworks Ginetta (48) fought AGB KTM in G4



KEY TO RACES: Rounds 1/2 Oulton Park, April 5; 3/4 Knockhill, May 9; 5 Spa, June 5; 6/7 Rockingham, July 18; 8 Silverstone Bridge Grand Prix, August 15; 9/10 Snetterton, August 30; 11/12 Brands Hatch Grand Prix, September 26; 13 Donington Park, October 16. **Points system:** 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 to first 8 eligible entries. Points are halved if fewer than six starters in a class. Double points for longer races at Spa, Silverstone and Donington. **KEY:** R=Retired; DNS=Did not start; DQ=Disqualified; +=Fastest lap; *=Pole. ****Note:** Short shared with Adrian Beer and not Fisker at Silverstone two-hour enduro.

SCOTT CLIMBS HIGH TO TAKE LAST-GASP TITLE



A four-way title fight at the Formula 4 finale was one of many highlights of the 750 Motor Club season. MARCUS PYE looks back



750 Formula again provided close action

Grandstand finishes and first-time winners in the Formula 4 and 750 Formula championships characterised a challenging 750 Motor Club racing season in which the economy hit some grids.

F4 proved a splendid competition in which Van Diemen duo Malcolm Scott and Robbie Watts went to Mallory Park's finale neck-and-neck. Scott, carrying a shoulder injury, needed to finish second to guarantee the crown. Instead, he won the race of his life, his second of the year.

Watts clawed his way back from fifth to oust his rival from the lead, but Scott's immediate counter-attack surprised Watts, whose hot Ford Zetec engine then faded fast.

Outgoing champion Jonny Weston-Taylor (Mygale) missed two double-headers, but still won most races (six) and finished fourth overall, five points behind runner-up Watts and two shy of triple victor Bryn Tootell.

The journey to the 750 Formula title was a magic carpet ride for Roger Rowe (Centaur Mk20MC), who opened with a treble at Snetterton, Mallory Park and Brands Hatch. Three more wins followed, the last – a belated 67th birthday present that ended a three-race DNF run – wrapped it up a few hours early back at Mallory.

Past master Bob Simpson (SS/F) started late but ended with a flourish to be runner-up. Maiden race winners Nathaniel Cooper (Davis T7), Bill Rutter (Darvi) and Chris Gough (self-built CGR2 Evo) were third, fourth and sixth, split by 2009 champ Dave Robson (SDAR/83).

The trials and tribulations of the Formula Vee year have been charted extensively, but unquestionably Martin Farmer rode out a deserving champion. Back in his Enviroshine GAC, the '07 runner-up bounced back from a dramatic Snetterton opener and nailed the coveted prize with three hat-tricks.

AUTOSPORT's Ben Anderson (GAC) was quick, but lacked the Castle Bromwich flyer's consistency. His two wins bookended a campaign in which he finished second, clear of the bold Peter Belsey (ex-Jez Clark Spyder) and kart graduate Ashley Sutton, thrice a podium topper in his Storm.

The latest series of Locost wars, contested by 63 drivers, was a classic, just 10 points blanketing top three Scott Mittell, David Black and Tom Collier. A big incident at Silverstone derailed Mittell and Collier – who like Alistair Garratt won three races (seven drivers tasted victory) – but Winchester schoolteacher Mittell rallied to snatch the title after

750MC CHAMPS

FORMULA 4

Malcolm Scott
(Van Diemen RF00)

750 FORMULA

Roger Rowe
(Centaur Mk20MC)

FORMULA VEE

Martin Farmer
(GAC 01)

LOCOST

Scott Mittell

RGB

Alistair Boulton
(ST Phoenix)

STOCK HATCH

Josh Cook
(Citroen Saxo)

SAXMAX

Ant Whorton-Eales
(Citroen Saxo)

BIKESPORTS

Richard Stables
(Radical PR6)

KIT CAR

Andy Hiley
(Taydec Mk2)

TOYOTA MR2

Zac Chapman
(Mk2)

Collier dramatically retired from the Oulton Park finale.

The rear-engined cars of Paul Rogers (Contour) and John Cutmore (Spire) generally made the Road Going Bike-engined sportscar running, but Alastair Boulton's relentless pace in the Honda Fireblade class proved decisive. Eight wins from 13 appearances took the Stuart Taylor Phoenix clear of the frantic peloton. Cutmore's team-mate Mathew Green pipped former champ Derek Jones to Class B honours.

Stock Hatch went down to the wire as usual, and young Josh Cook – a strong fifth on his switch from Saxmax last year – raised his game, winning four rounds and pipping defending champion Jeff Humphries to the post.

Matt Digby (son of former Ginetta ace John) won for the first time at Cadwell, and leapfrogged Saxmax-trained Joe Ferguson, a triple winner, and 'Patch' Fletcher to nab the bronze when a technical appeal was upheld.

Andrew Tibbs was the other winner (he did it twice), while Jon Maybin scooped the novice award as Citroen Saxos outnumbered Peugeot 106s in the Gallic-flavoured festival. Lee Scott drove the best-placed British car – a Ford Fiesta – and won Class B from Sarah Niblett (Peugeot 205 GTi).

Short oval graduate Ant Whorton-

GROVES MAKES IT FOUR



Mittell (right) bounced back from this to take Locost title



Hiley was Kit Car champion in Taydec



Eales' six successive Saxmax wins demoralised his teenaged rivals, then the momentum stalled. He still landed the series' fifth crown, with race victors Scott Moakes, Chris Warburton and Aaron Trigwell closing. Once Shaun Clay discovered how to win, a hat-trick climaxed his term.

Radical PR6s topped the patchy Bikesports grids, Richard Stables outpointing James Breakell after 2009 champion Darren Luke quit after four dominant wins. Steve Cave's JKS and Mike Field's svelte US-built Stohr brought variety.

Kit Car support waned but the pace remained, especially when combined with Sports Racing & GT guests in a similar predicament. Taydec driver Andy Hiley bagged another title, but veteran John Moore (Sylva) scored a fine win and Rob Johnston (Cyana) won the strongest class. Westfields and power-capped Caterhams should swell grids in 2011.

Zac Chapman used some robust passes to win eight of the first 11 MR2 rounds, and the title, before sampling F4. Quadruple victor Steve Lumley and fast Russian Andrei Bgatov (whose car was wrecked twice through rivals' errors) ran the Dorset lad closest. George Robinson and Alexander Lennon claimed a race apiece.



Groves and his well-used Gould took another title

After two lean years by his high standards, Martin Groves regained the British Hillclimb crown from arch rival Scott Moran. In taking his fourth title, the Gould driver also became the most successful UK hillclimb driver of all time.

In July 2009 Groves tied on 90 British championship victories with the legendary Roy Lane. Following a 10-month gap he moved ahead at Harewood to become the highest rounds-scoring competitor ever. He then really got into his stride to win a total of 14 rounds by the season's end, finishing on an unprecedented total of 104 career wins. Nearest current competitor is Scott Moran on 61, and he topped 10 run-offs in 2010.

Groves' ultra-aggressive style caused several mishaps and the car developed a patchwork quilt of unpainted carbonfibre panels, and carried four different nose cones, over the year. His determination to regain the title was exemplified by a near-miraculous double win at Shelsley Walsh only a week after the car was badly damaged at Gurston. The extreme effort over the season, coupled with business and family pressures, caused Groves to announce a year's withdrawal from the sport for 2011 and his Gould is now for sale.

Groves' 91st win seemed to coincide with a drop in form by Moran around the time of the birth of his first child in June, missing the first Doune encounter in the process. Moran recovered well towards the season's end, trading two wins apiece with Groves in the last four rounds, but by then it was too

late to catch his rival.

Moran was nevertheless a worthy second over the season and will be difficult to stop in 2011 with Groves absent. Trevor Willis could not often keep pace with Groves and Moran, but at slower venues his bravery stood out. Five victories is a testament to the OMS ace, and his retaining of the Bouley Bay record was nothing short of sensational. With his fourth place, Roger Moran made 2010 his 13th season inside the top four.

Chris Merrick took a maiden win at Gurston Down in May, shared with Scott Moran. He and Moran repeated the feat at Shelsley Walsh in August. Merrick's co-driver Tom New took two second places over the year but could not maintain consistency.

Groves' co-driver Paul Ranson finished a familiar sixth overall, but proved he is not a seat-warmer by taking a win at Craigantlet and adding a second and four fourth places over the season. Some over-trying elsewhere led to eight rounds with no score.

Making his first appearance in the top 10 was Wallace Menzies, who gained the number eight with a best run-off place of third at Craigantlet.

Deryk Young finished in his habitual ninth place, which he has done since 2006, while Will Hall snatched 10th by a solitary point in the last run-off of 2010 from Eynon Price's similar Force-Suzuki. Price was the one to score a win, however, proving to be the master of wet conditions with a maiden victory at a soaking Prescott in September.

● By Eddie Walder



2010 BRITISH HILLCLIMB FINAL STANDINGS

1 Martin Groves (left) (3.5 Gould GR55b)	247pts	14 wins
2 Scott Moran (3.5 Gould GR61X)	238pts	10 wins
3 Trevor Willis (2.8 OMS)	203pts	5 wins
4 Roger Moran (3.5 Gould GR61X)	182pts	1 win
5 Chris Merrick (4.0 Gould GR55)	141pts	2 wins

Single wins also taken by Paul Ranson (3.5 Gould) and Eynon Price (16 Force).

FINAL DRIVE

LETTERS ■ GEAR ■ ON-TRACK ■ ON-SCREEN ■ PICS ■ TECH ■ ARCHIVE

YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



F3 rescue plan is excellent news

At last the FIA looks likely to be finally doing something about F3 to promote it as a major rung on the motorsport ladder to F1. I cannot believe it has been allowed to get this far when its very future was called into question.

With the right regulations enabling chassis and engines to remain free and to encourage more manufacturers back, while keeping costs in check, F3 will flourish and will be a must for any right-minded driver/team/engineer to have on their CV.

Michael Skeet, Eastleigh, Hants

EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

Brilliant tactics from Red Bull in Abu Dhabi ensured that by pitting Mark Webber early they not only suckered Ferrari into a huge mistake, losing any chance of the required fourth place, they also erased any hope of Webber worrying the preferred driver and therefore any need to employ team orders towards the end of the race.

Richard Gaylard
Wantage, Oxon

Ten out of 10 for FIA boss Jean Todt who suggested all new tracks will need to demonstrate that cars can overtake, and that current tracks may be modified to assist overtaking.

This is the news the fans have been waiting for. The F1 Technical Working Group has come up with several 'solutions' to aid overtaking, but clearly there has been little improvement.

The circuit layouts hold the key. Modifying circuits is the way forward.
Duncan Sabiston
Didcot, Oxon

I don't think I am alone in being shocked at Jean Todt's arrogant and rude reaction upon being approached by Martin Brundle during the grid walk at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Martin was able to deal with the situation well, which was more than can be said for Eddie Jordan's handling of the rare opportunity to get some words from Dietrich Mateschitz after the race; it would appear EJ forgot to stop talking and let him speak.

Peter Brazier
By email

I was the lucky winner of the supercar day competition which was published in the 60th anniversary edition.

All I can say is thank you to everyone at AUTOSPORT and dreamcarhire.com for such an amazing day. I drove the following cars: Aston Martin Vantage V12, Ferrari 430 F1, Lamborghini Gallardo Spider, Porsche 997 Turbo, Nissan GTR and Audi R8 V10. All amazing and ever so slightly quicker than my BMW 1-series diesel!

Neil Pleasance
By email

AUTOSPORT.COM

TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **McLAREN: INNOVATION KEY TO 2011**
2. **ROSBERG: PIRELLIS WON'T HELP MERCEDES**
3. **ENGINE STILL A DISADVANTAGE, SAYS NEWEY**
4. **ALONSO FASTEST AS PIRELLI TEST ENDS**
5. **RICCIARDO DOMINATES ROOKIE TESTING**

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

TOP STORY ONLINE

WHY '10 WASN'T THE GREATEST SEASON EVER

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 VANTAGE

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Vantage – a dedicated safety camera and blackspot locator that displays the legal speed limit of every road you drive, automatically and wirelessly updating its database every few minutes as 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

● Last week we misspelled the first name of rally legend Erik Carlsson (p109).

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

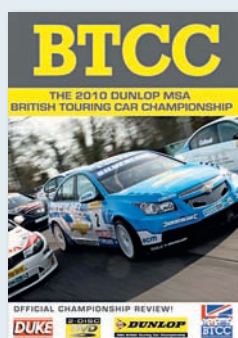
The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

RED BULL RACING 2010 MERCHANDISE

From £14.99

autosport.com/shop

Interest in Red Bull Racing merchandise has gone through the roof since the British squad captured both the drivers' and constructors' world championships. The collection includes everything from humble mugs and wallets, through T-shirts, hats and hold-alls, right up to limited-edition signed photosets. Three of the more popular items – pictured here – will include the Sebastian Vettel T-shirt (£34.99, sizes S-XXL), limited-to-1000-units 1:18-scale RB6 model on metal plinth (£119.99) and the commemorative framed photoset signed by Vettel and Mark Webber (£199.99). Check out the website for the full range.



BTCC 2010 REVIEW DVD

£19.99 (2-disc, 421mins)

dukevideo.com

Relive the best bits – although at seven hours in length it's probably all of it – of Britain's most popular championship, the BTCC.

The two-disc compilation features a great blend of race action, interviews and, most importantly, on-board footage of what became a down-to-the-wire, four-way scrap for the drivers' title.



SILVERSTONE DRIVING DAYS

From £99

silverstone.co.uk

Silverstone's new £99 Christmas Super Choice Voucher allows wannabe racers to choose from eight cars – the Lamborghini Gallardo, Aston Martin V8 Vantage, Ferrari 360 Modena, Lotus Exige, Formula Silverstone single-seater, Ford Fiesta ST rally car and Nissan GT-R or 370Z. Cheap thrills guaranteed!



LOLA T70 1:12 MODEL

£116.95 +£8.50P+P

grandprixmodels.com

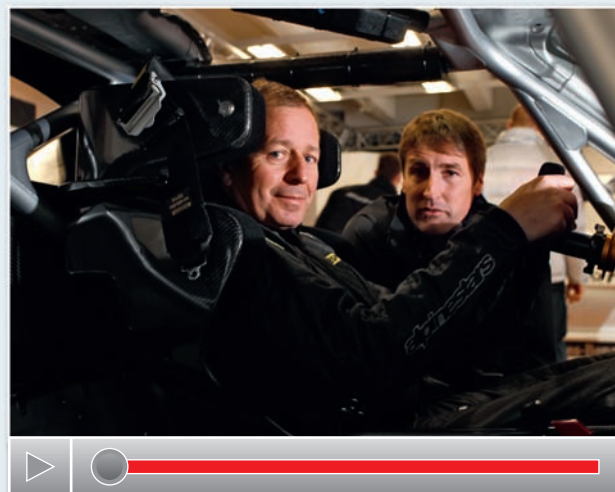
Now, thanks to plastic model gurus Tamiya, you can recreate in miniature one of the most beautiful racing cars of all time.

This 1:12-scale replica of Lola's thunderous T70 is incredible – the photo-etched parts and treaded tyres adding to authenticity.

Clear the dining table and get modelling now!

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: BRUNDLE ON THE MERC SLS GT3 RACER



SEARCH FOR: Mercedes SLS AMG GT3 - Hockenheim - Brundle (3:09)
You've read how Martin Brundle got on in his AUTOSPORT track test of the new Mercedes SLS AMG GT3 racer elsewhere in this issue, now hear it from the horse's mouth.

WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online



DTM

Rd 11/11
Shanghai, China
November 28
www.dtm.de

It's a three-way Mercedes title fight on the streets of Shanghai. Bruno Spengler has moved back in front of Formula 1 aspirant Paul di Resta, while Gary Paffett is praying for a miracle.

GT1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 9/10
Interlagos, Brazil
November 27-28
www.gt1world.com

BRAZILIAN GT3

Rd 8/8
Interlagos, Brazil
November 28
www.itaipavagtbrazil.com.br

RACE OF CHAMPIONS

Dusseldorf, Germany
November 27-28
www.raceofchampions.com

SUPERSTARS

Rd 10/10
Kyalami, South Africa
November 28
www.superstars.it

SOUTH AFRICAN V8s

Rd 9/9
Kyalami, South Africa
November 27
www.wesbankv8.co.za

SA PRODUCTION

Rd 10/10
Kyalami, South Africa
November 27-28
www.productioncars.co.za

NEW ZEALAND V8s

Rd 2/7
Ruapuna, New Zealand
November 28
www.nzv8s.co.nz

NATIONAL LISTING

ANGLESEY ACC/BRSCC
November 28
Admission £10
Tel: 01407 811400

Time is running out if you want to get a final fix of club motorsport this season. The Anglesey finale hosts two FF1600 races, the first for the Moose Trophy, and there are double-headers for Sports/Saloons and Caterham-style sportscars. There's also a 40-minute two-driver enduro.

NEW FEATURE

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Our guide on how to keep the motorsport flame burning through the cold winter months

BECOME AN F1 DRIVER

AS YOU bemoan another season where Sakon Yamamoto's millions got him into a Formula 1 car, one thought that has undoubtedly crossed your mind is how much would it cost you to do the same? The answer is less than you might think (€5500 in fact), provided you're happy to experience the life of a Formula 1 driver for just a day.

The Renault F1 team's 'Feel It' programme is not the first of its kind, but its cars are from early in the last decade, which is more recent than most.

But Renault packs a lot into the trip before letting you loose for a couple of laps of the Hungaroring to fulfil that childhood dream.

Included in the price is a one-night stay at a five-star hotel, including a champagne reception and three-course dinner.

At the track, the day starts with reconnaissance laps in a road car, before you explore the track properly for the first time by following a safety car in a Formula Renault single-seater.

Next up you're let loose in the Formula Renault for a

And you'll cross the line to tumultuous applause

confidence-inspiring 20 minutes. Then it's some time with the physios to prepare your body for the strains it will feel in the F1 car, and a detailed tutorial on how to avoid stalling the car when you pull away.

In the end, it all boils

down to you getting the Hungaroring all to yourself for two unforgettable laps. The power, the downforce, the braking – it's all there to feel, so make sure you press on.

www.renaultf1.com/Feel-It,1241.html

Television

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 25

1015-1045, 1905-1940 **Motors TV**

Caterham racing: Snetterton

1045-1115 **Motors TV**

Legends: Brands Hatch

1115-1220 **Motors TV**

Pickup Trucks: Brands Hatch

1330-1400 **Sky Sports 3**

Rallyzone

1525-1625 **Motors TV**

750 Motor Club: Oulton Park part 2

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 26

0435-0530, 1220-1320 **Motors TV**

750 Motor Club: Oulton Park part 2

1015-1220 **Motors TV**

Auto GP: 2010 season review

1730-1800 **Motors TV**

Caterham racing: Snetterton

1800-1905 **Motors TV**

Mini Se7en/Miglia: Brands Hatch

1940-2010 **Motors TV**

Fun Cup: Oulton Park

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 27

0405-0430 **Five**

Motorsport Mundial

1005-1105 **ITV4**

Motorsport UK

1105-1135 **ITV**

WTCC: Macau highlights

1800-2100 **Motors TV LIVE**

Race of Champions: Nations Cup

Michael Schumacher, Sebastian Vettel, Alain Prost, Sebastien Loeb, Mick Doohan, Heikki Kovalainen... A host of stars in head-to-head knockout special stage racing.

2100-2130 **Motors TV**

Britcar Production: Brands Hatch

2230-2330 **Eurosport 2**

Mini Se7en: Brands Hatch

Miglia and Se7en action from the season finale in Kent.

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28

0600-0700 **ESPN**

FIA GT1: Interlagos qualifying race

0700-0915 **ESPN LIVE**

DTM: Shanghai

Live coverage of a three-way title showdown in China, involving Brits Paul di Resta and Gary Paffett.

1000-1200 **Motors TV**

V8 Supercars: Sandown

1200-1800 **Motors TV**

Race of Champions

1600-1700 **Dave**

WRC: World Rally 2010

1715-1845 **ESPN**

FIA GT1: Interlagos main race

1800-2115, 2150-0105 **Motors TV**

British GT: 2010 season review

2115-2150 **Motors TV**

WRC: Rally World (below)



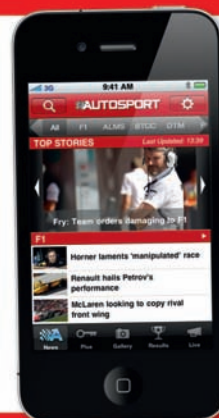
Online

AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

DTM & RACE OF CHAMPIONS

Keep visiting AUTOSPORT.com this week for our continued coverage of all the breaking news as Formula 1 heads into the beginning of the winter break – with several key deals for 2011 to be done in the coming weeks. There's also plenty of action during the racing weekend, with the DTM season finale in Shanghai and this year's Race of Champions.



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For more info, visit www.autosport.com/app

REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage

Mansell in 1980: body chemistry not pictured



PARODY IS said to be the greatest form of flattery. Personally, I'm happy with any lavish praise – even a “you look nice, dear” from Mrs Revved Up.

Where Nigel Mansell is concerned, the perfect parody has already been done. The fictitious Steve Pising, the four-time Formula Five champion in Channel 4's 2006 *Man to Man* with Dean Learner chat show spoof, is Mansell down pat. Right down to the bushy 'tache, and monotone tales of huge crashes and terrible injuries.

Yet on Sky's *Time of our Lives: Grand Prix Greats* (Sky Sports 2, Thursday, 2300) we were reminded that there's actually no substitute for the real thing. A sadly 'tache-less Mansell (although there's definitely signs of a bushy growth spurt as the show progresses) is joined by Damon Hill and Murray Walker, and chaired by veteran sports anchor Gary Newbon.

It's a cosy sit-down chatfest, in front of a fire and with a view of a city night-time skyline (presumably London, perhaps Romford). Hill and dear Muzza are predictably endearing with their reminiscences, but Mansell

is simply, well, Mansell.

Newbon: “Nigel, you had a crash that almost cost you your life before you even got to F1?”

Mansell: “Which one?”

Brands '77 was the one Newbon was fishing for, when Our Nige broke his neck. “No-one had ever survived an injury quite like that,” said Nigel, defying medical science merely by sitting there. “I broke my back three times, as you know.”

We move on to his F1 debut in Austria in 1980, where he sat in a chassis of leaking petrol: “It was very painful, but funny as well,” chuckles Mansell; Newbon interjects incredulously: “It couldn't

have been funny?”

Mansell: “It was funny at the time. I was sitting on the grid and my backside was getting hot, and I was thinking, ‘I hope they get on with this race, something's happening with the chemistry of my body’ – I was very nervous.”

But his greatest revelation was on the subject of the exotic fuel used in the early 1990s: “They developed rocket fuel that was so dangerous, a lot of people died handling it, although it's not politically correct to say that... but they did.”

Classic, classic Mansell. *Revved Up*

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

Shooting gallery, from Florida to Victoria – via Abu Dhabi and Macau



DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS FOR BRITISH WTCC BOYS IN MACAU

Rob Huff heads for city centre - and top of podium; Andy Priaulx is bound for the jetfoil



NEW LINE IN TOASTED M&M'S

Kyle Busch's NASCAR Sprint Cup season ended in flames after he was taken out by title-chaser Kevin Harvick



VETTEL DISCARDS THE BRIDGESTONES

Pirelli rolls out for its return to F1. Here's world champ Sebastian Vettel and his Red Bull in Abu Dhabi



JOHNSON'S HIGH FIVE

NASCAR star Jimmie Johnson has taken Schumacheresque five titles on trot



HRT TREATMENT, PART ONE...

Holden Racing Team's Will Davison made a mess of the rear end of his Commodore during the Australian V8 Supercar outing at Sandown...



...AND HRT TREATMENT, PART TWO

...while team leader Garth Tander fronted into his parking space. Watch out for a dodgy cut-and-shut if you're in the back streets of Melbourne

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Jorg Muller, Macau F3 GP, 1993



"I felt comfortable with the car straight away. And at Macau that means you are quick. We hardly fiddled with the car at all"

Muller cleaned up at Macau with pole and victory for RSM

IT WOULD have been wrong to call Jorg Muller a Macau ringer when he pitched up for the Formula 3 Grand Prix in 1993. But he certainly slipped in under the radar and wasn't among the pre-event favourites.

The pundits should have looked back further than the results of his part-season with Helmut Marko's RSM team and the unfancied Fiat engine in Germany that year. Back in 1991, he'd won at Monaco with the Bongers team, the first in a line of big street-circuit victories for Muller.

The German was in a class of his own around the Macau Guia circuit in '93. He claimed pole position and his RSM Dallara led every lap of the way over the two heats to claim a 25-second aggregate victory ahead of Tom Kristensen.

"I felt comfortable with the car straight away," remembers Muller. "And at Macau that means you are quick. We hardly fiddled with the car at all; we had a good set-up from the beginning of practice."

Muller attributes part of his success to his relaxed attitude coming into the race. He points out that at the beginning of the season he'd been working as a

mechanic for Bongers Motorsport after running out of money following two full seasons of F3 with the team.

"I was just the guy who had started the year as a mechanic," he says. "I had nothing to lose."

But everything to gain as it turned out. Muller admits that victory at Macau reignited a career that took him to the brink of Formula 1 and factory contracts with BMW, Nissan, Porsche and BMW again.

Muller was retained by Marko for the following season and claimed the German F3 title. He eventually graduated to Formula 3000 with RSM and won that, too, in 1996.

His F3000 championship year included a victory at Pau, which wasn't his last success on the streets. Muller went on to win the Macau Guia tin-top race in its final year as an invitation event in 2004 and took another victory in 2006 after it had become a round of the World Touring Car Championship.

"I like to think I've always been good on street circuits and being relaxed has always been part of that success," says the happy-go-lucky Muller. "And I'm still the only driver to win at Macau in F3 and touring cars." ❧

THIS WEEK IN...



NOVEMBER 29, 1990

F1 RACER Derek Warwick gets his Subaru Legacy airborne during his WRC debut on the RAC Rally, which featured pace notes for the first time.

Factory sportscar driver Warwick's maiden rally ended early on stage 25 when he found a ditch in Broomlylin.

Mika Hakkinen threw away victory with one lap to go in the Macau F3 GP (above). He clipped rival Michael Schumacher and thumped the barriers in a botched move for the lead of the second heat. Second place behind his German rival would have been enough to give the Finn an aggregate victory...

We also recalled Alain de Cadenet's victory on the Carrera Panamericana (below). On the 40th anniversary of the classic Mexican road race, de Cadenet became the first Brit to win outright in his 1954 Jaguar C-type.



NEXT WEEK



Looking back on an epic world championship

F1 REVIEW 2010

Team appraisals; top 10 drivers; full stats

On sale Dec 2

PLUS

Sims & Stoneman get their McLaren F1 chance; DTM Shanghai; Race of Champs

TOM KRISTENSEN

■ Fuji F3 Grand Prix ■ November 28, 1993 ■ TOM'S-Toyota O33F ■ Back-to-front charge to victory



TK's TOM'S leads Krumm, Angelelli and Villeneuve

THERE ARE several races I enjoyed. Maybe winning Le Mans on my debut in '97 in the Joest-Porsche, or the wet 24 hours for Audi in 2001 or Sebring first time out for BMW in '99. Perhaps beating Mika Hakkinen in a great fight to win the 1985 Scandinavian karting title by half a kart length, or winning a German STW race from 16th on the grid at the Nurburgring in '99, or taking the last-ever supertouring BTCC race for Honda at Silverstone in 2000. But the one I've chosen is the International F3 Grand Prix at Fuji at the end of '93.

F3 is the highest level for a young driver and it's where you can do something outstanding to boost your career. I won the Japanese F3 title for TOM'S that year – against people like Rickard Rydell, Anthony Reid and Jacques Villeneuve – and then finished second at the Macau GP just the week before.

For Fuji, a massive meeting with almost 60 cars, the team wanted to introduce the 1994 car, but we struggled with it in practice.

To make matters worse, I had a wheel-bearing failure in the flat-out 100R right-hander during

"The mechanics were exhausted but I've never seen the team so happy - the party afterwards was a lot of fun"

qualifying. The car rolled wildly into a ball and spectators thought I was killed. Fortunately, the team was based only 10km away so they rushed off and worked all night to get the bits to convert the car back to Macau spec. I tried to sleep in my local Gotemba apartment, but I was in a lot of pain – my kneecaps kept swelling and by morning

looked like Jennifer Lopez's bottom!

I went forwards from 15th in heat two – enough to start the final from ninth on the grid. Having worked my way up to fourth by lap two – with a bit of help from some messy driving up front – I battled with Michael Krumm and Max Angelelli and had some fantastic slipstreaming dices and six lead

changes with Roberto Colciago. I held on to win by four tenths.

The mechanics were exhausted after their overnight rebuild but I've never seen the team look so happy. [TOM'S owners] Tachi-san and Oiwa-san were crying. The downtown sushi and saki party afterwards was a lot of fun!

That weekend was one of my happiest moments in my five years of racing in Japan – a time that I have no doubt helped me develop enormously as a driver.

You come up as a young, loud wild beast and learn to be happy, humble and grateful. It helps when you're racing against guys you really like and respect, too. **X** Tom Kristensen was talking to Henry Hope-Frost

IN PROFILE



TOM KRISTENSEN began karting in his native Denmark at the age of 11 before rising through the single-seater ranks to win F3 titles in Germany and Japan. He raced in FIA F3000, winning once in 1997, before embarking on F1 testing with Tyrrell, Williams and for Michelin. But it was his move to sportscars that allowed TK to prosper – he won Le Mans on his debut for Porsche in '97 and has since taken seven more wins for Audi and Bentley. He dovetailed sportscar racing with tin-top action, winning in the BTCC for Honda and DTM for Audi – a marque for which he still competes.

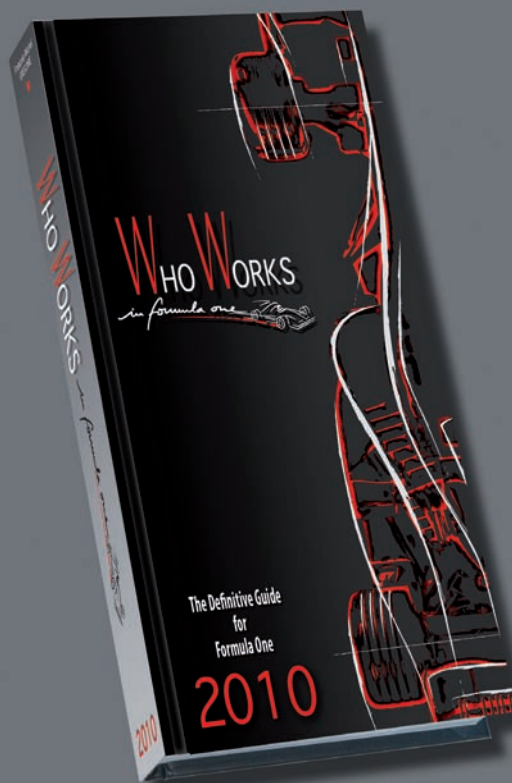
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