

BUMPER 52-PAGE F1 SEASON PREVIEW

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Michael Schumacher

What makes the returning 7-times champ the best ever

Team by team

The low-down on this year's runners and riders

No refuelling

What the new rules will mean for the racing

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C) JENSON BUTTON

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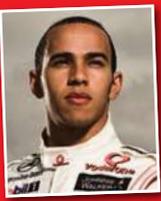
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GIBSON/LAT



“It was a unique and special feeling to see Michael Schumacher ahead of me - and know it was him”

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MCQUEEN/NOV



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EBREY/LAT



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Highlights this weekend on
Eurosport and Eurosport 2



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Let us be your guide for Bahrain and beyond



THE NEW Formula 1 season is almost upon us. Winter testing is over and the next time the cars hit the track will be for the opening free practice session at the Bahrain Grand Prix.

Seldom has there been a season that has promised so much. The story lines underpinning F1 2010 are fascinating: has Michael Schumacher still got it? Who is the top Brit: Jenson or Lewis? Can Alonso turn Ferrari around? Will Red Bull go one better and win the championship this season? And that's not to mention super-rookie Nico Hulkenberg at Williams, Robert Kubica and the reborn Renault team, the return of Lotus and so on.

From every team and its drivers, each track and the impact of the refuelling ban, our extensive guide to the 2010 season should be your ideal companion to an intriguing and captivating battle.

● The eagle-eyed among you will have spotted that AUTOSPORT's cover price has risen this week by 10p to £3.20. It's still (a lot) cheaper than a pint in our local, and I believe excellent value for the world's finest weekly motor racing read.

Andrew van de Burgt, editor

BAMBER'S WEEK





FLYING SCOTSMAN

Coulthard goes off piste in monster Dakar truck

AUTOSPORT's Formula 1 columnist David Coulthard got a wild ride in Dakar winner Vladimir Chagin's Kamaz truck in Moscow last week. "The thing was pretty impressive," reported DC. "He just aimed for the nearest snowbank and nearly broke my neck with the whiplash!"

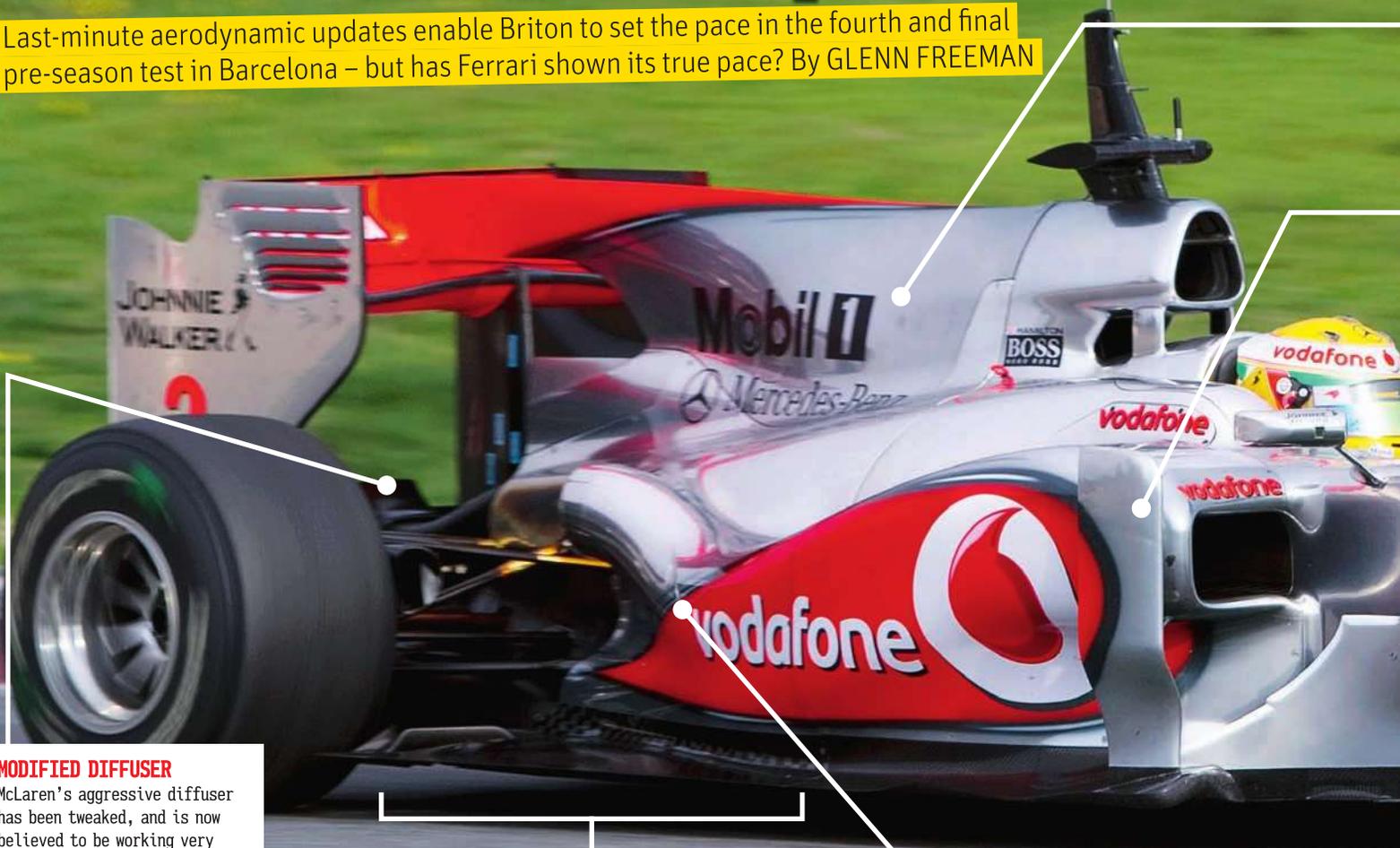
Photography: Denis Klero/Red Bull



AUTOSPORT
EXCLUSIVE

Hamilton hails McLaren's 'one-second' improvement

Last-minute aerodynamic updates enable Briton to set the pace in the fourth and final pre-season test in Barcelona – but has Ferrari shown its true pace? By GLENN FREEMAN



MODIFIED DIFFUSER

McLaren's aggressive diffuser has been tweaked, and is now believed to be working very consistently and effectively. It plays a big part in Hamilton being able to take Turn 3 flat-out for the first time

HOLE IN THE FLOOR

McLaren has worked hard to maximise the underbody airflow to its complicated diffuser to make the most of the available downforce

SCULPTED SIDEPODS

Modified to improve the airflow towards the 'Coke bottle' at the rear of the car

McLaren has made a leap forward in performance with a raft of aerodynamic upgrades introduced in the middle of last week's Barcelona test, according to driver Lewis Hamilton.

The Woking-based team introduced a major update package to the MP4-25 for the last two days of pre-season testing last weekend, and Hamilton was able to lead the way both on one-lap and race-simulation pace on Sunday.

"We were excited to see the upgrade package – we knew it was coming with a good second [per lap] improvement," Hamilton told

AUTOSPORT. "So we were eager to see if it worked. There was a noticeable difference – for example, Turn 3 at Barcelona, I've never done it flat before. Ferrari and Red Bull have been doing it flat, but we've never been able to do it. McLaren has never been strong at Barcelona, but finally we were competitive so that was a big bonus."

After setting the outright pace with a lower-fuel run on Sunday morning, Hamilton's race simulation later that day was also impressive, with his average lap time over a 61-lap run 0.2 seconds per lap faster than Michael

Schumacher's Mercedes that was on track at a similar time.

"The long-run pace was very surprising," the 2008 world champion added. "On full fuel I was thinking, 'Wow – this is good pace.' Overall it was a big boost for the team to see, but you cannot take things for granted. The others are pushing hard, so we have to stay on our toes and keep pushing."

FERRARI STAYS CALM

Ferrari has been widely hailed as being out in front throughout pre-season testing, but the Italian team was able to dodge some of the

limelight on the final day by not completing a full race simulation.

Felipe Massa's race run on Saturday, in less than ideal track conditions, suggested that the Scuderia does have frontrunning speed as the F10 comfortably outperformed its rivals on day three.

Ferrari's chief track engineer Chris Dyer told AUTOSPORT that he did not believe any team was a clear favourite going into the first race in Bahrain.

"I don't really see signs of anybody that's put a special package on here – I think everybody has added performance at a similar

ENGINE COVER

Modifications have been made both to improve the airflow feeding to the diffuser and, through the upper section of the engine cover, to make the rear wing work more consistently

BIGGER TURNING VANE

This is designed to separate the airflow heading over the sidepods towards the back of the car. McLaren's previous vertical wing was significantly smaller

FRONT BRAKE DUCTS

Like many teams, McLaren launched with large brake ducts. Amid concerns about brake wear and temperatures, this allows the teams to "work backwards" and optimise the ducts for both brake cooling and airflow

NEW FRONT WING

Features modified endplates and a new main plane of the two-piece front wing. The leading edge of the wing should help the airflow be more consistent, and make the car less pitch sensitive



Q&A

LEWIS HAMILTON

McLAREN DRIVER



Was this exactly what you wanted for the final test?

I didn't know what I wanted to come out with from Barcelona. I did want to know I had a good package and felt comfortable going into the first race, which I have. There is definitely more time to come, which is positive, and it's nice to come away from the test on the right foot.

What was it like to lap behind Michael Schumacher during your race stint?

I had really good fun. I caught him up and, rather than backing off, I thought, 'let's have some fun and see if we can get close to him'. It was a special feeling to see Michael Schumacher ahead of me. It feels different compared with any other driver, because he is a legend!

Last season started off badly, but the upgrades came quickly. With a better package, are similar big steps being made?

Now we have a good car, perhaps the steps will not be so big. They will be smaller steps, but they will all add up eventually.

rate over all of the tests," he said. "Within the difficulties of trying to work out everyone's performance, I don't think we've seen anything that has changed the relative performance of the cars.

"We're pretty happy with the way it's gone – the biggest problem has been the weather. We've had nothing more serious to worry about than the rain."

MERCEDES AND RED BULL CLOSE

The paddock consensus is that the title will be contended by a 'big four', comprising McLaren, Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull. But the

latter two teams were not grabbing the headlines in Spain last week, with Ross Brawn's squad waiting on its major updates for Bahrain, while Red Bull's one-lap pace looked stronger than its long runs, where it suffered high tyre degradation.

"The key thing is the understanding the tyre," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "It's important for us – it's one of many aspects that will contribute to the championship."

Mark Webber added: "We're working on the tyre situation. We had a lot of performance here, but looking to improve before Bahrain."

P12 F1'S SURPRISE PACKAGE



THOMPSON/GETTY

De la Rosa has high hopes for Sauber

Sauber poised to surprise

After strong showings in winter testing, Swiss privateer is tipped for some good results early in the year

Sauber has a strong chance of causing an upset in the early races this season after impressive performances below the radar from its C29 in testing.

Pedro de la Rosa put in one of the most impressive race simulation runs of the four-day test at Barcelona on Friday (see table, above right), and the team is expected to shine due to its consistency over long runs and how easy the car is on its tyres. According to senior figures

at Bridgestone, the way that the Saubers are able to manage their tyres could enable them to be one of the only teams to qualify on whichever is the softer tyre in Q3 and still be able to do a long first stint on the same set in the race.

"We are genuinely quick in all conditions," said de la Rosa. "My feeling when I drive the car is that it is very well sorted, so I'm confident. We are very fast in high-speed corners, and the lap times have been very positive."

Sauber's technical director Willy Rampf added that the car's kindness to its tyres will play a key factor in the team's ability to get results this season, as it will have more freedom during the races than other teams.

"The tyre wear is good and we can build on this," he told AUTOSPORT. "Our car is not too heavy, so we can do reasonable long stints. That helps keep strategies more flexible, if you're not forced to stop early by tyre wear."

Rampf added that the team has

benefited from the fact that every update it has put on the car so far this year has provided a gain in performance.

"Now we are an independent team again, we have fewer people, less time in the windtunnel, and less budget available to make the parts," he said. "So it has been difficult getting everything out on track, but I think overall it worked quite well because all of the components we brought are on the car now. We did not have to scrap anything, so the correlation with the windtunnel is good this year."

The team feels that its car's performance on heavy fuel loads is its strong point, with Rampf particularly pleased to hear de la Rosa's positive feedback after his race simulation.

"Pedro is pleased with the heavy car, it has no stability problems," he added. "Assuming everyone has run similar fuel loads to us, and is doing their real pace, then we are in quite good shape. The balance and the performance on high fuel is a strong part for us."

Q&A

PEDRO DE LA ROSA SAUBER DRIVER

What's your feeling on the car?

I'm very positive, but we don't know what fuel levels others are running. The team has done a very good job, and we have improved a lot.

Are you worried about the team's reduced resources?

We have very good people here, and we are creative. The budget is smaller, but that doesn't mean they are not

capable of doing a winning car.

Can you perform the same miracles like Brawn did last season?

These rules have been exploited to the

maximum already, so I don't think there will be any miracles. The teams with the most resources will start to dominate again, but we have a budget and we are exploiting it.



DUNBAR/LAT

AVERAGE RACE-RUN PACE CRUCIAL

SEVERAL OF the F1 teams declared last week that the most important information to take from the Barcelona test wasn't the headline times, but the average lap time achieved during race simulations.

AUTOSPORT has compiled this data, which shows how impressive Lewis Hamilton's 61-lap race simulation on Sunday was in comparison with the competition.

However, Hamilton, Michael Schumacher, Robert Kubica and Adrian Sutil all did their race runs on Sunday afternoon, when the track was

at its best. Felipe Massa did his race work for Ferrari on Saturday, with his early laps affected by light drizzle. The fact that he was still able to be fifth overall (while Jenson Button and Nico Rosberg were a long way off at the same time of day), suggests Ferrari is also in very good shape.

Red Bull's running was disrupted by reliability issues on Saturday, which meant its drivers then shared Sunday's track time. Its race run was on Friday, when Sebastian Vettel was caught twice on track by Fernando Alonso.

KEY DATA

BEST AVERAGE LAP TIME PER CAR OVER RACE SIMULATIONS	
1	Hamilton (McLaren) 1m24.237s
2	Schumacher (Mercedes) 1m24.435s
3	De la Rosa (Sauber) 1m24.818s
4	Kubica (Renault) 1m24.851s
5	Massa (Ferrari) 1m25.184s
6	Sutil (Force India) 1m25.555s
7	Vettel (Red Bull) 1m25.686s
8	Alguersuari (Toro Rosso) 1m25.742s
9	Hulkenberg (Williams) 1m26.189s

FASTEST LAPS DURING RACE SIMULATIONS	
1	Massa 1m22.344s
2	Hamilton 1m22.421s
3	Schumacher 1m22.809s
4	De la Rosa 1m22.946s
5	Sutil 1m23.008s
6	Kubica 1m23.175s
7	Hulkenberg 1m23.513s
8	Vettel 1m23.582s
9	Alguersuari 1m24.263s



Massa showed strong long-run testing pace

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

GLENN FREEMAN
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Guess which of the McLaren drivers was Gover-driving at last week's test and suffering excessive tyre wear? If you've applied perceived wisdom to your answer, then you're well and truly wrong. Yup, according to Bridgestone, super-smooth world champion Jenson Button is working his tyres too hard, while aggressive, oversteer-lover Lewis Hamilton has it under control.

This was just one of the answers that started to trickle through at last week's final pre-season test in Spain. While we weren't given a definitive form guide, there were at least a few things learned this time after a month of unknowns.

McLaren grabbed the headlines, but the general feeling in the paddock is that 2010 will be a four-way fight. Ferrari isn't enjoying the advantage some people felt it had, but it has kept its cards close to its chest, and hasn't got twitchy about McLaren's pace.

Mercedes and Red Bull are seemingly in the hunt, with the 'German' team just a little bit adrift but waiting on a big upgrade for Bahrain, while Red Bull has one-lap pace but seems to struggle to look after its tyres on a race run. Bring on the season.

The Red Bull is proving to be hard on its tyres

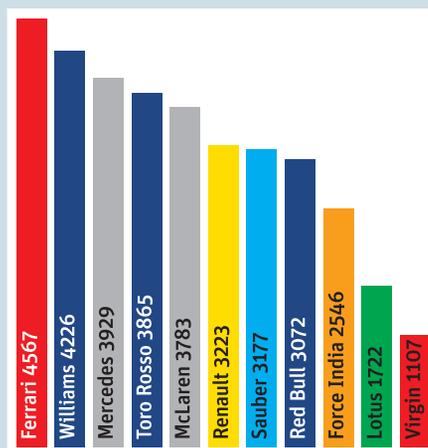


F1 TESTING: BARCELONA, FEBRUARY 25-28

POS	DRIVER	CAR	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-25	-	1m22.152s	-	1m20.472s
2	Mark Webber (AUS)	Red Bull-Renault RB6	1m21.487s	-	-	1m20.496s
3	Felipe Massa (BR)	Ferrari F10	-	-	1m22.344s	1m20.539s
4	Adrian Sutil (D)	Force India-Mercedes VJM03	-	-	1m22.606s	1m20.611s
5	Nico Hulkenberg (D)	Williams-Cosworth FW32	1m22.407s	1m20.614s	-	-
6	Fernando Alonso (E)	Ferrari F10	1m24.170s	1m20.637s	-	-
7	Sebastian Vettel (D)	Red Bull-Renault RB6	-	1m21.258s	1m23.123s	1m20.667s
8	Nico Rosberg (D)	Mercedes MGP W01	1m22.514s	-	1m20.686s	-
9	Michael Schumacher (D)	Mercedes MGP W01	-	1m21.689s	-	1m20.745s
10	Rubens Barrichello (BR)	Williams-Cosworth FW32	-	-	1m21.975s	1m20.870s
11	Kamui Kobayashi (J)	Sauber-Ferrari C29	-	-	1m26.216s	1m20.911s
12	Pedro de la Rosa (E)	Sauber-Ferrari C29	1m23.144s	1m20.973s	-	-
13	Vitantonio Liuzzi (I)	Force India-Mercedes VJM03	1m24.064s	1m21.056s	-	-
14	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR5	-	-	1m21.413s	1m22.135s
15	Jenson Button (GB)	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-25	1m23.452s	-	1m21.450s	-
16	Jaime Alguersuari (E)	Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR5	1m24.869s	1m21.571s	-	-
17	Vitaly Petrov (RUS)	Renault R30	1m24.173s	-	1m22.523s	-
18	Robert Kubica (PL)	Renault R30	-	1m24.912s	-	1m23.175s
19	Jarno Trulli (I)	Lotus-Cosworth T127	-	1m25.524s	1m25.059s	-
20	Heikki Kovalainen (FIN)	Lotus-Cosworth T127	-	-	-	1m25.251s
21	Timo Glock (D)	Virgin-Cosworth VR-01	-	1m25.942s	1m26.305s	-
22	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Virgin-Cosworth VR-01	1m27.057s	-	-	1m26.160s
23	Fairuz Fauzy (MAL)	Lotus-Cosworth T127	1m28.002s	-	-	-

Testing mileage

Total distance covered (in miles) by each team in February's four pre-season tests in Spain



P27 THE DEFINITIVE FORMULA 1 SEASON PREVIEW

New teams facing tough start to 2010 season



Lotus and Virgin – the two new teams who made it to pre-season testing in Spain – admit the extent of their early-race ambitions is merely to finish

Virgin has struggled for speed and reliability

Formula 1 newcomers Virgin and Lotus have admitted they will be uncompetitive at the start of the season despite completing 20 days of pre-season testing between them.

Lotus's best time in last week's Barcelona test, set by Jarno Trulli, was 4.587 seconds off Lewis Hamilton's fastest time for McLaren, while Virgin's best, set by Timo Glock, was a lap 5.470sec off the pace. Both teams have targeted race finishes as the limit of their ambitions, and Lotus technical director Mike Gascoyne has ruled out either team scoring early points.

"With the best will in the world, none of the new teams are going to score points in the first four races,"

Gascoyne told AUTOSPORT.

"And the only way you are going to score points is to finish – that's

"There are tweaks coming, but our drive is a major update around Barcelona time"

LOTUS TECH BOSS MIKE GASCOYNE

the number one aim. That's how we approached it, because if you put new aero bits on the car, you can make it quicker, but if you're not finishing you're not going to get anything."

Virgin driver Lucas di Grassi is confident that his team has created a

good baseline to work from, and expects the Manor Grand Prix-run outfit to make big gains.

"We have a good baseline and we know that we have to improve many different technical parts of the car," said di Grassi. "The car has been done in six months and the other teams have been doing this for a long time. So our steps will be greater in the beginning of the season and then it gets more difficult as you get closer to the other teams."

Lotus has a first major upgrade that is currently scheduled for the start of the European season, and Gascoyne is hopeful that his team will be able to improve the car's performance significantly. He

pointed to the fact that the team was just 3.5 seconds off the pace for much of the test, and only slipped back to 4.5 seconds off because it did not do any qualifying runs.

"There are tweaks coming, but our drive is a major update around Barcelona time," said Gascoyne. "The car is a little overweight here, so we haven't done any qualifying runs. If we did we'd be in the high 1m23s. So 3.5 seconds off the pace is where we said we would be six months ago."

"We always said that the first four races are about being respectable. When we look at the updates coming, the windtunnel resources and the CFD coming on stream, we can push the performance. But we have got a solid base to do it from."

Hamilton: no hurry on manager

LEWIS HAMILTON has said he is in no rush to find a new manager, after revealing earlier this week that father Anthony was no longer looking after his career.

The former world champion and his father have decided that the time had come for them to look after their own interests more.

This comes against the backdrop of Anthony's growing business interests through GP Prep, and his involvement with other drivers – including Force India tester Paul di Resta – taking up more of his time.

Speaking exclusively to AUTOSPORT, Lewis said: "My dad will guide me and help me with the transition, and even the selection [of his new manager], but as a dad.

"But the great thing is, I am here at McLaren for the next three years at least – and of course without my dad I would not be in this position. But we at McLaren are a family, the guys all help look after me in many ways, so there is no need for us to rush to find a new manager.

"We just want to take the right steps in the right time. I think he has come to realise that I am a man now. It is a big step, but one we have thought about for several years."

Hamilton's current contract with McLaren runs until the end of 2012.



Anthony Hamilton will no longer manage son Lewis

Stefan GP waiting on grid slot

STEFAN GRAND Prix was waiting to learn whether it can compete in F1 in 2010 as AUTOSPORT closed for press.

Both the Serbian outfit and US F1, which would have to drop out to make way for Stefan GP, are understood to have been asked to keep quiet by

the FIA while the 2010 entry list is finalised, preventing further escalation of the war of words that broke out last week. AUTOSPORT believes that should the FIA grant an entry, Stefan GP may still need the consent of the other F1 teams, and Bernie

Ecclestone, to race.

Whether the FIA decides that US F1 will not be able to take up its place on the grid will hinge on technical chief Charlie Whiting's report following a visit to the team's Charlotte base last Wednesday. This will allow him to make

an assessment of whether the team would be able to put a car on the grid this season, possibly for the Spanish Grand Prix in the second week of May. If not, US F1 may have to put its proposed entry back to 2011, although it may face competition.

Stefan GP was believed to be planning a shakedown at Lommel Proving Ground in Belgium as AUTOSPORT closed for press, although its running could depend on whether it will be granted an entry for Bahrain.

Kazuki Nakajima has already signed to drive one car, with 1997 world champion Jacques Villeneuve and Narain Karthikeyan vying for the second seat.



Zoran Stefanovich is still aiming for a 2010 entry

THIS WEEK IN F1



MERCEDES Reserve driver Nick Heidfeld is a strong contender to take over as chairman of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association. Pedro de la Rosa is set to step down from the role to concentrate on his race drive with Sauber.



RED BULL Owner Dietrich Mateschitz has set the target of winning the title this year after finishing second in 2009. "This year, we have to fight for the championship," said Mateschitz. "There is no guarantee, but it is a target."



MCLAREN Former champion Lewis Hamilton has paid tribute to new team-mate Jenson Button's willingness to work with him. "Jenson is very open about his feelings and vice versa," he said. "I'm really enjoying working with him."



FERRARI The Scuderia has hit out at the FIA's push to get new teams on the grid for hurting existing entrants. "This is the legacy of the holy war waged by the former FIA president," said a statement on the team's website.



WILLIAMS Rubens Barrichello has tipped his new outfit to be "one of the teams to surprise people this year" following a strong showing in last week's Barcelona test.



SAUBER Mexican Esteban Gutierrez has joined the Swiss outfit as a junior driver. The 18-year-old will race in GP3 this year, and will not be Sauber's F1 reserve driver.



RENAULT Robert Kubica has ruled out good results early in the season. "We will not go to Bahrain to fight for the podium," said the Pole.



FORCE INDIA Technical director James Key, who first joined the team in its Jordan guise in 1998, has moved to Sauber. Design director Mark Smith will take over Key's former role.



TORO ROSSO Team principal Franz Tost believes that STR heads into its fifth year in F1 better prepared than for any previous season after completing a full pre-season test programme.



LOTUS CNN International has joined the new team as a commercial partner. As part of the deal, CNN logos will be carried on both the car and team kit.



CAMPOS New team principal Colin Kolles is adamant that Campos will be on the grid for the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix. "It is very tough, but we will make it," he said.



US F1 Jose Maria Lopez, previously contracted to the American team, has given up on his planned graduation to F1 this year after failing to secure a seat at Campos.



VIRGIN Team co-owner Richard Branson has hit out at Ferrari's criticism of the new teams, blaming the Scuderia for making life more difficult for start-up operations. "Ferrari won the battle of making sure the new teams were shackled," he said in Spain last week.



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PORSCHE



MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

The testing is all over, but it's in the minds of the leading drivers that the fascination lies – particularly that of Michael Schumacher

And so it becomes ever-more real. After too long a winter we now have the pieces in place, the testing completed. As the teams desperately squeeze the last increments of performance from their Bahrain upgrades, the season is close upon us at last.

The performance of each car will be dependent upon the team's starting point and how good a job has been done during the off-season. But the software inside the helmets is less predictable. What it would be to get inside the minds of Alonso, Button, Massa or Hamilton as they face new and very real challenges... But perhaps most fascinating of all would be to get inside the mind of Michael

Schumacher. Just what sort of Michael are we going to see this year?

Testing has confirmed he's generally competitive, but is the searing extra pace still there to call upon when needed? Or will he be having to fall back on a veteran's experience and nous to get the job done, like we saw in times

past with such as Lauda or Prost?

The move away from two or three flat-out sprints to something more like the '80s/early '90s format of racing, with tyre, fuel and brake management critical, will allow Schumacher the opportunity to skin the cat a different way

if the last couple of tenths have been lost to him.

He gives the impression of being a more mellow man now than even in his last season of 2006. But the fact that he's coming back at all tells you that the fire still burns. You can guarantee his competitive spirit will be as intense as ever once he's in the car. So what happens in those critical split-seconds of high tension, when a great result is threatening to get away from him? Like at Adelaide '94, Jerez '97 or Monaco qualifying '06?

Such moves had the hallmarks not of premeditated fouls, but moments of madness triggered by panic. They were nothing like as cynical, for example, as Ayrton Senna's decision that he was going to take Prost off at the first corner of Suzuka in 1990, if Alain didn't allow him to lead. That was a premeditated plan – as he later admitted. With Schumacher, it was as if, when being pushed hard by a faster car, he was straining so hard for so long against the very edges of feasibility to deliver the 'impossible' result that eventually he made the inevitable error, exposed a hole in his defence and, when this happened, he felt it was unfair and desperately needed to undo it. The error of glancing the wall when leading Hill's faster Williams at Adelaide; the error of not fully closing the door to Villeneuve's new-tyred Williams at Jerez; the error of clipping the wall in the final sector at Monaco and knowing that

would cost pole (and thereby almost certainly victory in a season where he was the underdog fighting a big points deficit): all these things came when striving to do something quite special, and his reaction to them was akin to the cartoon character that's inadvertently just stepped over the edge of a cliff and desperately wants to jump back.

That reaction seemed almost like a default within him, triggered by a certain type of situation. But it has sullied the reputation of the most successful driver of all time. Despite all the unbelievable brilliance, the supernatural feats he regularly performed in a racing car, it must hurt to have all that dismissed as inconsequential because of basically three incidents over a 15-year career. That surely has come more into focus for him in his three years out of the car when, away from the intensity, he has had time to contemplate his career and how it is perceived by the outside world.

So the question is intriguing: when (if) that situation arises again, is that same hair-trigger still set? Or has the mellowing of time and/or the contemplation of his reputation allowed a detent that will intervene? He has the challenge of undoing time in the sense of the passing of the years, but without resorting to undoing it in the split-second of the moment when the special achievement has just slipped from his grasp. It's probably the biggest challenge faced by anyone on that grid. ☒



Predicting Schumacher's 2010 mindset is intriguing

GIBSON/LAT

“They were not premeditated fouls, but mad moments”

Chevrolet beckons for ex-F1 winner Herbert



SUPERSTARS/BTCC

Herbert secures Superstars ride

Three-time grand prix winner hopes to dovetail Italian Chevy programme with BTCC. By JAMIE O'LEARY

Johnny Herbert remains hopeful of returning to the British Touring Car Championship this season, despite signing a deal to race in the Italian-based Superstars Series.

The three-time grand prix winner made three appearances in a Team Dynamics Honda Civic last season, scoring a best finish of seventh place at Rockingham.

Dynamics boss Steve Neal has made no secret of his desire to hang onto the 1991 Le Mans 24 Hours winner, and Herbert, 45, believes he can combine programmes in both championships.

"It's something I hope will still happen," Herbert told AUTOSPORT. "The last two rounds clash with Superstars races, but the team

showed with James Thompson last year that it can still be very competitive even with a driver not running all the races.

"I know that Steve is working very hard to get a deal sorted, but, as always, it's a question of finding a budget, and in the current climate even finding one for Matt [Neal] isn't easy."

Herbert completed his Superstars deal last week and will race a 400bhp, rear-wheel-drive Chevrolet Lumina CR8 for the Motorzone Race Car team.

"The team only really started partway through last season," he said, "but they're full of ex-Osella F1 guys and had a win for [Herbert's team-mate] Fabrizio Armetta at Kyalami. The car looks impressive



Herbert will race with Fabrizio Armetta

too – a bit like the Speedcars I used to race. That's part of the appeal.

"Plus I've got a few of my old F1 rivals to race against like Gianni [Morbidelli], and [Emanuele] Naspetti too."

Herbert will drive the Lumina at the official series test at Monza

ahead of the season opener at the same track, but could get a preliminary run-out at Imola.

"The great thing is that it's the start of the year, so there'll be some testing time," he said. "That will mean that I'll be race fit for the BTCC too if that deal can come off."

Daytona winner will race this Porsche



SUPERSTARS

Tin-top return for N.Technology

TOP TOURING car team N.Technology will return to racing this year after linking up with Porsche to run one of the new Panamera S models in the Superstars series.

Mauro Sipsz's organisation, which won multiple Italian and European touring car titles as Alfa Romeo's

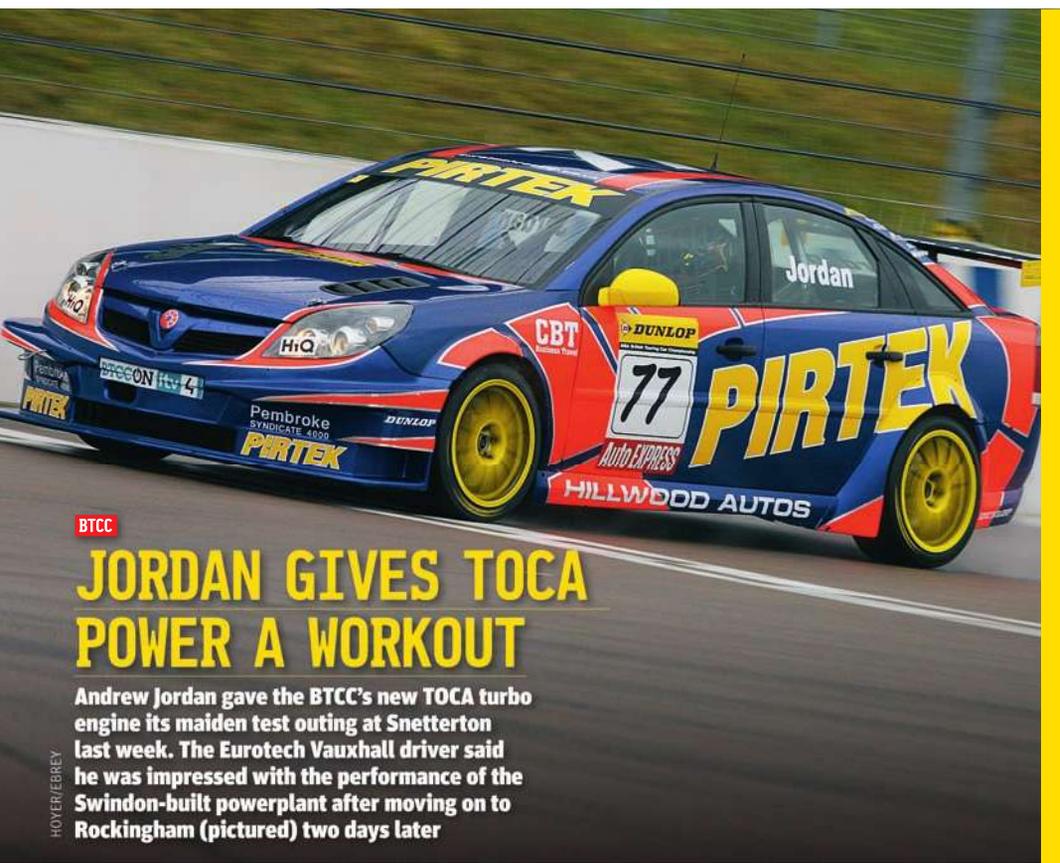
works team, last fielded an independent Honda for James Thompson in the 2008 World Touring Car Championship.

The Porsche will be driven by Daytona 24 Hours winner Joao Barbosa, who will dovetail Superstars with his Grand-Am commitments.

"This is a great

opportunity," said the Portuguese. "It's very important to be involved with projects with long-term futures and I'm sure this is one of them."

Porsche is the sixth manufacturer to be represented in the series this year, joining Mercedes, BMW, Cadillac, Maserati and Chevrolet.



BTCC
JORDAN GIVES TOCA POWER A WORKOUT

Andrew Jordan gave the BTCC's new TOCA turbo engine its maiden test outing at Snetterton last week. The Eurotech Vauxhall driver said he was impressed with the performance of the Swindon-built powerplant after moving on to Rockingham (pictured) two days later

HOYER/EBREY

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

JAMIE O'LEARY
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR

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If someone had told me a year ago that the Superstars Series would be unveiling a three-time grand prix winner from anywhere other than Italy on its driver front, I'd have laughed. The acquisition of Johnny Herbert by the Motorzone team is a real coup for the championship.

The fact that series promoter Romolo Formula Futuro is run jointly run by the Flammini brothers, who have done so much to bring the World Superbike Championship to a wider audience, is cause for optimism that it could become a real player in professional motorsport. Certainly, claims made to AUTOSPORT by series boss Dario Calzavara last December that "this can become the biggest touring car championship in the world" should not be taken lightly.

After all, a large crowd attended last year's season finale at Kyalami, machines from Mercedes, BMW, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Maserati and Porsche have already been entered for the coming season, and there seem to be sound finances backing the whole thing up. All that's left is to add a few more star names to the line-up. Now, let me think: Hakkinen, Zanardi, Giovanardi, Verstappen...

IN BRIEF



TANDY TO PORSCHE

British Formula 3 race winner Nick Tandy (above) will race in the Porsche Supercup this season. The former McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist has joined Konrad Motorsport, which took the title last year with Jeroen Bleekemolen.

OLYMPIAN TARGETS RACING

Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes will attend the Women in Motorsport event at Silverstone next Monday. The 800m and 1500m specialist is a motorsport fan and is considering an involvement in the sport.

POINTS TWEAK FOR WTCC

The World Touring Car Championship has adopted F1's new scoring system, with 25 points for a win down to a point for 10th place. The works Chevrolet Cruzes will run at the 1150kg base weight in Brazil, with the BMWs and diesel SEATs 5kg and 20kg heavier respectively.

ZONTA WITH CORINTHIANS

Former grand prix driver Ricardo Zonta's Brazilian V8 Stock Car team will run as Corinthians Racing this

year after a tie-in with the Sao Paulo-based football team. Zonta will drive one car, with Rodrigo Sperafico set for the other seat.

WTCC DEBUT FOR BARTH

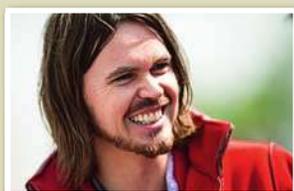
Swiss Fredy Barth will make his WTCC debut at Curitiba this weekend in a late deal to race a SUNRED-run SEAT Leon TDI. Barth was third in last year's Leon Eurocup.

GEORGE TESTS HONDA

British Touring Car Championship regular John George had his first test with the Tech-Speed Honda squad at Snetterton last week. Team-mate Paul O'Neill also drove his Integra-R. Meanwhile, new WSR BMW signing Andy Neate continued his testing programme at Silverstone.

THOMMO TAKES MIC OUT OF CLELAND

James Thompson (below) will commentate on the WTCC for British Eurosport this season, starting with this weekend's Curitiba round. He replaces fellow two-time BTCC champion John Cleland.



WTCC

Menu: play fair and I'll still win



Menu hopes for better luck in '10

ALAIN MENU believes he can have a strong season in the World Touring Car Championship this year in the face of the arrival of former world champion Yvan Muller alongside him at Chevrolet.

Menu has been beaten by team-mate Rob Huff for the past two seasons, and the line-up at the RML-run team is even more competitive this year, with Muller replacing the retiring Nicola Larini.

But Menu insists that he can still be competitive and puts his disappointing 2009 season down to bad luck.

"I am reasonably optimistic ahead of this season," he said. "In truth, apart from finishing on the podium from the first race, my biggest wish for 2010 is to have more fair play on the track and not live again what I had to endure in 2009, when I was a victim of others."



PHOTO

Superstars has plenty of potential to grow

REMEMBER WHEN...



1997 F1 SEASON

LAT

Herbert was team-mates with Morbidelli? Johnny Herbert and reigning champion Gianni Morbidelli will be rivals in the Superstars series, but they were F1 team-mates at Sauber for eight races in 1997.

P88 WTCC PREVIEW



INDYCAR

New-look Penske fires the opening salvo

The familiar livery is gone, but the pace remains as Power leads a team 1-2-3 in IndyCar testing

Power has recovered from his back injury

Penske dominated last week's two-day IndyCar Series test at Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama, on the team's first public outing since the end of its 20-year relationship with Marlboro.

Will Power, who steps up to a full-time ride this year in the team's expanded line-up, emerged quickest on the final day ahead of team-mates Ryan Briscoe and Helio Castroneves, 24 hours after Briscoe and Castroneves led a team 1-2-4.

"We certainly found some good things," said Australian Power, who also declared himself fully recovered from the back injuries sustained in a crash at Sears Point last year. "From the first lap I felt fine. I've been running too, which is the last thing they let you do after an injury like that. It doesn't hurt when I run, so I'd say it's healed."

Best of the non-Penske team runners was Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon, but the test was less productive for champion team-mate Dario Franchitti, who managed just a couple of flying

laps on the first morning before spearing into a guardrail.

New KV Racing signing Takuma Sato made an encouraging start, finishing the second day in sixth place, behind Justin Wilson.

Also among the new faces was Briton James Rossiter, who was 13th on the first day in a third KV. The ex-Super Aguri reserve has still not confirmed that he will remain with the team when the season starts.

The unseasonably chilly conditions played a factor in three teams deciding not to join the test. Panther Racing opted to run Dan Wheldon at Sebring instead of Barber in the hope of finding warmer weather, while new squad FAZZT opted to keep working at its base in Indianapolis after having tested with Alex Tagliani a few weeks ago. Dale Coyne Racing was also absent, having run Indy Lights champion JR Hildebrand at Sebring a week earlier.

The IndyCar season will open with the Sao Paulo street race in Brazil on March 14.

INDYCAR TESTING, BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK, FEB 25-26

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	Will Power (Penske)	1m09.8724s
2	Helio Castroneves (Penske)	1m10.0084s
3	Ryan Briscoe (Penske)	1m10.0459s
4	Scott Dixon (Ganassi)	1m10.0594s
5	Justin Wilson (Dreyer & Reinbold)	1m10.0869s



Rossiter in action for KV Racing

WEBB/LAT
KINRADE/LAT

Q&A

TAKUMA SATO

KV RACING

It was 15 months since your last proper test (for Toro Rosso). Did you feel rusty?

I tried not to be, and had a good surprise in terms of my speed and being okay with the physical forces. I was very excited to be back in a car and immediately felt comfortable. One

proper test before the first race is not ideal, but it was enough to maximise my performance.

How did the deal with KV Racing come about? Since we first looked at IndyCar, KV and Jimmy Vasser was a team I got on well with. Penske



COATES/LAT

and Ganassi are dominant, but KV has great potential and I'm confident that they can give me 100 per cent commitment.

IN BRIEF



SINGLE-CAR CONQUEST

Conquest Racing will return to the IndyCar Series full-time this year with Brazilian Mario Romancini (above). Fellow Indy Lights race winner Bia Figueiredo, meanwhile, will race a third Dreyer & Reinbold car in the season opener.

HAMILTON LANDS INDY DEAL

Indy 500 regular Davey Hamilton has completed a deal with the De Ferran Luczo Dragon team for a three-race IndyCar programme this year to encompass the 500, Texas Motor Speedway and one other oval event. Meanwhile, Indy Lights race winner Sebastian Saavedra will race for Bryan Herta Autosport at the 500.

DE SILVESTRO JOINS HVM

Swiss driver Simona de Silvestro will race full-time in IndyCar this year after joining HVM Racing. The arrival of the 21-year-old, a Formula Atlantic race winner, could bring the series' count of female drivers as high as four, alongside Danica Patrick, Sarah Fisher and potentially Milka Duno.

ALESHIN BACK IN RENAULT 3.5

Formula Renault 3.5 race winner Mikhail Aleshin will return to the series with Carlin this season. The Russian, who raced in Formula 2 last year, did not take part in last week's unofficial Valencia test. Spaniard Victor Garcia switches from British F3 to complete KMP Racing's line-up.

LATE SWITCH FOR AUTOGP

AutoGP has moved its opening round to Czech venue Brno on April 24-25 as there is a shortage of marshals for the planned opener at the Algarve circuit in Portugal the previous weekend.

VERNAY HEADS STATESIDE

F3 Euro Series race-winner Jean-Karl Vernay (below) will race in Indy Lights with Sam Schmidt Motorsports this year. The Frenchman will partner Canadian Philip Major, who moves from British F3, and Briton Pippa Mann in the team.



BRITISH F3

Manor returns to British F3 arena

MANOR MOTORSPORT will return to British Formula 3 this season after a six-year absence.

John Booth's Yorkshire-based squad won back-to-back British F3 titles with Marc Hynes and Antonio Pizzonia in 1999 and 2000, before switching to the F3 Euro

Series with Lewis Hamilton in 2004.

The squad had been set to quit the category altogether, after gaining an entry to the new GP3 Series for 2010, and has already sold two of its current-spec Dallara-Mercedes to new British F3 squad Sino-Vision Racing.



Pizzonia scored Manor's last British F3 win in 2003

Manor is preparing to run reigning Formula BMW Pacific champion Rio Haryanto in GP3 this season, but will also run a single car in a limited British F3 campaign to give the 17-year-old extra mileage. The Indonesian racer tested a National Class Dallara for Team West-Tec at Rockingham this week.

Manor boss John Booth said: "Rio's going to be doing GP3 and some sort of F3 programme.

"It will be one car for him, but it won't be a full season. The maximum Rio can do is eight rounds, but he'll probably do five or six. We've got a couple of cars left over from the Euro Series and this is quite an easy thing to do – it will be nice to be back."

● Series rookie Oli Webb set the pace on the first day of the second official pre-season British F3 test at Rockingham on Monday. Webb's Fortec Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes lapped 0.226s faster than Carlin's Jean-Eric Vergne.

INDYCAR

Tracy tweeting with rage

PAUL TRACY used social-networking site Twitter to launch a fierce attack on the lack of American drivers in this year's IndyCar Series.

Just four North American drivers were on track for the opening day of last week's Barber Motorsports Park test, after Graham Rahal's deal to bring McDonald's backing to Newman/Haas/Lanigan Racing fell through. The team will run a



Tracy: outburst

solo car for Japan's Hideki Mutoh.

Tracy, who has only raced sporadically since the collapse of Champ Car in 2007, called on American fans to protest. "Guys like Rahal, [Buddy] Rice and me get to stay home and watch," he wrote. "If that's what you fans want, enjoy."

The Canadian also addressed the series directly, saying: "Listen to what people who support the IRL want. The series needs guys that a fan base build on, not turn them away for ride buyers. And they wonder why no one's watching anymore."

BRITISH F3

Cooper to resolve tyre problems

BRITISH F3 tyre supplier Cooper Tires has been forced to remake its 2010 rear wet-weather tyres after problems at the first pre-season test at Snetterton last week.

Many teams switched to leftover supplies of 2009 rubber after issues with the new tyres, which were running for the first time. Frontrunning squad Raikkonen Robertson Racing was unable to switch to '09 tyres and languished over 1.4 seconds behind Carlin's James Calado, who set the wet pace on the first day.

"We were a bit mystified by our lack of pace on the first day," said team boss Anthony 'Boyo' Hieatt. "The chassis balance wasn't right, the tyres lacked grip,

and they looked like they were going off."

Cooper Tires sales director Brian Davies said the company has been sent incorrect materials by one of its suppliers, but had produced a new batch of tyres for this week's two-day test at Rockingham.



Teams struggled with 2010-spec wets

GP3

Van der Zande set for GP3



Dutch F3 star heading to new series with Mücke

FORMULA 3 race winner Renger van der Zande will race in the GP3 Series with Mücke Motorsport, which is now co-owned by DTM Mercedes racer Ralf Schumacher.

The 24-year-old Dutchman joins the team for the first time at this week's opening pre-season test at the Paul Ricard circuit in France.

"I had a few other options, but this opportunity was the best for me," van der Zande told AUTOSPORT. "The team has a link to Mercedes, and so does Ralf, and so do I, so it's very good.

"I think I have a good chance for the championship, which will be nice in front of the F1 teams. But this is a new series, so reliability will be the focus of testing. We don't need to be the fastest until we get to the first race."

WORLD GT1

Drivers flock to world championship

Names from GP2 and Japanese GT are among those on board as series is launched in Paris



Series kicks off far from here, in Abu Dhabi

Ex-Formula 1 driver Enrique Bernoldi, GP2 race winner Andreas Zuber and former Super GT racer Dominik Schwager are among a wave of leading drivers announced for the FIA GT1 World Championship at the official launch of the series in Paris.

Bernoldi will race for the Matech Ford team alongside Thomas Mutsch, Zuber will drive one of the Phoenix Carsport team's Chevrolet Corvette C6.Rs, most likely with Mike Hezemans, while Schwager has landed a seat at the All-Inkl.com Lamborghini team.

Bernoldi, who raced in FIA GT and Superleague Formula last year, said: "I really enjoyed my time in GTs last season and decided that this was what I wanted to focus on."

Phoenix team manager Dirk

Theimann said that Zuber had impressed at the wheel of one of the Chevys at Paul Ricard last week.

"It was the first time he had driven with a roof over his head, but he was very cool," he explained.

Schwager will share the second All-Inkl Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV with Nicky Pastorelli.

He was brought in by friend Marc Basseng, who will act as team manager in addition to driving the lead car alongside former Le Mans 24 Hours winner Christophe Bouchut.

Series boss Stephane Ratel said: "Teams understand that this could become something big and, if new manufacturers come in, they will have to do it through the existing teams. That's why they are employing top drivers, because they



Ratel with FIA chief Jean Todt

want to win races and prove they are the best in the championship."

The new Sumo Power team has revealed that former FIA GT Championship driver Jamie Campbell-Walter and prototype

regular Warren Hughes are frontrunners for the seats in its second Nissan GT-R. They tested with the team at the Motorland Aragon circuit in Spain late last week.

Porsche v Ferrari only in LMS/ALMS



DPPi

FIA GT2

GT2 gets canned for this year

THE FIA GT2 European Championship is certain to be cancelled for 2010 through a lack of entries.

Series boss Stephane Ratel has proposed to the FIA that the new series, which had been split from the new FIA GT1 World Championship, be postponed for one season.

His plan instead is for a European Cup to be

awarded for the best GT2 car at the Spa 24 Hours, which is also open to GT3 and GT4 machinery.

Ratel denied that the introduction of a pro-am driver format for 2010 had precipitated his decision, despite the defection of the leading AF Corse and CRS Ferrari teams to the Le Mans Series.

"If we had left it as it was, we would have had 11 cars like last year," said Ratel.

"We knew our plan would lose us some cars, but we thought it would bring in others."

Ratel has called for a major rethink of the category, and claimed that GT2 is too expensive in comparison to GT3.

LE MANS

Duval lands ORECA Peugeot LM drive

REIGNING FORMULA Nippon champion Loic Duval will race at this year's Le Mans 24 Hours in the ORECA Peugeot team.

The 27-year-old is returning to the French enduro after one season away to drive ORECA's Peugeot 908 HDi with Olivier Panis and Nicolas Lapierre. He will also contest the eight-hour Le Mans Series opener at Paul Ricard next month in the car.

ORECA boss Hugues de Chaunac said: "Loic did a good job with us two years ago and also at Okayama last season [in the Asian Le Mans Series races]. We wanted a driver who would quickly integrate with the team."

ORECA tested its Peugeot for the first time last week at Paul Ricard. The car completed more than 900 miles in the hands of Panis and Lapierre.

ORECA ran its Pug at Ricard last week



ORECA/JULES SEUR

LE MANS

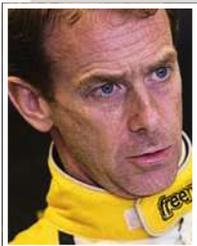
DAVIDSON BACK IN THE SADDLE

Anthony Davidson had his first test of a Peugeot 908 last week since he was confirmed as part of the French squad's driver line-up for Le Mans. The ex-Formula 1 driver was in action at Paul Ricard



PEUGEOT

IN BRIEF



HUGHES BACK WITH ASM

Prototype regular Warren Hughes (left) will return to the ASM Zytek team for this year's Le Mans 24 Hours. The Briton, who drove for ASM in 2006-07, will also

team up with Olivier Pla and Miguel Amaral in the team's Zytek LMP2 contender at the Paul Ricard Le Mans Series opener.

KAFFER ON BOARD FOR RISI

Pierre Kaffer will return to the Risi Competizione GT2 Ferrari squad for the blue-riband enduros at Sebring, Le Mans and Road Atlanta this year alongside Jaime Melo and Gianmaria Bruni. Kaffer, who raced for the team full-time last season, will also contest the Road America ALMS race when Bruni is unavailable.

LAMY JOINS SCHNITZER

Multiple Nurburgring 24 Hours winner Pedro Lamy has been added to the Schnitzer BMW squad for this year's endurance classic on the Nordschleife. The Portuguese, who scored one of his three wins at the 'Ring with BMW, is part of a roster of drivers in the two-car squad of V8-powered M3s that includes big names Andy Priaulx, Jorg and Dirk Muller and Uwe Alzen.

GRAND-AM FOR CHRISTODOULOU

Reigning STAR Mazda champion Adam Christodoulou will contest the remainder of the Grand-Am series in a GT class Mazda RX-8 run by SpeedSource under the banner of Newman Wachs Racing. The 20-year-old Briton will share the car with Atlantic champion John Edwards.

PRIAULX SET FOR SEBRING

Three-time World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx will drive for the Rahal Letterman Racing BMW team in the Sebring 12 Hours later this month. The Briton will share one BMW M3 with Dirk Muller and Joey Hand, while Dirk Werner joins Bill Auberlen and Tommy Milner in the second car.

RML LANDS WALLACE

British sportscar legend Andy Wallace will race with the RML squad at Le Mans, as predicted by AUTOSPORT (Feb 18). The team tested its LMP2 Lola with its new HPD V8 engine and Dunlop tyres for the first time at Silverstone last week (below).



WORLD GT1

Ratel targets US race for GT1 championship

A RACE in the United States is top of FIA GT1 World Championship boss Stephane Ratel's list of targets for an expanded calendar in the next two years.

Ratel revealed at Monday's launch of this year's series that he wants to take the series to the US, China and Russia in the "short-term".

He described the three countries as "essential markets" for the world championship, and said

a US race was vital because it "was the biggest market of them all" for the six brands competing in the series.

Discussions with the Canadian St Jovite circuit at Mont Tremblant are at an advanced stage, according to Ratel. He is now looking for a US event to complete a North American double-header.

"I have had many meetings in America and hope to find a promoter, and if we stay on the East

Coast it would not be an expensive trip," he said. "I believe that if there is one area where GT racing could have greater appeal than Formula 1, it is the US."

Ratel would not divulge potential venues, but he is known to have had discussions with tracks in Florida.

An expansion of this year's 10-race schedule to 12 events is planned for 2011. Ratel stated that this could grow to a maximum of "14 or 15".

GT1 cars have a history in Florida



BOYD/LAT



BURNS BEAUTIES IN BOURNEMOUTH

Last Saturday's Rallye Sunseeker was graced by a display of seven of Richard Burns's rally cars. The cars, including his BRC-winning Subaru Legacy, WRC-winning Impreza and his Peugeot 206 WRC, were present on the Dorset event to promote the Richard Burns Foundation and the inaugural Richard Burns Trophy, which Dave Weston won for finishing as top Group N driver on the event

IRC

Peugeot backs Meeke defence

French team's motorsport boss promises to upgrade the 207 S2000 to help Kris Meeke fight for a second title

Kris Meeke's Peugeot 207 S2000 will undergo significant changes as the French firm aims to keep pace with its IRC Super 2000 rivals, Skoda's Fabia and the all-new Ford Fiesta.

Peugeot Sport's director of motorsport Olivier Quesnel has confirmed he will do all he can to bolster Meeke's chances of a successful defence of his IRC title this season, with the Ford and Skoda both winning in the championship more recently than the 207.

Quesnel has sanctioned the use of development parts that had been intended for the Citroen C3 Super 2000 - a car which the PSA Group canned, unwilling to see Peugeot and Citroen go head-to-head in

the same formula. The main areas of development for the 207 will be in the suspension and engine.

Quesnel said: "Kris is a good person, we have to give him the best

"We will do all we can to make the 207 competitive.

We want this car to win"

PEUGEOT BOSS OLIVIER QUESNEL

equipment, we know we can't stop working on this car. We will do all we can to make the Peugeot competitive. We want this car to win. We will put on the shock absorbers developed for the Citroen and maybe the engine."

There had been concerns that

Meeke's challenge for back-to-back IRC titles could have been hit if Peugeot hadn't stepped up its development on what is one of the sport's oldest Super 2000 cars. Meeke said he never doubted the manufacturer's commitment.

"When I signed the deal to stay at Peugeot last year, that was one of the bottom-line parts of the agreement," said Meeke. "I had the same question: would Peugeot work on it or would the 207 just be left out to grass? I knew this development was coming and we're really going to see the benefit of it soon."

Meeke hasn't started testing the new parts yet, but he is hoping they could be ready in time for the series' return to Europe in June.

In the meantime, and in a mirror

of his 2009 season, Meeke has to start his IRC campaign from scratch on the Curitiba Rally in Brazil this week, following his no-score in Monte Carlo.

Meeke will not face any Fiestas in South America, but the works Skodas of Juho Hanninen and Jan Kopecky will compete on the event which starts on Friday (tomorrow).

Meeke aims to fly high with new bits



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WRC Prodrive quiet over Mini project

DESPITE DAVID Richards's assurances that Prodrive's latest WRC project would be revealed at this week's Geneva Motorshow, Mini's presence in Switzerland failed to feature any kind of WRC promotion.

While there might not have been a rally car in virtual or physical form, Mini did reveal the road-going version of its all-new Crossover model. This is the car on which Prodrive is basing its return to the sport next season.

No comment was available from Mini or Prodrive on the potential WRC entry, but a source close to the alliance said: "It's certainly not being



Mini's Crossover will act as WRC donor car

seen as bad news that no announcement came in Geneva. There is no delay in the practical on-going development of the car or the project. The delay has come from the marketing rather than the engineering side of things.

The intention is to have the [rally] car running at the expected time."

It is believed the delay in revealing either a virtual or physical mock-up of the Mini World Rally Car is due to the German firm not wanting to detract any

attention from the reveal of the Crossover road car.

The Mini WRC, which will utilise BMW's new 1.6-litre turbocharged engine, is expected to begin testing later this year, before making its WRC debut in January next year.

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

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If history is anything to go by, the lunchtime leader of Rally Mexico tomorrow will be Petter Solberg. In all but one of central America's five previous WRC encounters, the Norwegian has held the initial advantage. But only once – in 2005 – has he been in the same position at the finish.

The consideration here is about who has never led from the outset in Leon, and that's Sebastien Loeb. Yet the Frenchman has won the last three Rally Mexicos. Loeb's plan in Mexico is simple: let everybody do their thing for the first morning, or the first day, then move ahead and beat them all.

Where we can really expect to see Loeb make his experience play is tomorrow (Friday) afternoon and Saturday morning. When the temperatures peak at close to 30C on Friday, he'll manage his tyres better than anybody to move to within striking distance of the front. Then, probably during the first run through the Duarte test on Saturday, he'll hit the front. And, if history is to be trusted for a second time, he'll then manage that advantage from the front with the odd fastest time here and there.

If Mikko Hirvonen's title aspirations are to hold any weight this year, the Finn must stop all of the above. He simply can't afford, from a psychological or practical perspective, to let Loeb hit the front.

Loeb: out for his fourth Mexico win



IN BRIEF



Cyprus organisers have put together the new initiative, which offers a purse of €150,000 for the driver who is fastest over two runs at a mixed-surface, 18-mile stage. The prize fund will be split between the Super 2000, Group N and two-wheel-drive classes.

NO CITY RUN FOR FINLAND

Rally Finland has dropped its plan to run a city-centre stage through the streets of Jyväskylä after it failed to get permission to conduct the test. The July event now gets underway with a Thursday-night seeding stage, with the top 10 drivers on the stage being allowed to select their own place in the running order for day one's 10 stages. Saturday includes a further eight stages.

NEW STAGES FOR MEXICO

This week's second round of the WRC, Rally Mexico, will run a test through the centre of Leon. This is the first time the WRC-qualifying event has included the stages in its itinerary. The majority of the Ford team will run the mile-long stage on foot to raise money for Sport Relief today (Thursday).

GOLDEN STAGE FOR CYPRUS

The final round of this year's IRC, the Cyprus Rally, will run the first-ever Golden Stage Rally the day after it finishes. Eurosport and the

LATVALA'S TEST WASTE

Ford WRC driver Jari-Matti Latvala admitted his pre-Rally Mexico test in Spain wasn't exactly conducted in the perfect conditions. The Finn drove the test Focus RS WRC 09 for two days in pouring rain, with temperatures plummeting to -2C. It was 27C and sunny in host city Leon yesterday (Monday).

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

Monster World Rally Team driver Ken Block makes his debut in a Ford Focus RS WRC 08 (below) on this week's Rally Mexico. He arrives at the start of his world programme on the back of a fifth win on the 100 Acre Wood Rally last weekend. He was driving his Ford Fiesta on the second round of Rally America.



WRC Atkinson fired up for WRC return



Atkinson lay off has been productive

FORMER SUBARU driver Chris Atkinson says his enforced absence from the sport has made him even more determined for when he returns.

While the Australian has still to find a deal to drive this season, he has been linked with a seat in the Monster Ford World Rally Team, and the Prodrive Mini operation for 2011. Since losing his seat when Subaru canned its WRC team at the end of 2008, Atkinson has only tackled one world round, finishing fifth in Ireland in a Citroen C4 WRC last year.

Atkinson said: "I've worked in rallying for eight years and to have a year off in the middle of your career makes you stand back and appreciate what you have. It's probably what some drivers could do with. It's been good for me. I still believe I have a world title in me, otherwise I wouldn't be working to get back."

WRC PREVIEW

Event	Rally Mexico
Based	Leon
Date	March 4-7
Stages	22
Surface	Gravel
Previous winner	Loeb (2008)



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COMPOSITE GT/RALLY

COMPOSITE FORMULA



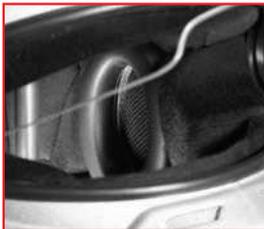
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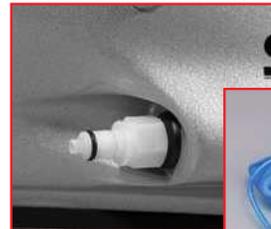
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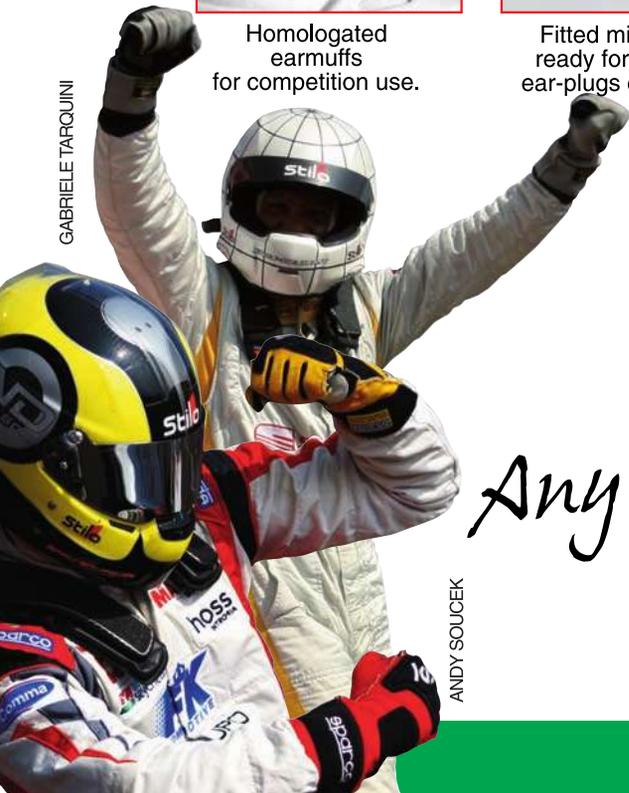


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GUIDE 2010



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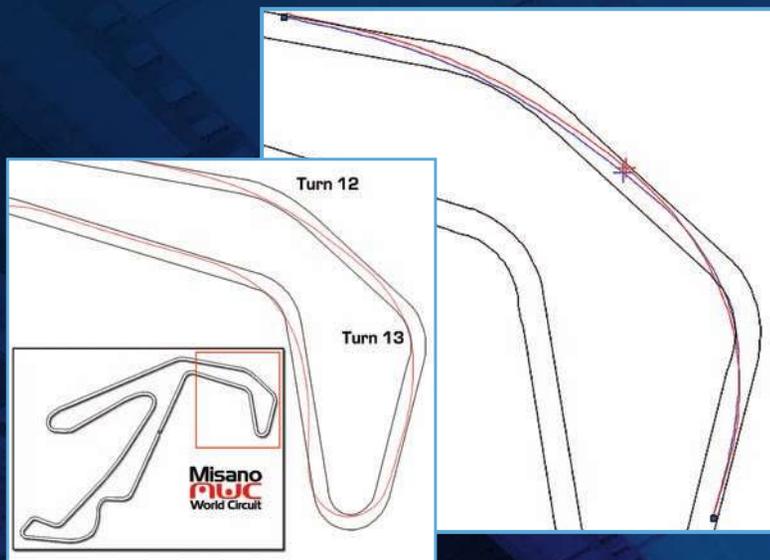
Why am I half a second off the pace?

Brain Power is the new Horse Power

With tightened budgets, restricted testing and stiffer competition, driver training has enjoyed a surge in popularity. In the first of a series of articles, we will be discussing technique with various professional driver coaches to try to help you extract every last ounce of performance from yourself as well as your car.

In this article we will be discussing Compound Corners which are common to almost every race circuit, with accomplished race driver and personal coach, Nigel Greensall.

Definition – Compound corners: a series of corners, close enough such that the car is always turning and never travelling in a straight line.



Nigel Greensall – "It is a common mistake to treat compound corners as two separate items, whereas they should be tackled as one section, with sacrifices being made in the first corner to gain maximum exit speed of the second corner. There are many examples, but let's take Misano Circuit, Turns 12 and 13."

"There are many ways to take these corners, but I have found that the quickest is almost to ignore Turn 12 and set yourself up for a nice wide entry into Turn 13 (red line). That way you can carry as much speed as possible through Turn 13. If you treat Turn 12 as a conventional corner and clip the apex, you cannot get far enough across to use the whole width of the track into Turn 13 (blue line). It feels very odd to deliberately miss the apex, but it works!"

"Using screenshots from the in-car video, you can see just how much closer to the edge of the track I could go, whilst carrying 7mph more speed."

"The analysis software showed a gain of 0.67s, which was very simple to achieve, just by taking a slightly different line."

To read more examples from Nigel, including a fascinating line through some corners at Dubai Autodrome which will have you scratching your head, please visit the article on our website:

www.VideoVBOX.co.uk/as1



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It was the last time there were no fuel stops, and it was a season blessed with intrigue, even in the face of domination by one car

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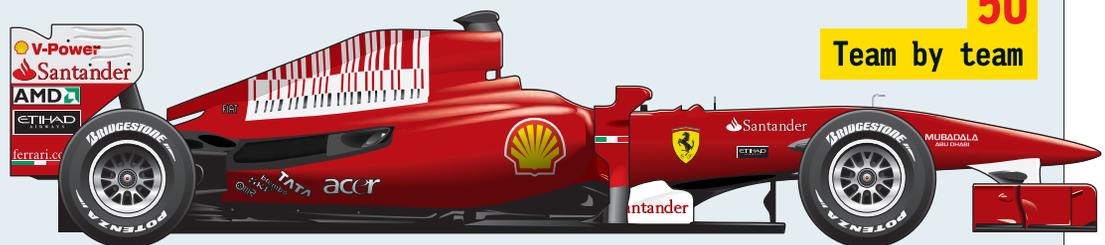
Schumacher's best days



FERRARI/LAT

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Team by team



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Senna-sational!

F1's newest track

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MARK HUGHES



FANTASY F1 TURNED REAL

It's as if F1 has delivered a fantasy wish-list for 2010 as a reaction to its economic difficulties. What would we have thought at the end of last season of the chances of a) the reigning world champion stepping into the lion's den of the previous world champion's team for a direct comparison in the same car and b) the comeback of the most successful F1 driver of all time to give perspective to the new generation? We'd have seen it as improbable to get either one of those and virtually impossible to get both. Yet that's exactly what F1 has delivered, making this the most intriguing season in living memory.

But even that's not all of it. Think of the dynamics between the teams. Last year, super-teams Ferrari and McLaren were support acts to the starring roles played by usurpers Brawn and Red Bull. Now the Maranello and Woking outfits have had time to work out how to hit back – hard. How will the two teams that contested last year's title withstand the onslaught? Was '09 the turning of the tide or just punctuation in the long essay of the Ferrari/McLaren battle?

Imagine the anticipation as we wait for the first qualifying lap Schumacher does in his forties. But as we wait to see if he is still the Schumacher of old, we haven't even defined who his natural heir was/is. Fernando Alonso? Lewis Hamilton? Sebastian Vettel? Could Button, emboldened by the vindication of a world title, sweep by the lot of them? What of the internal dynamics at Ferrari? Alonso at last back in a car worthy of his level, but Felipe Massa possibly with an inner core of steel as well as a determination not to let the Spaniard take over – not to mention a turn of speed that has seen off Kimi Raikkonen.

It's a pre-season line-up you might almost expect to wake up from and find it was all just a dream.



1



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1. Schumacher's return will deliver intrigue
2. Button has stepped into the lion's den
3. Alonso at last has a car worthy of his talent
4. Webber must prove he can beat young guns
5. Will Vettel stand out as Schuey's heir?
6. Kubica could be F1's dark horse in 2010
7. Hamilton has a car to challenge for the title
8. Massa and Ferrari will hit back hard after '09



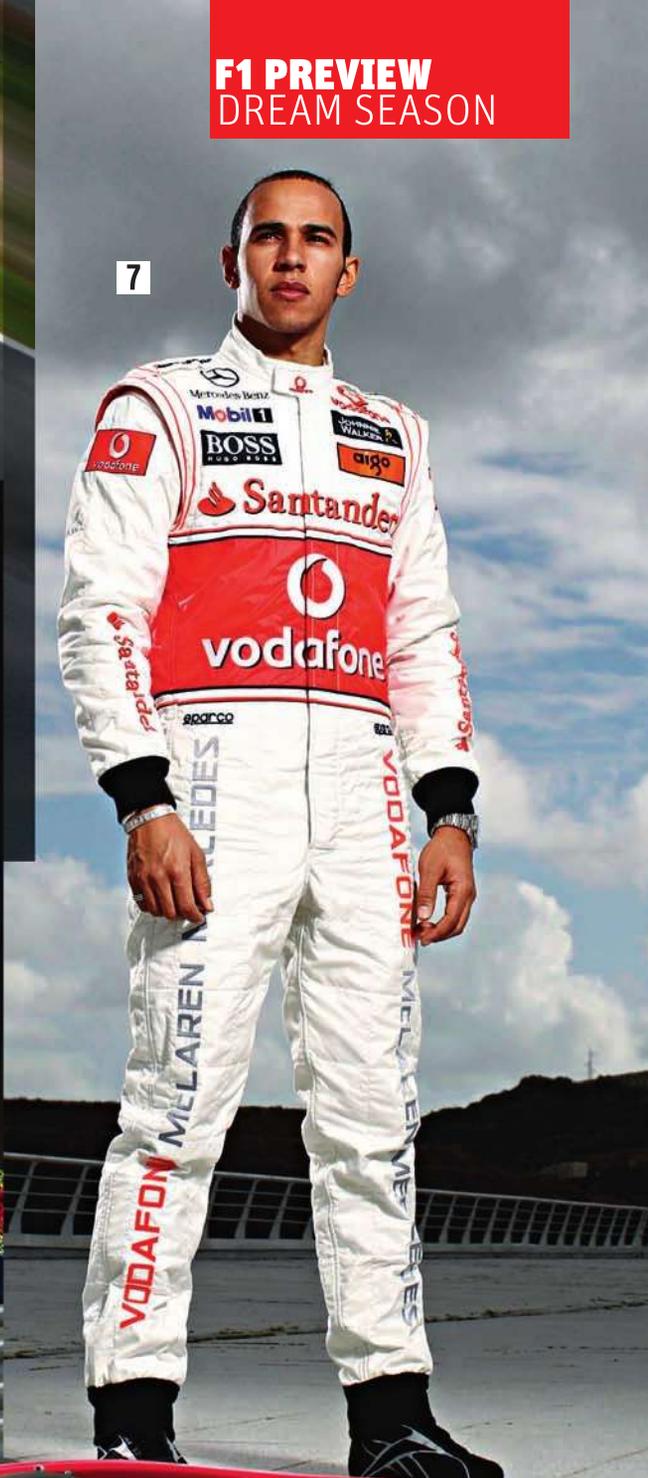
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7



8

“Imagine the anticipation as we wait for the first qualifying lap Michael Schumacher does in his forties”

EVOLUTION PROCESS

The 2009 season heralded a complete overhaul of the Formula 1 technical regulations, which prompted the arrival of a new generation of cars. While the transition from last season to this season is far less dramatic visually, there are still some significant differences to 2010-spec F1. These can be highlighted by comparing the MP4-24 that McLaren raced last year with the new MP4-25. By GARY ANDERSON



FRONT TYRES

These are 25mm narrower, to abolish the necessity of having to get as much weight forwards as possible which, in the KERS era, was punishing the heavier drivers. Narrower dimensions and more-rearward weight distribution will mean more difficulty in getting them up to temperature for one lap. On the other hand, narrower tyres will bring an aero advantage.

BRAKE DUCTS

Front-brake ducts will be bigger than in previous years, as the existing-dimension brake discs must stand up to exponentially greater strain by starting the race so much heavier than before.



**BIGGER FUEL TANKS,
LONGER WHEELBASE**

Wheelbases are generally longer by up to 20cm to accommodate a tank that will need to house around 175kg of fuel – about 75 per cent more than in the fuel-stop era. Other teams – notably Williams and Mercedes – have kept wheelbases short by making shorter gearboxes. There are pros and cons to each approach. We may see more variation in competitive order between tight tracks (suited to short wheelbase) and fast, flowing ones (favouring long wheelbase).



2010



WHEEL COVERS

Flush-fitting wheel covers are now banned in order to give tidier aerodynamic wake and reduce a costly area of aerodynamic research.

ENGINE SOFTWARE

There is much research on fuel-saving modes for engines as economy is even more critical than before.



UNSETTLING SCORES

The world championship has a new points system. *MARK GLENDENNING* applies it to seasons through history and finds that some results would change...

It's a step forward: winning a grand prix will be better rewarded by championship points in 2010 than it has been for the past seven years.

Under the new system being introduced for this season, the winner will score 25 points, with second through to 10th earning 18, 15, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 and 1. In other words, second place pays 72 per cent of the points for winning, compared to 80 per cent under the 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 system that has just been ditched.

With points now theoretically being awarded to just under half of the field (assuming that at least 10 cars finish), there's more incentive for those further back to try to improve their position. On that basis, it's no surprise to find that Heikki Kovalainen, who will be scrapping for points with the new Lotus team, is a fan.

"I think it's good," he told AUTOSPORT. "To get more points all the way through the field is a good thing for everybody – it opens up more opportunities and it should keep the championship close until the very end of the season.

"Of course, getting more points for a victory is good because it might encourage people to really try to go harder for a win, although it's still really difficult to overtake with these cars. Hopefully it will make the championship tight and create more challenges throughout the field, so that even the teams that have fewer points still have a reason to fight each other – it won't just be about who is in front, there should be battles all the way through."

While the new system may liven things up this year, what would have happened if it had been in place since the first year of the world championship in 1950? We've looked at all the years in which the title was decided at the final round by fewer than five points, on the proviso that drivers and teams may have performed differently had the current points system been in existence. ❧



HISTORY REWRITTEN	
OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Schumacher 92	Hill 252
Hill 91	Schumacher 236

Hill would take the 1994 title with Williams

1994 **WHAT HAPPENED:** Michael Schumacher wins his first championship with Benetton, with the help of a controversial clash with the Williams of Damon Hill in Australia. The German ends the year one point ahead.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM: Hill is champion by 16 points. Wonder if Michael would have made the same 'mistake' in Adelaide under those circumstances, or if his late-summer ban would have been so severe?

1950 NO CHANGE

What happened: Nino Farina beats Alfa Romeo team-mate Juan Manuel Fangio by three points.

Under the new system: Farina remains the champion by 18 points.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Farina 30	Farina 93
Fangio 27	Fangio 75

1956 MINOR CHANGE

What happened: Ferrari's Fangio edges out Maserati's Stirling Moss by three points in a season in which only the best five results for each driver count.

Under the new system: Fangio keeps his title, but Moss loses second in the points to the Argentinian's team-mate Peter Collins.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Fangio 30	Fangio 123
Moss 27	Collins 104
Collins 25	Moss 93

1958 NO CHANGE

What happened: Mike Hawthorn (Ferrari) denies Stirling Moss (Vanwall) the championship by a single point. Only the best six results from 11 races count.

Under the new system: Hawthorn retains the championship by a comfortable 22 points.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Hawthorn 41	Hawthorn 140
Moss 40	Moss 118

1959 NO CHANGE

What happened: Cooper's Jack Brabham finishes the season four points clear of Ferrari's Tony Brooks to take his first title.

Under the new system: Brabham extends his margin still further to 25 points.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Brabham 31	Brabham 110
Brooks 27	Brooks 85

1967 NO CHANGE

What happened: Denny Hulme beats his employer Jack Brabham by five points. Only the best five results from the first six races and the best four from the last five races count.

Under the new system: Hulme stretches his title-winning margin to nine points.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Hulme 51	Hulme 161
Brabham 46	Brabham 152

1974 NO CHANGE

What happened: Emerson Fittipaldi notches one up for McLaren, beating Ferrari's Clay Regazzoni by three points.

Under the new system: Fittipaldi extends his gap to nine points to win his second world title.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Fittipaldi 55	Fittipaldi 182
Regazzoni 52	Regazzoni 52

HISTORY REWRITTEN

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Surtees 40	Hill 126
Hill 39	Surtees 119



Hill would deny Surtees of his only F1 title

1964 **WHAT HAPPENED:** John Surtees finishes just one point ahead of Graham Hill. BRM driver Hill actually scores a point more than Surtees (Ferrari) during the season, but only the best six results are counted.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM: Hill wins his second world championship by seven points.



Hunt (second left) would have lost out

HISTORY REWRITTEN

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Hunt 69	Lauda 207
Lauda 68	Hunt 205

1976 **WHAT HAPPENED:** James Hunt (McLaren) beats Ferrari's Niki Lauda by a single point.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM: Hunt gets angrily out of his car in Japan - and stays angry upon learning that he has lost the title to Lauda by two points.

HISTORY REWRITTEN

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Lauda 72	Prost 213.5
Prost 71.5	Lauda 209



Prost out front in 1984 European Grand Prix

1984 **WHAT HAPPENED:** Niki Lauda finishes a scant half a point ahead of McLaren team-mate Alain Prost (half-points were awarded for Monaco, as the race was stopped early).

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM: Prost's seventh position in the French GP becomes crucial. It paid no points under the 1984 system, but gives him six this time around and proves enough to snatch his first title a year early.

Irvine would have been world's number one



HISTORY REWRITTEN

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Hakkinen 76	Irvine 237
Irvine 74	Hakkinen 216

1999 **WHAT HAPPENED:** With Michael Schumacher out injured, McLaren's Mika Hakkinen instead has to deal with the Ferrari of Eddie Irvine. He wins by two points.

UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM: Hakkinen pays the price for a string of mid-season DNFs, and watches Irvine crowned. Date of Schumacher's comeback may well have changed...

1981 NO CHANGE

What happened: Piquet beats Reutemann by a point, but it's equally close behind them, with seven points covering the top five.

Under the new system: Piquet remains in top, with an increased gap over the others.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Piquet 50	Piquet 166
Reutemann 49	Reutemann 162

1982 MINOR CHANGE

What happened: Keke Rosberg ends a dramatic season five points clear of Didier Pironi and John Watson.

Under the new system: No threat to Williams man Rosberg at the top, but Watson finishes seven points clear of Pironi in second.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Rosberg 44	Rosberg 155
Pironi 39	Watson 133
Watson 39	Pironi 126

1986 NO CHANGE

What happened: The battle between Prost and Nigel Mansell is settled in Prost's favour by two points. His cause is helped by Mansell's tyre exploding in Adelaide.

Under the new system: The consistent Prost enjoys a bigger margin than he does under old win-favouring 9-6-4-3-2-1 system.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Prost 72	Prost 233
Mansell 70	Mansell 223



Prost would have won by bigger margin in 1986

2003 NO CHANGE

What happened: Michael Schumacher (Ferrari) holds off a sustained challenge from McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen to win by two points.

Under the new system: Schumacher's tally of six wins to Raikkonen's one blows the German's margin out to 23 points.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Schumacher 93	Schumacher 236
Raikkonen 91	Raikkonen 213

2007 MINOR CHANGE

What happened: A late rally from Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen allows the Finn to overcome McLaren's Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso by one point.

Under the new system: Raikkonen keeps his championship, but Alonso moves a point clear of Hamilton to take second outright.

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Raikkonen 110	Raikkonen 272
Hamilton 109	Alonso 266
Alonso 109	Hamilton 265

2008 NO CHANGE

What happened: Hamilton survives a late scare in the final race to beat Felipe Massa by one point.

Under the new system: Hamilton pulls his margin out to three points, and Glock isn't Massa fans' scapegoat!

OLD SYSTEM	NEW SYSTEM
Hamilton 98	Hamilton 243
Massa 97	Massa 240

Massa still would have lost to Hamilton in '08



BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS IT

With the end of fuel stops, wheel changes will be cut to three seconds. *By JONATHAN NOBLE*

If you think Formula 1 pitstops have been impressive in recent seasons, just wait until you watch them in 2010.

For 16 years, F1 teams have wowed fans by refuelling and rebooting their cars in around eight seconds, but they're going to need to slash that time by more than half this year if they want to be winning races.

Since refuelling returned to F1 in 1994, the tyre-change crews have had what you could say was a fairly easy time. With the pitstop length defined by the amount of time it took the fuel to flow into the tank, there was little pressure to get the tyres changed as quickly as possible. The stops just needed to take place without errors.

For 2010 all that has changed. There is no refuelling, which means the only limiting factor to the length of a pitstop will be how quickly the crew can get the old wheels off and the new wheels on. Teams are looking at getting all that done in around three seconds.

Williams technical director Sam Michael is under no illusions that the pressure is firmly back on the tyre changers again.

"To be honest they've been on a cruise for 16 years because they've been fuel limited," says Michael. "They could have a spare four seconds up their sleeves, so there was never any desire to push for that last three or four tenths. If you did that you'd make mistakes, so you'd rather say, 'Right, slow down by half a second and make sure we get it right, because the fuel is still going in anyway.'"

With overtaking on track likely to be no easier this season than in recent campaigns, the pitstop windows for the mandatory tyre change may often be the only chance that drivers will have of getting past their rivals.

That means the emphasis on the crews will be huge: tyre changes will have to be done as quickly as possible,



and without mistakes. Just as it is for the driver and car on the track, it means getting a perfect harmony between the best technology and the right mental strength.

On the technology front, tyre changes will be a world away from how they were done back in 1993, the last year before refuelling was allowed.

Forget wheelnuts that actually look like 'nuts'. Nowadays, the wheels are held on by bespoke magnetic hubs, custom built to engage with an individual team's wheelgun, which itself operates at a much higher speed than they did in the early 1990s.

As part of the move to speed up the wheel-changing process, the mandatory wheel-retention devices have also been changed. Up until last year, these were engaged manually by the pit crew, who had to pull a mechanism out. For 2010, this is all

done automatically – shaving further tenths from the ultimate time.

All this brings new demands upon the mental capacities of the pit crews, and it's important to remember that the front wheels bring different challenges from the rear wheels.

Michael explains: "You're synchronising the thing. The man on the front jack is there straight away, so he has an advantage over the rear-jack man, who has to come in after the car has stopped. The rear-jack guy can come in quite quickly, but he's never as quick as the guy who is physically standing there at the front."

"The front tyres tend to be easier to change than the rears. The wheels are slightly lighter, but a bigger factor is that the crew can get around the wheel better. If you look at the rear tyre, you can't get in front because you've got the sidepod there, and at the back you have the rear wing.

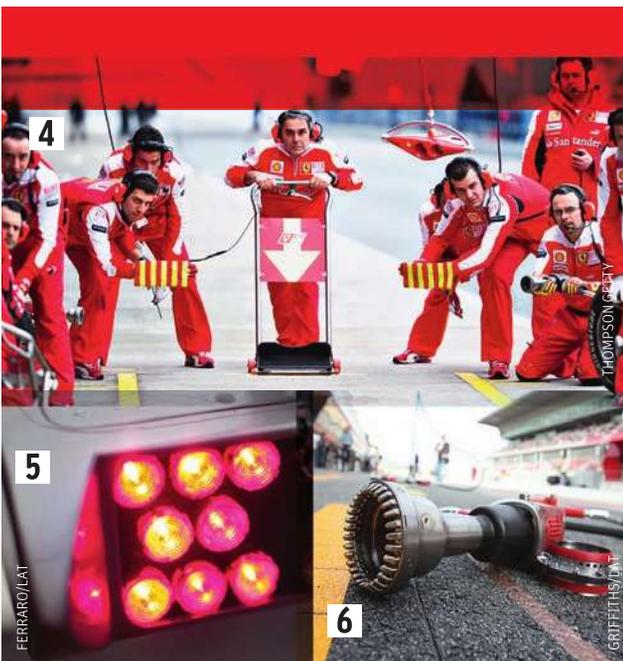
PICTURES

1. The pressure is on these men in 2010
2. In 1993, Benetton could turn Patrese round in 3.2s
3. Same team – now known as Renault – practices for 2010
4. Front jack man has reason to look scared
5. Mercedes' new traffic light system
6. Wheelgun and magnetic hub 'nut'



THOMPSON/GETTY

“The guys have been on a cruise for 16 years”
Williams tech chief Sam Michael



FERRARO/LAT

THOMPSON/GETTY

GRIFFITHS/PA

That’s why the rear change is naturally slower than the front.”

Some teams have sent their crews away on physical and mental-conditioning courses to help improve their ability to work together, as well as improve their coordination and ability to operate under pressure. There’s also been endless practice in the factories over the winter, getting the teams in a state of readiness so their techniques are fine-tuned.

Teams are banned by the FIA from using exotic-powered devices to jack up the cars at the stops, but you can expect a plethora of approaches to try to speed up a drivers’ exit. Some will keep the traditional lollipop man, but others will gamble that the time gained using traffic lights is better than the

risk it has of going wrong.

Although there has been talk of teams getting down to completing pitstops in as little as 2.5s during winter practice, in the heat of battle they may take slightly longer than that. Teams are able to take more risks in the factory because there’s no penalty – and no risk of throwing away a weekend’s hard work.

There is no official world record for the quickest pitstop in a race, but in the 1993 Belgian Grand Prix Riccardo Patrese’s Benetton crew gave him a fresh set of tyres in just 3.2s to set the ‘unofficial’ benchmark.

That’s an impressive feat, but something we may think of as ‘slow’ by the time the season kicks off in Bahrain. **W**

LIQUID ASSETS

The fuel race could decide the outcome of the world title. *EDD STRAW* explains

Fuel has never been a high-profile player in the cacophonous symphony of power, technology and aerodynamics of a grand prix car. It skulks in the shadows, ever-present, safe in the knowledge that without it the car wouldn't even get off the line, let alone get there first. But, like some unseen hand guiding a vast conspiracy in a Hollywood blockbuster, even if you aren't aware of it, its effects are felt in everything that happens.

With the ban on refuelling for 2010-spec F1, it will be even less visible than it has been for the past 16 seasons. But, ironically, the 160kg (or so) that is sloshed behind the driver in every car on the starting grid will play an even bigger part in the victory equation.

Why? Because, with the freeze on engine development, fuel remains one of the factors dictating performance that remains openly competitive. Shell and Mobil will play as big a part in the battle between Ferrari and McLaren as star drivers Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton.

They may be in competition and free to develop, but the fuel suppliers need to comply with stringent rules. Article 19 of the 2010 F1 technical regulations, which runs to three pages, creates a rule set "intended to ensure the use of fuels that are composed of compounds normally found in commercial fuels and to prohibit the use of specific power-boosting chemical compounds".

Article 19.3 stipulates the permitted characteristics of the fuel. This covers factors like octane, oxygen and nitrogen levels, benzene level (which is in line with that permitted on the road in



the European Union), volatility, lead level, oxidation stability and sulphur level, as well as other aspects such as electrical conductivity and final boiling point (210 degrees).

Among other things, Article 19.4 includes a limit on the level of certain groups of hydrocarbons that contribute heavily to emissions (including aromatics and olefins), which is broadly in line in road-fuel regulations.

This makes F1 fuel similar to the unleaded pump fuel to be found on any garage forecourt. The octane rating is much the same, while the chemical components that are allowed to be used in the fuel are the same as might be found in the tank of an average road car. But 'similar' and 'same' are two different things, for F1 fuel is a massively optimised variant of pump petrol. What's more, it is tailored directly to a specific engine manufacturer.

Bruce Crawley, the motorsport technology manager at McLaren fuel supplier ExxonMobil, explains.

"The regulations are very tight, but within them there is room to manoeuvre," he says. "The skill is in matching the fuel composition to the

PICTURES

1. Felipe Massa has a go at being a scientist
2. A serious amount of kit is required for each GP weekend
3. Fuel is optimised to engine's rev range
4. Hose no longer required in 2010



GETTY IMAGES



LAT



GETTY IMAGES



GETTY IMAGES

“The regulations are very tight, but within them there’s room to manoeuvre. The skill is matching composition to the engine”

ExxonMobil’s Bruce Crawley

engine, so you have to understand how the engine responds well across the rev range in varying operational conditions, such as a range of rpm and engine maps. To do this, we change the composition of the fuel.”

That has to be achieved with a major caveat. In a sport where an extra 10kg of fuel can easily cost you 0.3s a lap, you want your engine to be as fuel-efficient as possible, but without losing outright performance.

“The density of the fuel has been chosen carefully,” says Crawley. “We’ve looked very carefully at the volumetric and gravimetric fuel consumption as well as the power. When you’re looking at your overall race performance, all of these factors

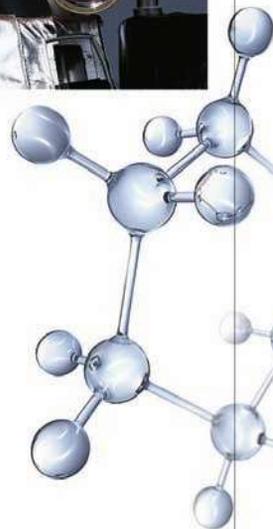
are taken into account in simulating what the quickest race time will be.”

Regulation 19.4.4 further complicates matters, stipulating that at least 5.75 per cent of the fuel must comprise ‘biocomponents’ – those derived from biological origins. This follows European Union regulations and, given that the regulations do not tightly constrain exactly what the biocomponent has to be, it is a big window of opportunity to get one over the opposition. Although the biocomponent doesn’t boost performance, it’s all about finding the right one to minimise any negative effect.

“The bio-derived component is not specified; we just have to use it as

5.75 per cent of the fuel,” says Crawley. “We don’t talk about what this compound is because there are various options and unsurprisingly they don’t all perform the same. It’s a double-edged sword. On the one hand, we would rather not have the regulations specifying that you have to use a certain amount of something because that limits freedom, so you can argue that it’s constraining. But on the other hand, if you exploit it better than the competition, it’s an advantage.”

And isn’t that what F1 should be about? Remember, when anyone talks about one engine manufacturer having an advantage over the competition, it could be the fuel supplier that has made the difference. **W**





STRAIGHT TALK

David Coulthard

AUTOSPORT's Formula 1 columnist

“It’s going to be as great as those classic late ’80s years”

The F1 veteran-turned-pundit reckons the 2010 crop of top liners is the best since the classic Prost/Senna/Mansell/Piquet era

On paper, this year should be one of the most competitive seasons for many years. When I look back, I think of the late 1980s – Piquet, Mansell, Prost and Senna – in terms of the number of proper teams with great drivers, all with a chance of winning.

From a nationalistic view, you’ve got an all-German team at Mercedes up against an all-British team at McLaren. You’ve got Michael Schumacher coming back, Ferrari with Fernando Alonso pairing up with Felipe Massa, and the two most recent world champions – Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton – going toe to toe. Add Red Bull into the mix, with Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber, and then consider that only one of them will be first at the end of the season. It’s going to be fun finding out who that is when the music stops.

THE KEY FACTORS

We’ve had relatively stable aerodynamic rules for a year now, especially in light of the clarification over the double diffuser. The narrowing of the front tyres will inevitably have a small effect, and when you work in F1 you live off exploiting tiny details like that.

The big change is the refuelling ban. All of my grand prix career was in a refuelling era, and I would have loved to have experienced that transition of balancing your car, brakes, tyres etc from 170kg down to racing with what you’ve got left at the end. The contrast from low-fuel qualifying to starting the race on full tanks, and relatively cold tyres and brakes, is a massive difference. That first corner in Bahrain is going to be worth watching! Most of the drivers have never had to deal with that before.

I once tested for Williams at Estoril on full tanks. I came straight back in, after just a couple of laps, convinced something had broken. Then it was explained to me: “That’s what a full tank feels like.” Nigel Mansell was using an even smaller steering wheel than I was around that time, and I could hardly bloody turn the thing!

One topic I picked up on at Barcelona last week was that drivers are not enjoying the full-tank tests, where they’re forced to lap four to five seconds off the pace, but the smart ones will see this as an opportunity to steal crucial tenths of a second in this phase.

It’s such a different challenge. Instead of simply sprinting with 50kg worth of fuel, you have to manage tyres and brakes every lap. The driver called the tyre strategy more than the pitwall in those days, and you could take a punt with fresh rubber, which might gain you



GRIFFITHS (L&T)



STALEY/LAT

'Hats off to Button', says Coulthard

places in the final reckoning.

There will be times in a grand prix where the fastest car in the field, whether that's on high fuel or low fuel, will be out of its sweet spot in terms of its tyre use. There should also be more room for driver errors, which leads to overtaking, on the varied fuel loads. Look at a wet/dry race: not everyone improves at exactly the same rate, lap by lap, and it's the people who are good at judging the conditions, and that rate of change, who come out on top.

Bear in mind that the brake discs and pads are the same material as used last year, and that Webber ran out of them in Singapore. Teams are going to have to make sure they get their cooling right, and there are a lot of compromises to be dealt with. In the past this wasn't really a big concern; you just drove the nuts off it from start to finish. This year, how do you not overcool them in qualifying, yet undercool for the race?

LIFE'S THE PITS

F1 should represent the quickest cars, the best technology, and the fastest tyre stops known to man. If you take your car to Kwik Fit you might be mildly impressed that they've changed your tyres in the time it takes to go to Starbucks and back. In F1, the tyres are going to be changed in the blink of an eye! I think it's great, and puts the spotlight on the teamwork element.

Pitstops were limited by refueller

nozzle time and lollipop-man release, but now it's really down to those guys on each corner of the car. Maybe the guy on the front-right is going to be so amazingly quick that he can eat a Kit Kat while his mates are still changing the other three wheels! It's going to be brilliant to watch who's the fastest.

THE BIG GUNS COMPARED

MERCEDES: I've got to believe Schumacher is going to be as good as he ever was. He made the decision to come back based on competitive and pleasure reasons, and we've not seen a comeback like this happen in the past decade. Michael loves the buzz of driving these cars, takes pleasure from working with the engineers, and wants to go racing.

Will he be better at 41 years of age than he was before? Well, it's doubtful. Will he be any slower? I think we're going to see a great life experiment play out here: a fully-motivated older driver, who's not battle-weary because he's taken time out. Can he outperform a young charger in Nico Rosberg? It's make or break for Nico's career, because he's up against Michael. If he beats him, it's a feather in his cap. If he's behind him, that doesn't mark him out as a team leader of the future when Michael retires again.

I don't think Michael would've come back under any other circumstance than Ross Brawn running the show. They know each other as intimately as two

heterosexual men can. They can call on that, and I can see their combined sportscar knowledge helping too in this new era of full-tank strategy. **MCLAREN:** Hats off to Jenson for giving us this opportunity to see these two great world champions competing wheel-to-wheel in the same team. He could've taken the safe option of staying at what has become Mercedes, but he's gone for the challenge and believes in his ability. I think we should give him half a season, at least, to get comfortable in that environment. It'll take him time to learn that cockpit layout, and get used to the guys around him. But what a great line-up.

I don't think losing Mercedes factory status will have any adverse effect. With the restriction on the development of the engines, Mercedes is at such a level that it can knock those very quick and reliable engines out to all its teams. **FERRARI:** I can see the Alonso-Massa pairing working well. I don't view Massa as a volatile character. Despite Alonso's bad rap from his McLaren experience, I think he was at a point in his career where he felt he wasn't getting what he was promised. So off he went, broke his contract and took a step back in car performance for a couple of years to get where he really wanted to be. He's strong-minded, sure, but he's a double world ►



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◀ champion, and that's what makes these guys win titles.

Ferrari was caught out with its car's performance last year, missing the double diffuser like a number of teams, but the early testing form looks promising.

RED BULL: The greatest form of flattery is mimicry, and it's no coincidence that a lot of teams' cars look a lot like last year's Red Bull. People expected Adrian Newey to come up with something radical, but the RB6 is largely related to last year's car, albeit with a lot of clever work going on under the skin.

I believe both Sebastian and Mark can challenge for the title. Sebastian lost a lot of points early doors last year, and he's got to take responsibility for a number of those, and he doesn't shy away from it, but he was also let down by poor reliability. He's a great talent, and firmly established now. Mark had a wobbly start after his well-documented leg injury, but that's well in the past, and this now is his big chance. He's a no-nonsense guy and he knows he's got to get on with it.

BEST OF THE REST?

WILLIAMS: Rubens Barrichello deserves that slot after what he did with Brawn last year. He's a safe pair of hands who wears his heart on his sleeve. I believe the family environment of Williams will work well for him. I'm very impressed with Nico Hulkenberg, who seems like the real deal both in and out of the car. It's a very interesting pairing.

I've got a soft spot for Williams, like many people have, because they're one of the oldest privateer teams out there. They're proper racers, but after a difficult couple of years they need to deliver some hard results. The car looks nice, and in Cosworth they have another backbone of British motorsport, but will the engine be good enough in areas like fuel economy?

RENAULT: They're heavily branded as Renault, even though there's a new majority shareholder, and will still want to be winning. Robert Kubica is known to be quick, and is an established grand prix winner, and Vitaly Petrov has the opportunity to prove he's got the ability to step up.

I don't mean to be unkind, but they had one of the ugliest-looking cars last year, and they've not been put off by that judging by the new colour scheme! I hope it goes a bit quicker than it looks.

FORCE INDIA: It's a great opportunity for Paul di Resta to get this seat time on Friday, but should this team be

Massa: 'not a volatile character', says DC



FERRARI/LAT

Lotus should be best of the new teams



THOMPSON/GETTY

Coulthard remains as Red Bull advisor



DUNBAR/LAT

“I hope the Renault goes a bit quicker than it looks”

worrying about young-driver development like this? I don't see how it enhances their two race drivers getting the maximum out of a grand prix weekend. It would be great if everyone else was doing this, by giving young talent a chance, but I don't see anyone else following suit.

TORO ROSSO: The car seems a logical development of last year, so it's a great opportunity for Sebastian Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari to shine. Sebastian did a really solid job to establish himself, and Jaime has to take on board what he learnt at the tail end of last year. He's got to up the ante if he's got long-term ambitions at this level.

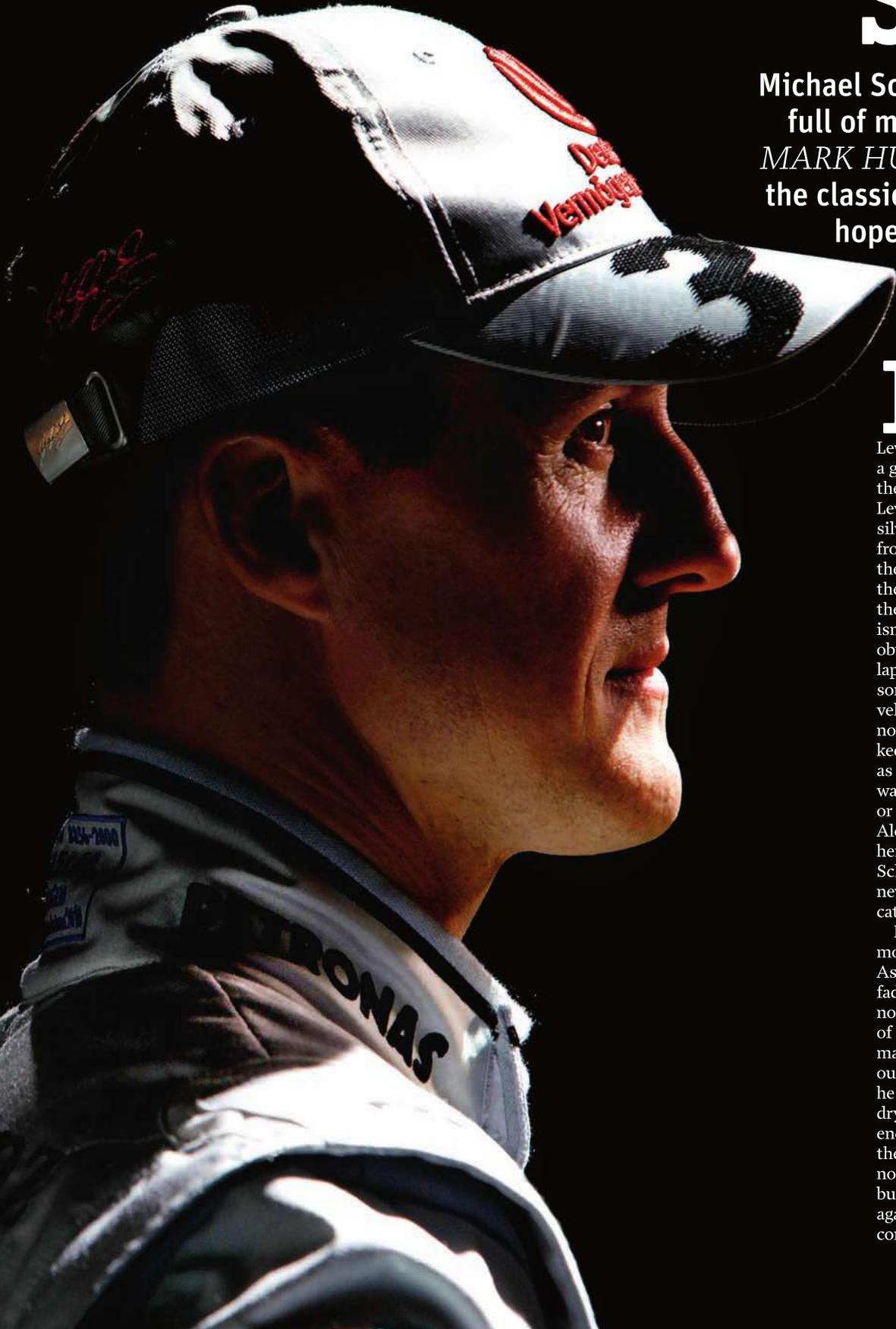
SAUBER: It's like the Honda/Brawn situation; I imagine BMW are paying for them to keep the operation going. Peter sold his team for a lot, and he's

got it back for not very much at all. Kudos to him for doing it again. It's good to have Pedro de la Rosa back, while Kamui Kobayashi was very impressive on his F1 debut, more so than his junior-category performances. It will be interesting to see if it can replicate its testing form in the heat of battle.

NEW TEAMS: I can imagine that Lotus will be at the highest level, because they have the most experience across the board with Mike Gascoyne and two proven drivers in Jarno Trulli and Heikki Kovalainen. Virgin has gone down this super-duper CFD route, and it will be interesting to see how it works out, and with Campos we still haven't seen a car so we can't draw any conclusions. ❧

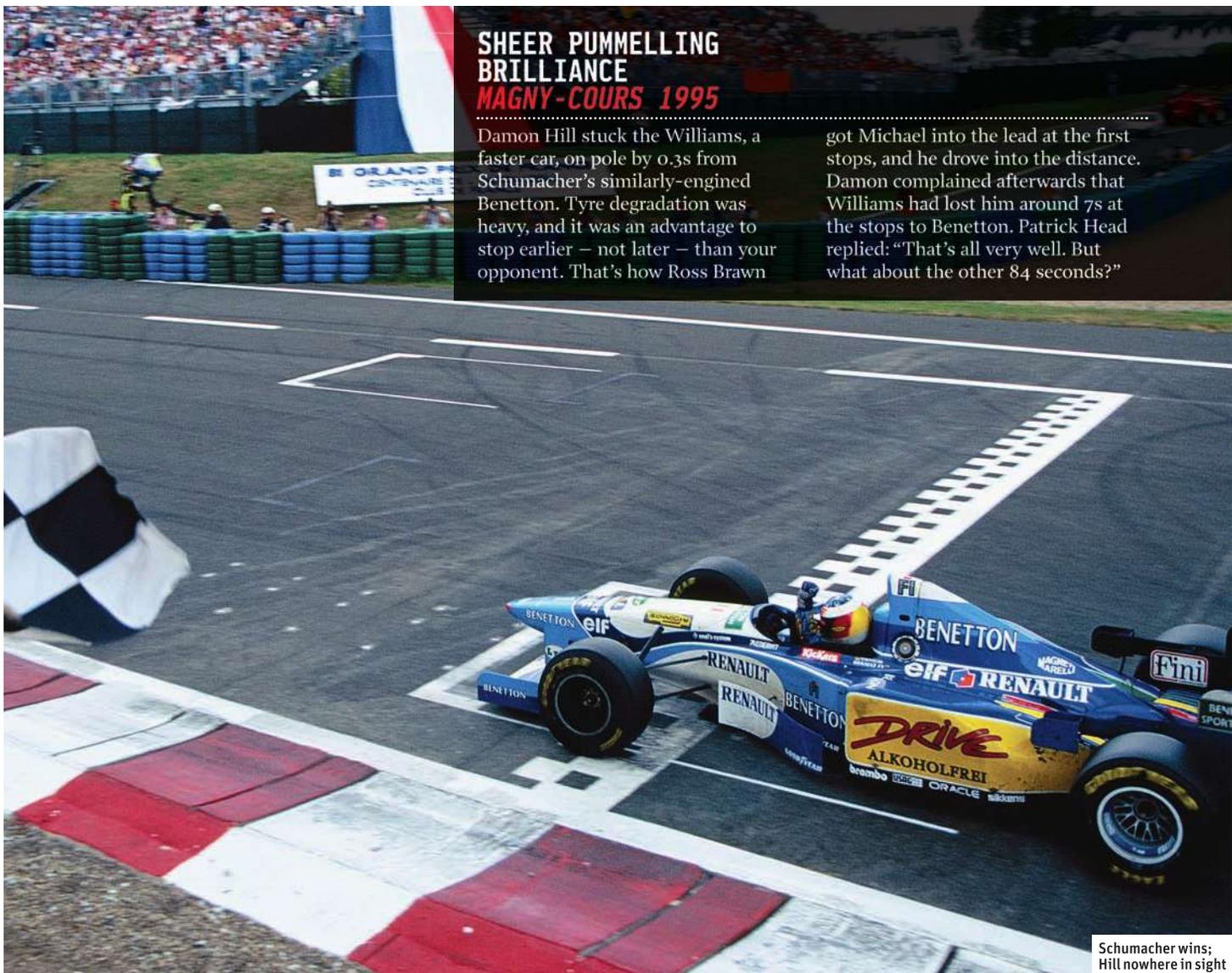
A GIANT'S STEPS

Michael Schumacher's career is full of moments of greatness. *MARK HUGHES* looks back at the classic cases that his rivals hope will not be repeated



In Michael Schumacher's absence, other giants have arisen. It gives a sobering sense of the pace of time, for example, to think that Lewis Hamilton had yet to even contest a grand prix when Schuey was wowing the crowd one last time in Brazil '06. Lewis at Silverstone '08, a twitching silver-and-dayglo mirage emerging from the gloom, the rest nowhere. Then there's Sebastian Vettel at Monza '08, the rest of the field left breathless in the wake of a Toro Rosso... Excellence isn't always so red-meat raw and obvious: Jenson Button's magical pole lap of Monaco last year, time itself somehow spellbound by his trancing velvet trickery, a lap pulled out of nowhere, and his caressing touch in keeping those super-soft tyres in shape as everyone else's were destroyed. It was a performance that recalled Prost or Stewart at their best. Fernando Alonso will be bursting to reattain the heights of his 208mph outside pass on Schuey at Suzuka, now with a demon new car and Schumacher's old team catering to his every whim.

But Schumacher had many such moments, probably more than anyone. As time passes, so those memories fade, so new fans come to the sport not having witnessed legendary events of previous times. On the eve of the man's comeback, it's time to remind ourselves of the unbelievable peaks he attained – not the overwhelming dry statistics, but the moments that encapsulated the greatness that led to them. After all, they are the barometer not just for those that took his baton, but for Michael himself, the feats against which the success of his comeback will be judged.



**SHEER PUMPELLING
BRILLIANCE**
MAGNY-COURS 1995

Damon Hill stuck the Williams, a faster car, on pole by 0.3s from Schumacher's similarly-engined Benetton. Tyre degradation was heavy, and it was an advantage to stop earlier – not later – than your opponent. That's how Ross Brawn

got Michael into the lead at the first stops, and he drove into the distance. Damon complained afterwards that Williams had lost him around 7s at the stops to Benetton. Patrick Head replied: "That's all very well. But what about the other 84 seconds?"

Schumacher wins; Hill nowhere in sight

WET-WEATHER WIZARDRY
BARCELONA 1996

"I don't know how he took four poles with that shitbox," said Schumacher's team-mate of the time, Eddie Irvine. "I know how bad that car was." It's true that Ferrari's first V10, the horribly bulky F310, was not in the same league as the pacesetter Williams FW18, or probably even the Benetton B196 that Ross Brawn reckons was even better than the B195 in which Schumacher had dominated in '95. With hindsight it's clear Michael's disadvantage was offset by a fairly ordinary driver line-up in the two cars that were clearly better – Damon Hill/Jacques Villeneuve and Gerhard Berger/Jean Alesi is a weaker group than he will face in 2010 – but it was difficult to gauge the extent of how much extra he was worth over these guys. A biblically wet race day at Barcelona gave Schumacher the stage on which to display the real

extent of his superiority. In dry qualifying, he had got within 0.9s of the Williams on this aerodynamically demanding track. Irvine, in the sister car and fresh from an extended test session, was three-quarters of a second slower. But that all counted for nothing on the Sunday. Michael fell back to the middle of the pack after almost stalling at the start, but was sixth by the end of the opening lap and in the lead by lap 12, on a totally different plane to everyone else. At one stage he was lapping *four seconds* faster than the next quickest guy. The ugly red car bitchily twitched and slid, but it was never able to get out from under its master. Even the engine lapsing onto eight cylinders from half-distance made little difference, as Schumacher took his first victory for Ferrari by the margin of 45 seconds.



Villeneuve leads as Schuey passes Alesi



German beat 'ordinary' Alesi

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Schumacher gets past Jean Alesi

AUDACITY
SPA 1997

A typical Spa conundrum: race time approaching, wet track, rain stopped but uncertain skies. Schumacher had taken the Ferrari out in the warm-up session on dry settings and rain tyres, same as everyone else. But in the garage, with his rivals already lining up on the grid, he switched to the spare: with a set-up midway between wet and dry – and intermediate tyres. It was an audacious gamble. A safety-car start saw him through the worst, through conditions that would have rendered his inters hopeless and, as the race got under way, he retained his third-place grid position, kept the gripless car on the track and just waited for a dry line to begin appearing – which it surely did. At the end of the fourth lap he scythed inside Alesi's Benetton for second and, by Rivage a few corners later, he was hot on the tail of race leader Jacques Villeneuve. Jacques defended but Michael simply twitched the car off line, confident now of his tyre grip, inters fully up to temperature, passed the Williams and disappeared in a cloud of spray. Two laps later he was leading by 16.9s. By the time it was time for a change to slicks on lap 14, his own miraculous skills had combined with his tyre advantage to give him a whole minute's lead. No-one had even seen which way he went.



Another Spa podium celebration...

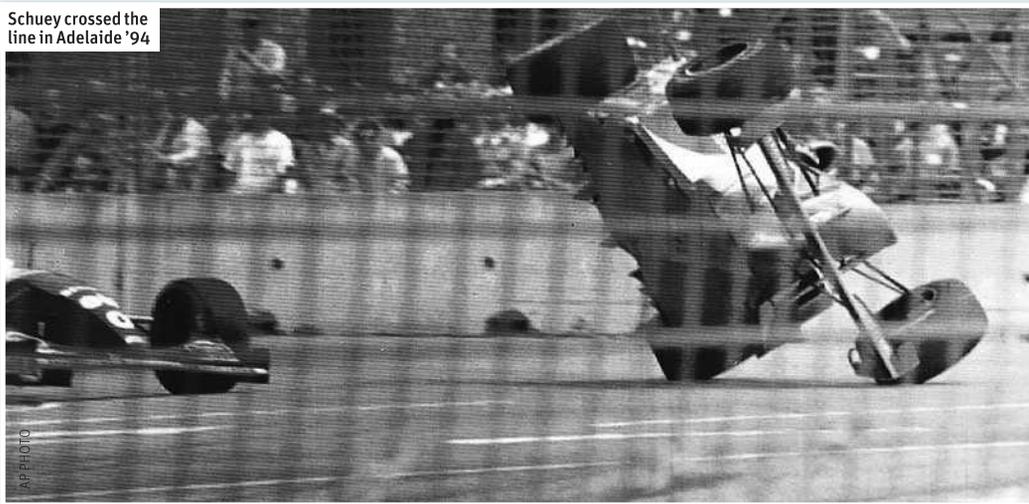


...after audacious tactical victory

THE DARK SIDE

The obvious examples are notorious: driving Damon Hill off the track in Adelaide '94 to win his first world title; repeating the stunt but failing to make it work on Jacques Villeneuve, Jerez '97; parking at Rascasse, Monaco qualifying 2006. These were panic moves in the split-second of the moment, when the awful reality that he might be about to be bested became real. It was as if he couldn't help himself in such moments and any sense of fair play, of not stepping over the line, was subjugated to the need for his self-belief to be reflected in the results. He was the best, therefore the result should reflect that, and anything that got in the way of that could legitimately be bulldozed aside. In the cold light of day, away from the intensity of the moment,

Schuey crossed the line in Adelaide '94



he might think differently. For some these are mere blemishes, flaws to a beautiful diamond, for others they betray that talent and are unforgivable. Doubts about the legality of the

'Option 13'-equipped '94 Benetton simply intensify the view, as does his list of contractually subservient team-mates. His willingness to accept the gift of Barrichello pulling aside in

Austria '01 (for second place) and '02 (for the win) tell the same tale of someone who finds it difficult to define the line between extreme competitiveness and unreasonable behaviour.

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On the way to his first title for Ferrari

DELIVERY SUZUKA 2000

The pressure was immense, as Schumacher was on the verge of finally returning the world title to Maranello after a drought stretching back 21 years. He'd been in this title-decider situation before and lost – in '97 with his failed attempt at driving Villeneuve off the road, in '98 with a startline stall and subsequent puncture. Was it ever going to happen? Only one man stood in his way: reigning champion Mika Hakkinen, who was not about to relinquish his status easily. The pair had already fought an epic battle for

pole, a whole chunk clear of everyone else, Michael narrowly edging out the McLaren. Hakkinen won the drag race off the line and, for the next 20-odd laps, we thrilled to the sight of the fastest two men in the world locked in battle, flat-out and leaving the pack far behind. Hakkinen was fuelled a couple of laps shorter than Schumacher and, just as he pitted, a thin blanket of drizzle began to fall. Ross Brawn didn't need to tell Michael these were the critical two laps. He squeezed everything from the Ferrari it had to

give, his hot tyres unperturbed by the drizzle and maintaining their grip. By contrast Hakkinen – on his new, cold, dry-weather tyres – was struggling. Had there been no drizzle, he might have stood half a chance. But not now. Michael pitted, the new tyres went on, the fuel was delivered and he accelerated away. "It's looking good," said Ross Brawn over the radio. A pause. "It's looking bloody good, Michael." As he exited the pitlane the McLaren was in his mirrors – which is where it stayed.

IMPROVISATION SHANGHAI 2006

With a championship to slug out against Fernando Alonso and Renault, the last thing Schuey needed was a wet-but-drying track in qualifying. Schumacher's Bridgestones were not the things to have in these conditions, and he was the only Bridgestone user to make it through to Q3, a session in which he produced miracles to qualify on the third row, 1.4s off Alonso's pole. The beauty of the tyre war was how quickly and dramatically conditions

could swing the competitive picture back the other way. On raceday, similar conditions allowed Alonso to quickly build up a big lead while Schumacher simply hung on as best he could. But as the track dried further, so the Michelin inters would tend to overheat and wear out, while the Bridgestones remained good. Michael began picking them off – de la Rosa, Barrichello, Button – until he was up to third with only the two Renaults ahead of him. But

Alonso still had around a 20s lead as Schuey cautiously followed Alonso's team-mate Fisichella. Suddenly they were catching Alonso dramatically as Fernando's tyres went off. Fisi was virtually obliged to pass, with Schuey following him through a couple of corners later. When the time came to pit for dries, Michael made the first move. He had a moment on the damp patch as he rejoined, and took that info on board. He knew Fisi would encounter that same patch as he exited the pits a lap later. He did, and when it happened Michael was ready, diving the Ferrari across the kerb and past. Asked why he was retiring after such a great performance, he replied: "It's better you ask me that than waiting until you say, 'Why don't you retire?'"



Fisi passes Alonso as Schumacher lurks

McLAREN

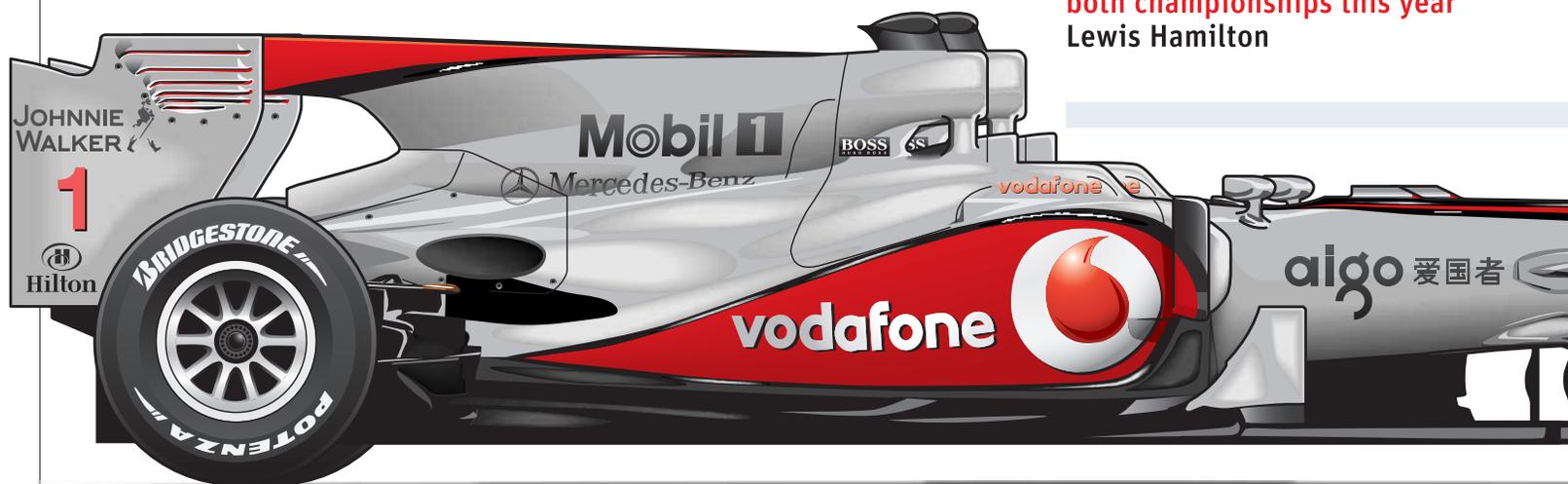
NORMAL SERVICE RESUMES

McLaren takes pride in the way that it recovered from its nightmarish start to 2009, but it is also painfully aware that it shouldn't have been in that much trouble to start with. All efforts will be on avoiding the need for a similar Lazarus-style comeback this time around.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"I look forward to working with JB, and hopefully we can push the team onwards to both championships this year"

Lewis Hamilton



The availability of new world champion Jenson Button proved more than enough to end Heikki Kovalainen's increasingly tenuous claim to the second seat at McLaren, meaning that once again the team finds itself with two world champions in its cars. History would suggest that there can be no happy ending, but in this case the past is not a perfect guide. Many of the complications that destroyed earlier

pairings are missing this time around, and provided that both drivers feel like they're being treated fairly, there's no reason to expect anything other than harmony. On the technical front the team is still smarting from the aero problems that plagued it during the first half of last season and has pulled out all stops to prevent a repeat with the MP4-25, although it does have to adapt to its new status as a Mercedes customer team.

KEY CHANGES

McLaren is now a customer team, but it insists that it retains close ties to Mercedes. World champ Jenson Button strengthens driver line-up



IN:
↑ JENSON BUTTON



OUT:
↓ MERCEDES WORKS TEAM

FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.mclaren.com> • TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/Theffthdriver>

MILESTONES



> The team is five pole positions away from reaching an all-time total of 150. Senna (above) scored 46.

WHAT IT MEANS:

Jenson's a nice bloke and he's quick enough to score us a lot of points. I think he'll be a great number two



THE DRIVERS

Button and Hamilton, Britain's past two world champions: A fascinating dynamic for 2010

1 JENSON BUTTON



It's difficult to imagine a driver's fortunes changing as dramatically as Button's did between 2008 and '09, but having won the title, he now has a job on his hands trying to keep it. And that includes figuring out a way to beat team-mate Hamilton.

Age: 30
Debut: Australia, 2000
Starts: 170
Wins: 7
Poles: 7
Fastest Laps: 2
Points: 327
'09 position: 1st



2 LEWIS HAMILTON



After a mostly blessed start to his career, Hamilton had his first taste of F1 biting back during his struggles with the troubled MP4-24 in the first part of last season. He'll be high on confidence if McLaren has got things right from the start this time around.

Age: 25
Debut: Australia, 2007
Starts: 52
Wins: 11
Poles: 17
Fastest Laps: 3
Points: 256
'09 position: 5th



TEAM STATS

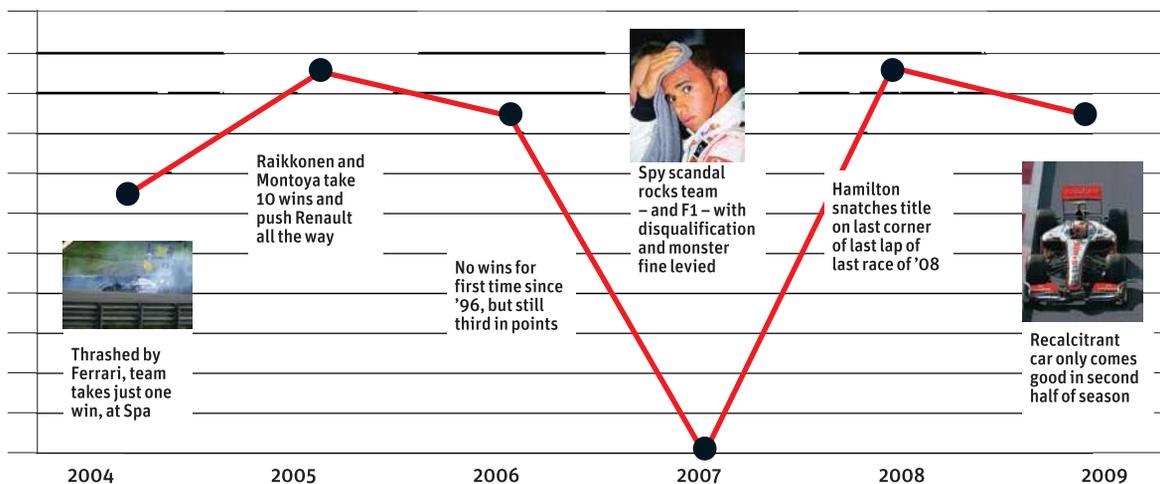
Starts: 665
First GP: Monaco 1966
Wins: 164
Poles: 145
Fastest laps: 136
Drivers' titles: 12
Constructors' titles: 8

2010 equipment

Chassis: MP4-25
Engine: Mercedes FO108X

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009



MERCEDES

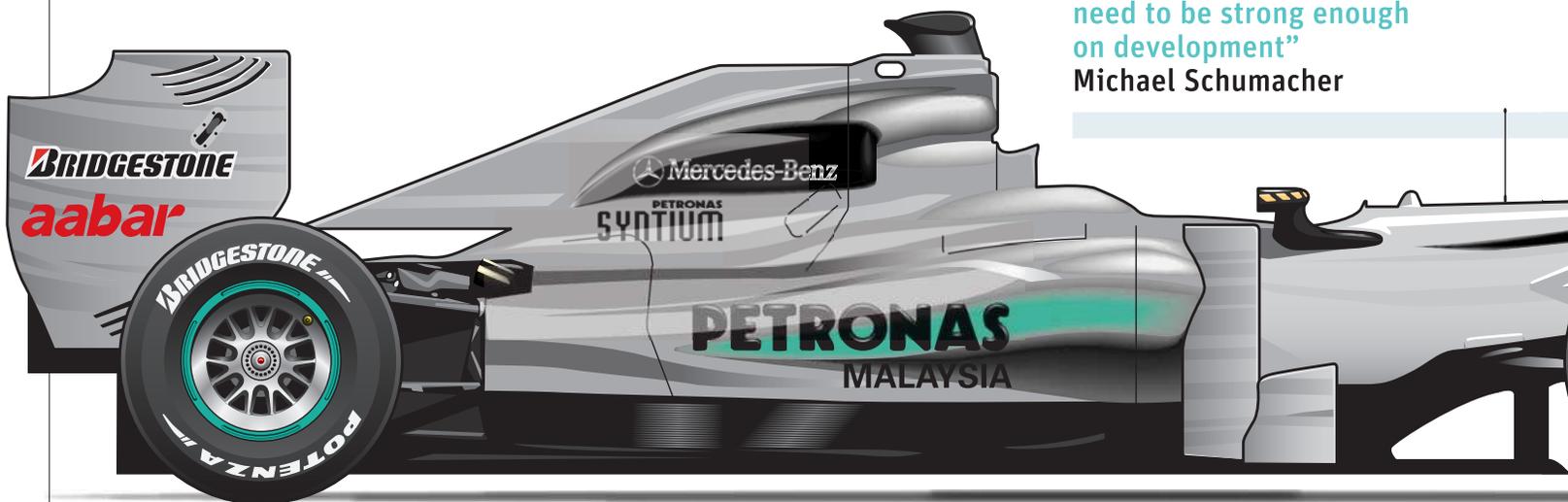
TEAM GERMANY (BRACKLEY)

Mercedes returns to grand prix racing as a full works team for the first time since 1955 after taking over last year's world championship-winning Brawn team. If that hasn't set the bar high enough, it's brought seven-time champion Michael Schumacher out of retirement. Only title glory will do.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"I wouldn't expect to be winning right from the beginning. But we need to be strong enough on development"

Michael Schumacher



The metamorphosis from Brawn to Silver Arrows has been a smooth one. Ross Brawn still has his name above the team principal's door, if not the front gate at Brackley, and the workforce is largely unchanged. Brawn insists that the strain of last year's title fight hasn't compromised the 2010 car, although it does seem that the likes of McLaren and Ferrari have been one step ahead in testing. Despite that, have no doubt

that Mercedes will win races this year, even if it doesn't happen in the first few GPs. The team's 41-year-old star driver looks every bit the Schumacher of old, the Mercedes engine remains the strongest all-round unit in F1 and in Brawn it has a leader that any team in the paddock would sell its soul to have on its side. Question is, will Mercedes lose too much ground early in the year to retain the drivers' and constructors' titles won as Brawn?

KEY CHANGES

Mercedes has taken control of the team, but Ross Brawn remains in charge. Michael Schumacher comes out of retirement to partner Nico Rosberg

IN: MICHAEL SCHUMACHER AND NICO ROSBERG



IN: MERCEDES



OUT: JENSON BUTTON AND RUBENS BARRICHELLO

FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.mercedes-gp.com> • **YOUTUBE:** <http://www.youtube.com/mercedesgppetronas>

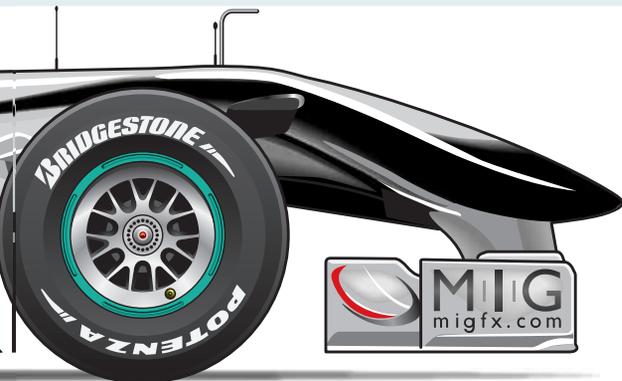
MILESTONES



> Schumacher will become second most capped driver when he starts his 257th race at the European GP.
> Mercedes returns after a 55-year gap from F1 (above). It will pass Brawn in the all-time race starters list in Monaco when it notches up its 18th start!

WHAT IT MEANS:

We're not quite there at the moment, and we are going to have to out-develop the likes of Ferrari and McLaren if we are going to be in the hunt for the championships



THE DRIVERS

Mercedes has assembled an 'old-hand, young-charger' line-up of Schumacher and Rosberg

3 MICHAEL SCHUMACHER



The seven-time champion's record is without question, but there are doubts about whether he'll be the same driver that bade farewell to F1 at the end of 2006. Does the 41-year-old still have the sharpness to recapture his pomp?

Age: 41
Debut: Belgium 1991
Starts: 248
Wins: 91
Poles: 68
Fastest laps: 76
Points: 1369
'09 position: N/A



4 NICO ROSBERG



Overshadowed by his superstar team-mate to the point of invisibility, Rosberg must silence the doubters this year. There's no doubt that 1982 world champion Keke's lad is quick. This year will show if he is the all round package needed to win races.

Age: 24
Debut: Bahrain 2006
Starts: 70
Best finish: 2nd
Best qualifying: 3rd
Fastest laps: 2
Points: 75.5
'09 position: 7th



TEAM STATS

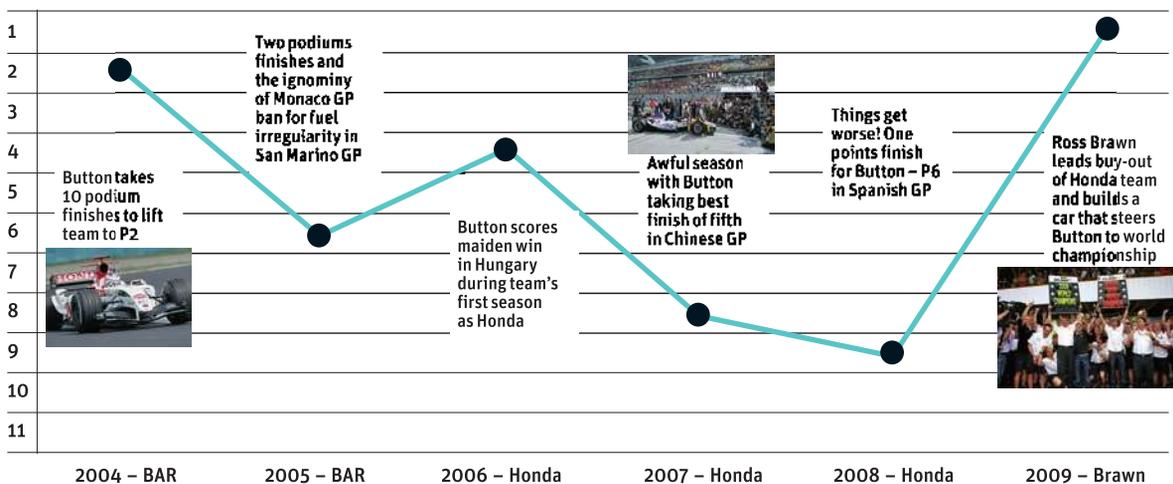
Starts: 12
First: France 1954
Wins: 9
Poles: 8
Drivers' titles: 2
Constructors' titles: N/A

2010 equipment

Chassis: W01
Engine: Mercedes FO108X

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION 2004-2009



RED BULL TEAM ON THE RAMPAGE

Design chief Adrian Newey seized the opportunity of last year's new regulation set with aplomb and catapulted Red Bull into the big time. Second last year, only the world championship will do this time as the ex-Jaguar team must prove that it can sustain its 2009 form.

WHAT THEY SAY:
"Our target is obviously to win the world championship, but we respect the quality of the opponents. We've set very aggressive targets"
Christian Horner



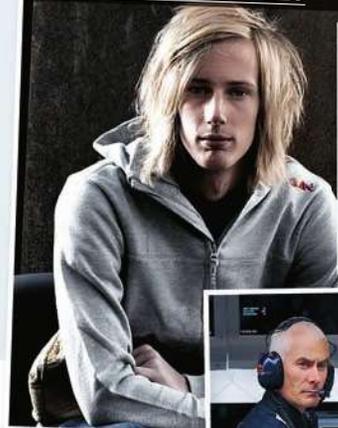
There are two ways of looking at Red Bull's 2009 season. The first is that it was a triumphant, breakthrough year. The second is that six wins for the best car in the field was a slight underachievement. How the team fares this year will tell us which perspective is the more accurate one. Despite many expecting some kind of revolutionary design, Newey's RB6 builds on the strengths of last year's car. Although testing has

been inconclusive, it's worth noting that it wasn't until Melbourne that Red Bull really showed its hand in 2009. In Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber it has proven race winners, while lessons will have been learned from the odd costly error last year. Much will depend on whether Renault power is up to it after team owner Dietrich Mateschitz blamed the engine for the loss of last year's titles. Strong fuel economy could be its trump card.

KEY CHANGES

Stability can't be underestimated in a year of major changes in F1. Little has changed since technical director Geoff Willis mid-2009

**IN: RESERVE DRIVER
BRENDON HARTLEY**



MILESTONES



> The Hungarian GP is due to be Red Bull's 100th race, (above is its first, Oz 2005) making it only the 25th team to reach a century in the world championship.
> It's also likely to break into the all-time top 10 points scorers: Ligier has 388, Red Bull has 256.5.

WHAT IT MEANS:

We're still not completely sure we can match the likes of Ferrari and McLaren despite last year's success, and we've pulled out all the stops to stay at the front



THE DRIVERS

Red Bull is the only top team with an unchanged line-up for 2010. It could prove to be decisive

5 SEBASTIAN VETTEL



After winning four races last year and taking second in the final points, the title is this year's target. Vettel has already proved he can dominate a race, but he must ensure he doesn't throw away points like he did last year.

Age: 22
Debut: USA 2007
Starts: 43
Wins: 5
Poles: 5
Fastest Laps: 3
Points: 125
'09 position: 2nd



6 MARK WEBBER



Proved himself as a race winner last year, but needs a good season to remain with the team in 2011. Is he a genuine world title contender or a strong support act to Vettel in the same team? With no leg injuries to hobble him this is the year we will find out.

Age: 33
Debut: Australian 2002
Starts: 138
Wins: 2
Poles: 1
Fastest Laps: 3
Points: 169.5
'09 position: 4th



TEAM STATS

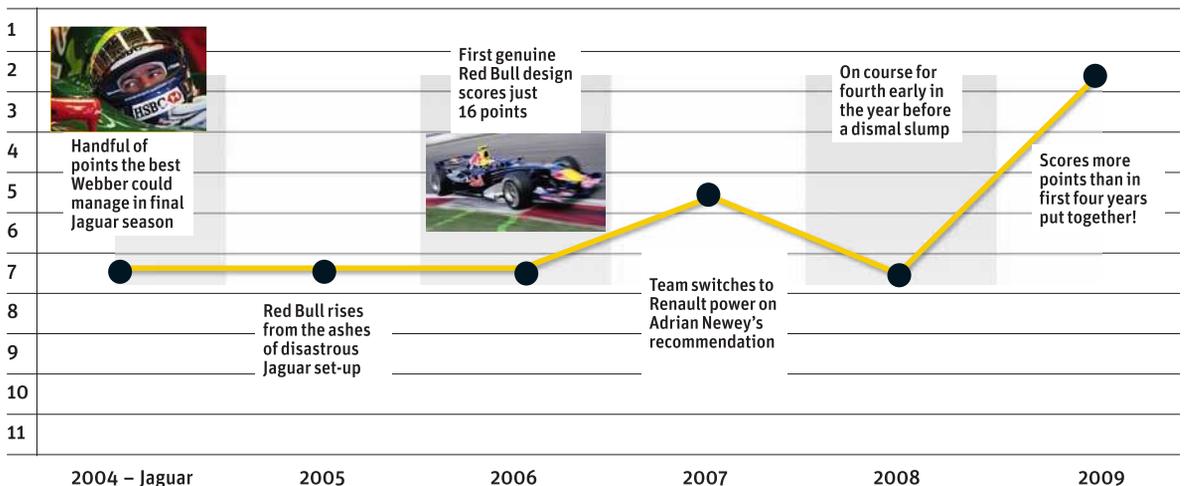
Starts: 88
First GP: Australia '05
Wins: 6
Poles: 5
Fastest laps: 6
Drivers' titles: 0
Constructors' titles: 0

2010 equipment

Chassis: RB6
Engine: Renault RS27

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009



FERRARI GETTING BACK ON TRACK

Ferrari was quick to realise that 2009 would be a year to forget, and after so publicly stating that it had switched all of its focus to its 2010 car, the F10 needs to be a winner. With Alonso and Massa behind the wheel, everything is in place to prove '09 was just a blip.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"I'm happy, but we don't know how good the others are. The results in testing are encouraging, but it's too soon to pass judgement"

Luca di Montezemolo

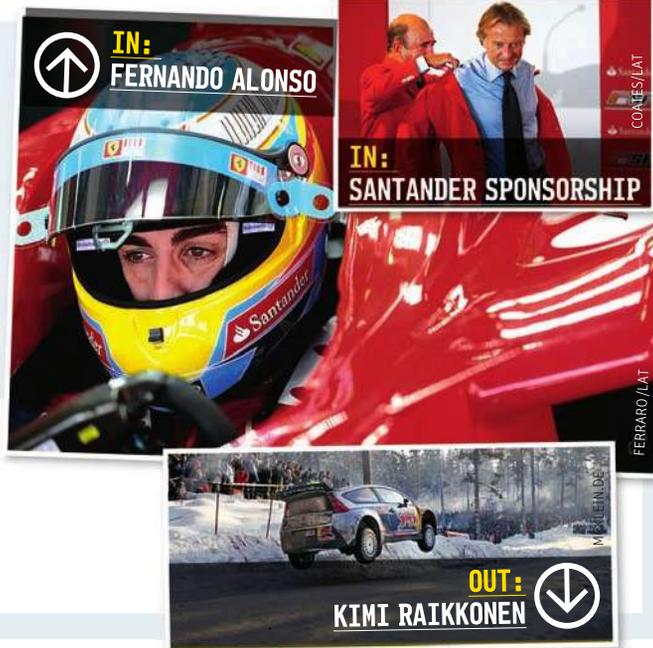


The Kimi Raikkonen relationship didn't pan out as expected, so now all eyes will be on Fernando Alonso to see if he can 'do a Schumacher' wearing the famous red of the Scuderia. He's expected to be more hands-on than the Finn, and so far has been saying the right sort of things to suggest that he's fully committed. Everyone will have a close eye on the relationship between the Spaniard and his new team, especially

if Felipe Massa proves he is fast enough to cause a few problems. If that is the case, then get ready for plenty of comparisons to the 2007 McLaren disaster. The decision to completely abandon development of the 2009 car ahead of a winter of relative rules stability was slightly surprising, but Ferrari clearly felt its efforts would be better served starting from scratch rather than continuing to update its hurried 2009 car.

KEY CHANGES

Dropping Raikkonen for Alonso should give Ferrari the motivated team leader it has craved since Michael Schumacher left at the end of '06



FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://formula1.ferrari.com/> • FACEBOOK: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ferrari/24712846969>

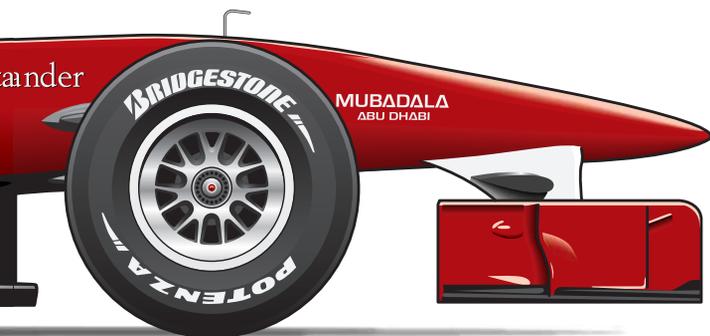
MILESTONES



> Ferrari is just two short of having 350 front-row starts to its name. This is Silverstone 1952 (above).
> Alonso only needs two points to jump ahead of fifth-placed Kimi Raikkonen in the soon-to-be meaningless all-time points scorers list.

WHAT IT MEANS:

Everyone else is saying we are one of the pacesetters, but we're an old hand at this so we'll play dumb for as long as we can. See you in Bahrain



THE DRIVERS

With Massa back to 2008 form and Alonso out for a third title, this could be a stellar line-up

7 FELIPE MASSA



So far it seems that the Hungarian incident has not cost the Brazilian any of his speed. The signing of Alonso is hardly a vote of confidence in the man who nearly won the 2008 title, but don't expect him to roll over and play second fiddle.

Age: 28
Debut: Australia 2002
Starts: 114
Wins: 11
Poles: 15
Fastest laps: 12
Points: 320
'09 position: 11th



8 FERNANDO ALONSO



A season like Alonso's 2009 would be pretty demoralising if he hadn't already had a Ferrari contract in his back pocket. After two years spent mostly in the wilderness at Renault, he's clearly relishing the prospect of a genuinely competitive car.

Age: 28
Debut: Australia 2001
Starts: 138
Wins: 21
Poles: 18
Fastest laps: 13
Points: 577
'09 position: 9th



TEAM STATS

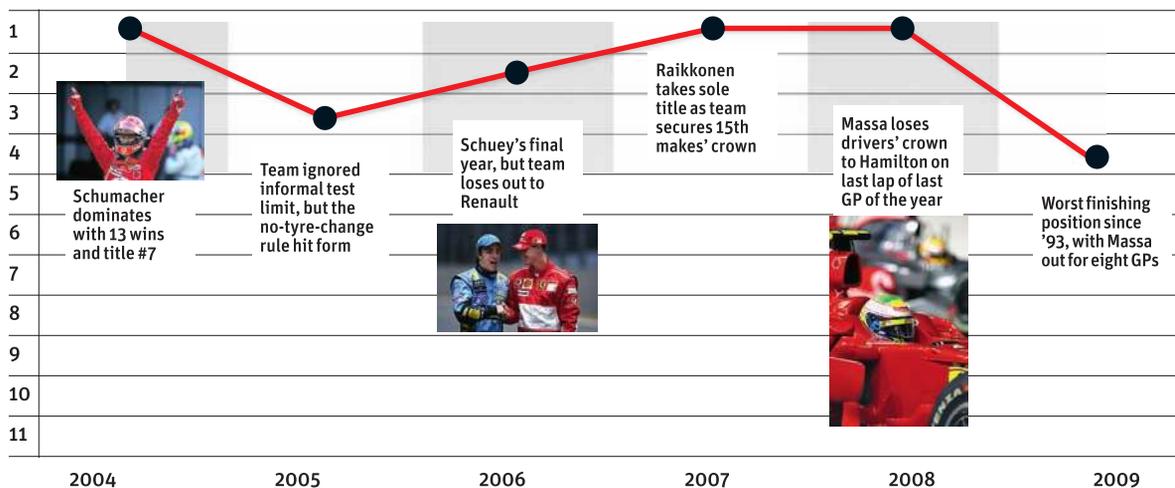
Starts: 793
First GP: Monaco 1950
Wins: 210
Poles: 203
Fastest laps: 219
Drivers' titles: 12
Constructors' titles: 16

2010 equipment

Chassis: F10
Engine: Ferrari O56

*All stats from start of world championship in 1950

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009

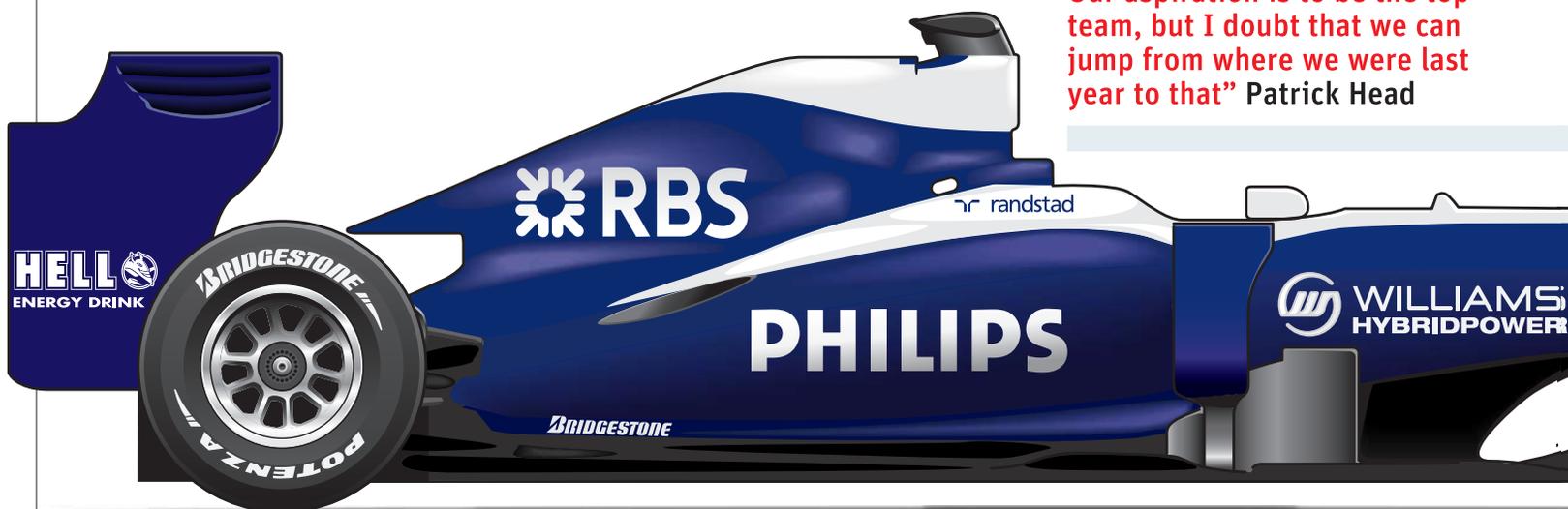


WILLIAMS ROLLING BACK THE YEARS

It's been five long years since Williams last won a grand prix. Last year's change of regulations allowed the team to catch up with the rest, and it enjoyed a far stronger season than its seventh place in the constructors' championship suggested. This year it needs to re-emerge as a race winner.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"We can re-establish ourselves as one of the top teams in F1. Our aspiration is to be the top team, but I doubt that we can jump from where we were last year to that" Patrick Head



Williams starts the season on an upward curve, although much will depend on the strength of the Cosworth engine. The Williams-Cosworth alliance has been a fruitful one in the past, yielding world titles in both 1980 and 1982, and the combination's form this year will say a lot about whether two of the great names of F1 can again be a title force. After a slow start in testing, largely because of the need to break in

the Cosworth engine slowly, Williams has gradually become stronger although whether the powerplant is up to it will only become in Bahrain. One area in which Williams has unquestionably taken major strides is with its drivers. Nico Rosberg scored all the team's '09 points, so Kazuki Nakajima is no loss, and the hiring of veteran Rubens Barrichello and Nico Hulkenberg gives it the classic blend of youth and experience.

KEY CHANGES

Cosworth replaces Toyota engines. On the driver front, Nico Rosberg and Kazuki Nakajima are replaced by Rubens Barrichello and Nico Hulkenberg



FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.williamsf1.com/> • **TWITTER:** <http://twitter.com/williamsf1> • **TEL:** 01235 77700

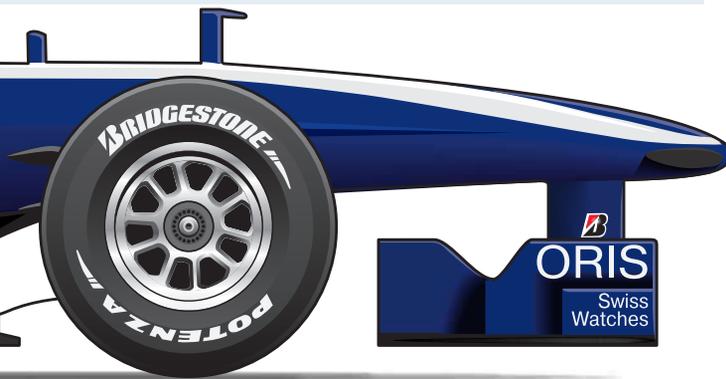
MILESTONES



> Rubens Barrichello is on course to start his 300th GP in Japan (this is his first, above, Kyalami 1993).
> In Bahrain, Frank Williams (along with the revived Lotus) will join McLaren and Ferrari as the only entrants to have fielded cars in six or more decades.

WHAT IT MEANS:

We are on the up, although it might be a little too soon to win races. We probably won't admit it, but being fourth or fifth in the constructors' championship would be a good step



THE DRIVERS

9 RUBENS BARRICHELLO



Exactly who Williams needs. One of the best development drivers in F1, Barrichello proved he still has a lot to offer by ending a four-season victory drought last year. Still driven at 37, he will be the bedrock upon which Williams's season is built.

Age: 37
Debut: South Africa 1993
Starts: 284
Wins: 11
Poles: 14
Fastest laps: 17
Points: 607
'09 position: 3rd



10 NICO HULKENBERG



Hulkenberg's inexorable march towards F1 will be completed in Bahrain, but the German won't be satisfied merely by being there. No rookie has come into F1 with this kind of buzz since Lewis Hamilton in 2007, and Nico's first challenge is to outpace Barrichello.

Age: 22
Debut: Bahrain 2010
Starts: N/A
Best finish: N/A
Best qualifying: N/A
Fastest laps: N/A
Points: N/A
2009: 1st in GP2



TEAM STATS

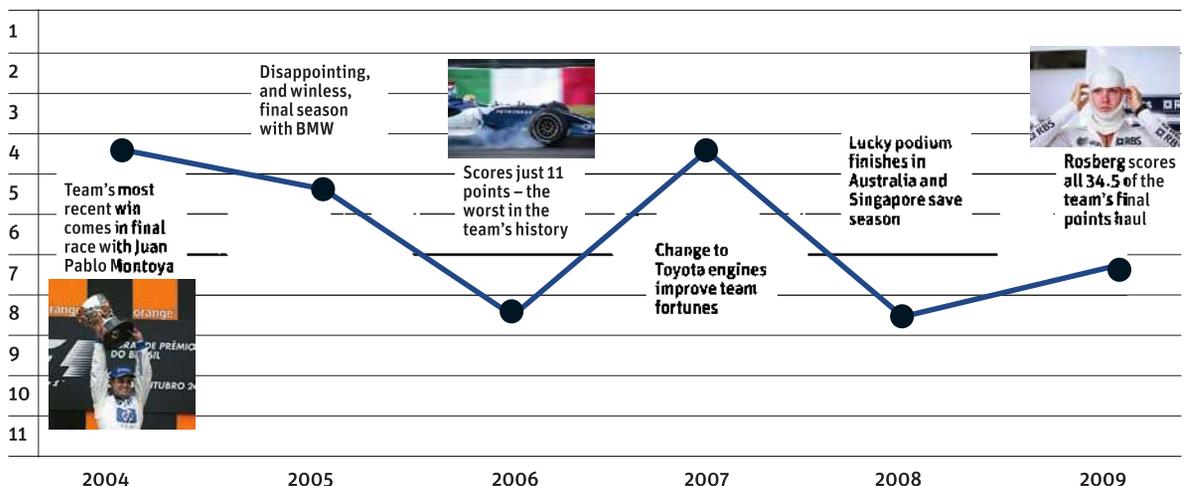
Starts: 534
First GP: Argentina '78
Wins: 113
Poles: 125
Fastest laps: 130
Drivers' titles: 7
Constructors' titles: 9

2010 equipment

Chassis: FW32
Engine: Cosworth CA2010

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION 2004-2009



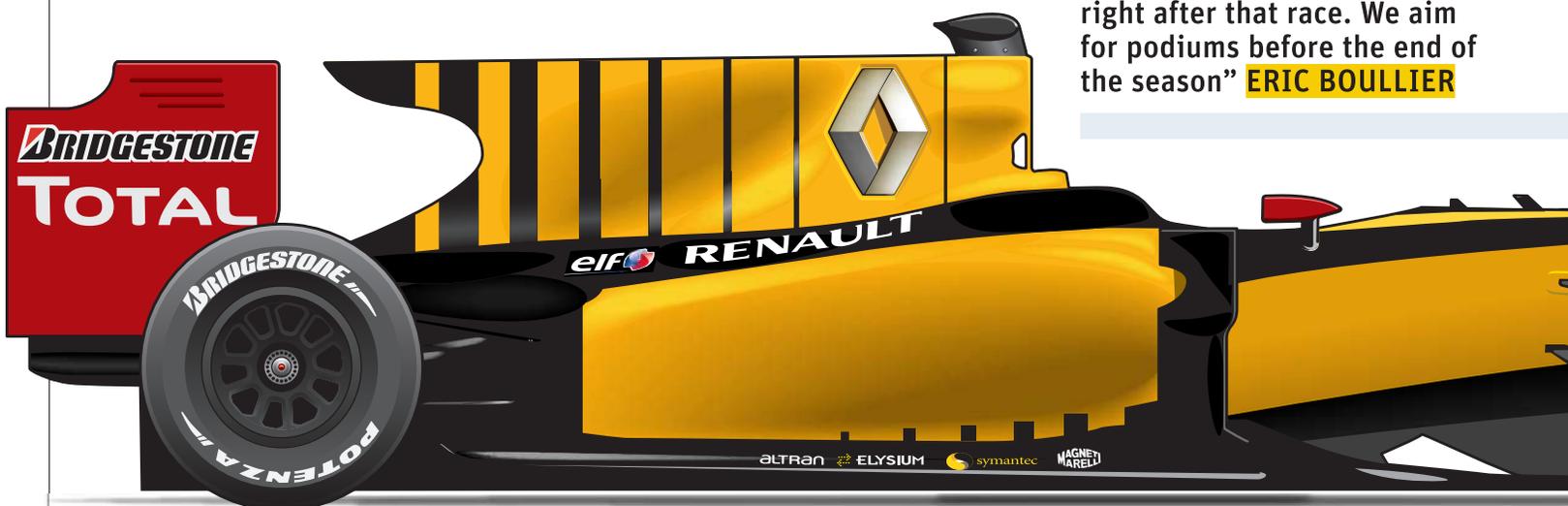
RENAULT

LEAVING THE DARK DAYS BEHIND

Last year will forever go down as a complete write-off for Renault, and that's before you take into account the fact that it built a dog of a car. It won't get back to title-winning form overnight, but a solid first season for Kubica and a year without controversy would be a good start.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"We have an idea of where we will be in Bahrain. There'll be some aggressive development right after that race. We aim for podiums before the end of the season" **ERIC BOULLIER**



Now that the dust has started to settle regarding all things Nelson Piquet and Singapore, the investment over the winter by Genii Capital has at least kept the Renault name on the grid. Rebuilding is the name of the game for the team now, and it will be interesting to see how the new owners get on in their first season in Formula 1. With changes of personnel at the top and a completely new driver line-up

in Robert Kubica and Vitaly Petrov, there is bound to be a settling-down period early in the season, but the mood of the team in testing suggests that it will at least have a half-decent car at its disposal this time round. The striking yellow-and-black colour scheme has created plenty of attention since the car's launch, but it has also highlighted just how few sponsors are currently backing the squad.

Results will change that, hopefully.

KEY CHANGES

Total overhaul of the team's ownership and management structure following the off-season takeover by Genii Capital



IN: GENII CAPITAL, GERARD LOPEZ, ERIC BOULLIER (RIGHT), ROBERT KUBICA, VITALY PETROV



OUT: FERNANDO ALONSO, ROMAIN GROSJEAN, MOST OF THE SPONSORS



OUT: FLAVIO BRIATORE

ALL PICS: LAT

FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.renaultf1.com/> • **FACEBOOK:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/RENAULT-F1/7481000979>

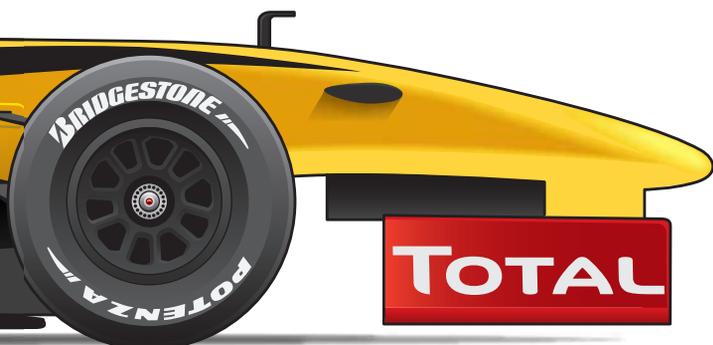
MILESTONES



> Renault is joint fifth with Brabham in the all-time wins table behind Ferrari, McLaren, Williams and Lotus.
> The team needs five podium finishes to reach 100.

WHAT IT MEANS:

We've come into this pretty late, so we probably can't turn everything around in time for Bahrain. Once we've got our own ideas in place, however, we'll start setting some proper targets



THE DRIVERS

All-new line-up in Kubica and Petrov could be the breath of fresh air this once great team needs

11 ROBERT KUBICA



Now free of an atmosphere he found increasingly frustrating at BMW, Kubica should at least be happier at Renault. But with most of the other top-line drivers in good cars, he could be in for a testing campaign if his equipment isn't up to it.

Age: 25
Debut: Hungary 2006
Starts: 57
Wins: 1
Poles: 1
Fastest laps: 0
Points: 137
'09 position: 14th



12 VITALY PETROV



He was runner-up to the highly-touted Nico Hulkenberg in GP2 last year, but it was the German's rookie season while Petrov already had two and a bit years in the category under his belt before 2009. His aim this year will be to prove that he's more than a pay driver.

Age: 25
Debut: Bahrain 2010
Starts: N/A
Wins: N/A
Poles: N/A
Fastest laps: N/A
Points: N/A
'09 position: N/A



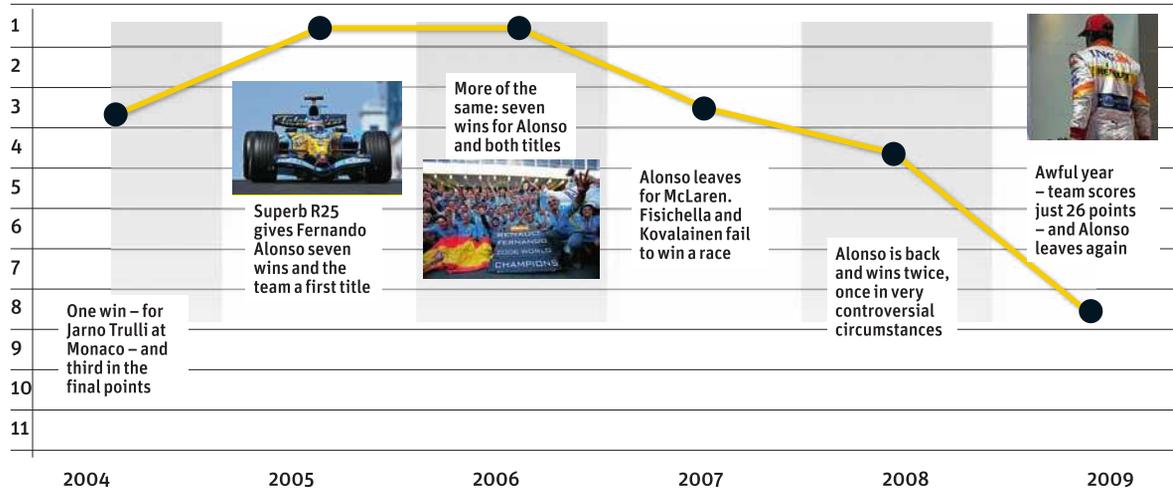
TEAM STATS

Starts: 262
First GP: Britain 1977
Wins: 35
Poles: 51
Fastest laps: 29
Drivers' titles: 2
Constructors' titles: 2

2010 equipment
Chassis: R30
Engine: Renault RS27

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009



FORCE INDIA

NO MORE FLASH IN THE PAN

After years of instability, changing ownership and new identities, the ex-Jordan/Midland/Spyker team at last took a big stride forward last year. A pole position and a second place at Spa kicked off a strong end to the season, and in 2010 the Silverstone-based team must continue its upward climb.

WHAT THEY SAY:

“Towards the end of last season the performance was markedly better. We’ll try to stay on that glidepath, and continue to exploit those efficiencies” OTMAR SZAFNAUER



Against a backdrop of team stability unprecedented since the Jordan days, Force India can at last realistically hope not to be propping up the constructors’ championship table at the end of the season. After last year’s rules ‘reset’, the team came on strong in the second half with a car that was strong on aero efficiency, but weak on low- and medium-speed downforce, and testing suggests that it has improved its

package without simply bolting extra drag onto the car. The late change to Mercedes power ahead of last season made adapting the car a rush job, but this year Force India was on track in the second week of February and has made major changes to its car to optimise the package. Sixth in the championship is the aim but to do that, much will depend on drivers Adrian Sutil and Tonio Liuzzi, who both have something to prove in F1.

KEY CHANGES

Paul di Resta joins as third driver. Technical director James Key has left for Sauber, with design director Mark Smith taking his place



FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.forceindiaf1.com/> • FACEBOOK: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Force-India-F1-Team/>

MILESTONES



> Force India will start its 50th GP in Singapore (above), making it the 40th team to hit the half century. Including previous incarnations Jordan, Midland and Spyker, it will start its 327th race in Turkey, which puts it eighth in the all-time list.

THE DRIVERS

Sutil and Liuzzi give the team driver continuity – Paul di Resta will be hoping ‘not for long’

14 ADRIAN SUTIL



Proved he could run at the sharp end in 2009, although remained prone to getting involved in his own and others’ mishaps. If the Force India VJM03 is up to it, Sutil needs to emerge as a consistent points scorer in his fourth season in F1.

Age: 27
Debut: Australia 2007
Starts: 52
Best finish: 4th
Best qualifying: 2nd
Fastest laps: 1
Points: 6
'09 position: 17th



15 VITANTONIO LIUZZI



Liuzzi’s second coming in F1 started promisingly with a strong run in the Italian GP after 18 months on the sidelines. The next four races were less eye-catching, and with Paul di Resta in the wings the pressure is on the Italian to turn his talent into results.

Age: 28
Debut: San Marino 2005
Starts: 44
Best finish: 6th
Best qualifying: 7th
Fastest laps: 0
Points: 5
'09 position: 22nd



WHAT IT MEANS:

We had a good finish to last season, but we need to make sure that it wasn’t down to luck. We’re a small team, but we need to produce a car that’s good on all tracks rather than just at the faster circuits



TEAM STATS

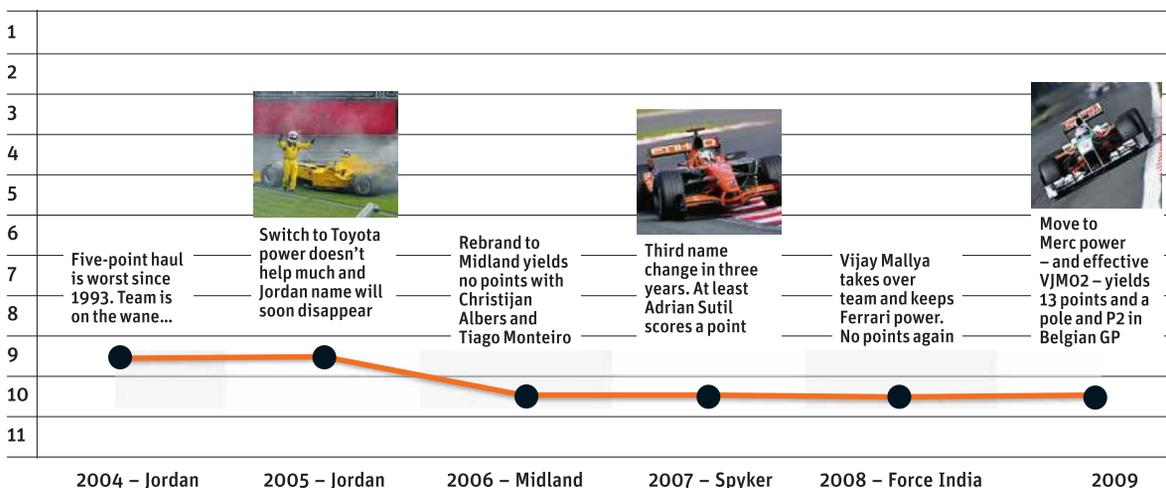
Starts: 35
First GP: Australia '08
Best finish: 2nd
Poles: 1
Fastest laps: 1
Drivers’ titles: 0
Constructors’ titles: 0

2010 equipment

Chassis: VJM03
Engine: Mercedes FO108X

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS’ CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009



Five-point haul is worst since 1993. Team is on the wane...



Switch to Toyota power doesn't help much and Jordan name will soon disappear

Rebrand to Midland yields no points with Christian Albers and Tiago Monteiro



Third name change in three years. At least Adrian Sutil scores a point

Vijay Mallya takes over team and keeps Ferrari power. No points again



Move to Merc power – and effective VJM02 – yields 13 points and a pole and P2 in Belgian GP

TORO ROSSO

TIME TO COME OF AGE

After spending its formative seasons relying on Red Bull for cars, 2010 marks the year in which Scuderia Toro Rosso flies the coop and becomes a constructor in its own right. A tough job - especially when your drivers have only one-and-a-half seasons of F1 experience between them.

WHAT THEY SAY:

“If pushed, I would say that we must aim to finish in the top eight in the constructors’ championship while giving our young drivers everything they need to improve” Franz Tost



On the surface, not much appears to have changed at Toro Rosso this year. Sebastien Buemi returns for his second year in the cockpit, and he'll again be joined by Jaime Alguersuari, who'll be embarking upon his first full season after being roped in from Hungary onwards in 2009. The only difference is that this year the Spaniard won't be dovetailing his day job with a Formula Renault 3.5 campaign.

The car also looks the same too: a Red Bull-themed paint scheme on a Red Bull-looking car. But where the STR5 breaks from its predecessors is that it was designed not from blueprints provided by Red Bull Technologies, but by a team led by technical director Giorgio Ascanelli - albeit with a large dollop of Red Bull DNA. With that newfound status as a constructor and two relatively green drivers, however, this is very much a learning year.

KEY CHANGES

Team joins the 'real' constructors now that it is required to design and build its own chassis. Ben Butler moves from Red Bull as chief designer



IN:
A NEW WINDTUNNEL IN BICESTER



OUT: NO ONE. BUT STR TENDS TO DO THAT MID-YEAR



FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.tororosso.com/> • FACEBOOK: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Faenza-Italy/Toro-Rosso->

MILESTONES



> The Spanish Grand Prix will mark STR's 75th GP. Let's hope it's better than last year's (above).

WHAT IT MEANS:

If we get beaten by any of the new teams we are going to be humiliated beyond words



THE DRIVERS

F1's youngest and least experienced confirmed line-up. They need as much mileage as possible

16 SEBASTIEN BUEMI



The 'veteran' of the team with 17 starts to his name, the Swiss has proved himself reliable enough to capitalise on any opportunity for points, while not necessarily having what it takes to create those chances for himself. Needs to step up a level his this year.

Age: 21
Debut: Australia 2009
Starts: 17
Best finish: 7th
Best qualifying: 6th
Fastest Laps: 0
Points: 6
'09 position: 16th



17 JAIME ALGUERSUARI



His status as the youngest driver ever to start a world championship grand prix gave him some leeway in the second half of last season, but any attempt to rely on the same excuse in 2010 will quickly wear thin. The Spaniard must prove himself at this level.

Age: 19
Debut: Hungary 2009
Starts: 8
Best finish: 14th
Best qualifying: 12th
Fastest Laps: 0
Points: 0
'09 position: 24th



TEAM STATS

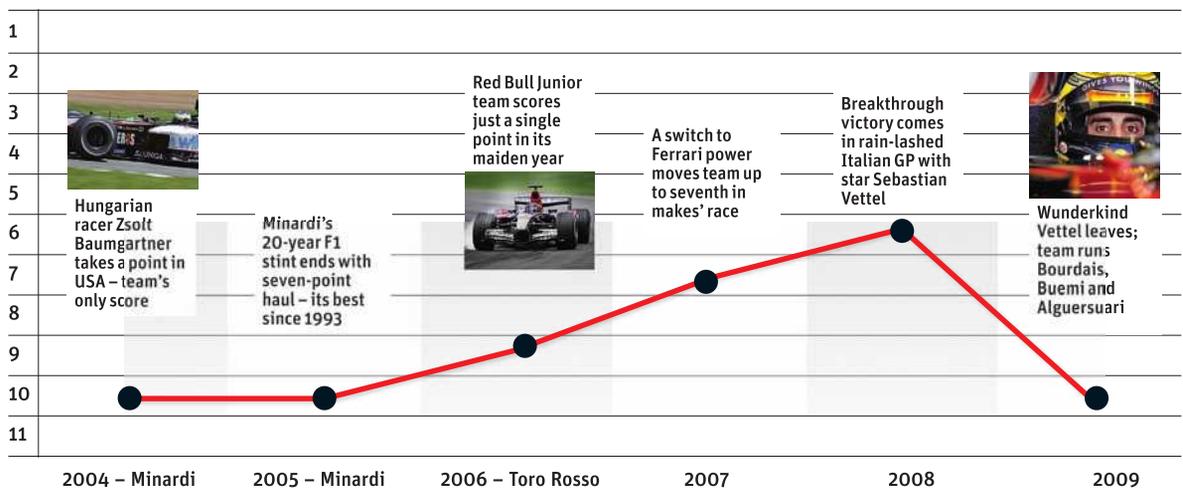
Starts: 70
First GP: Bahrain 2006
Wins: 1
Poles: 1
Fastest Laps: 0
Drivers' titles: 0
Constructors' titles: 0

2010 equipment

Chassis: STR5
Engine: Ferrari 056

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 2004-2009

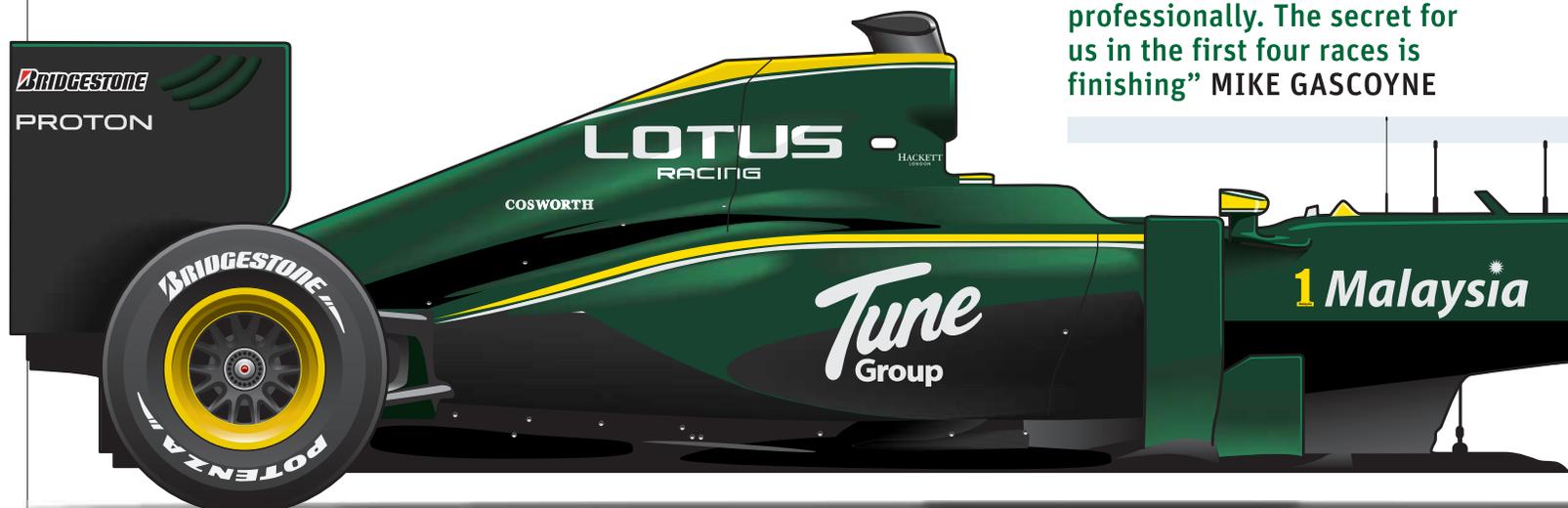


LOTUS

PICKING UP WHERE THE NAME LEFT OFF

As with the other new teams, if Lotus can end the season as anything more than back-of-the-field grid-fillers then 2010 will be deemed a success. While the iconic name is a big thing to live up to, it wouldn't be a bad start if this new guise could at least match its predecessor's later years.

WHAT THEY SAY:
"We wanted to put a good, solid car on the track and present and run it professionally. The secret for us in the first four races is finishing" MIKE GASCOYNE



The debate about whether this team can really be considered Lotus will never be settled, but one thing that is clear is that this new team will need to prove it can stand on its own two feet regardless of any links to the past. So far, the signings have been astute – two solid, if not spectacular, drivers in a Mike Gascoyne-designed car sounds like an ideal starting point for a rookie team.

With experienced people on board, the noises coming out of the team have been sensible so far, with lots of talk of working on reliability (rather than worrying about any lack of speed) and 'potential' (rather than worrying about any lack of speed right now). Now Lotus needs to make sure it can build on the solid foundations that have been laid once the serious stuff gets underway.

KEY CHANGES

You name it, it's all new. Except for the illustrious name, of course, which means this Norfolk-based team has a lot to live up to



FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.lotusracing.my/> • FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/lotusf1racing • TEL: 01953 608507

MILESTONES



> Including the previous team's records, the Lotus team name will make its 500th start later this year.
> Trulli is 3.5 points away from taking his career total to 250.

WHAT IT MEANS:

If we haven't got the pace to begin with, let's at least make sure we're still running when the flag falls. Better to have one box ticked than none at all



THE DRIVERS

Experienced race winners – but both needing to prove themselves – could help team progress

18 JARNO TRULLI



At some point in qualifying this year we will see just how much speed the T127 has, because Jarno will hit his Saturday sweet spot and take Lotus higher than expected. Then he'll just have to worry about keeping quicker cars behind him.

Age: 35
Debut: Australia 1997
Starts: 216
Wins: 1
Poles: 4
Fastest laps: 1
Points: 246.5
09 position: 8th



19 HEIKKI KOVALAINEN



Living in Lewis Hamilton's shadow at McLaren didn't bring the best out of Kovalainen, but after stints in two big manufacturer-backed teams, moving to Lotus will be an eye opener. In Trulli, the Finn has a good benchmark to base himself against.

Age: 28
Debut: Australia 2007
Starts: 52
Wins: 1
Poles: 1
Fastest laps: 2
Points: 105
09 position: 12th



TEAM STATS

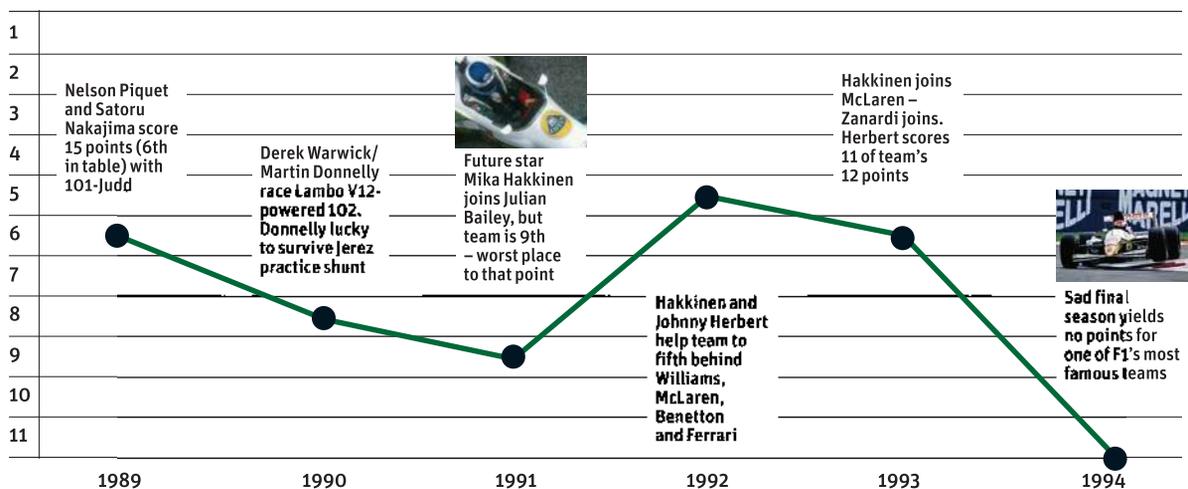
Starts: 491 (or 0)
First GP: Monaco 1958 (or Bahrain 2010)
Wins: 79 (or 0)
Poles: 107 (or 0)
Fastest laps: 71 (or 0)
Drivers' titles: 6 (or 0)
Constructors' titles: 7 (or 0)

2010 equipment

Chassis: T127
Engine: Cosworth CA2010

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS 1989-1994 (PREVIOUS LOTUS TEAM)

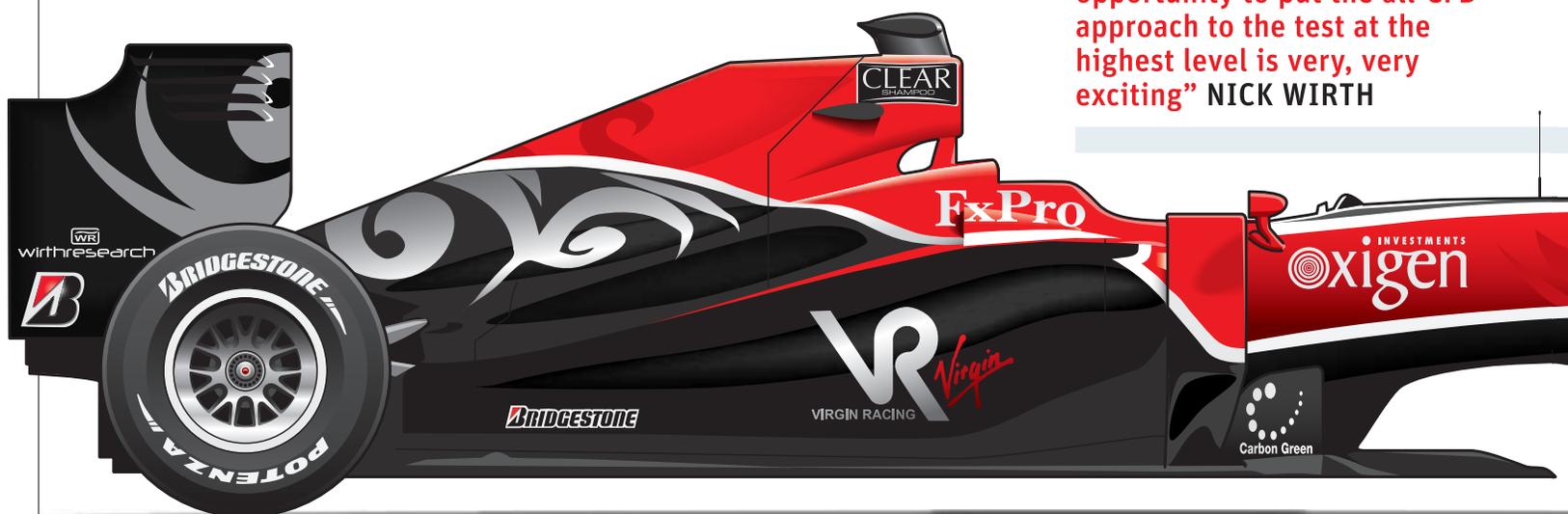


VIRGIN DIGITAL REVOLUTIONARY

Virgin Racing was the first of the 2010 season's new teams to break cover, but the hype over the 100 per cent CFD-designed VR-01 has been tempered somewhat by reliability problems in testing. Still a candidate for best of the new teams, provided it can overcome the all-new Lotus squad.

WHAT THEY SAY:

"I have absolute belief in the digital design process and the opportunity to put the all-CFD approach to the test at the highest level is very, very exciting" NICK WIRTH



By now, the Virgin team has heard pretty much every 'computer says no' joke imaginable about its famously windtunnel-shy VR-01, and it's getting on with trying to make the thing actually work. Persistent reliability problems in testing haven't helped, and while the team's plight has drawn a few knowing smiles, the glitches haven't been CFD-related.

Reliability aside, the team seems

to be adapting to the demands of F1, although the challenge of sorting procedural matters – the division of responsibilities between Wirth Research and Manor Motorsport – is as difficult as sorting the car. The team insists that the two entities are working together well. Things look okay on the driver front too, although rookie Lucas di Grassi would have liked more mileage at the rain- and reliability-affected Jerez tests.

KEY CHANGES

You'd think there'd be none in a team that hasn't raced yet, but Virgin has swapped Alex Tai with John Booth for the team principal role

↑ **IN: JOHN BOOTH TAKES TEAM PRINCIPAL ROLE FROM ALEX TAI**



↑ **IN: ANDY SOUCEK IS RESERVE DRIVER**



↓ **OUT: ... AT THE EXPENSE OF ALVARO PARENTE**

FOLLOW THE TEAM

WEB: <http://www.virginracing.com/> • TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/virginracing>

MILESTONES



> Timo Glock will make his 50th start in the Italian GP. He scored points in his first - Canada, 2004 (above).

THE DRIVERS

A powerful line-up for a brand-new team. Speed, intelligence and technical ability aplenty

24 TIMO GLOCK



Always dependably quick at Toyota, Glock now steps into a team leadership role for the first time at Virgin. Spearheading a start-up team is a heck of a challenge, but the German has the outright speed and temperament to do the job.

Age: 27
Debut: Canada 2004
Starts: 36
Best finish: 2nd
Best qualifying: 2nd
Fastest Laps: 1
Points: 51
'09 position: 10th



25 LUCAS DI GRASSI



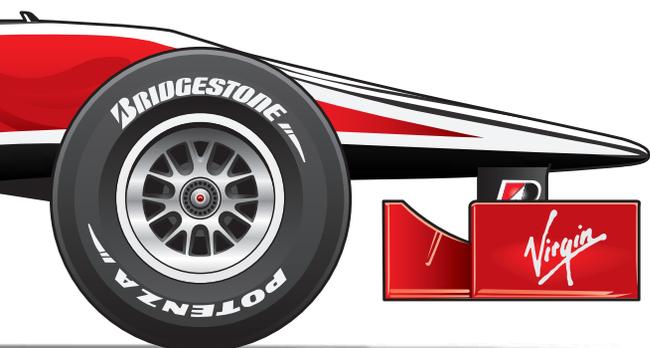
Long recognised as one of GP2's most consistently quick drivers, the fact that di Grassi never won the series is the one blot on his CV. Technically astute and extremely bright, the Brazilian has been waiting for his F1 chance and will be keen to now prove his worth.

Age: 25
Debut: Bahrain 2010
Starts: 0
Wins: N/A
Poles: N/A
Fastest Laps: N/A
Points: N/A
'09 position: N/A



WHAT IT MEANS:

We can't afford a windtunnel



TEAM STATS

Starts: 0
First GP: Bahrain 2010
Wins: N/A
Poles: N/A
Fastest Laps: N/A
Drivers' titles: N/A
Constructors' titles: N/A

2010 equipment

Chassis: VR-01
Engine: Cosworth CA2010

*All stats from start of world championship



Timo Glock put the early mileage on Virgin VR-01

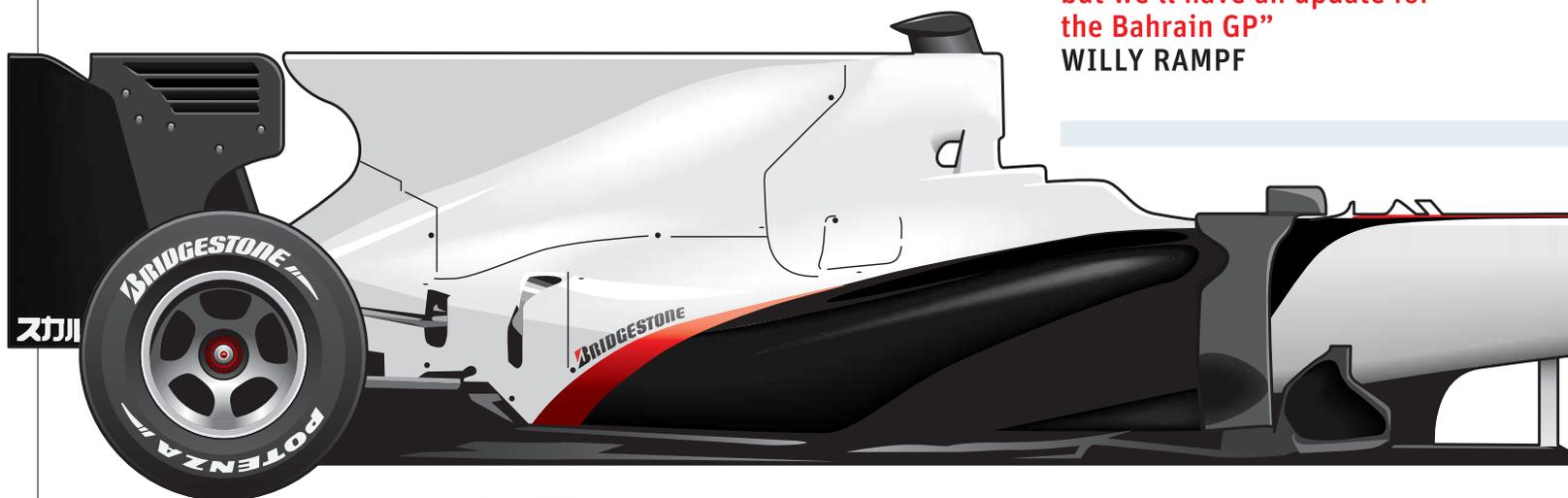
SAUBER BACK TO THE OLD DAYS

BMW is gone in every way but the official - and confusing - name, and Sauber is once again an 'indie' team. When left to its own devices in the past it was more than capable of scoring points, but its lack of wins and poles indicates something was missing. Will it finally break through in 2010?

WHAT THEY SAY:

"We are restricted by budget, but we'll have an update for the Bahrain GP"

WILLY RAMPF



After a few heady years as a manufacturer team, BMW has departed and Peter Sauber has found himself in charge again. With shades of Brawn's situation 12 months ago, Sauber has overcome the first hurdle in securing the team's survival; now it has to go out and do the job on the track. Like Brawn, the car has been testing with virtually no hint of sponsorship on its bodywork; like Brawn, the team is adamant that it

has the money to see it through the season. Unlike Brawn, the C29 hasn't gone out and hosed everyone from its very first test, but by the same token, early indications are that it's not the slowest car out there either. You'd have got great odds if you'd bet on a driver line-up of Pedro de la Rosa and Kamui Kobayashi, but the combination of experience and genuine-if-untamed speed could be just what the team needs.

KEY CHANGES

Not much - other than the team owner, the powerplant, and both the drivers!



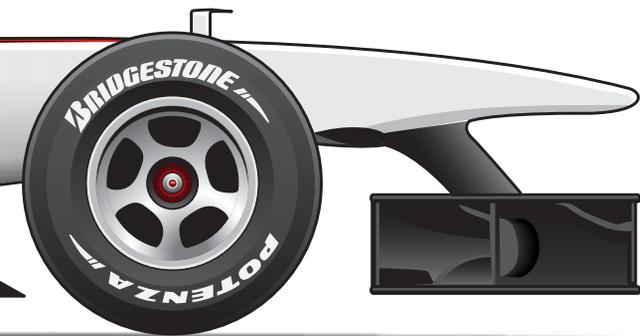
MILESTONES



- > Sauber is five points shy of reaching 200, scored since its maiden grand prix season in 1993 (above).
- > Pedro de la Rosa will make his 75th start in China.

WHAT IT MEANS:

We'll be running the same spec for the rest of the year unless we can get some stickers onto the car



THE DRIVERS

With a decent car underneath them, de la Rosa and Kobayashi could accrue a decent points haul

26 PEDRO DE LA ROSA



Coming off the bench after not racing for a couple of years is familiar territory for de la Rosa, and he's insistent that doing it as a 39-year-old is not going to present any problems. The team will value his experience, regardless of his speed.

Age: 39
Debut: Australia 1999
Starts: 71
Best finish: 2nd
Best qualifying: 4th
Fastest Laps: 1
Points: 29
'09 position: N/A



27 KAMUI KOBAYASHI



Surprised everyone by transforming himself from a GP2 midfielder to a quick F1 driver when he subbed for Toyota last year, and has now been given the chance to prove himself over a season by Sauber. He's quick, but he needs to tame the aggression.

Age: 23
Debut: Brazil 2009
Starts: 2
Best finish: 6th
Best qualifying: 11th
Fastest Laps: 0
Points: 3
'09 position: 18th



TEAM STATS

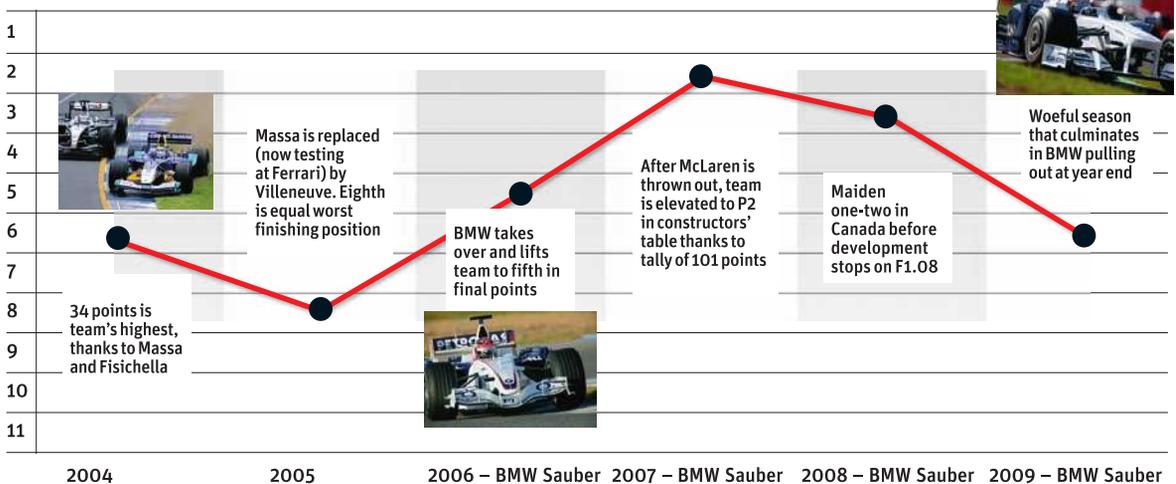
Starts: 215
First GP: South Africa 1993
Wins: 0
Poles: 0
Fastest Laps: 0
Drivers' titles: 0
Constructors' titles: 0

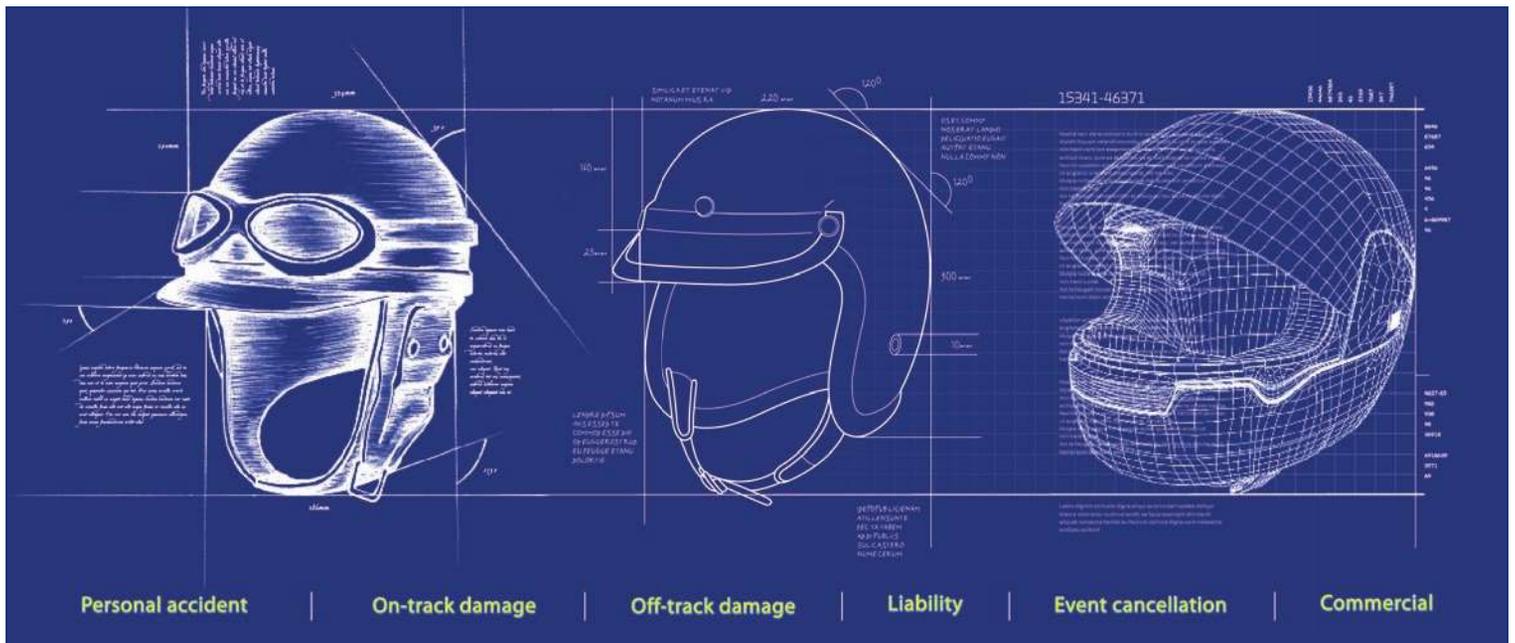
2010 equipment

Chassis: C29
Engine: Ferrari 056

*All stats from start of world championship

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS (2004-2009)





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CAMPOS META1

THE LATE LATE SHOW

A last-gasp takeover means that the team *should* be on the grid in Bahrain

A few weeks ago, you wouldn't have put more than a couple of quid on the Spanish outfit getting its Dallaras onto the grid in Bahrain, but major changes in February have seemingly saved the fledgling outfit.

Anonymous founder Adrian Campos, a veteran of 16 grands prix in the 1980s, has been sidelined to minority shareholder status after Jose Ramon Carabante took full control of the team. Colin Kolles, team principal of Midland/Spyker/Force India until the end of 2008 has been brought in as team principal with ex-Red Bull technical director Geoff Willis also involved on what is initially a short-term basis. These experienced hands should get the team onto the grid, even though being in the mix with fellow newcomers Lotus and Virgin will be a big ask.

As AUTOSPORT closed for press, little

had been confirmed about the team's plans, besides Kolles's conviction that it would be in Bahrain. Karun Chandhok is set to be confirmed as partner to old iSport GP2 team-mate Bruno Senna.

Dallara knows how to build a car, but for this start-up operation, achieving respectability by mid-season is the aim.



With luck, the Senna name will return to F1...

THE DRIVERS

Two rookie GP2 graduates are set to fill Campos's two seats

20 KARUN CHANDHOK* **21** BRUNO SENNA



Age: 26

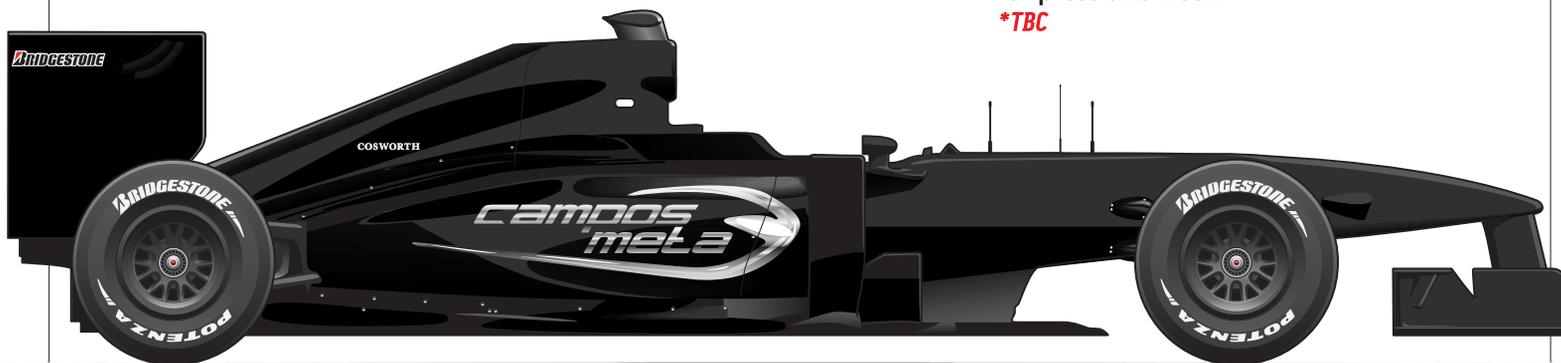
The GP2 race winner was set to be confirmed as a Campos driver as AUTOSPORT closed for press this week.

*TBC



Age: 26

The Brazilian is set to keep his seat at Campos despite his deal looking shaky late last month.



US F1

'TEAM AMERICA' UP AGAINST IT

Charlotte-based US F1 won't be in Bahrain. Or Australia. Or Malaysia. Or China. And few expect the operation ever to make it to F1 after

much-publicised funding problems over the winter. The team had signed ex-Renault test driver Jose Maria Lopez, but the Argentinian has now given up on F1 after coming close to a Campos switch. With progress on its first F1 car stalled, it will take serious investment to get this team up and running. 2011 may be more realistic, if ever.

Will US F1 get any further?



STEFAN GP

SERBIANS RISING FROM THE TOYOTA ASHES

Stefan GP claims to have the backing to compete this year with a pair of cars that were originally designed to be Toyota TF110s prior to

the Japanese marque pulling out of F1. With Kazuki Nakajima and possibly 1997 world champion Jacques Villeneuve set to drive, team owner Zoran Stefanovich reckons he is ready to go. The only trouble is, Stefan GP doesn't have an entry. If the team is to be on the grid this year, rather than having to wait until 2011, it's going to have to happen soon.

Stefan GP is almost ready...



THE FORMULA 1 CIRCUITS

BAHRAIN Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

March 14

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turn 1

The slow first corner is not only a potential flashpoint in the race, but is also a great overtaking opportunity as the cars slow from close to 200mph.



Circuit length: 3.914 miles
Number of laps: 49
Race distance: 191.642 miles
UK start time: 12:00

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Jarno Trulli
1m33.431s (shorter circuit)
Lap record: to be established (new circuit layout)

One of a swathe of new circuits in emerging Formula 1 nations, Bahrain joined the calendar in 2004 and has bucked the trend for track shortening by having an extra half-mile added. The new loop comes off the old circuit after Turn 4 and takes in an extra five corners. Despite the addition, the characteristics of this Hermann Tilke-designed circuit remain the same. It's a medium-speed track that can be hit by wind and even sandstorms. Such is the rate of track 'clean-up' as the circuit rubbers in that,



even in dry conditions, being last over the line to start your final qualifying effort can be an advantage.

AUSTRALIA Albert Park, Melbourne

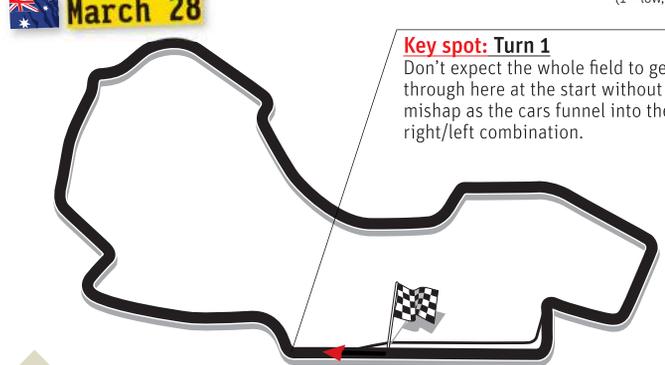
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

March 28

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turn 1

Don't expect the whole field to get through here at the start without mishap as the cars funnel into the right/left combination.



Circuit length: 3.295 miles
Number of laps: 58
Race distance: 191.110 miles
UK start time: 07:00

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Jenson Button
1m26.202s
Lap record: 1m24.125s (Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 2004)

Set around the Albert Park lake close to the south of the centre of Victorian capital Melbourne, this temporary circuit hosts its 15th world championship race this year. With an Australian GP history that stretches back to the 1950s, it has become a popular track on the calendar as much for its location as the driving challenge. A relatively high-downforce track, there are few high-speed corners – save for the fast left/right Turn 11/12 combination. It nonetheless has a reputation as a car breaker,



something that is partly due to it usually being the season opener and the fact that much of the track is parkland road.

MALAYSIA Sepang

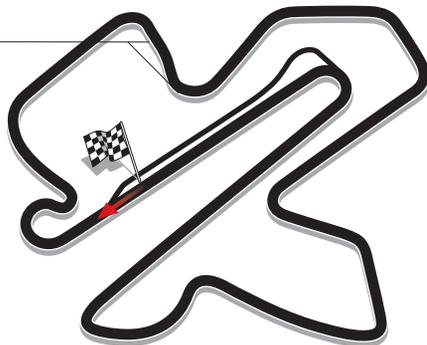
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

April 4

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turns 5/6

A fast, fifth-gear entry and a change of direction equals a heavy g-loading and a big test of car stability.



Circuit length: 3.444 miles
Number of laps: 56
Race distance: 192.887 miles
UK start time: 09:00

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Jenson Button
1m35.181s
Lap record: 1m34.233s (Juan Pablo Montoya, Williams, 2004)

The first world championship venue in Asia outside Japan, Malaysia joined the calendar back in 1999. Although the track hasn't established itself as a classic, it's nonetheless an underrated driving challenge, particularly with the humid conditions that abound in tropical Malaysia and take their toll on drivers. TV pictures fail to capture the elevation changes of the track, which is a challenging blend of fast corners, twisty sections and a couple of big braking zones into hairpins. Rain is a regular feature, with last year's race called after 31 laps because of monsoon conditions.



CHINA Shanghai International Circuit

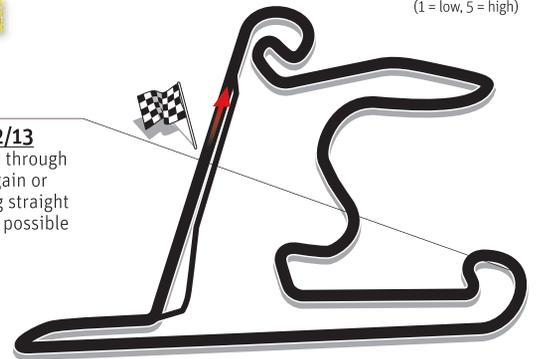
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

April 18

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turns 11/12/13

A slow entry, but the exit through the banked Turn 13 can gain or lose you time on the long straight that follows and set up a possible overtaking manoeuvre.



Circuit length: 3.387 miles
Number of laps: 56
Race distance: 189.568 miles
UK start time: 08:00

2009 winner: Sebastian Vettel
2009 polesitter: Sebastian Vettel
1m36.184s
Lap record: 1m32.238s (Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 2004)

The Chinese GP joined the schedule in 2004, but dwindling crowds have put its continued presence in doubt. Nonetheless, the circuit remains part of the world championship and boasts formidable facilities. Designed by Hermann Tilke to resemble the Chinese symbol meaning 'high', it features trademark long straights into slow corners, with technically challenging sections at Turns 1/2 and 9/10 bookending the quicker sweeps of 7/8. Overtaking is possible, with the slow Turn 14



offering the best opportunity. Ironically, the F1 drivers are not legally allowed to drive on the road in this country!

SPAIN Circuit de Catalunya, Barcelona

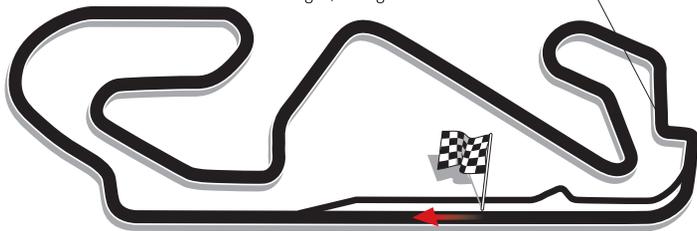
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

May 9

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turn 15

It's flat-out from the exit of this left, through Turn 16 and down the main straight, so a good exit is critical.



Circuit length: 2.892 miles
Number of laps: 66
Race distance: 190.825 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Jenson Button
1m20.527s
Lap record: 1m21.670s (Kimi Raikkonen, Ferrari, 2008)

Hailed by ace development driver Pedro de la Rosa as "the best test track in the world", the Circuit de Catalunya has been an ever-present in F1 since Nigel Mansell's and Ayrton Senna's wheelbanging duel back in 1991. It has a good blend of corners, as well as a long straight, but doesn't feature much overtaking. The twisty final sector is a good test of a car's low-speed performance and an excellent marker for the following weekend's race in Monaco.



MONACO Monte Carlo

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

May 16

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Sainte Devote

Carrying speed here is important for a good lap. Exit barrier claims many victims, and it's a potential flashpoint on the first lap.



Circuit length: 2.075 miles
Number of laps: 78
Race distance: 161.887 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Jenson Button
1m14.902s
Lap record: 1m14.439s (Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 2004)

The first grand prix on the streets of Monte Carlo was held in 1929. It's common to hear people say that F1 has long since outgrown Monaco – certainly, this circuit has always made threading a camel through the eye of a needle look easy. It's all about traction and maximum downforce for the cars, and precision and confidence for the drivers: what would be a tiny mistake on most other tracks will leave you in the wall in Monaco. Michael



Schumacher is the current master of the Principality, and could match Ayrton Senna's six-win record this year.

TURKEY Istanbul Park

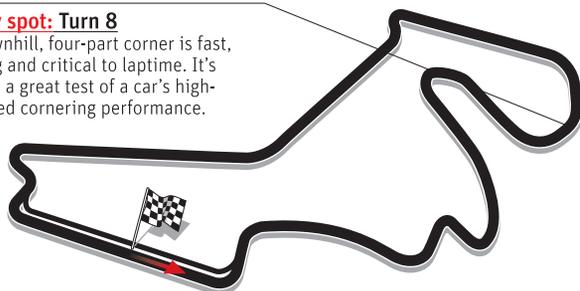
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

May 30

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Turn 8

Downhill, four-part corner is fast, long and critical to laptime. It's also a great test of a car's high-speed cornering performance.



Circuit length: 3.317 miles
Number of laps: 58
Race distance: 192.250 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Jenson Button
2009 polesitter: Sebastian Vettel 1m28.316s
Lap record: 1m24.770s (Juan Pablo Montoya, McLaren, 2005)

Hailed as the standard to which all new circuits should be held, the Hermann Tilke-designed Istanbul Park combines the safety requirements of a modern track with good old-fashioned balls-out driver challenge. The never-ending Turn 8 was instantly regarded as one of the most testing corners in F1 when Turkey made its F1 bow in 2005, while the physical challenge of the undulating, anti-clockwise circuit asks a lot of the drivers. Ferrari's Felipe Massa has made the track his own, winning from 2006-08 and only missing out last year as Ferrari struggled to match the pace of the leading teams.



CANADA Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, Montreal

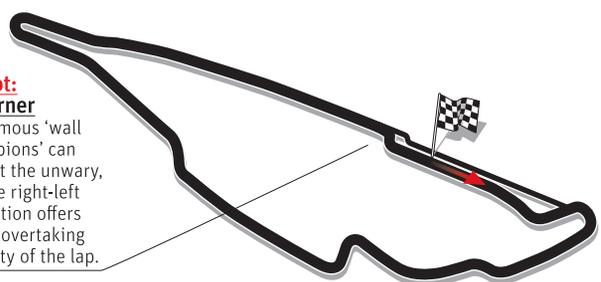
Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

June 13

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Last corner

The infamous 'wall of champions' can catch out the unwary, while the right-left combination offers the best overtaking possibility of the lap.



Circuit length: 2.709 miles
Number of laps: 70
Race distance: 189.694 miles
UK start time: 1700

2008 winner: Robert Kubica
2008 polesitter: Lewis Hamilton
1m17.886s
Lap record: 1m13.622s (Rubens Barrichello, Ferrari, 2004)

One of F1's most popular venues returns after a year away, but only following lengthy negotiations between race organisers and Bernie Ecclestone. The circuit is always demanding on brakes, and the ban on refuelling this year will make it even more of a challenge of a car's stopping power. The proximity of the walls means that a big accident is always a possibility – as evidenced by Robert Kubica's megashunt in 2007. The bumpy circuit is likely to expose any underlying reliability problems, and you can bank on the intervention of the safety car, while the long run to the hairpin offers a great overtaking opportunity – even to Takuma Sato's Super Aguri when he came up behind Fernando Alonso's McLaren in '07!



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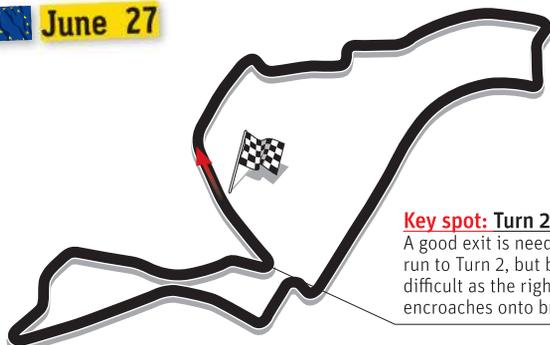
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EUROPE Valencia Street Circuit

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

 **June 27**

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Turn 24

A good exit is needed for long run to Turn 2, but braking is difficult as the right-handed T23 encroaches onto braking zone.



Circuit length: 3.367 miles
Number of laps: 57
Race distance: 191.919 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Rubens Barrichello
2009 polesitter: Lewis Hamilton
1m39.498s
Lap record: 1m38.683s
(Timo Glock, Toyota, 2009)

A second Spanish race was brought onto the calendar off the back of Fernando Alonso's success, and organisers will be delighted that the home hero will have a chance of winning on what would be better termed an 'urban' than a street track around the America's Cup marina. It's quick and has a low-grip surface that takes a while to rubber in. It has aspirations to rival Monaco, but has yet to come close to the atmosphere of F1's definitive city race although, like Monaco, it offers hardly any passing places.



GREAT BRITAIN Silverstone

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

 **July 11**

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Becketts/Maggotts

If there's one place to watch F1 cars, it's at this ultra-fast right/left/right during qualifying.



Circuit length: 3.666 miles
Number of laps: 52
Race distance: 190.612 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Sebastian Vettel
2009 polesitter: Sebastian Vettel
1m19.509s (old circuit)
Lap record: to be established (new circuit layout)

To no one's great surprise, the British GP remains at Silverstone this year following the failure of Donington Park's ambitious project. More of a surprise is that it won't be on the same track that held the race last year, with the new 'arena' section used for the first time. The cars will turn right at what was Abbey, joining the old national straight via a right/left combination and back into the complex at Brooklands. Last year's race enjoyed record



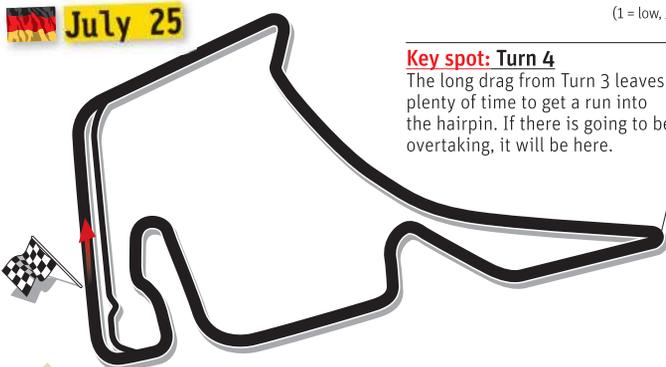
crowds and, despite ticket sales being delayed by the Donington debacle, the British GP is again set to be an F1 highlight.

GERMANY Hockenheim

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

 **July 25**

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Turn 4

The long drag from Turn 3 leaves plenty of time to get a run into the hairpin. If there is going to be overtaking, it will be here.



Circuit length: 2.842 miles
Number of laps: 67
Race distance: 190.433 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Mark Webber
2008 polesitter: Lewis Hamilton
1m15.666s
Lap record: 1m13.780s (Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren, 2004)

Another F1 track with a rich past, but an uncertain future, Hockenheim returns to the calendar in what is the last year of its original race-share deal with the Nurburgring. Since 2002, the track has been used only in shortened form. Although this destroyed the unique character of the long-straight-and-chicanes forest circuit, it has created a track that has produced some great racing over the years. The last time F1 was here, in 2008, Lewis Hamilton charged from fifth to first



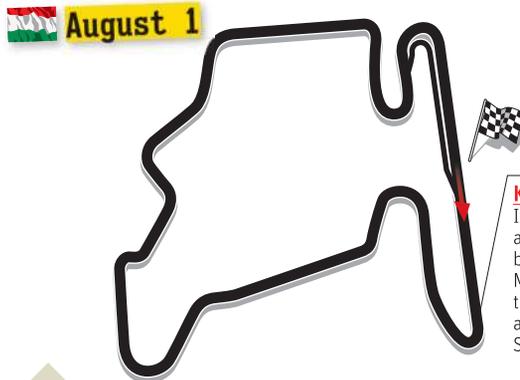
after his first pitstop to win. What Hockenheim may lack in spectacle it will more than make up for in terms of wheel-to-wheel action.

HUNGARY Hungaroring, Budapest

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

 **August 1**

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Turn 1

If you're going to pass anywhere, it's going to be at Turn 1. Remember Massa's stunning move at the start two years ago and Hill's pass of Schuey in 1997?



Circuit length: 2.722 miles
Number of laps: 70
Race distance: 190.539 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Lewis Hamilton
2009 polesitter: Fernando Alonso
1m21.569s
Lap record: 1m19.071s (Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 2004)

Notorious for its lack of overtaking opportunities, the Hungaroring is nonetheless popular with the drivers. The corners come thick and fast, so they can really find a rhythm. With the little-used track being so dusty off line, qualifying is critical, although last year Lewis Hamilton made a KERS-assisted pass on Mark Webber to lay the foundations for a slump-bucking win for McLaren. The heat of the Hungarian summer makes 70 laps of this tight circuit a physical challenge, especially in the knowledge that, if you do make a mistake and lose a place, you're unlikely to get it back.



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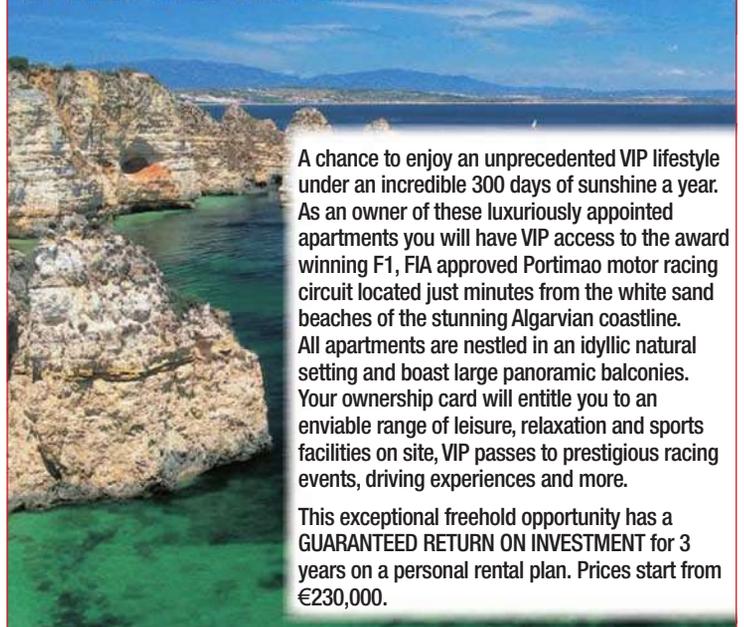
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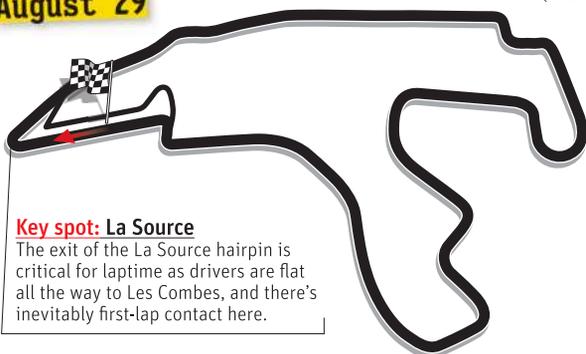


BELGIUM Spa-Francorchamps

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

August 29

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: La Source

The exit of the La Source hairpin is critical for laptime as drivers are flat all the way to Les Combes, and there's inevitably first-lap contact here.



Circuit length: 4.352 miles
Number of laps: 44
Race distance: 191.410 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Kimi Raikkonen
2009 polesitter: Giancarlo Fisichella, 1m46.308s
Lap record: 1m45.108s (Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren, 2004)

Eau Rouge may be easily flat in the slick-shod V8-engined era, but it's still a majestic sight to see a grand prix car hurtling through Formula 1's most famous corner. The Ardennes circuit remains a daunting high-speed challenge, albeit with the Pouhon left-hander displacing the steep climb of Eau Rouge as the drivers' favourite corner. Spa has everything – a rich grand prix history, huge driver challenge and probably the best overtaking opportunity in F1 into the right/left at Les Combes. Efficient



high-speed aero is the key to success at Spa, which is why Force India flew here last year, so don't count out another surprise this year.

ITALY Monza

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

September 12

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Parabolica

A strong run through this long right-hander is crucial to laptime, as well as the possibility of forcing an overtaking opportunity into the first chicane.



Circuit length: 3.600 miles
Number of laps: 53
Race distance: 190.596 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Rubens Barrichello
2009 polesitter: Lewis Hamilton
Lap record: 1m21.046s (Rubens Barrichello, Ferrari, 2004)

Chicanes may have emasculated the circuit in the eyes of some, but the high-speed track deep in Monza Park on the edge of Milan remains a unique challenge. The fastest track on the calendar, Monza is all about straight-line speed, braking and kerb hopping, with drivers having to strike a fine balance between aggression and careful throttle application in low-downforce trim. The three chicanes require drivers to slow from over 200mph, which will put huge demands on the life of brake discs with cars

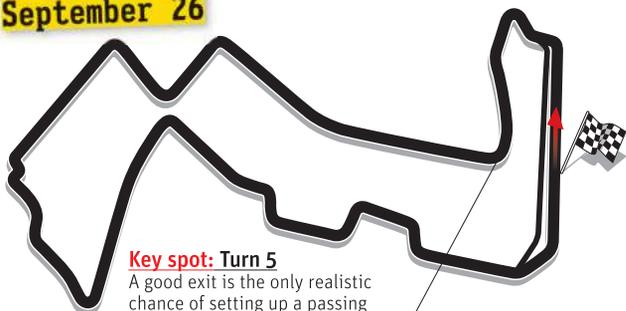


starting with 160kg of fuel or more. Even the drivers admit that it takes a few laps to get used to the pace of one of F1's most-historic circuits.

SINGAPORE Marina Bay

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

September 26



Key spot: Turn 5

A good exit is the only realistic chance of setting up a passing move through the flat Turn 6 and into the left at Turn 7.



Circuit length: 3.152 miles
Number of laps: 61
Race distance: 192.208 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Lewis Hamilton
2009 polesitter: Lewis Hamilton
Lap record: 1m47.891s
Lap record: 1m45.599s (Kimi Raikkonen, Ferrari, 2008)

Located close to the famous Raffles Hotel, this circuit can justifiably lay claim to being the Monaco of the east. Even though the race runs at night the temperatures are still high and, with the first two F1 races here going to almost two hours, it's a challenge to drivers' conditioning and concentration. It's a bumpy circuit and, although there is more room to manoeuvre than in Monte Carlo, there's nothing like the space the cars have at Valencia, making this a true street track. Changes are on the cards for 2011 to make the track quicker, although they have yet to be finalised by race organisers.

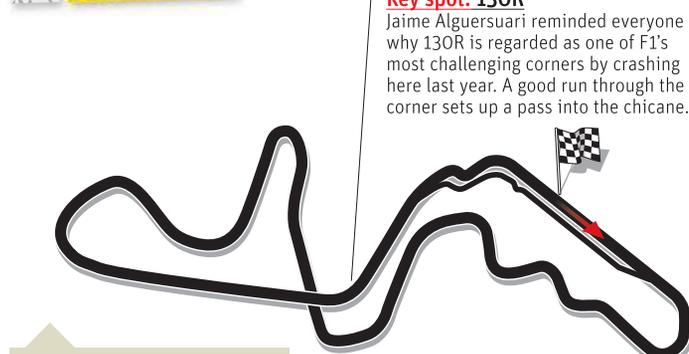


JAPAN Suzuka

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

October 10

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: 130R

Jaime Alguersuari reminded everyone why 130R is regarded as one of F1's most challenging corners by crashing here last year. A good run through the corner sets up a pass into the chicane.



Circuit length: 3.608 miles
Number of laps: 53
Race distance: 191.062 miles
UK start time: 0700

2009 winner: Sebastian Vettel
2009 polesitter: Sebastian Vettel 1m32.160s
Lap record: 1m31.540s (Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren, 2005)

Few lamented the loss of Fuji as a venue for the Japanese Grand Prix when the race returned to Suzuka last year, as the Honda-owned track remains one of the world's elite venues. What makes it so popular? It's fast, has some classic corners (including the infamous 130R) and, as we saw last year, is one of the few tracks where a big mistake will more often than not result in a high-speed visit to the wall. It's good for racing too, with the chicane the scene of many a classic move, and Kimi Raikkonen's famous last-lap move at Turn 1 to win the 2005 Japanese Grand Prix etched into F1's fans' collective memories.



KOREA Korea Auto Valley, Yongam

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

 **October 24**

F1'S LATEST INV-ASIAN

WHEN THE Korean Grand Prix was first mooted, few thought it would be a goer – especially given the failure a few years ago of the Champ Car World Series to pull off a race in the country.

Doubters there may have been, but construction of the track is well advanced and work is due to be completed in time for the FIA's final inspection in July, three months before the race. Currently, the race has provisional status, subject to FIA circuit homologation but, although there are still rumours in some parts that the race won't go ahead, you can safely pencil the race date into your diary.

The race organisers – whose project has been funded partly through a government initiative – have put a lot of investment into making the race a memorable one.

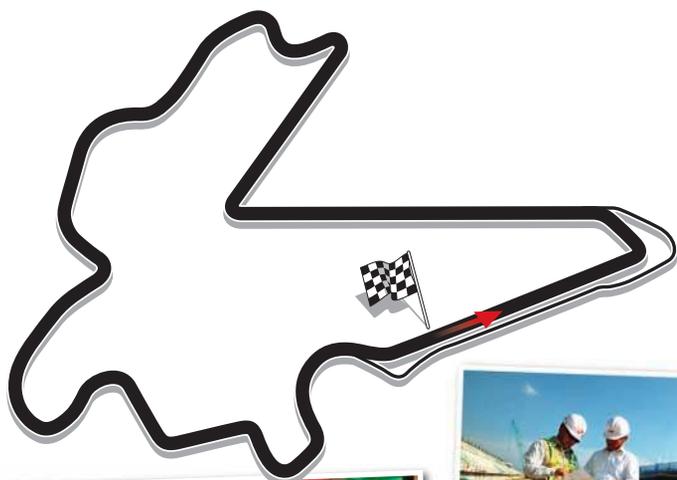
The location of the track has been a subject of much scrutiny. You might have expected the race to be held near the

South Korean capital of Seoul. Instead, it will be in the South Jeolla region some 250 miles south of the city, which explains why finding accommodation for the Formula 1 circus is going to be the biggest challenge for the organisers, even with the FOTA resource-restriction agreement limiting teams to 45 operational personnel on a weekend!

Designed by the ubiquitous Hermann Tilke, the circuit features some elevation change, as well as multiple configurations for use by other categories.

Just like Abu Dhabi, Singapore and Valencia, F1's three most recent new tracks before this one, it is built next to water – although this isn't a mandatory requirement for new venues!

This season will be the first of a seven-year contract to stage the Korean Grand Prix, with a further five-year option likely to be taken up if the race is a success.



Yellow Sea flanks new Korea Auto Valley

NEW TRACK



BRAZIL Interlagos

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

November 7

(1 = low, 5 = high)

Key spot: Senna 'S'

The plunging left-right-left sweep offers a great overtaking opportunity, although there's always a chance of your victim fighting back on the long run down to Turn 4.



Circuit length: 2.677 miles
Number of laps: 71
Race distance: 190.067 miles
UK start time: 1600

2009 winner: Mark Webber
2009 polesitter: Rubens Barrichello 1m19.576s
Lap record: 1m11.473s (Juan Pablo Montoya, Williams, 2004)

The facilities and pokey paddock seem out of place in modern F1, but the track offers everything you could hope for in a grand prix circuit. It has huge elevation changes, some quick corners, tricky bumps and a technically challenging middle section of the lap that make it a real test of man and machine, while the elements frequently throw in a curveball – as we saw during last year's qualifying sessions that lasted close to three hours! You can pass too, as Jensen Button proved with his feisty



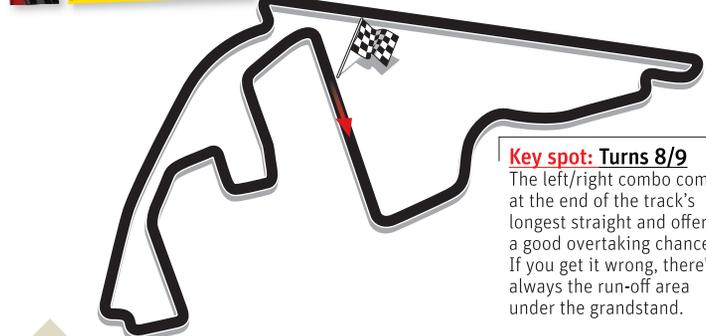
drive to seal the world championship last year. Interlagos always throws up a story; just look at Lewis Hamilton's last-gasp title win in 2008.

ABU DHABI Yas Marina

Full throttle ●●●●● Braking ●●●●● Downforce ●●●●● Tyre wear ●●●●●

November 14

(1 = low, 5 = high)



Key spot: Turns 8/9

The left/right combo comes at the end of the track's longest straight and offers a good overtaking chance. If you get it wrong, there's always the run-off area under the grandstand.



Circuit length: 3.451 miles
Number of laps: 55
Race distance: 189.747 miles
UK start time: 1300

2009 winner: Sebastian Vettel
2009 pole sitter: Lewis Hamilton 1m40.948s
Lap record: 1m40.279s (Sebastian Vettel, Red Bull, 2009)

Arrived on the grand prix scene amid much fanfare last year, and was widely hailed as a great triumph. It's said that even Bernie Ecclestone was blown away by the investment in the track, and that's saying something. So, it amazed everyone as a venue, but as a spectacle the Yas Marina circuit has still yet to convince that it can produce the kind of racing to match up to its bells and whistles, including pit-exit tunnel and under-grandstand run-off. It will continue to run as a night race, so Europeans can watch it on telly in the afternoon. Let's hope it can improve on a 2009 race that had only flashes of thrills.



1993

FULL TANKS, HIGH INTEREST

The '93 season preceded an era of refuelling in F1. **TONY DODGINS** casts his mind back

The last time Formula 1 cars ran without refuelling, reigning champion Nigel Mansell had gone off to the US in a huff and F1 looked intent on self-destruction.

Frank Williams began a theme he'd revisit again – getting rid of the driver who'd just won him the world title. Mansell wanted a '93 retainer befitting the status of dominant champion while, the way Frank saw it, such status had been conferred by his car. Alain Prost, meanwhile, had spent the '92 season on an assortment of beaches and bicycles after publicly labeling his '91 Ferrari "a big red bus", prompting a P45 from the Maranello management.

Unbeknown to Mansell, Prost had signed a Williams contract early in '92, so that when Nigel got feisty over the number of zeros/hotel rooms/Renault Espaces/Mars bars (delete as applicable) in his contract, Frank wasn't playing. The razor blade-spitting Fleet St contingent was partially appeased when Williams promoted Damon Hill from his testing role to the second race seat.

Which brings to mind a poignant tale Damon told about the final test that cemented his drive. Living in south-west London, he'd forgotten to factor in a Chelsea home game as he left to catch his flight. Stuck in heavy traffic, he thought how deeply unimpressed Frank and Patrick Head would be when he failed to show up!

He made it onto the plane as the doors were closing, slumped into his seat and blew out his cheeks. Then, as he took off, he looked at his watch and it hit him: it was November 29 – same date, same time that his father had crashed approaching Elstree in his light aircraft exactly 17 years earlier. It spooked him, and after that the test itself was easy.

Williams had been dilatory with its paperwork and missed the entry deadline for the '93 championship by a couple of days. Technically it meant that Frank's rivals had to unanimously agree to the champions taking part.

Max Mosley and the teams struggling to keep pace with Williams wanted to see the back of active suspension, electronic driver aids, etcetera. What chance they would accommodate Williams without making political capital? Prost had also made himself unpopular over something he supposedly said in a magazine article. It prompted Max to write a letter to Frank questioning whether Alain was really a suitable candidate for a Superlicence.

Finally they let both Prost and Williams through the gate but Mosley said that for '94 there would be a raft of technical changes banning such as traction control and active ride in the interests of containing costs. Sound familiar? March had already been lost, Scuderia Italia would pull out before the end of the year, and both Minardi and Larrousse dropped regular pilots for the last rounds and filled their seats with paying drivers.

Max got around the need for more notice by selling his new rules as sporting changes, which seriously upset Williams and McLaren's Ron Dennis. It suited the 'have-nots' but it was tough for Frank to swallow – nobody had helped him in the early days when he was conducting business from a phone box! There was talk of civil actions to recover money spent on newly obsolete technology.

It all came to a head in Canada when technical delegate Charlie Whiting – no doubt after a little nudging – said that traction control and active suspension did not conform to the '93 regulations, let alone '94. But the FIA would turn a blind eye for the rest of the season so long as they all stopped squawking about '94...

The fall-out from a politically acrimonious Montreal weekend was overshadowed when James Hunt succumbed to a massive heart attack. It was, said a colleague, a bit like discovering that Sir Edmund Hillary had died hiking in the Peak District.

On the track everyone expected ▶



Senna leads Prost and Schumacher at Kyalami



Hakkinen (7) starred on McLaren debut at Estoril

ALL PICS: LAT

“Max Mosley announced that for 1994 there would be a raft of technical changes in the interests of containing costs. Sound familiar?”



Schuey won in Portugal;
Prost claimed fourth title



◀ Prost's Williams-Renault to walk it, which is what ultimately happened, but not without a few hiccups.

McLaren lost Honda at the end of the '92 season and only inked a £6million deal for a supply of non-works Ford HBs from Cosworth late in December. Benetton, with Michael Schumacher, was the official Ford works team and the original McLaren deal specified they would only get the higher-revving, pneumatic-valve series-eight unit mid-season. Senna wanted it sooner.

McLaren's MP4/8 only broke cover a few days before the freight was due to leave for South Africa but hopes were high when Senna turned up at a chilly Silverstone and set fastest time of the winter. But he wanted a million bucks per start and was only prepared to deal on a race-to-race basis until it was agreed. There was supposedly no guarantee he would be in Kyalami.

When the South African Airways 747 taking a bunch of us to Jo'burg left, however, Ayrton was on it. I was in a middle seat in the second row of economy, behind a group of McLaren guys. A couple of hours into the flight, the curtain from the business cabin opened and through walked Senna. He'd come to have a chat with the McLaren lads and parked himself in the aisle at the end of my row. After Ayrton had been there a few minutes, a news item confirming that he would be driving in South Africa but wanted \$1m a race, appeared on the overhead TVs.

The fellow on my left, on the end of the row, was reading a magazine when Senna appeared and was oblivious. Now though, he was looking up at the TV. "Oh that's great," he said in a loud voice, "my son'll be delighted, he's a huge fan of that Brazilian guy. A million a race though? He's taking the piss!"

"You can tell him," I whispered, "that's him leaning against your leg..." When it dawned I wasn't joking he was absolutely dumbstruck. Then he started scrabbling around for a pen.

"Do you think he might sign something for me?"

"Depends whether he heard you or not," I replied. When Senna was done, I tapped him on the shoulder, apologised, and he duly scribbled on the guy's in-flight menu with a thin smile that told you he had heard, before disappearing back to the posh end.

Unfortunately Ayrton discovered at Kyalami that the MP4/8 couldn't hold a candle to Prost's Williams, but at Interlagos it rained, Alain crashed and Senna beat Hill to win in front of his adoring public. Then came Donington and that spellbinding first lap and 83-second winning margin over Damon again, as Prost made no fewer than seven stops in the changing conditions!

In qualifying Williams was in

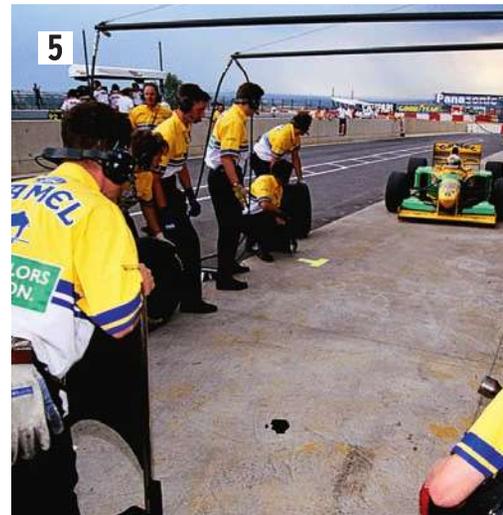
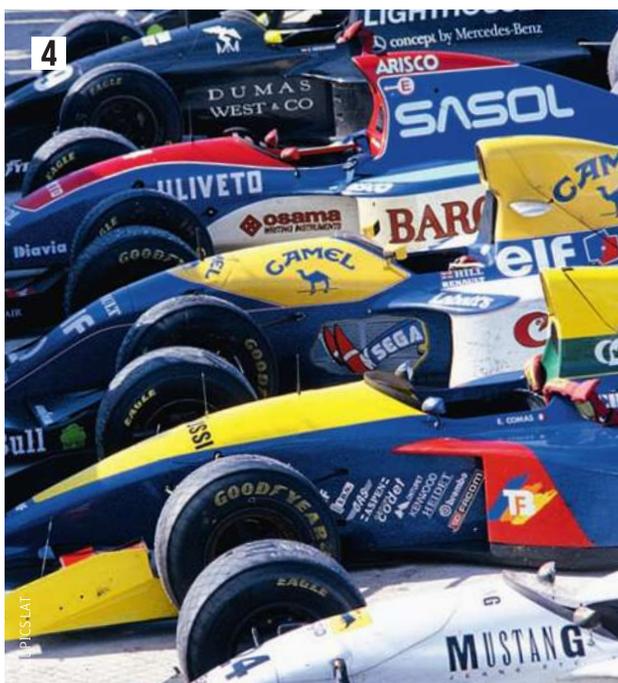


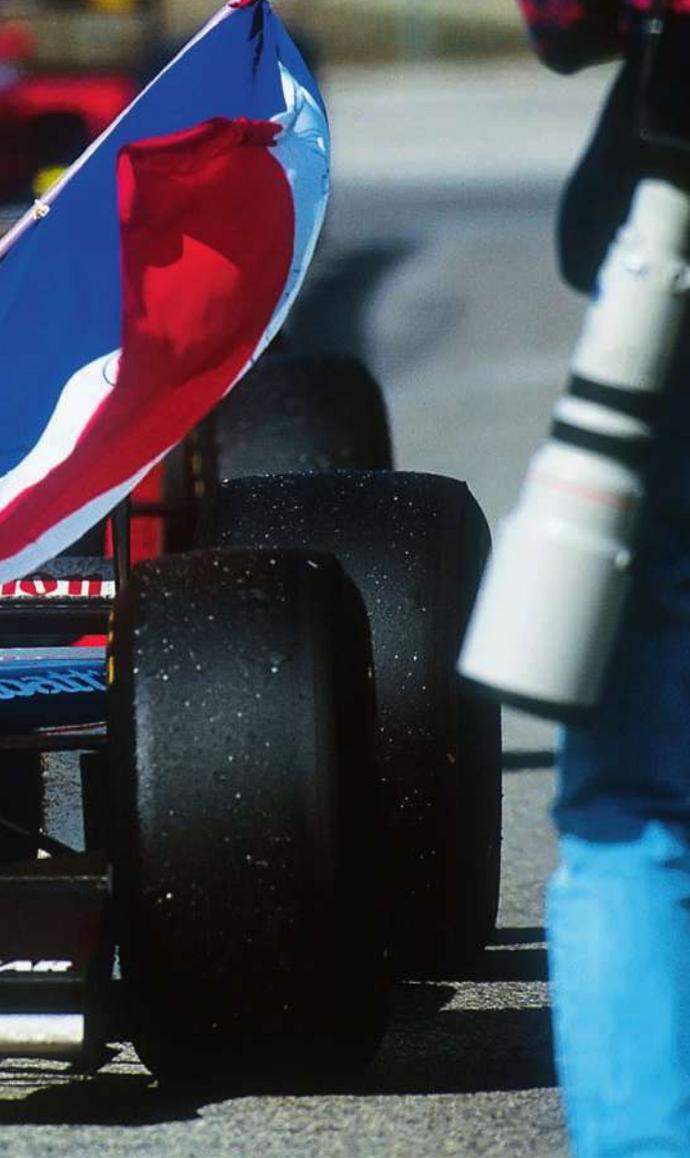
PICTURES

1. Prost un-retired to win seven races with Williams and secure his fourth world title
2. Senna with McLaren's Ron Dennis. Their sixth and final year together yielded five wins
3. Rubens Barrichello made his debut for

Jordan. The Brazilian is still racing
4. From top: Sauber, Jordan, Williams, Larrousse and Minardi. Some are still around
5. Riccardo Patrese brings his Benetton in for a pitstop in South Africa. The veteran

Italian would bow out at the end of the year after 17 seasons in F1
6. Damon Hill was promoted from tester to racer at Williams and made good use of the sometimes boisterous advice doled out by tech supremo Patrick Head





another league but Schumacher beat Senna to the Ford honours for the first time and Ayrton wasn't best pleased. He immediately campaigned strongly for the upgraded Ford engine at Imola. Having a different engine to Michael on Sunday though, did him a favour.

With TAG electronics on McLaren's Ford HB, Ayrton had traction control but with Cosworth unconvinced about cylinder cut-out and due to introduce its own throttle-intervention system later, Schumacher did not. Considering what we came to know about Michael's wet-weather prowess in later years, imagine the kind of battle we might have had if it had been a level playing field! It's the reason Senna never rated Donington anything like as highly as his debut win at Estoril in 1985.

Considering the 2010 season ahead, newer fans will want to know whether there was more overtaking without fuel stops. The answer, sadly, is no. But there were many and varied reasons.

Mosley, early in his FISA presidency, had been minded to do something about unruly on-track behavior. He

he only won once he was second on power tracks like Imola, Silverstone, Hockenheim and Spa against the far more potent Renault V10. Without the Williams, he'd have won seven times.

The only other current driver on the '93 scene was Jordan's Rubens Barrichello, who shaded Ivan Capelli and Thierry Boutsen at the start of the year but didn't look quite so special when Eddie Irvine came along at Suzuka. In fairness though, Irvine had intimate circuit knowledge and Rubens hadn't seen the place.

For Alex Zanardi the active-ride ban did come quite soon enough. His Lotus's system failed just as he went into the compression at Eau Rouge and was fortunate to survive a horrific shunt. He didn't drive for the rest of the year and, a fortnight later, the whites of his eyes were still red.

"The car has an orange warning light in case there's a hydraulic failure," he explained, "and when it came on there I just thought, 'Please Lord, not now!'"

An enduring mystery is why a man of Mario Andretti's experience and

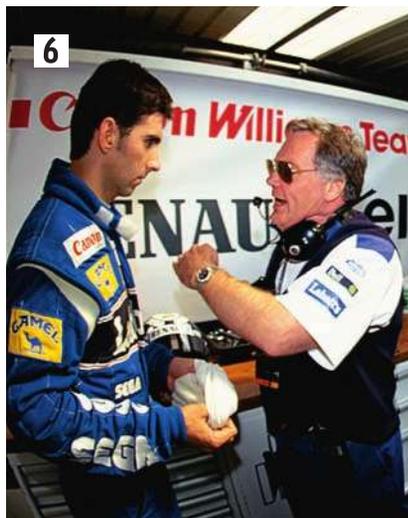
"Was there more overtaking in '93 without fuel stops? Sadly, the answer's no, but there were many and varied reasons"

nous thought it a good idea for his son to go into the lion's den and take on Senna at McLaren. But, probably, when you've driven cageless dirt cars

and taken on the likes of Parnelli Jones at Indy, the concept of hiding from anything is probably alien.

Michael had a lamentable year and was dropped in favour of Mika Hakkinen after Monza. Mika immediately outqualified Senna in Portugal and very nearly did it again at Suzuka. Prost clinched his fourth title at Estoril and moved his then record victory tally onto 51 but wasn't enjoying himself. The team had criticised him at Donington; stop-gos for minor transgressions at Monaco and Hockenheim convinced him the FIA was out to nobble him. When Frank signed Senna for '94, Alain immediately announced his retirement.

They had two battles left. By now, software improvements had improved the McLaren and Hakkinen's arrival had refocused Senna. Ayrton was determined to put it across Alain. They shared the front row at Suzuka and Adelaide. Both times Ayrton beat Alain by around 10sec in the race. Senna was jubilant, Prost didn't look like he cared. As Tina Turner brought the curtain down on '93 with her post-Adelaide concert, she hauled Ayrton on stage for *Simply the Best*. Nobody could know what was six months down the line but, with Alain gone and Ayrton finished at McLaren, it was poignant – already the end of an era. ❧



attended a drivers' briefing and read them the riot act. But, carbon monocoques had been around more than a decade by then and the last F1 fatality was also more than 10 years ago. Afterwards, Gerhard Berger, concerned, sought Max out.

"Look," Gerhard said, "I just wanted to check you were aware that to pass anyone on the track these days, you have to be prepared to bang wheels."

It would be wrong to lay the blame for increasingly aggressive F1 driving standards solely at Schumacher's door. Some of the things Senna did to Prost in 1993 – the early laps at Silverstone in particular – made Michael look like Florence Nightingale.

Ultimately though, it was futile. The Williams FW15C was in class of its own so long as it wasn't raining. Starting in Canada, Prost won four races on the bounce and the car was so good that it even allowed Hill to take a hat-trick of wins in Hungary, Spa and Monza in his first season. Schumacher took a brilliantly opportunistic win in Portugal and, for the first time ever, some even questioned Senna's commitment. It emerged that all the will he/won't he saga at the start of the year had been a ruse to separate Philip Morris from some more cash.

Schumacher's results didn't reflect the superb job he was doing. Although

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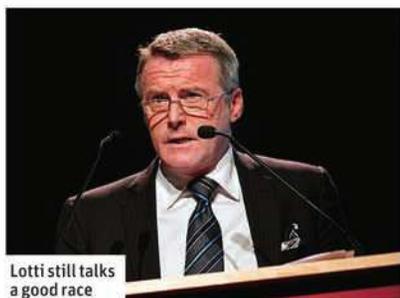
IS THE WTCC IN CRISIS?

If this is supposed to be the World Touring Car Championship's lowest ebb, then things don't look that bad, says *STEVEN ENGLISH*

It's tempting to say that the World Touring Car Championship is in crisis. Last year there were rules rows, secret power breaks, mid-season regulation changes, SEAT walking away, BMW almost leaving (but settling for scaling back) and even a Lada pull-out.

There are new regulations on the way for 2011, which is good news, but it means that 2010 is a bit of a black hole – often politely described as a transition season – for enticing new teams and/or manufacturers. And it looks pretty desperate.

Despite all this, the series' boss claims it's in good health: "It's a challenging economic time and we have maintained a high-quality field," says



Lotti still talks a good race

WTCC promoter Marcello Lotti. "We have continuity with most of our teams and drivers. SEAT is no longer a factory team, but is still represented strongly, and we have new arrivals joining." Cynics might

suggest that he would say that. After all, he's not going to come out in public and say: "Oh dear, what a mess."

But actually, what he says is pretty true. You can't argue against the usual plethora of tin-top legends, there are more diesel SEATs on the grid than there were last year, and there are new teams and drivers too.

BMW Motorsport boss Mario Theissen has never been shy of speaking his mind about the WTCC. He was openly critical of the series and the FIA – and threatened BMW's



FACTORY ENTRIES IN THE WTCC

How the works teams have supported the series – or not

Year	Factory Entries
2005	BMW 5 SEAT 5 Alfa Romeo 4 Chevrolet 3 Honda 0 Lada 0
2006	BMW 5 SEAT 6 Alfa Romeo 3* Chevrolet 3 Honda 0 Lada 0
2007	BMW 5 SEAT 5 Alfa Romeo 2* Chevrolet 3 Honda 0 Lada 0
2008	BMW 5 SEAT 5 Alfa Romeo 0 Chevrolet 3 Honda 1* Lada 0
2009	BMW 5 SEAT 5 Alfa Romeo 0 Chevrolet 3 Honda 0 Lada 3*
2010	BMW 2 SEAT 5* Alfa Romeo 0 Chevrolet 3 Honda 0 Lada 0

* Scoring points in main series, but not full factory teams

departure – as early as May last year. So what does he make of its current state?

"The economic downturn will hit all motor racing in 2010 – even more than in 2009," he says. "The sheer number of cars might be smaller, but it will be a very competitive grid. We expect to see the SEAT TDI with works support and Chevrolet looks more competitive."

Okay, so he's not overexcited, but he seems to reckon it's doing all right. Let's have a look at the maths and see what has actually changed from last year to this.

In 2009 there were 13 proper works cars, plus three Ladas (that sounds

harsh, but at the beginning it was running at the back and far from a true works squad). Starting this year, there are 10 – we'll get to clarifying exactly what counts as a works team. Lots of people turn up for the odd round here and there, but last year there were 10 regular independents (including Lada), and now there are... 10. So we're only down three. That doesn't look too bad.

The most noticeable absentee in 2010 is SEAT, following the manufacturer's withdrawal. Previously, there were five SEAT Sport-run Leon TDIs, driven by the Spanish manufacturer's works drivers. This year, there will be five Leons run by SR-Sport (a new name for



Chevy, BMW and SEAT will lock horns again

the SUNRED Engineering team, which is based yards away from SEAT HQ in Spain and has run petrol Leons for the past two years). They will be driven mostly by SEAT works drivers, with engineers, mechanics, data and set-ups from the factory next door.

"We will support technically all the [SEAT] teams so they can achieve big results," says SEAT Sport chief Jaime Puig. "They still have the opportunity if they manage the team well; they have the cars and some of the drivers."

Is that any less of a works team than Chevrolet, run by British team RML, which has been behind successful operations in touring cars, sportscars and even rallying throughout the past 20 years? Or BMW, which is now represented only by Belgian team Racing Bart Mampaey? No. So don't expect this year's diesel SEATs to be any slower than they were in 2009.

Last year's title was a three-way fight between Gabriele Tarquini, Yvan Muller and Augusto Farfus, and all three remain in the championship. What's more, the fact that Muller has moved to Chevrolet means that they all now represent different teams.

At SEAT, Tarquini could face a threat from Tom Coronel, who is unproven in this series at factory-team level but has an international record at least the equal to most of his rivals.

Fingers crossed that BMW does not repeat its bizarre and unsuccessful decision to implement team orders so early this time, so Farfus and Andy Priaulx should be up there. With Muller, Alain Menu and Rob Huff at Chevy, that's a major potential title fight.

The drivers we have lost are mainly those who played support roles for title-contesting team-mates. Frankly, if that means that we see fewer examples

of these guys cruising around to align themselves for the reversed-grid poles, then good riddance.

Is anyone really watching beyond the top six anyway? There are still 20 cars and, if this year's WTCC can manage a fight between at least four world-class drivers in three different makes of car, that will be quite sufficient.

As former triple champion Priaulx says: "It only takes one other driver to make it hard. It's going to be as challenging, if not more so, because you're never going to have anyone drop out of the top eight."

"There was such a big grid last year that you could easily be 10th, and your rivals could be too. This year we're all going to be in there all the time."

Crisis? What crisis? ❧

 **P90 YVAN MULLER**

THE MAN WHO NEVER CRUZES

Yvan Muller has switched to Chevrolet, just when the Cruze looks poised to pose a title threat. *By STEVEN ENGLISH*



Yvan Muller has become the man to beat in the World Touring Car Championship, and it's fair to say that he won that mantle from three-time champion Andy Priaulx sometime during the 2007 season.

That year was Muller's second in the series but, boosted by the mid-season appearance of SEAT's turbodiesel Leon, he got the better of Priaulx and only missed out on the title due to a heartbreaking fuel pump failure in Macau. Priaulx battled all year with a car disadvantage, but magnanimously admitted that he felt as if someone else's title had landed in his lap.

Muller went on to win it in 2008. Being the WTCC, it went down to the finale – as it always does – but his 26-point margin at the end was telling. Starting as the favourite last year, he was on top pretty much all the way

through the season until a couple of uncharacteristic errors let Gabriele Tarquini pip him to the crown.

Narrow defeat in championship battles is something Muller has had plenty of experience of over the years. It's strange to think that he has just one British and one World title to his name, but he was runner-up four times in Britain and now twice in the WTCC.

In 2010, Muller goes in probably as the slight favourite again, which is unusual for a driver moving to a new team, particularly so when he is switching to a car that has never won a title. The diesel SEAT will remain the fastest car in the series but, with the withdrawal of the SEAT factory and the loss of Muller from the driver roster, you'd struggle to pick Tarquini as the man to beat. BMW has two of the quickest drivers around in Priaulx and Augusto Farfus, but it also has a five-

year-old car and a scaled-back works effort. Chevrolet, on the other hand, has a Cruze with one year of development behind it.

Ray Mallock, boss of Chevy works team RML, is only too aware that his team now has its best chance to clinch some WTCC silverware.

"It must be," he agrees. "It's our second year with the Cruze and we've squeezed more performance out of the car over the winter. I don't know what BMW or SEAT have done, only time will tell, but certainly I'm confident that we're going to have a good year."

It's no accident that the WTCC's man to beat has arrived at Chevrolet at exactly the time the team is poised to challenge for the title. "We've raced against him a lot over the years and he has been a formidable opponent," admits Mallock. "He's always been a class act and I've had the utmost

This is the stare that WTCC drivers fear



PHOTO:4



Muller teams with Menu (r) for the first time



Fending off a Lada (ahem) at Imola last year

GIBSON/LAT

respect for him in all the series I've seen him in. When it was clear that we would have a vacancy [with the retirement from the WTCC of Nicola Larini], Yvan was top of the list."

After four years with SEAT (as well as a cameo appearance with the marque in the 2003 European Touring Car Championship), Muller has had four months with Chevrolet. He's been out testing in the Cruze, both before and after Christmas, so has been an integral part of the car's winter development.

"Testing is never enough. I'd like to have more miles, but I'm happy with the work we've done," says Muller. "I've had some good time with the engineers and mechanics – this is very important in a new team.

"We were working on balance and trying many set-ups so I can see how the car reacts in different situations."

There's going to be no grace period for Muller. Last year, Chevrolet forfeited any hope of being involved in the title fight when it left the opening two rounds, in Brazil and Mexico, with no points. It's going to be a long year for everyone in blue if that happens again.

Equally, if the car is up to speed but – for whatever reason – Muller lags

MULLER CV



WTCC
Titles 1
Wins 10
Starts 88
Poles 5
Fastest laps 6

BTCC
Titles 1
Wins 36
Starts 202
Poles 17
Fastest laps 28

behind team-mates Rob Huff and Alain Menu after the first few rounds, he could end up getting boxed into an inescapable team-orders corner. But he reckons he's well-set for the off.

"I've become familiar with the Cruze and working with the team," he says. "The car seems to be a good base but I'm only starting to explore its limits."

A Muller team change is a rare thing. After winning the French title in 1995 with BMW he switched to Audi from 1996–98, until the marque withdrew from Super Touring. He then had seven years in the BTCC with Vauxhall, from 1999 to 2005, before his switch to SEAT. Such is the reputation and ability of the man from Alsace that, even if his employer quits the series, he is the first to land on his feet with a new manufacturer deal.

Whatever happens in the WTCC title fight this year, it's impossible to conceive that Muller will play anything other than a prospect-enhancing role with Chevrolet. Now begins the challenge for the WTCC's man to beat in turning the factory Cruze squad into the series' team to beat. **✎**



WHO CAN BEAT TARQUINI?

Full list of runners and riders in the WTCC. STEVEN ENGLISH assesses prospects



Italian veteran is now a world champion

1 GABRIELE TARQUINI (I)

WTCC starts: 107

WTCC wins: 10

WTCC titles: 1

The 48-year-old has lost none of the speed that has collected him British, European and, in 2009, World titles. He won't have the same support structure around him this year but, with Yvan Muller departing for Chevrolet, he starts the season as undisputed top dog at SEAT.

SR-SPORT/SUNRED ENGINEERING

SEAT Leon TDI

This is a big year for Joan Orus and his team. Clinching the independents' class title last year was one thing, but graduating to run five ex-factory cars with works support and drivers is a new ballgame. Every little team thinks it could make it big; SUNRED has the chance to prove it.

2 TOM CORONEL (NL)

WTCC starts: 107

WTCC wins: 1

WTCC titles: 0

Before moving into touring cars, Coronel had won in pretty much everything he'd ever driven, and now the reigning independents' champ has the biggest chance of his WTCC career. Has the pedigree to prove a major threat to his ex-factory team-mates.

3 TIAGO MONTEIRO (P)

WTCC starts: 68

WTCC wins: 2

WTCC titles: 0

Monteiro started last year – his third in the WTCC – looking genuinely fast, but it tailed off and in the end he couldn't repeat the peaks of 2008. The ex-Formula 1 racer is running out of time to prove he can be more than a team player in touring cars.

4 JORDI GENE (E)

WTCC starts: 110

WTCC wins: 4

WTCC titles: 0

His streak of one win each season ended with a drought in 2009 and, as a warning to Monteiro, it's already too late for Gene to prove he's more than a team player. He's likely to get a few podiums but will play a supporting role to Tarquini wherever possible.

17 MICHEL NYKJAER (DK)

WTCC starts: 2

WTCC wins: 0

WTCC titles: 0

He's twice a Danish champion and a two-time European Touring Car Cup winner, so this is a deserved chance for Nykjaer. Driving a Leon out of the same garage as the big stars is a great opportunity. Swiss driver Fredy Barth will join him in a Leon TDI in Brazil.

TEAM ENGSTLER

BMW 320si

The German team took a big step forward in competitiveness last year, with veteran Engstler running at the front overall on occasion. Well-placed for honours in 2010.



Look out for dangerous safety cars, Franz

15 FRANZ ENGSTLER (D)

WTCC starts: 50

WTCC wins: 0

WTCC titles: 0

Will not quickly forget last year's Pau race, when a potential outright victory was scuppered by an assault from the safety car. The owner/driver has his best shot at silverware yet this season.

16 ANDREI ROMANOV (RUS)

WTCC starts: 24

WTCC wins: 0

WTCC titles: 0

The Russian returns to the team he raced for in 2008, when he took one top-10 finish, at Macau. Spent last year building his experience in the German series, and took three wins in a Chevy Lacetti.

SCUDERIA PROTEAM MOTORSPORT

BMW 320si

The Italian team had only one car on a full-time basis in 2009, but is back to full strength this season and has two former winners of the independents' title on board.

25 SERGIO HERNANDEZ (E)

WTCC starts: 64

WTCC wins: 1

WTCC titles: 0

BMW's reduced effort means there's no works drive for Hernandez anymore, so he's back where he won the indie title that earned him that factory ride in the first place.

26 STEFANO D'ASTE (I)

WTCC starts: 104

WTCC wins: 0

WTCC titles: 0

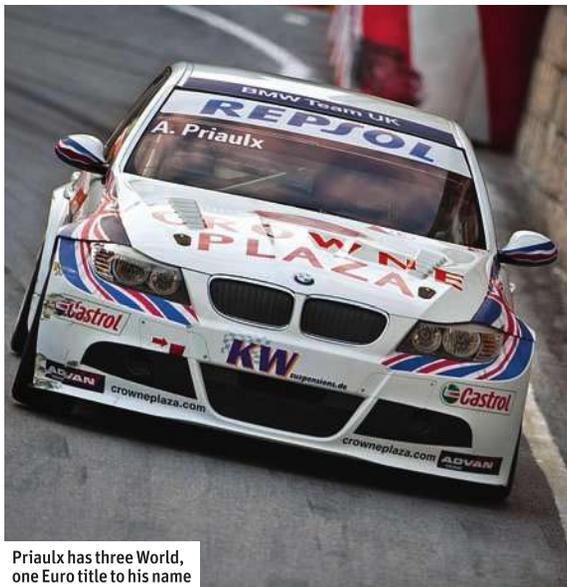
Another former independents' champion, ex-rallyman d'Aste will likely be as wild and sideways as ever. Can he keep it pointing straight long enough to challenge his team-mate?



Felix Porteiro upheld Proteam honours in '09

BMW/TEAM RBM
BMW 320si

The downsizing of BMW's WTCC efforts means that Belgian team RBM is left to fly the marque's flag alone. It has BMW's best two drivers of recent years, so there'll be no doubt that the maximum is being squeezed from a model that's been racing for five years now.



Priaulx has three World, one Euro title to his name

10 AUGUSTO FARFUS (BR)

WTCC starts: 108
 WTCC wins: 15
 WTCC titles: 0

Could have won last year's title but for a couple of costly errors at inopportune moments. Equally, he could have been a long way adrift were it not for some stunning drives to rescue reverse-grid success. Same as ever: plenty fast enough, just needs to curb the mistakes.

11 ANDY PRIAULX (GBG)

WTCC starts: 110
 WTCC wins: 12
 WTCC titles: 3

Wasn't ecstatic about being shoved into supporting Farfus last year, but still produced the occasional masterclass to remind everyone of why he won three successive world titles. If the BMW is quick enough, the Guernseyman will be back in the mix for the title.

CHEVROLET/RML
Chevrolet Cruze LT

RML's Midas touch, which turned the Vauxhall Cavalier, Nissan Primera and Chevy Lacetti into top-drawer touring car machinery, continues with the transformation of the bulky, awkward-looking Cruze into perhaps the best all-round package on the grid. With two of the best touring car drivers of all time alongside today's most promising, it won't get a better chance than this for WTCC success.



Menu will provide fireworks, as usual

6 YVAN MULLER (F)

WTCC starts: 88
 WTCC wins: 10
 WTCC titles: 1

Muller will have ended 2009 wondering how he didn't seal back-to-back world titles after edging Tarquini almost all year long. He's still a class act but some chinks emerged in his armour last year. Perhaps a change of scenery will push him back to his very best.

7 ROB HUFF (GB)

WTCC starts: 108
 WTCC wins: 7
 WTCC titles: 0

This is the biggest year of his career by far. Everything has fallen into place now for Huff to prove he is among the touring car elite, just as a former world champion teammate moves in next door. If he can match Muller, you know he's really made it.

#8 ALAIN MENU (CH)

WTCC starts: 108
 WTCC wins: 11
 WTCC titles: 0

He's won more WTCC races than Muller or Tarquini, but for Menu the problem has been stringing together a consistent season-long challenge. He's proven time and again that he's one of the fastest ever to sit in a two-litre tin top, but arrival of Muller will pose a threat.

WIECHERS-SPORT
BMW 320si

This German team is another former independents' class winner and is again limited to a one-car entry in 2010. It will be tough for the squad to challenge Proteam, but it has a history of getting the most out of previously unfancied drivers.

21 MEHDI BENNANI (MA)

WTCC starts: 10
 WTCC wins: 0
 WTCC titles: 0

Looked promising on his series debut on home soil at Marrakech last year, and was solid enough on his outings with the Exagon SEAT team thereafter. Full season gives him a great opportunity.

ZENGO-DENSION
SEAT Leon TDI

Hungary now has a world championship team, with the Zengo-Dension squad stepping up from the SEAT Leon Eurocup and taking an ex-works Leon TDI in an attempt to prove it can compete at this level.

5 NORBERT MICHELISZ (H)

WTCC starts: 4
 WTCC wins: 0
 WTCC titles: 0

Michelisz won the SEAT Eurocup with Zengo last year and qualified an impressive ninth on his WTCC outing at Brands Hatch with SUNRED. Has his chance now with a full season in a Leon TDI.

BAMBOO ENGINEERING
Chevrolet Lacetti

The British team steps up from the BTCC and brings Harry Vaulkhard with it. It'll be a steep learning curve, but the Lacetti remains competitive.

19 HARRY VAULKHARD (GB)

WTCC starts: 0

The 24-year-old had flashes of form in the BTCC last year but has a lot to learn at this level.

20 DARRYL O'YOUNG (PRC)

WTCC starts: 0

Canadian-born Hong Kong national has raced Porsches throughout his career so far, including FIA GT last year.

COLAK RACING
SEAT Leon TFSI

The driver-owned Croatian team showed strong form in the SEAT Leon Eurocup before taking the brave step into the WTCC for 2009. It wasn't a bad effort for a one-car team, until it disappeared halfway through the year.

23 MARIN COLAK (HR)

WTCC starts: 14
 WTCC wins: 0
 WTCC titles: 0

Acquitted himself well enough during the first half of the 2009 season and lucked into a wet front-row start at Oschersleben – which turned out to be his last appearance of the year. Good enough to pose a threat.

POULSEN MOTORSPORT
BMW 320si

This owner-driver team returns to the WTCC, after Poulsen's 2009 season spent as a customer of Engstler. The team has plenty of experience, mostly from competing in the Danish championship.

#24 KRISTIAN POULSEN (DK)

WTCC starts: 32
 WTCC wins: 0
 WTCC titles: 0

Just one top-10 finish in two years for this 34-year-old graduate of Danish tin-tops, who has a long way to go even before thinking about indie class honours – even if he did win LMP2 at Le Mans last year!

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Valsecchi took title with race-one win

GP2 ASIA SERIES SAKHIR (BRN), FEBRUARY 26-27, RD 3/4

Dominant Davide takes title

Daide Valsecchi sealed the GP2 Asia Series title three races early when he triumphed in last Friday's feature race at Sakhir, before Charles Pic scored his first victory at this level in Saturday's sprint event.

ART's F3 Euro Series champion Jules Bianchi took a hard-earned pole after an intense battle with iSport racer Valsecchi, but that achievement was ruined when he bogged down at the start. Valsecchi failed to get away well too, so Javier Villa led the charge to the first corner, before Luca Filippi lunged down the inside of him to lead.

Arden International driver Villa couldn't find a way back past the Meritus machine of Filippi, so he

made his mandatory tyre stop early. Filippi stopped three laps later, by which time Villa had used his fresh-tyre laps to jump ahead. Valsecchi pitted a lap later and rejoined in third, while Villa's team-mate Pic had stopped at the earliest opportunity, and was running fourth, battling with DPR's Giacomo Ricci.

In the desert heat, tyre management would be the decider, and Valsecchi saved his rubber for a charge in the closing stages. After outbraking Filippi – and himself – at the tricky downhill Turn 10 left-hander, Valsecchi recovered and recomposed. A sublime lunge at the first corner, with six laps to go, deposed Filippi from second. Valsecchi then reeled in

Villa, whose rear tyres were spent (not helped by his team changing left-side tyres rather than both rears). He passed him two laps later at Turn 8, only to run wide and let Villa through again. Valsecchi regrouped and nailed Villa again with another great outbraking move at Turn 1 with four laps remaining.

Valsecchi beamed: "When I was P3 my team told me, 'You will win the championship; it's a good position.' But I decided to try to win and took some risks. I knew my tyres were fresher than Villa's because he had stopped earlier."

Filippi passed Villa for second around the outside of Turn 11 late on. Ricci further demoted Villa with just two corners to go, but the Spaniard repassed him at the final corner to retain his podium position. Pic finished fifth, ahead of Alvaro Parente, Sergio Perez and impressive Adrian Zaugg – eighth from 18th on the grid despite a tardy pitstop!

The sprint race was dominated by Pic, once he had passed early leader

Zaugg on lap five. Zaugg collided with Bianchi, ruining both of their races, soon after Ricci had overtaken him for second, and Villa was elevated to third. Parente and Perez had already taken each other out by this point, colliding on the opening lap.

Sam Bird charged past Oliver Turvey and Daniel Zampieri to finish fourth, shadowed by Edoardo Piscopo. Turvey finished sixth, helping iSport to seal the teams' title. Valsecchi finished way down the order after losing his front wing when he failed to avoid a spinning Filippi.

● Chuck Bradbury Jr

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Davide Valsecchi, 34 laps in 1h02m05.146s; 2 Luca Filippi, +2.792s; 3 Javier Villa; 4 Giacomo Ricci; 5 Charles Pic; 6 Alvaro Parente; 7 Sergio Perez; 8 Adrian Zaugg; 9 Oliver Turvey; 10 Jules Bianchi. **Race 2 1 Pic**, 23 laps in 41m11.960s; 2 Ricci, +3.586s; 3 Villa; 4 Sam Bird; 5 Edoardo Piscopo; 6 Turvey; 7 Vladimir Arabadzhev; 8 Daniel Zampieri; 9 Christian Vietoris; 10 Yelmer Buurman. **Points** 1 Valsecchi, 45; 2 Ricci, 19; 3 Turvey, 17; 4 Filippi, 16; 5 Villa, 16; 6 Pic, 12.

IN BRIEF



NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Kevin Harvick put himself second in the all-time winners' list by taking his 35th series victory at Las Vegas. He was slowed by poor pitstops during the race, but got his Kevin Harvick Inc Chevrolet (above) ahead of Denny Hamlin's Joe Gibbs Toyota with 25 laps left. Carl Edwards (Roush Fenway Ford) was third and leads the series by 39 points. Danica Patrick (JR Chevy) crashed and was classified 36th.

SAUDI HA'IL BAJA

Yazeed Al-Rajhi delighted the locals as he claimed a second successive win in the Saudi Arabian Ha'il Baja. Mitsubishi Lancer driver Al-Rajhi, co-driven by Matthieu Baumel, finished 32m54s ahead of the Toyota FJ Cruiser of Abdullah Bakhshab/Joseph Matar. It was Baumel's third win in a row on the event.

ARCA REMAX SERIES

For the first time a Remax Series race was run on wet-weather tyres following early-race rain at Florida's Palm Beach road course. Youngster Justin Marks claimed his maiden series win in his Win-Tron Racing Dodge and leads the championship. Rob Brent (JAM Dodge) and Blake Koch (ERS Toyota), making his series debut, completed the podium, while Bill Elliott's protege Casey Roderick (Phoenix Dodge) claimed pole.

RALLY AMERICA

Ken Block, co-driven by Alex Gelsomino, won the 100 Acre Wood Rally in his Monster Rally Team Ford Fiesta. Series leader Antoine L'Estrange finished second in his Mitsubishi, after early leader Travis Pastrana (Subaru) broke a rear axle.



Pic claimed his maiden GP2 win

STALEY/GP2

QUICK RESULTS

→ Winner **Jimmie Johnson**
→ Pole position **Kurt Busch**
→ Most laps led **Jeff Gordon**

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Little racing, little incident, little to wax lyrical about



Gordon leads his protege Johnson

NASCAR SPRINT CUP LAS VEGAS (USA), FEBRUARY 28, RD 3/36

Hendrick's Vegas domination

For all but 48 laps, Jeff Gordon was the man at Las Vegas. His Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet was the class of the field, lightning from restarts and fast and consistent during long runs.

But unfortunately for the four-time Cup champion, 16 of those 48 laps came at the end of the race, as team-mate Jimmie Johnson ran him down to take his second win of 2010. It was

also the 15th of Johnson's career on a 1.5-mile oval, making him the most successful driver in NASCAR history on 'cookie cutters'.

When the seventh and final caution flag of the day flew for rookie Kevin Conway hitting the wall, most of the leaders piled into the pits. Gordon's crew fitted two left tyres, Johnson's swapped all four.

The non-stopping Richard Childress Chevy of

Clint Bowyer was demoted instantly as racing resumed, while Gordon did what he'd done all day and swept to the front. But Johnson was on his tail and, as the stint wore on, his fresher rubber came into its own.

Getting in tight behind Gordon through Turn 2, he was able to get the run underneath his car owner to sweep by. Gordon clung on for a few laps before falling back, dropping a further

place to series leader Kevin Harvick (Childress Chevy) in the dying stages.

"It's so tough to make the right decision," said Gordon. "We were awesome all day. I know Steve [Letarte, his crew chief] is beating himself up, but there were lots of other people who took two [tyres] too."

In a race of little action, the only major accident happened when Earnhardt-Ganassi team-mates Jamie

McMurray and Juan Pablo Montoya collided, taking polesitter Kurt Busch (Penske Dodge) out with them. McMurray accepted the blame for the incident, while Montoya was fuming.

"I'm sure on the radio it was, 'Ah, I didn't mean that.' He's just trying to prove to people he can drive a race car and he isn't doing too many favours on this team," said the Colombian.

Mark Martin was fourth, while there was a photo finish for fifth between Matt Kenseth and Joey Logano, which went in favour of the 2003 Cup champion by about an inch. ● Connell Sanders Jr

RESULTS

1 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet Impala), 267 laps in 2h49m53s; 2 Kevin Harvick (Chevy), +1.874s; 3 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 4 Mark Martin (Chevy); 5 Matt Kenseth (Ford Fusion); 6 Joey Logano (Toyota Camry); 7 Tony Stewart (Chevy); 8 Clint Bowyer (Chevy); 9 Kasey Kahne (Ford); 10 Greg Biffle (Ford). **Points** 1 Harvick, 506; 2 Bowyer, 459; 3 Martin, 457; 4 Kenseth, 448; 5 Johnson, 443; 6 Biffle, 443; 7 Jeff Burton, 430; 8 Logano, 413; 9 David Reutimann, 397; 10 Carl Edwards, 389; 11 Stewart, 386; 12 Kyle Busch, 375.

AUSTRALIAN V8 SUPERCARS SAKHIR (BRN), FEBRUARY 26-27, RD 2/15

No let-up from four-star Whincup

Jamie Whincup's flight home to Australia must have been a comfortable one, after his unbeaten run in the V8 Supercar Championship stretched to four races from four starts in Bahrain.

The Triple 8 Holden driver took the first race at Sakhir fairly comfortably, but had to come from behind to beat Mark Winterbottom in the second race. In fact, a bad start left him in fifth place, and he showed mettle and determination to make it to the front.

"That certainly wasn't a perfect performance," Whincup said. "The start was ordinary; I ran wide and

locked a wheel, but got away with it. Then I stalled in the pits, which I'm not happy about and will have to have a think about."

Winterbottom emerged as Whincup's closest challenger with podium finishes in both races, and showed plenty of speed in his Ford Performance Racing Falcon. Not far behind was Shane van Gisbergen, with a fifth and a third to consolidate third in the series in his Stone Brothers Ford.

Once again, there was much talk about Holden's former top squad, the Holden Racing Team. Will Davison was eighth and sixth in the two races, and

Garth Tander fourth in the Friday event. But on Saturday another Tander retirement came as the result of broken steering after a clash with Steven Richards (FPR). Tander, the pre-season favourite for many, is now 22nd in the championship and virtually out of title contention.

While Whincup was stealing the headlines, the other star of the race was his own team-mate, Craig Lowndes. A bad start put

him mid-pack in the first race, but he roared through the field to third before another bad start and a clutch problem put him back in 12th on Saturday.

The series now returns home and there will be much that is different at Adelaide — there'll be spectators, for a start. Every other driver will hope that the distractions will slow Whincup down, because nothing has so far. ● Phil Branagan

RESULTS Race 1 1 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore VE), 37 laps in 1h21m37.428s; 2 Mark Winterbottom (Ford Falcon FG), +3.415s; 3 Craig Lowndes (Ford); 4 Garth Tander (Holden); 5 Shane van Gisbergen (Ford); 6 James Courtney (Ford). **Race 2 1 Whincup**, 37 laps in 1h21m06.420s; 2 Winterbottom, +4.850s; 3 van Gisbergen; 4 Rick Kelly (Holden); 5 Lee Holdsworth (Holden); 6 Will Davison (Holden). **Points** 1 Whincup, 600; 2 Winterbottom, 543; 3 Lowndes, 447; 4 Courtney, 420; 5 R Kelly, 392; 6 Holdsworth, 372.



Winterbottom chases Whincup

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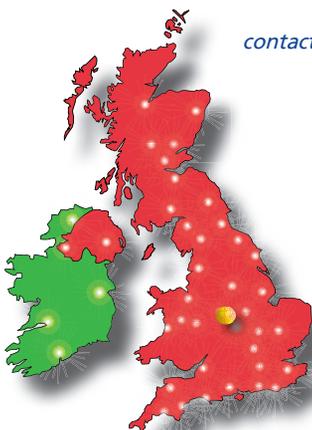
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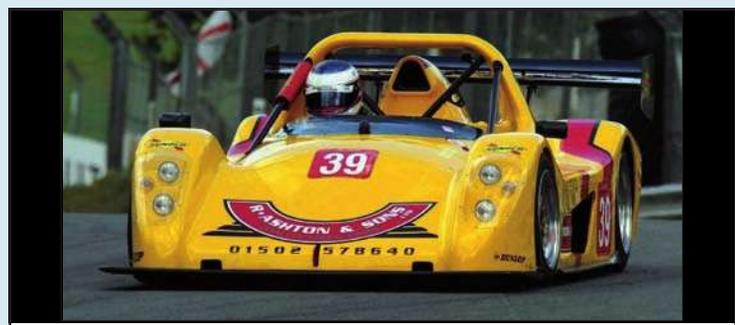
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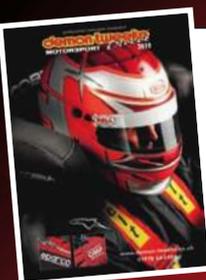
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BTCC race winner joins top Carrera Cup team, p110



Formula 2 cars will now form backbone of Award



Palmer

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



HAVING BEEN a part of the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award judging panel for the past two years, I've seen how difficult it is to assess drivers who are on track at different times, often with very changeable weather conditions.

Last year Callum MacLeod had a great run in the BTCC BMW, but it was hard to know just how great, because most of the other finalists had more rain during their runs.

With all the drivers set to be out on track together, in a fleet of Jonathan Palmer's Formula 2 cars, it will be much more obvious who is doing an outstanding job.

Often, one of the six seems to be a bit more unlucky with the weather than the others, or at least thinks he is. This way, that problem - or excuse - will be eradicated.

Having that number of cars also opens up the possibility of more-tailored tests. As Palmer has already pointed out, we could now get the drivers to try qualifying runs, race distances and mock pitstops.

The benchmark driver is also important. If a finalist can get close to, or shade, the category expert, as happened when past winners Jenson Button and Alexander Sims had their tin-top runs, it's a sure sign they're a contender for victory.

It'll all mean a much-more-rounded test, although the element of racing will still be missing. Putting six young drivers out at the same time, without staggering them and with £50,000 up for grabs, would be asking for trouble!

Nevertheless, it all sounds pretty good. All we need now is to get the second Award test car sorted and to get the season underway. Then we can see which six drivers deserve their chance to shine.

Extra contact details

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Palmer's F2 cars to become part of driver assessment

Six Williams-built racers to be used in McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award

» THE 22ND running of the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award will use six Formula 2 single-seaters to assess the drivers as part of a radical shake-up to the single-seater format of the competition.

A fleet of 425bhp Williams F1-built machines will replace Formula 3 cars, which were used in the Award from 1996 to 2004 and since '08 (Formula Renault 3.5 racers were used from 2005-07).

The move will allow the Award shootout to put the six finalists on track at the same time and add extra elements to their assessment. Previously, drivers have had to pair up for simultaneous runs in the single-seaters - a time-consuming process that has left the results prone to skewing by changing weather conditions.

F2 chief Jonathan Palmer, a former

chairman of the Award's judging panel, said: "The single-seater is the most important part of the evaluation, but it's been frustrating to have to run drivers in batches because of the resources that have been available.

"Even if we tested in Spain the track conditions would vary with temperature. Comparing drivers in different weather conditions and at different times complicates the whole process. Using six F2 cars will allow the judges to compare drivers in the same cars at the same time."

Palmer will provide the cars and a full team of F2 engineers to run them. He also hopes to shake up the format of the Award final by introducing qualifying runs, race-distance simulations, mock pitstops, and technical appraisals of the drivers' feedback.

He also plans to use a seventh car, so that a frontrunner from the F2 championship can set a benchmark lap time for the finalists to aim at.

"This gives us a real opportunity to get creative with the appraisal," added Palmer. "We can do more running and give the judges a huge amount more data with which to evaluate the drivers.

"It could also make the whole process more transparent, which I think it needs. Now we can say, 'Here are the lap times, here is the feedback, this is the winner and why'. It's very exciting and a big leap forward for the Award."

Long-serving McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award judge and veteran commentator Ian Titchmarsh has welcomed the move. He believes using F2 cars will make the evaluation process easier for the judges and prevent the drivers from gaining extra mileage in the cars before the Award final.

Titchmarsh said: "Just like F2 itself as a racing category, the introduction of F2 cars into the Award test days will provide a much more level playing field, while at the same time offering the opportunity to test the finalists in ways which have simply not been possible previously."

The second type of car, which will join the F2 machines at the Silverstone test, has yet to be confirmed.



Formula 3 cars will no longer take part

CONTENTS

p114 TEAM FOCUS:
MANOR

Jelley makes move to Carrera Cup

BTCC and British Formula 3 race winner Stephen Jelley signs with top Porsche squad Team Parker

BRITISH TOURING Car Championship race winner Stephen Jelley is to contest the Porsche Carrera Cup GB this season with Team Parker Racing.

The 27-year-old has made the switch because he has found it impossible to raise the budget to continue in the BTCC.

"It would have been the natural place to stay, but everyone knows what's going on with the economic situation," said the ex-British F3 race winner. "I had to look at an alternative. Driving the Porsche will be a good experience and it can lead onto new things. It's like a GT car so, with my background in single-seaters and touring cars, I'll be able to ply my trade anywhere.

"The Carrera Cup will be like a more

powerful version of a touring car, so I'm looking forward to it. I've spoken to a few guys who've come out of single-seaters and they say I should do well and enjoy it."

Jelley joins a line-up that includes reigning Pro-Am 1 champion Glynn Geddie and Porsche Scholarship winner Euan Hankey at Team Parker Racing, which carried Tim Bridgman to the 2009 title and is his local team.

"They're the people you should be speaking to and they're just down the road from where I live in Leicester, so it makes perfect sense to go with them," he said.

Team boss Stuart Parker said: "For a race-winning driver from the BTCC to consider the Carrera Cup and us a worthy team is a real feather in our cap. He's had a very successful career so far and we're sure he'll go well this season."

Jelley was due to get his first taste of the 997 GT3 in testing at Oulton Park yesterday (Wednesday).

● The Carrera Cup will not feature a guest car in 2010. Organisers have dropped the initiative to save money and confirmed last week that the series has reached its 28-car limit for 2010, with a roughly even split across its three classes.



Jelley won races in BTCC, now moves to Carrera Cup

EBREV/LAT

Stephen Jelley

2004 British Formula 3 2nd in Scholarship Class

2005 British F3 12th

2006 British F3 7th (5 podiums)

2007 British F3 3rd (2 wins)

2008 BTCC 15th

2009 BTCC 7th (2 wins)

Volkswagen Racing Cup

Disabled drivers head to VW Cup

A PAIR of disabled drivers will join the VW Racing Cup grid for its 10th-anniversary season this year.

Phil Morris, who lost a leg after a motorcycle accident, and wheelchair user Simon Andrews will race specially adapted Golf GTIs. Both have used their cars previously on track days.

Their Golfs will have DSG semi-automatic gearboxes with steering-wheel-mounted gearchange paddles. Morris's has specially adapted foot pedals, while Andrews's car features

a hand-operated throttle and brake.

"I've had to be very persistent," said Andrews. "I've had to go before the MSA's medical panel a number of times, and had to prove I can escape a car in less than 10 seconds.

"Last year they permitted me to go sprinting in my Golf, and that all went well, so here I am, the first paraplegic to race in the VW Cup."



Formula Renault UK

Correa joins CRS for Renault attack

BRAZILIAN RACER Victor Correa will step down from British Formula 3 to drive with CRS Racing in Formula Renault UK this year.

The 19-year-old won two races and finished fourth in the 2008 British Formula Ford championship, before graduating to the F3 National Class.

He endured a tough 2009 racing Litespeed's SLC chassis, finishing over 100 points adrift of class pacesetters Daniel McKenzie and Gabriel Dias.

Correa joins Harry Tincknell, Robert Foster-Jones and Michael

Lyons to complete CRS Racing's four-car FRUK line-up. He was due to begin testing with the squad at Brands Hatch this week.

"Formula Renault will be a good challenge for me," said Correa. "The new car looks very interesting and it will be a good opportunity for me to show what I can do in equal equipment.

"I chose CRS because I think it is the best team with a very good structure and I think that, as a team, we can fight for the championship."

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British Formula Ford

Cook and Tucker to Formula Ford

GINETTA JUNIOR ace Jake Cook and Superkart star James Tucker are the latest drivers to commit to the British Formula Ford Championship for 2010.

Cook, who scored eight wins on his way to second in Ginetta Juniors last year, will drive a Mygale prepared by Getem Racing. Tucker, 20, has joined the works Van Diemen team and will drive alongside Jesse Anttila. It will be

both drivers' first year in single-seaters.

Cook, who has already tested with Getem, said: "It was always the plan to go to single-seaters, we just had to make a decision between Formula Ford and Formula Renault.

"With budgets being really high for the new car in Renault we decided Ford was the best option.

"We've not got a full year's budget, but enough for the first three races and hopefully results will help."

Van Diemen boss Lindsay Allen has been impressed with Tucker's testing performances so far. "He's improving all the time," he said. "By the time we get to the first rounds I think he'll be right up there."

Tucker will drive works Van Diemen in 2010



JAKOB EBREY

Ford and Ginetta G50 champion tries latest Juno

Former British Formula Ford champion and Century Motorsport boss Nathan Freke tested the new Juno he will run in the 2010 series at Silverstone last week. The team is looking for a driver



JAKOB EBREY

AAA Saloon Cup

BTCC champion Neal in line for four-wheel-drive race after test

DOUBLE BRITISH Touring Car champion Matt Neal intends to race in a round of the new AJEC All-wheel-drive Academy Saloon Cup after an exploratory test outing at Silverstone last week.

The 2005-06 BTCC title winner, who is set to return to the series again this year in a Team Dynamics Honda Civic, sampled AJEC's production-spec Class B demo car at a Silverstone track day last Thursday.

"It was fine to drive, but strange getting used to the gizmos," said Neal. "If you try to flick the car in [to

corners] to get a drift on it just sorts it all out and goes into understeer before you can do anything.

"It would be fine to race, but the guys who know the cars inside out would have an advantage because they know how to get the best from the driver aids."

The 400bhp machine will be used as the AAA Saloon Cup guest car for the inaugural 2010 season. Organisers are planning for a 'celebrity' driver to race it at each of the five rounds. The exact date for Neal's appearance has yet to be confirmed.

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Unusual Mann Ford impressed at Goodwood

JEFF BLOXHAM

Now in its eighth season, Masters Historic Racing provides some of the most stylish and exciting competition for owners of cars of the 1950s, '60s and '70s at a cross-section of Europe's finest venues. This year, in response to customer demand, its core international series will be run for points counting towards 'Champion of Europe' titles for the first time.

But 'Masters' is not solely about Formula 1 and sports racing cars. It also has a strong domestic presence with the ever-popular Top Hat meetings pioneered by Julius Thurgood. The first of these spirited get-togethers will take place at Snetterton on April 18.

The Masters pre-season test days at Goodwood (first run in 2008) kicked off this term's action last Friday and Saturday, giving drivers the opportunity to shake down freshly-built or newly-acquired steeds. Or dust the cobwebs from a trusty old warhorse.

The most exciting machine to grace Sussex's most-fabled 2.4 miles of asphalt was the achingly beautiful lightweight Jaguar E-type that Peter Lumsden and Peter Sargent raced at Le Mans in 1964. Clothed in even sleeker style to its Malcolm Sayer-bodied low-drag cousins, 49 FXN has been acquired in the close season by Ross Warburton from Viscount Cowdray's stable, where it shared lodgings with the ex-Dick Protheroe low-drag CUT 7.

From the sublime to the

ridiculous, MHR caters for them all - as evidenced by the Ford 100E Alan Mann Racing has built for Henry Mann to race in the Oldies But Goldies competition, for tin-tops of the 1950s. Wearing the red-and-gold colours (beloved of fans of the late Frank Gardner's Falcon Sprint and Escorts, not to mention the team's Lotus Cortinas or Cosworth DFV-powered F3L sports prototypes), it screamed and scurried through the chicane without a hint of body roll!

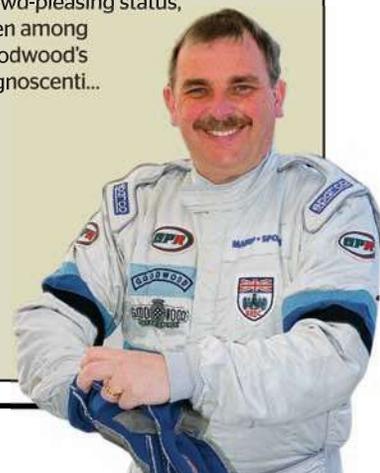
Of course, the *raison d'être* behind so many bizarre contraptions of the era is a coveted invitation to the St Mary's Trophy race at September's Goodwood Revival Meeting. Following last year's Mini 50th birthday bash - and Masters is mopping up Cooper Ss, because founder Ron Maydon enjoys his almost as much as the F1 Amon - it reverts to its '50s showcase this time.

Historically - or anti-historically as it goes - this decade has provided some of the most bizarre cars of the Revival's 12 editions.

While nothing holds a candle to the Ivan Dutton-built 'Alvis Grey Lady', which the late Gerry Marshall piloted in 2004, the 100E is also beautifully engineered and almost as magnificently daft. Its former owner, who cherished it as a low-mileage road car, was said to be 'horrified' by the Ford's fate.

Which pretty much guarantees crowd-pleasing status, even among Goodwood's cognoscenti...

“The reason behind so many bizarre contraptions is a coveted invitation to the Goodwood Revival”



Formula Renault BARC

Euro Vee champ to take on Renault

REIGNING EUROPEAN

Formula Vee champion James Birch will return to the UK this season to graduate into Formula Renault BARC.

The 20-year-old Durham University student will race the car campaigned by Lee Dwyer in last season's Formula Renault UK championship.

The ex-UK Formula Vee frontrunner had hoped to move into German Formula 3 in 2010 with help from Volkswagen, but couldn't raise enough sponsorship to seal the deal.

He will instead race

as a privateer in Formula Renault, using personnel from the MD Motorsport squad that ran him in Euro Vee to help prepare the car.

"After two years racing in Europe, I feel I need to return to the UK to raise my profile here," said Birch, who tested the car for the first time at Silverstone last Friday.

"I'm at the point where I need a break to get the £100,000 I need to get to the next level.

"This is a one-year plan: get in, try and make as much of a mark as possible, hopefully win the championship, and go from there."



JAKOB EBREY

Birch has already started testing



MICK WALKER

Scragg (leading) has already committed to the new series

Aston Martin British GT4 Challenge

New Aston series is go

Aston Martin Racing's new one-make GT4 initiative has already started to attract teams ahead of its inaugural season of mini enduros

ASTON MARTIN RACING has already confirmed eight cars for its new Aston Martin GT4 Challenge and believes the grid could nearly double for the opening race.

The official factory one-make series is open to the Vantage GT4 and Vantage N24 models and races will be between 90 and 150 minutes in length. Each entry can have up to two drivers and AMR will provide engineering and scrutineering support.

Established Aston Martin squads, including Vantage Racing, Chris Scragg Racing and Goldsmith & Young have already confirmed entries, while dealership Aston Riviera Swiss is also expected to compete. The winning team will get the opportunity to test drive either the Aston Martin Vantage GT2 or the GT3 DBRS9.

Roland Cherry, director of GT4 racing, said: "We have had a very good response and are expecting further series – and individual-event – entries and should have a dozen to 15 cars on the grid for each event.

"We have built more than 60 Vantage GT4s in the past three years and, while they are all eligible to compete in GT4 championships, many owners have told us they would like to be able to compete exclusively against identical cars."

Vantage Racing boss Tom Black, who plans to race in the series himself, said: "I think there are enough cars out there. I'm optimistic we'll see good grids."

The series starts in April at Snetterton and finishes at Donington Park in October after visiting Silverstone, Spa, Brands Hatch, and Oulton Park.

Gentlemen, start your (fire) engines!

A Ford Escort MkII takes avoiding action as this fire truck heads the wrong way down the 10th stage of last weekend's 25th Rallye Sunseeker in Bournemouth's Ringwood forest



JONATHAN SUITER

Formula Renault BARC

Fortec man sets up his own team

FORMER FORTEC Motorsport engineer Simon Baldry has formed a new team and will run two cars in the Formula Renault BARC Championship this season.

SWB Motorsport has signed former karter Luke Wright, who appeared in the FR Winter Series last year with Fortec, and Andrew Jarman, who Baldry engineered in the FR BARC Privateer Cup. Mark Godwin, who also works for Fortec, will engineer the cars.

Baldry, who worked with Greg Mansell at Mansell Motorsport and

ran Will Stevens at Fortec last year, said: "I've reached the point where I want a change - I've been a mechanic and engineer for a long time and I've always wanted to have my own team.

"I don't see any reason why we can't be fighting for podiums, and I'd like to get a win by the end of the year."

The 27-year-old added that he soon hopes to move the team into higher categories. "We're looking to do Formula Renault UK in 2011 if it all goes to plan," said Baldry. "I'd like to think we could do the Winter Series, too."



Artist's impression of the new team's livery

IN BRIEF

CATERHAM R400 racers will get their own class in the Classic Sports Car Club's Magnificent Sevens series this year. The R400 Superlight series has been canned this year due to a lack of entries (see AUTOSPORT, February 25), so the CSCC has now introduced the new class to attract racers to its 40-minute events for Lotus 7-style machines.



THE EX-Lance Reventlow 1957 Cooper Bobtail T39, configured with a 1500cc Coventry-Climax FPF twin-cam engine and

Porsche gearbox, should be a force in European historic events this season. New owner Jeremy Cooke drove it at Goodwood last Saturday (above).

BRITCAR PRODUCTION Production champions Kevin Clarke and Wayne Gibson are planning to run a newly-built BMW E92 in Britcar GT this season. The Intersport pair has not ruled out running the car in the Production category too.

BTCC SQUAD Eurotech will again run cars in Britcar this year. Team boss Mike Jordan and his BTCC racer son Andrew will share a Ginetta G50 in Britcar GT, while Jordan Sr will also share the team's Ford Mustang with Stuart Scott and Steve Wood in the Production split.

ROSS WARBURTON'S lightweight Jaguar E-type, 49 FXN (left), tested at Goodwood last week. Warburton plans to share the 1964 Le Mans car with preparer Andy Newall, of Gelscoe Motorsport, at the 2010 Revival Meeting.



WILLIAM PANSON is planning to run his ex-Jo Schlesser Ecurie Ford France 1964 Brabham-SCA BT10 F2 car in a full season of European historic events. The ex-Americas Cup yachtsman and Rejo sports car racer tested the car at Goodwood last week.

FORMER MITSUBISHI Starion racer Doug Forbes had a brief first taste of historic action at Goodwood last Friday in his newly-completed 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air, which is destined for the Masters Oldies But Goldies series.

WESTFIELD'S NEW electric i-Racer broke cover at the Geneva Motor Show earlier this week (right). It's set to make its debut in hillclimbing later this year.



Pomeroy Trophy

HRG racer tops eclectic 2010 Pomeroy field

HRG DRIVER Dudley Sterry won the 59th Vintage Sports Car Club Pomeroy Trophy at Silverstone last Saturday.

Sterry's was the first victory for a non-Frazer Nash since 2004. After a complicated points system to determine the best Grand Touring car, the 1937 machine beat the Ford Cortina of Adrian Goding into second place. Patrick Blakeney-Edwards, winner for the past three years, finished third.



HRG of Dudley Sterry won the 59th Pomeroy

STEVE JONES



Chris Hudson's Ford Sierra fights Tim Dutton's Lamborghini Miura



Eclectic field splashes into Copse corner

STEVE JONES

Formula Ford 2000

Latest Firman car almost ready to race

THE NEW Formula Ford 2000 contender from Ralph Firman Cars is less than two months away from hitting the track and orders have already started coming in.

RFC has already scored successes in America with its motorcycle-engined F1000 car. It re-established the Van Diemen founder as a constructor, and now the first FF2000 machine is nearing completion.

The David Baldwin-designed car can take the US Pro Series' Ford Zetec engine or the older Pinto

unit for club racing, and is also capable of running in the 750 Motor Club's F4 series in the UK.

RFC's John Uprichard said: "A complete car is five to six weeks away, but after that we will be able to produce more in rapid succession. [American ace] Niki Coello is having the first one and we have firm interest in four more."

The F1000 model, of which 15 have now been sold, continues to win in America. Californian Nick Belling took a dominant victory at Willow Springs last weekend.

British GT

Aston team changes plans

VANTAGE RACING could appear in selected British GT rounds this year despite withdrawing from the full championship.

The Aston Martin squad had planned to move into the series this year with a GT3 DBRS9 for team boss Tom Black and Stuart Hall. But now business commitments have

caused Black to cut back.

"I got wrapped up in some business and decided there's not enough space to do the full series," he said.

"I'd like to do one or two races, and perhaps fully commit for 2011."

Black might instead run in the new Aston Martin British GT4 Challenge (see story left).



Black is likely to race GT4 Aston rather than GT3

MICHAEL WALKER

South African Formula Ford

Merton takes first step towards Festival drive



Merton's Mygale took two wins

TONY ALVES

MYGALE DRIVER Matthew Merton took double honours as the South African Formula Ford Championship kicked off its Duratec era at East London last Saturday.

The opening two races of the 2010 season were close affairs on the former grand prix venue, with Merton holding off Robert Wolk (Mygale) in the first encounter. Steve Morris kept

up the pressure in race two, but Merton held firm. Reigning champ Nicholas van Weely came third twice.

Merton's Saturday pole time of 1m25.274s was more than three tenths faster than van Weely's '09 Zetec pole.

The champion this year will win a fully funded drive with a Mygale squad in the Brands Hatch Festival (see AUTOSPORT, February 25).

Manor's LORD & LADY

Tony and Sarah Shaw run top Formula Renault UK squad Manor Competition. **MARCUS SIMMONS** gets the lowdown



Tony and Sarah Shaw: FR UK's most hands-on team bosses

EBREY/LAT

Dean Smith, leading here at Brands, won the 2009 title

As Acts of Succession go, this is one from which Henry VIII could have learned something. In late 2006, John Booth, owner of Manor Motorsport and uncrowned monarch of Formula Renault UK, wanted to expand his F3 Euro Series team. He knew that he would no longer be able to give the Renault side of his business the attention it deserved, but reckoned it would thrive in the hands of team manager Tony Shaw, and Shaw's new wife Sarah.

Booth's abdication happened so quietly that it scarcely raised a blip. The Shaws bought the team before the 2006 Winter Series (in which Franck Mailleux won all four races for the new owners), they kept the Manor name (adding the suffix 'Competition' to replace 'Motorsport'), they even kept the Manor Yorkshire Rose emblem, and they were allowed to stay for free in the workshop until new premises were found a little way down the M1 in Nottinghamshire.

"The deal was extraordinarily sympathetic to us," says Tony,

"and Sarah and I will always be grateful. It happened just before the Winter Series, so that allowed us to get some racing and testing and money in. That was crucial, because we didn't have hundreds of thousands of pounds. John never wanted to sell it on the open market. He recognised it as an ideal opportunity for us."

This Act of Succession was beautifully subtle, although 'subtle' may not be an adjective you would use to describe Tony 'Heart on Sleeve' Shaw... First, a little background: at the last count, Manor was the only team in FR UK that competes only in that series and has no interest in expanding into another category; it's also the only leading team in which the owners are so hands-on (Mr and Mrs S engineer two cars each from their four-car squad).

So, what does Tony think of teams running in more than one category? "We'd consider moving up to a different formula, but not running two teams. You can't do that as effectively as you can just one. Your staff need to concentrate on one set of customers,

one job. Those teams that are running cars in the BARC Renault series as well are a bunch of greedy bastards in a cynical, money-making exercise!"

Okay... How about the 'hands-on-owners' bit? "When we're trying to sell a drive or make a situation work, we're far more knowledgeable about it. Some team owners don't know a bloody thing about motor racing, but they could sell you a rusty truck for 50 bloody grand!"

Getting more serious, this was a situation that needed addressing before 2008, when Alexander Sims came close to giving Shaw-era Manor its first Renault UK title. "Alexander's people asked whether the fact that I was engineering him, plus another car, plus running the team, was all too much," says Tony. "I totally agreed with them." In came Jeremy Cotterill, early-1990s FF1600 and Vauxhall Lotus race winner and drily-humoured Brummie, to act, in the Shaws' words, as "team dad. He looks after the running of the team over a race weekend so we can concentrate on the drivers and the engineering."



Shaw worked with Lewis Hamilton in 2002-03...

FAMILY TEAM IS A SHAW-FIRE SUCCESS

TONY SHAW is a Formula Renault lifer. The son of Tony Shaw Sr (who raced Modsports Jaguar E-type, Prodsaloon Ford Capri and BTCC Chevy Camaro from the late 1960s to the mid '70s), he started working in FR UK during its first season ('89) and joined Manor in '95.

Wife Sarah, nee Murgatroyd, came to Renault relatively recently – but she's already engineered three different drivers to titles and, says her husband, "deserves so much credit for how Manor runs. She's a fantastic engineer and so analytical, whereas I flit around left, right and centre!"

After a background in Vauxhall Junior, she first worked in FR UK with Team DFR. "The team closed and

I had two months out of the sport," she says. "Then someone asked me to do some freelance engineering in the Swedish and German Renault championships. I came back here to work with Richard Singleton in 2006 [he won the BARC title], then I ran Hywel Lloyd the following year [another BARC crown!] while we were doing Manor at the same time."

And then Dean Smith in 2009... "His devastating performances were down to Sarah," says Tony. "Rockingham was the funniest thing. When he set fastest lap on lap 15, I turned to Sarah and said, 'I hope you've got clean knickers on because you're going to get stripped down to hell in scrutineering!'"



Smith's speed at Rockingham could've embarrassed Shaws

EBBREV/LAT

"There's quite a lot of rust on the truck, but the last time I looked a brand-new truck wasn't winning the title..."

behest of Sarah Shaw, has brought ex-Alpine team manager Sam Blogg with him as mechanic.

"We don't promise people they'll win the championship with us, but we'll work as hard as we physically can and anything we have will be put back into the team," says Tony. "Okay, there's a bit of a rust on the truck – quite a lot actually – but the last time I looked a brand-new truck wasn't winning the championship. I'd rather have 10 engines and the best staff."

And that is exactly the sort of thing John Booth would say. "The Butcher" may no longer be involved as owner, but his spirit still pervades a team that looks likely to re-establish a formal link with Booth through a 'Virgin Young Driver' association with his Virgin Racing Formula 1 team.

That's a plan that will, you can confidently predict, provide further seamless Acts of Succession. ❧



Will Stevens was attracted to Manor for 2010 season

Sims may have graduated to F3 for 2009, but he was one of the factors behind Dean Smith finally breaking the team's duck and winning that year's FR UK crown. Sims remained in the Renault paddock as driver coach to the Manor squad, joined whenever possible by GT star Rob Bell. "We focus very much on driver coaching," says Tony. "If it's possible we'll have two coaches – and not just any old coaches. Alexander's now a fully-paid-for racing driver, but here he is, loading the truck and all the rest of it."

"Nothing against Dean, but there were some issues with his driving that we needed to sort out. He and his dad wholeheartedly wanted everyone's input to have one last roll of the dice. Just because a driver has loads of experience doesn't mean he wins; he

still has to be taught. You can't bring everybody up to that level, because everybody's skills and levels of understanding are varied, but it doesn't stop you trying."

The philosophy clearly works: Sims and Smith showed the all-round abilities they developed at Manor to win the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award in successive years.

Thanks to the success of Smith and Sims, Manor has risen once again to the top of the FR UK pecking order. Lewis Williamson and Will Stevens, both potential 2010 champions, have jumped ship from CRS Racing and Fortec Motorsport respectively. Improving Dutchman Thomas Hylkema remains, while BARC Renault ace Josh Mulholland moves from Alpine Motorsport – and, at the

Sims narrowly lost title and is now team driver coach



EBBREV/LAT



LAT

...and with Kimi Raikkonen in late 1999 and 2000



LAT

EBBREV/LAT

YOUR SAY

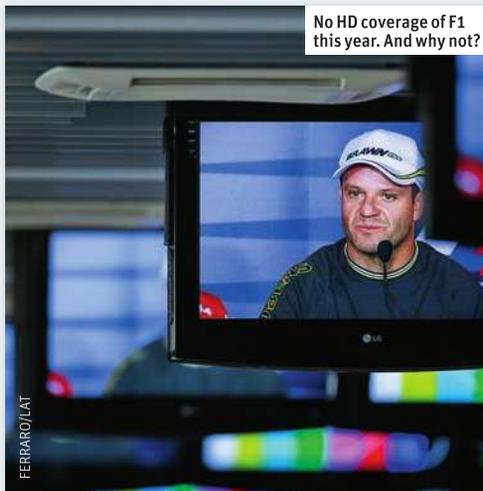
What you think of the motorsport news of the past week

High on the list of priorities

F1 is the most technologically advanced sport in the world with an industry worth millions and largely funded by multinational corporations not involved with the motor industry, but seeking a global TV audience.

So why, despite all of this, is there no capability to show the races in high definition yet?

Bob Barker Leominster



EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

I visited Jerez to watch F1 testing and had a fabulous time. Eight hours of cars on track, a terrific spectacle, a large crowd of emotive Spaniards screaming every time Alonso and Alguersuari came past, and all for a paltry €5 entry charge.

This is a great teaser for the F1 season to come and should be better publicised. I can't wait for Bahrain.

Peter Bolton
Surrey

The new Renault R30 colour scheme is undoubtedly striking but very reminiscent of the Jordan of 10 years ago. Have EJ's lawyers already been on the phone to the powers that be at Enstone to offer them a 'snake' or 'hornet' nose to complete the retro look?

Gareth Tarr
Chertsey

What fantastic news that Peugeot has signed Anthony Davidson to race at Sebring and Le Mans. Hopefully this extremely talented Brit will now start to get the chances he deserves.

I know he wants another crack at F1, and justifiably so, but this is a great opportunity and hopefully he can better his finish of last year in France with Aston Martin.

Kevin Lyttle
By email

I write to offer my thanks for the diary stickers included with the mag recently. Rather than using them for their intended purpose, I used them to ensure some peaceful reading time (below).

Michael Mann
Peterborough



AUTOSPORT.COM

TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **USF1 INSIDER: HURLEY CAN SAVE TEAM**
2. **FERRARI SLAMS FIA'S NEW TEAM 'HOLY WAR'**
3. **FIA INSPECTS USF1'S ABILITY TO JOIN GRID**
4. **STEFAN GP CANCELS PORTIMAO TEST**
5. **BUTTON, ALONSO TO START BARCELONA TEST**

WIN!



ROAD ANGEL PROFESSIONAL CONNECTED

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Professional Connected – the world's only safety camera alert device to use GPRS/GSM update technology while you drive.

For more details on Road Angel please visit www.roadangelgroup.com Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

● Mugen Honda-powered cars did not win every British F3 title between 1990-2005, as stated (February 18, p22). Oliver Gavin used Vauxhall power on the way to the 1995 crown. Thanks to Peter Briggs for that one.

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

AUTOSPORT.COM FANTASY LEAGUE GRAND PRIX 2010

THE 2010 F1 SEASON starts in Bahrain on 14th March, and that's when the autosport.com Fantasy League F1 gets underway, with the commencement of the Mini Championship.

There are £20,000 in prizes to be won throughout the season. The top team boss at

the end of the year wins £5,000 and a VIP trip to the Monaco GP, with cash prizes at every GP. There's also the opportunity to take on your mates in your own Friends & Enemies League.

Register now - you have an unlimited number of team changes available until the Main Competition begins in April!

**£20,000
IN PRIZES UP
FOR GRABS!**



THE LATEST GEAR

The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

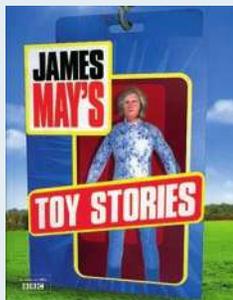
SCHUMACHER OFFICIAL CAP

£24.99 (code MS2010)
autosport.com/shop

2010 official Formula 1 merchandise has arrived! Michael Schumacher and/or Mercedes GP fans among you will be pleased to note that the official Schuey cap is now available. The one-size-fits-all cap is resplendent in team silver and features the Schumacher logo and his #3 race number on the peak, as well as the tongue-twisting logo of the un-retired German's long-time personal sponsor Deutsche Vermögensberatung.



TEE/LAT



JAMES MAY'S TOY STORIES
£20 (978 1 84486 107 1)
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A glorious pictorial celebration of iconic toy brands Plasticine, Meccano, Hornby, Airfix, Scalextric and Lego, through the eyes of TV presenter and self-confessed toy addict James 'trapped in the '70s' May. The perfect complement to May's hit TV series of the same name.



GRANITE & MARBLE BOOK
£29.99 (978 0 85184 075 8)
chatters.co.uk

No book has had the AUTOSPORT office poring over it quite like this one – a directory of memorials and resting places of motorsport greats. Packed with pictures of headstones and plaques, it might appear morbid, but we think it's a respectful celebration of those who paid the ultimate price.



VALENTINO ROSSI LAPTOP
£449.99
packardbell.com

Packard Bell has launched this Valentino Rossi-inspired netbook with the multiple world motorcycle champ's sun-and-moon helmet design. The dot VR46 packs a 640Gb hard disc, weighs only 1.35kg and has an eight-hour battery life. Want more science? Check out the website...

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: 1993 F1 SEASON REVIEW



SEARCH: Formula 1 1993 Goodyear Season Review – Part 01 (10:03)
If you've read Tony Dodgins's 1993 retro piece in our F1 2010 guide, why not watch this Goodyear-made, three-part review of the last grand prix season without refuelling. All three parts run to 10:03.

Manage your own Formula 1 team. Who would you choose to be in your Formula 1 team?

To start playing log onto **<http://autosport.fantasyleaguef1.com>**

Or visit **autosport.com** and click on **Fantasy League F1**

WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place around the world this week – plus TV and online

WORLD TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 1/12
Curitiba, Brazil
March 7
www.fiawtcc.com



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rally Mexico
Rd 2/13
Leon, Mexico
March 5-7
www.wrc.com



INTERCONTINENTAL RALLY CHALLENGE

Rally Curitiba
Rd 2/12
Curitiba, Brazil
March 4-6
www.ircseries.com

GRAND-AM

Rd 2/12
Homestead, USA
March 6
www.grand-am.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 4/36
Atlanta, USA
March 7
www.nascar.com



FULL THROTTLE

What's grinding our gears this week

IT SEEMS that barely a week passes these days without some form of driver training scheme being announced or amended.

I applaud the aims of these in general, and especially the desire to keep aspiring young drivers in school and give them some skills to fall back on when, for the vast majority, their dreams of making it to F1 fall in a heap of budget shortfalls, broken promises, bad luck and a lack of talent.

But where I'm left scratching my head, and fuming at the ears, is the inevitable inclusion of 'media training'. Whenever I encounter people from the "it's not as good as it used to be" generation, one of their main gripes is the lack of personality,

the dearth of "James Hunt-types".

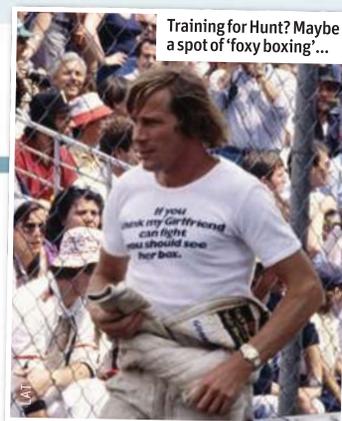
Yet despite the ubiquity of these schemes, driver interviews are getting blander. Has there been an interesting post-race presser in F1 since Senna's passing? When there are – and it's rare – it's all in the body language. What isn't said is more conspicuous than what is.

But that's just the most visible example. The same is true – and often much worse – in the junior categories, too. And that applies to all interviews, not just on TV.

Drivers may remember to thank all the people who helped pay the bills, and they'll be sure not to say anything too controversial about incidents that have happened. Very professional, yet exceedingly dull.

And for what? There's probably not a sponsor out there that wouldn't want to be associated with the next James Hunt. They are involved in motorsport because it's cool and sexy, not dry and corporate.

Maybe it's not the fault of the schemes or the drivers. Perhaps it's the fact that from the age of six, these wannabes are thrust into a competitive environment and removed from the real world. Establishing normal relationships, doing the interesting things away from the track that build character and charisma, aren't compatible with a life spent on the road every weekend. An appreciation of foreign cultures ought to be the foundations for a well-rounded, interesting



Training for Hunt? Maybe a spot of 'foxy boxing'...

interviewee, but the backdrop of a circuit isn't exactly a weekend break.

So instead of media skills, what these kids need is life training, where they are forced to do something away from racing, so that when someone asks them what they've been up to since the last race the answer isn't the stultifyingly boring "training".

Andrew van de Burt

Television

THURSDAY MARCH 4

1030-1100 [ESPN America](#)
NASCAR Now
1600-1730 [Eurosport 2](#) & 2130-2230
[Eurosport](#)
GP2 Asia
1730-1800 [Eurosport 2](#) & 2100-2130
[Eurosport](#)
WTCC Preview
2325-0135 [Motors TV](#)
V8 Supercars

FRIDAY MARCH 5

0000-0100 [Sky Sports 4](#)
Race World
1030-1100 [ESPN America](#)
NASCAR Now
1500-1530 [Eurosport 2](#)
WTCC Preview
2300-2330 [Eurosport](#)
IRC
Action from the first day of the second round of IRC 2010 from Brazil.

SATURDAY MARCH 6

0400-0425 [Five](#)
Motorsport Mundial
1000-1100, 1300-1400, 1700-1800, 2220-
2325 [Motors TV](#)
WRC
Action from Rally Mexico.
1000-1100, 1500-1600 [Dave](#)
WRC
1300-1400 [BBC1](#)
2009 F1 Review
Jenson Button's title-winning season.
1900-1945 [Eurosport LIVE](#)
WTCC

Live coverage of qualifying from Curitiba.
2300-2330 [Eurosport](#)
IRC

SUNDAY MARCH 7

0750-0815 [Channel 4](#)
Mobil 1 The Grid
Formula 1 2010 preview and behind the scenes at the Daytona 500.
1000-1100, 1300-1400, 1700-1800, 2220-2325 [Motors TV](#)
WRC
More action from the Mexican stages.
1315-1345 [Eurosport 2 LIVE](#)
WTCC warm-up
1700-1915 [Eurosport LIVE](#)
WTCC
Back-to-back coverage of both races from the first round of the 2010 WTCC.
1800-1830, 2235-2305 [Dave](#)
WRC

Highlights of Rally Mexico.
1900-0100 [Open Access 3 LIVE](#)
NASCAR Sprint Cup
Public access TV channel shows America's most popular race series. How random.
2200-2230 [Eurosport](#)
IRC
Highlights from Brazil.
2230-0000 [Eurosport 2](#)
WTCC Highlights
2230-2245 [Eurosport](#)
Motorsports Weekend

MONDAY MARCH 8

1900-2000 [Sky Sports 3](#)
NASCAR Highlights
The Kobalt Tools 500 from Atlanta.

Online

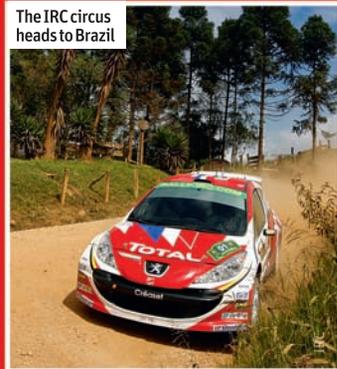
AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

WTCC, WRC, IRC & NASCAR

It might be the last week of peace before the Formula 1 season erupts, but aside from the last test in the run-up to Bahrain, there's plenty to keep you going on AUTOSPORT's website. It's the opening round of the World Touring Car Championship from Brazil, running alongside the second round of the IRC (right), plus WRC Mexico, NASCAR from Atlanta and the Le Mans Series test at Paul Ricard.

The IRC circus heads to Brazil



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REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



NASCAR ace David Regan took to the skies in an F16

LAT SOUTH

IN A CLASSIC episode of *The Simpsons* – where Homer becomes Mr Plow – the family makes an ad that airs on public-access TV. Having stayed up late to watch it, Lisa declares: “It may be on a crummy channel, but the Simpsons are finally on TV.”

Without me noticing, public-access TV has become available in the UK too. And on Sky channel 190 – in between the delights of Open Access 2 and BET – lies Open Access 3, the new home of NASCAR.

Without fanfare or announcement, just the NASCAR logo on a white background with “coming soon” written next to it,

the baton was passed.

The feed was straight from FOX in the US, which meant we got the full build-up programme. This included David Regan taking to the air with the US Thunderbird aerobatic display team – cool – and Jimmie Johnson's toe-curling appearance on the frankly dreadful *A Slice Of Pizzi* chat show.

A car-crash low in US televisual history, which featured the portly host Pizzi acting like a baby to see how recent new father Johnson would react – like a man who wished he was somewhere else, if you missed it.

Of course there was no studio like on Sky;

no Keith, John and David, so during the scores of breaks we were left with, at best, a helicopter view of the track, at worst, the white holding page we started off with.

The pictures were in the low-fi haze that *Sesame Street* and *The Beachcombers* used to be shown in, a far cry from Sky's HD, but a million times better than the blurred noise I had to watch on the internet a week earlier.

During the entire four-hour broadcast there were

“Without me noticing, public-access TV has become available in the UK – and is the new home of NASCAR”

just two ads. One, for a Royal Airforce display DVD, ran a few times. The other, for a channel called Omusic, just once. Which is sort of great, but leads to the question: who the hell is paying for this?

There were a few instances of picture break-up, which left us with the disclaimer “Signal loss. Detected Service 12 (0578)”, whatever that is. Still, at least it was on and, despite all its cheap shoddiness, for that I am exceptionally grateful.

Revved Up

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

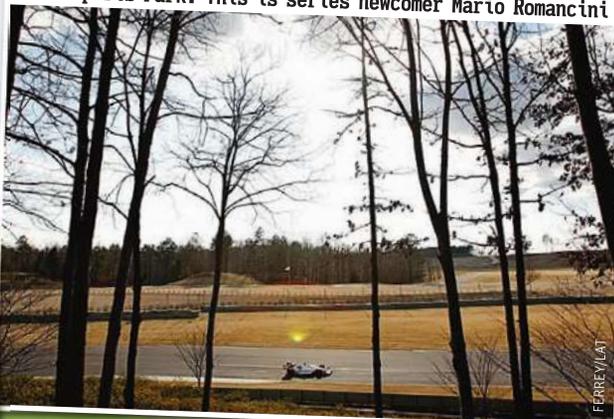
The lensmen pounding the beat, from Bahrain to Alabama



MERCEDES UNVEILS NEW F1 GULLWING SAFETY CAR
Michael Schumacher and Nico Rosberg will be hoping that this won't be the only Merc to lead a grand prix this year

NO SHORT CUTS AT BARBER

IndyCar teams warmed up (in the cold) at Alabama's Barber Motorsports Park. This is series newcomer Mario Romancini



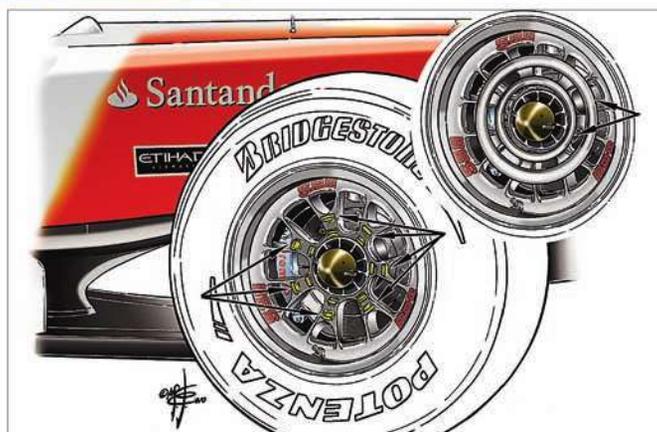
HIGH SIDE FOR ROSSI!
No, not Valentino... This time it's GP2 Asia racer Alexander Rossi launching himself into Britain's Will Bratt (not pictured) at the Bahrain round

Engineering debrief – wheel fairings



GARY ANDERSON

BIO
Gary has designed grand prix race-winning cars during his long F1 career and worked for Brabham, McLaren, Jordan, Stewart and Jaguar.



DESPITE THE agreement among the FOTA teams not to use wheel fairings, Ferrari ran with a form of wheel spinner at the Barcelona test (left). It's fastened to the wheel, so presumably the team's interpretation is that it is considered part of the wheel itself. This is as opposed to the wheel fairings used

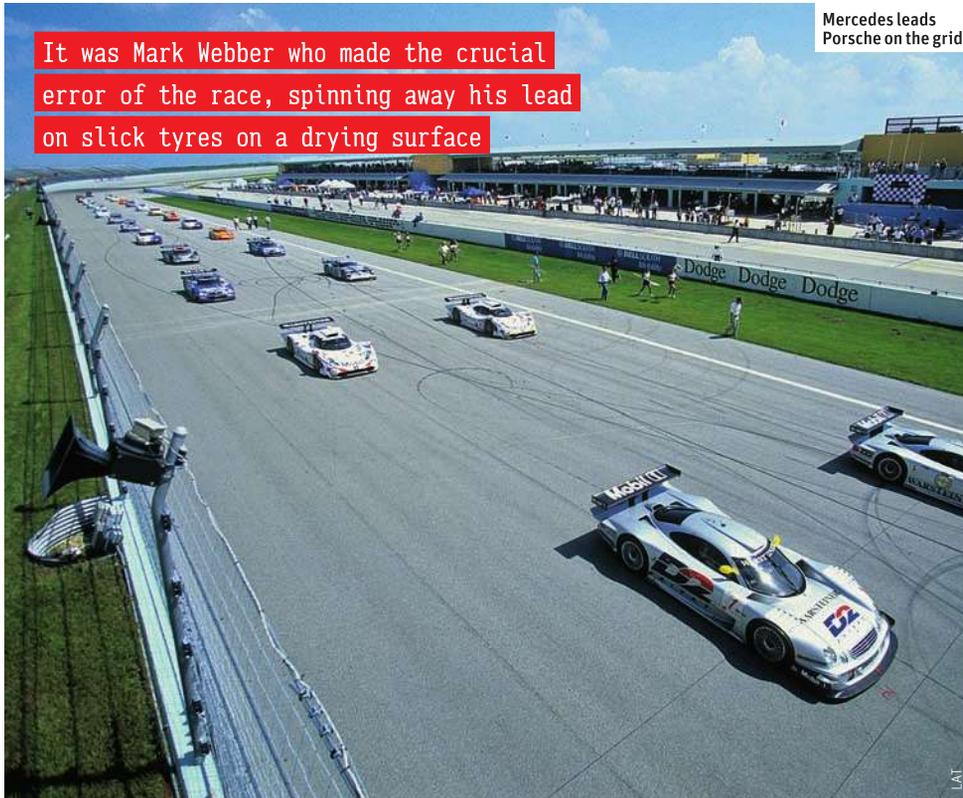
last year, which circumnavigated the rules by being defined as brake ducts. A fairing tries to suck the air through to outside of the wheel by creating a low-pressure area. It's basically a downforce-producing device and, if I was one of the rival teams party to the FOTA agreement, I would question why Ferrari is doing it.

Got an engineering question you'd like answered? Send it to mark.glendenning@haymarket.com

ILLUSTRATION: GIORGIO PIOLA

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Ricardo Zonta, Homestead FIA GT, 1998



It was Mark Webber who made the crucial error of the race, spinning away his lead on slick tyres on a drying surface

Mercedes leads Porsche on the grid

AFTER A SHOCK win for the Action Express Riley-Porsche at the Daytona 24 Hours, the real meat of the Grand-Am season gets underway at Homestead in Florida this weekend.

The first time a road-course layout was used for a big sportscar race at the predominantly oval venue was in 1998, when Mercedes team-mates Bernd Schneider/Mark Webber and Klaus Ludwig/Ricardo Zonta arrived locked in a battle for the championship with two races remaining.

"It was a tough season," remembers Zonta. "All year the team was pushing for the number-one car because Schneider was the champion. But with a few races left, Klaus and I were in with a good chance, so we pushed really hard to get equal treatment – especially Klaus – and we got it, so it was all to play for.

"We were behind in the points and knew that we had to win both of the last two races to become the champions."

The Brazilian made a good start, putting his CLK-LM on pole and then leading the opening hours. But he lost time when he overruled his crew and remained on slicks after a sudden

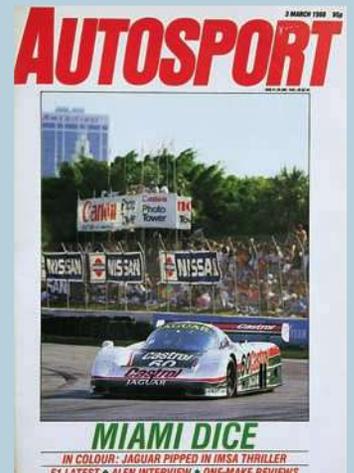
rainshower doused the circuit, and was then forced to make an extra stop to belatedly fit rain tyres. He charged back at Webber, only to take a trip across the grass.

"There were some nervous moments," Zonta recalls. "We didn't use the left side of the oval back then, and the turn off the oval was very dangerous with a low kerb. A Porsche [Sandy Grau's Zakspeed 911 GT1] had a big crash in practice, so you had to be so careful. We'd done a 24-hour test there, but had put cones at that section to keep us away from the kerbs."

It was Webber who made the crucial error of the race, spinning away his lead on slick tyres on a drying surface once most of the field had changed back. That allowed Ludwig, who had now relieved Zonta of driving duties, to seize the advantage and take victory.

With Schneider/Webber slipping back to fourth by the flag, the German-Brazilian pairing found themselves in the championship lead, and the title duly came when they scored Mercedes' record-breaking 11th straight victory at Laguna Seca the following weekend. 🏆

THIS WEEK IN...



MARCH 3 1988

THE JAGUAR of Martin Brundle/John Nielsen took pride of place on our cover, but failed to win the second round of the IMSA GTP Championship in Miami. Nielsen lost the lead to the Dyson Porsche 962C of James Weaver/Price Cobb – which was sporting an odd-looking nose wing – in traffic with 15 minutes remaining. A desperate attempt out of the final corner left Nielsen just 0.004s short at the finish.

Nigel Mansell gave the new lowline Williams FW11C its maiden run at a 'secret location', the car's Judd engine clearly visible to the rear (below).

The F1 driver market was in a buoyant state, with Stefan Johansson joining Rene Arnoux at Ligier. The Swede was also closing in on a deal to race a Sauber-Mercedes in the World Sports-Prototype Championship.



NEXT WEEK



McLaren hosts the new battle of Britain, but
WHO'LL WIN?
Mark Hughes on Jenson v Lewis
On sale Mar 11

PLUS
The big questions for F1 2010; IndyCar champ Franchitti defends title

HARRY KALLSTROM

■ Safari Rally ■ April 19-23, 1973 ■ Datsun 1800SS ■ Losing on a tie-break



Slow, old 1800SS was unfancied even by Datsun

THERE WAS A special atmosphere at the Safari that year. After winning the event in 1970 and '71, but failing to gain the hat-trick the year after, Datsun had a score to settle.

Our main opponents were the Fords, but they were unlucky. Timo Makinen and Hannu Mikkola both rolled, while Roger Clark had steering trouble. The works Porsche of Sobieslaw Zasada rolled and Bjorn Waldegard had gearbox problems.

Datsun had split its forces – Rauno Aaltonen, Edgar Herrmann and Shekhar Mehta were in big, powerful 240Z sportscars, while Tony Fall and I had slow, old 1800SS saloons.

We had very few problems and moved to the top of the leaderboard after Clark retired. If you treated the 1800 smoothly and nicely, it was no problem, but being gentle was maybe why we lost the event. It wasn't far from the end of the rally back in Nairobi when we went into a control just off an asphalt road, but I couldn't restart up the murrum hill afterwards

"It took four hours before the stewards decided the winner should be Shekhar Mehta. So far as we were concerned, we were the moral winners"

because the tyres were worn out.

We tried almost everything. My co-driver Claes Billstam was standing on the rear bumper, jumping up and down. Eventually we did what we should have done originally – reverse back past the control to take a flying run.

That one problem allowed Shekhar to take three minutes

off us, and he'd already saved time by taking a minute penalty for damaging his wing rather than lose more time by repairing it.

When we arrived at the finish in Nairobi it was the first and only time a manufacturers' world championship rally had resulted in a tie. It took four hours before the stewards decided the winner

should be Shekhar, not me. So far as we were concerned, we were the moral winners considering the types of car we had each been driving.

I've been haunted by thoughts of why we let Mehta get so close to us. After changing a puncture we were so hot, we stopped for a Coke. On another occasion there were so many people at a time control that Claes lost a minute trying to find the officials.

This rally came at a critical period in my career. My surprise that I could even finish with a car that our team had regarded with suspicion, let alone come within an ace of winning outright, made this the most memorable event of my life. ❧

Originally published on July 27, 1988

IN PROFILE



SWEDE HARRY Kallstrom began rallying in 1957 and would work his way through the ranks to become a works driver at international level for BMW, Renault, Lancia and Datsun. He won a host of high-profile events, including the RAC Rally in 1969 and '70, and also took rallying's biggest prize at the time, the European Championship, in '69. His last major victory (and lone WRC win) came on the Acropolis Rally in '76, after which he retired to become a forestry worker. He died in 2009 aged 70.

NEXT WEEK

Martin SCHANICHE



DAYTONA: UP FOR IT?



DEREK JOHNSTON CERTAINLY WAS!

Derek, the 2009 Radical UK Cup Champion, won the 2010 Sunoco Rolex 24 At Daytona Challenge, drove the #77 Doran Racing Ford Dallara in the 2010 Rolex 24 At Daytona® against some of the world's top drivers taking the chequered flag and the car to 10th in the DP class.

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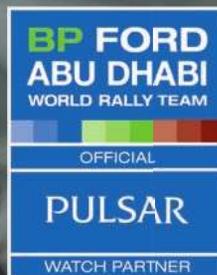
The Sunoco Rolex 24 At Daytona Challenge is provided by Daytona International Speedway and promoted by Anglo American Oil Company Ltd.

* including flights, hotel and pre-race testing



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