



MALAYSIAN GP PREVIEW
DC's view: McLaren will be
Red Bull's most serious rival



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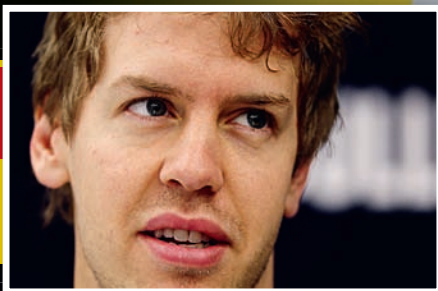
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Brands double fires
reigning champ to
the top of the charts

"It means a lot -
Andy Rouse was a
hero of mine"



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Vettel and his
love of F1



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Why Ferrari
must deliver
this weekend



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“The one-word answers that you guys get are going to be hilarious. I might come in here for the first session”

JEFF GORDON IS AMUSED AT THE PROSPECT OF KIMI RAIKKONEN FACING THE NASCAR MEDIA

8½

Number of manufacturers represented in BTCC opener at Brands Hatch. We can't quite count that fleeting Audi glimpse as a whole, but there'll be more as 2011 progresses.

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FIA HISTORIC FORMULA ONE



The European Formula One season kicks off at Hockenheim on April 15th.

Sebastian, Lewis and Fernando won't be on the grid but 20 historic cars will be.

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POLE POSITION

Well done Jason Plato on a Rouse-ing record



CONGRATULATIONS TO JASON

Plato on breaking Andy Rouse's long-held record of British Touring Car Championship race wins. Given the form he and his Chevrolet Cruze showed at Brands Hatch last weekend, the bar will be raised well above the 62 wins he currently has to his name by the end of the season.

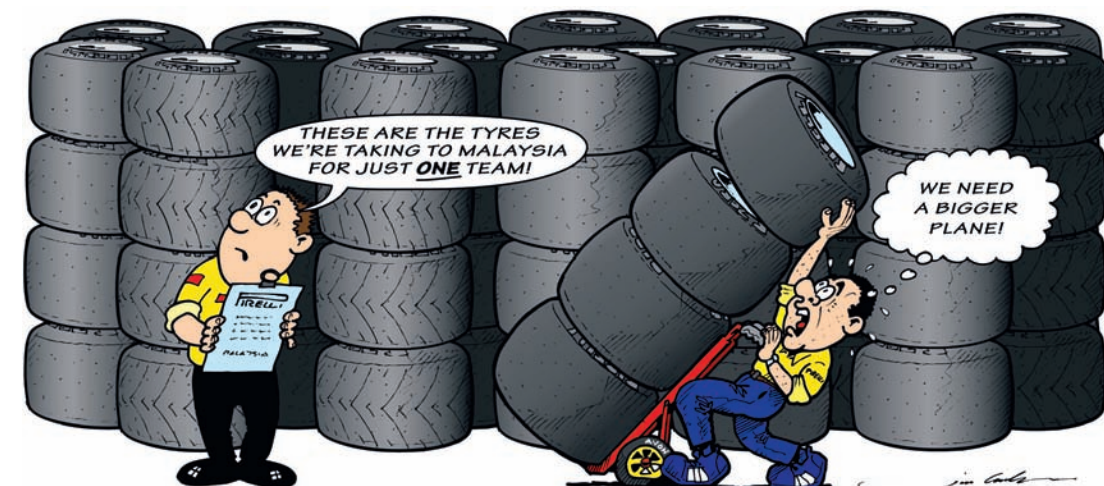
Another driver with a phenomenal wins record is Michael Schumacher. But despite the pre-season optimism of the German and his Mercedes team, the Australian GP was a massive disappointment for them, and Schumacher was a long way off his 92nd Formula 1 victory.

The Mercs did show prodigious straight-line speed, and this should serve them well in this weekend's Malaysian GP at Sepang. Ferrari also needs to get a strong result, after looking like Red Bull's closest challenger in testing.

Ferrari blamed its underperformance in Melbourne on not getting heat into the tyres. F1 won't go to a hotter race this year, so anything short of victory in Malaysia will not bode well for Fernando Alonso and his title hopes.

Andrew van de Burgt, editor

BAMBER'S WEEK





NASCAR

Five-hundred laps go like a blur

Our prolific American snapper Mike Levitt goes all pop-art on us with this spectacular offering from last weekend's NASCAR Sprint Cup round on the historic half-mile Martinsville 'paperclip' in Virginia. Greg Biffle leads Jeff Gordon and the rest in a race won by Kevin Harvick.

Picture: Levitt/LAT



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Ferrari needs Malaysian fightback

The Prancing Horse needs to prove it can take the fight to Red Bull after unexpected slow start. By EDD STRAW

Ferrari's performance in the Malaysian Grand Prix will be a key indicator of whether it is strong enough to challenge Red Bull for the world championship.

The Scuderia endured a difficult start to the season, with Fernando Alonso and Felipe Massa finishing fourth and seventh respectively in Australia. Despite Ferrari being Red

Bull's nearest rivals during pre-season testing, Alonso was almost 1.5 seconds off Sebastian Vettel's pole-position pace. The team's technical director Aldo Costa admitted that he was surprised by Vettel's speed, saying, "we expected to be much closer".

Difficulties in getting the Pirelli tyres up to temperature affected

both Massa and, to a lesser extent, Alonso in Australia. But with the track likely to be well over 50C at Sepang, that can't be used as an excuse this weekend.

Ferrari team boss Stefano Domenicali

added: "The main thing is that we need to make sure that we come back in Malaysia."

QUALIFYING PACE KEY

Alonso's race pace in Australia was strong enough to challenge the McLarens, even though it is unlikely that the Spaniard could have troubled Vettel upfront.

A bad start from fifth on the grid dropped the Spaniard to ninth on the first lap, but Domenicali believes that a strong qualifying and first lap would have transformed his team's results in Melbourne.

"If he had had a clean start, then the race would have been totally different," said Domenicali. "After finishing the first lap in ninth, he drove a fantastic race and was able to, also due to the strategy, fight for the podium."

Ferrari's tyre temperature problems in qualifying meant that

it was forced to use soft tyres even during Q1, meaning that both drivers had a maximum of one set of option rubber to use in the top 10 shootout. Track temperatures in Malaysia should prevent this, while the car being gentle on its tyres could also open up the possibility of making one pitstop fewer than Red Bull in what is expected to be a three or even four-stop race. As Sepang is a more aero-dependent circuit, this weekend will also give a more accurate impression of where Ferrari is in the competitive order.

Alonso admitted that he was unhappy with the pace of the car in Melbourne and accepted that Red Bull was well ahead.

"The gap in qualifying was exaggerated," said Alonso of Ferrari's pace in Australia. "But it's obvious that we have work to do. We need to grow because we are behind on pure performance and we



Domenicali can't afford title near-miss

CAR ISSUE BEHIND WEBBER'S WOES



Webber's car will be "rectified" for Sepang

Red Bull has blamed Mark Webber's disappointing performance during the Australian Grand Prix weekend on car problems.

The team changed numerous parts on his RB7, including the nose and suspension components, ahead of the race after Webber qualified over eight-tenths of a second off team-mate Sebastian Vettel. But the Australian continued to struggle on race day, for rear-end grip in particular. It is believed that the chassis itself was not the problem.

Team principal Christian Horner told AUTOSPORT: "We found a few problems with Mark's car after the grand prix, however we are unable to quantify what these would translate to in actual lap time. The issues will all be rectified on Mark's car ahead of the Malaysian Grand Prix."

Horner also confirmed that Red Bull heads to Malaysia hoping to use its KERS system, which it did not use during qualifying and the race in Australia because of reliability concerns.

"We will test it on Friday and will then make a decision," he added.

Alonso has admitted Sepang will be crucial

"We need to grow because we are behind on pure performance.

We expected more after testing"

FERNANDO ALONSO

definitely expected more after the winter tests because we were never able to fight to win [in Australia]."

MORE PRESSURE FOR MASSA

Massa's disappointing start in Australia, where he finished ninth on the road before the exclusion of the Saubers, again puts his performances under scrutiny.

The Brazilian has a poor record at Sepang. Despite taking two pole positions his best finishes are two fifth places in 2006 and '07. He

came into this year upbeat that the change to Pirelli rubber would turn around his fortunes, after he blamed last year's Bridgestones for his qualifying woes.

In Australia, Massa was six-tenths of a second off Alonso and was passed easily by his team-mate during the race. He needs a strong performance in Sepang to boost his chances of being given a run at the world championship rather than having to remain as the team's perceived number-two driver.

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

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Despite the expectation after testing that Ferrari would start the season as Red Bull's closest rival, the Italian outfit's underwhelming performance dipped under the radar in Australia. With McLaren grabbing headlines by turning its pre-season disaster into second place and Mercedes qualifying two seconds off the pace, the troubles in the red corner were overshadowed.

The stakes are sky-high for Ferrari. Last year, the team performed admirably to get to within one badly-timed pitstop of the championship after squandering points left, right and centre in the first half of the season. But even without such profligate behaviour, on Melbourne form Fernando Alonso doesn't have the machinery to stockpile the early-season points that would have made such a difference in 2010.

That's why Ferrari's speed in Malaysia is so important. A mundane fifth place and over a second a lap off the pace won't do – but even a double DNF could constitute a positive weekend if the prancing horses are within striking distance of Red Bull in qualifying.

The pressure at Ferrari must be immense. Stefano Domenicali leads his troops impressively, but if Luca di Montezemolo's must-win diktat is not fulfilled, the team principal risks becoming the scapegoat.

Ferrari used to set the standard in F1. But, like McLaren, it may now have to face the fact that Red Bull is the new benchmark.



Spotlight will be firmly on Ferrari

ROLL OF HONOUR

Ferrari is by far the most successful constructor in the Malaysian Grand Prix, winning five of the 12 races held at Sepang since 1999. This is more than the next two on the list combined, with McLaren and Renault winning two apiece

Ferrari (5) • McLaren (2) • Renault (2) • Williams (1) • Brawn (1) • Red Bull (1)



Schumacher gave Irvine win in 1999

Ferrari didn't expect to fight in the midfield





Perez was king of tyre management

Tyres set to play bigger role

Demands of Sepang layout combined with Malaysian temperatures will put more emphasis on race strategy

Tyre strategy is set to be a key factor in Sunday's Malaysian Grand Prix, with degradation expected to be significantly higher than it was in Australia last month.

The combination of a track configuration that did not heavily load tyres and track temperature that was consistently in the 20-28C range meant that most teams opted for two stops in Australia, with only a minority opting for the widely-

anticipated three. But higher track temperatures and the number of corners with larger lateral loads should work the Pirellis significantly harder in Malaysia. This will accelerate both degradation and wear, forcing more stops and placing a larger premium on drivers to preserve their rubber.

The teams have yet to run with Pirellis at such high temperatures, despite testing for two days in Abu

Dhabi last November. This means that Malaysia is set to be at the more extreme end of the degradation spectrum than the teams have previously experienced.

Pirelli motorsport director Paul Hembery told AUTOSPORT: "There are so many variables and all of the tracks are different. That will conjure up all sorts of strategy variations. There are some places where we will be up around four stops – Malaysia will probably be one of those – and there will be others where it will be a two- or three-stop strategy."

As Sauber proved in Australia with Sergio Perez, who completed only one stop after starting on hards and then running the softs for the final 38 laps on a rubbered-in track, there is a big advantage to be gained by making fewer stops. But there are places at Sepang where it will be more difficult to preserve the rubber through smooth throttle application without losing significant amounts of time.

Perez's strategy, for example, was possible partly because of the Mexican rookie's very smooth

driving style in a car that is inherently easy on its tyres. Hembery believes that Sauber's tyre advantage could set up further strong finishes for the Swiss outfit.

"We saw in winter testing that the Sauber was very good on its tyres," he said. "We saw some good data from that car and if they can keep going they have some good potential there. Perez's smooth driving style also helped a lot."

Making fewer pitstops at Sepang offers a major time advantage. Time loss for a stop, not including time in the pitbox itself, is around 20s when you factor in accelerating when rejoining the track. This means that anyone making four stops will lose close to a minute-and-a-half.

Malaysia could also produce Pirelli's first wet race, with long-range forecasts promising rain at the weekend. Teams have had limited running in the wet and are still unsure of what the changeover points will be between wet, intermediate and slick rubber – another factor that could contribute to an unpredictable race on Sunday.



Looking after rear tyres will be vital

Sauber: I won't sell team again

EPONYMOUS FORMULA 1 TEAM

owner Peter Sauber insists that he has no plans to sell the team for a second time.

Sauber re-took control to save the team he started in 1970 from closure after BMW withdrew from the sport in 2009. Despite not having planned to return to the role of active team principal, Sauber intends to retain ownership in the long-term.

"Currently, I hold 100 per cent of the team and have no intention to sell it," he told AUTOSPORT. "This is important to maintain stability."

The 67-year-old is confident that further reduction in team expenditure under the FOTA resource-restriction agreement in 2012 will help his outfit to become more competitive.

"The team is a good size and there

is still room to add to it in terms of the RRA," he said. "So we can expand if we have strategic reasons to do so."

"Resource restructuring measures are in our favour. In comparison with the bigger teams, we can become more competitive because we are used to smaller resources."

 **P38 SAVING SAUBER**



Sauber plans to stay put in F1

Vettel open over future



Vettel's happy at Red Bull – for now

SEBASTIAN VETTEL HAS

hinted that he could finish his career with a team other than Red Bull, despite committing his medium-term future to the world title-winning squad.

Vettel signed a contract extension just prior to the Australian Grand Prix that will keep him at Red Bull until at least 2014, but the 23-year-old said that he remained open to racing elsewhere.

"Right now I don't think about these things," he told

AUTOSPORT. "Everything is very good. If the day came where the car was not good enough, or I did not feel happy... the relationship with the team and Red Bull has always been so open that I think I know their targets and they know my targets. They probably would not stand in the way if they did not match one day. But I am very, very happy where I am."

 **P32 INTERVIEW**

ROSSI DEMONSTRATES LOTUS. NO, NOT VALENTINO!

Formula Renault 3.5 driver Alex Rossi drove a Team Lotus F1 car during a street demo in the Malaysian city of Putrajaya last weekend. American Rossi was one of seven drivers signed to Lotus's junior driver scheme last week



THIS WEEK IN F1



RED BULL Team principal Christian Horner has distanced his team from a move for Lewis Hamilton, whose McLaren contract expires at the end of next year. "He has a multi-year contract with McLaren and I envisage that he'll be there for a while yet," said Horner.



McLAREN The floor problem that Lewis Hamilton suffered during the Australian Grand Prix has been put down to damage rather than a failure. "It seems like the bond between the bib and the chassis was damaged," said Hamilton.



FERRARI Ferrari Driver Academy members Raffaele Marciello and Brandon Maisano tested an F3 car at Fiorano last week. Also running was Brazilian Fiat Formula Futura champion Nicolas Costa, who recently joined the scheme.



MERCEDES Ross Brawn believes the manner in which the team bounces back from its poor start in Australia, where the car was two seconds off the pace in qualifying, will show its strength. "How we respond to the disappointment will be a true measure of our team," he said.



RENAULT Modified front and rear wings will be among a package of car upgrades that the Enstone-based team will introduce in Malaysia. Technical director James Allison hopes that the improvements will be worth "several" tenths.



WILLIAMS Technical director Sam Michael is confident that the transmission problems that affected both cars during the Australian Grand Prix have been solved. The team has also made modifications to its KERS system.



SAUBER The Swiss team chose not to push on with its appeal against the exclusion of Sergio Perez and Kamui Kobayashi from the Australian Grand Prix. The decision was made once it became clear that a manufacturing error was to blame for the illegal rear wings.



LOTUS The High Court hearing of the Team Lotus versus Group Lotus case has concluded. The judge, Mr Justice Peter Smith, is expected to consider the evidence for around four weeks before issuing his verdict.



HRT A major car upgrade for the Spanish Grand Prix will allow the team to get ahead of fellow former new teams Lotus and Virgin, according to team owner Jose Ramon Carabante.



VIRGIN Timo Glock has no concerns about fitness heading to the Malaysian Grand Prix, one of the toughest driver challenges on the calendar, despite losing three weeks of his pre-season training after having his appendix removed. "The lower muscles are just a bit unused," he said. "It shouldn't be a problem."



PIRELLI Teams will be given two extra sets of tyres for use in free practice on Friday at Sepang this weekend. The extra sets are being distributed to enable Pirelli the chance to evaluate potential future compounds.



SERIOUS HEAD PROTECTION

WELL DONE VITALY

to be the first Russian driver on podium in F1 history! Vitaly Petrov hit 3rd spot on the podium in Melbourne during the first race of the season. Congratulations!



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Straight talk David Coulthard

13-time GP winner and 2001 world title runner-up

DC is so keen ahead of this weekend's Malaysian GP that he's been turning laps of the track already. He expects some different results from what we saw in Australia a fortnight ago

I was at Sepang circuit on Monday, filming for AMG, and as I drove out on track a smile immediately came on my face. It's easy to forget what a great racetrack this is. When you ask drivers for their favourite circuits, you wouldn't expect too many 'Sepang' replies, but it's got undulation, blind crests and a couple of really meaty high-speed corners.

There's nothing quite like hanging on the edge at sixth gear in a Formula 1 car to feel the tightening of one's buttocks and to focus your mind. It's a beautiful



DC hopes there's loads of overtaking, like here in '08

thing, and it's what grand prix cars are built for.

It's an absolute joy to drive Sepang's high-speed sections, and we'll see the drivers truly earn their corn this weekend as the heat and humidity are draining.

PIC: STALEY/LAT

QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED

I presume that tyres will remain the biggest talking point of this weekend. Melbourne actually calmed the waters, and in some ways confused them with Sergio Perez completing the race on one stop in his Sauber. But Melbourne has never been a true form-setter for the season, and degradation will be a larger factor on a more regular circuit with a higher track temperature.

Although we've got the same hard/soft tyre combination, I'm expecting different results from what we saw in Australia. The new DRS moveable wing system was an intriguing development for Martin Brundle and me to describe on the BBC during the opening race, because we know that our audience aren't all AUTOSPORT-reading aficionados so we had to explain a lot. The nature of Melbourne's last corner meant the DRS wasn't as effective as people hoped (or feared!).

In Malaysia the deployment zone will be on the start/finish straight, so there should be good scope to get within 1sec on the back straight – the previous corner is third gear and not too aero-affected. On the start/finish itself, there is room to defend and attack – it's not too dusty off-line and there is plenty of space for drivers to take a decision and run with it all the way to the braking zone. I think it'll produce some interesting situations as Turn 1 is a long corner, so cars can run two-wide without getting spat off the track.

RED BULL'S KERS QUANDARY

The post-race revelation that Red Bull didn't run KERS in Oz proved that if you're not lacking three-tenths of raw car performance, and your rivals don't optimise their starts, then you save yourself a big reliability concern. It's obvious that Red Bull's eyes were on getting to the chequered flag, and that scoring serious points early doors was worth giving up the laptime benefit KERS gives you.

It was a surprise to see McLaren that close to Red Bull after a mixed pre-season and we know its development rate has been pretty impressive, so on a poll of one event McLaren looks like Red Bull's most serious challenger.

As surprising as it was to see Lewis knocking on Seb's door in that first stint, it was also a shock to see Ferrari struggling quite so badly by comparison. Its testing form didn't suggest that lack of pace, but it highlights the old maxim of different track, different conditions, different day in history. In Malaysia I would expect to see Ferrari a lot closer.

The pleasant surprises in Melbourne were the pace of the Saubers – before their disqualification – and Vitaly Petrov's podium finish. We must remember that Petrov was 30s behind Vettel, and that's a fair old gap at the end of a grand prix. It highlights the divide between a mid-grid competitor and being in with a shout of winning a race, but a strong performance from him nonetheless. 🏁

“In Malaysia I would expect to see Ferrari a lot closer”

F1 2011 is about to heat up

Round two at Malaysia's popular Sepang circuit will be tough on drivers and cars

It seems only yesterday that Sepang was a newcomer to F1, but this weekend's GP will be the 13th at a track that has become very popular with drivers and fans over the years. Why? Because it's a track that combines overtaking opportunity with driver challenge, as well as the added problem of being held in very hot and horribly humid conditions.

Malaysia is one of those places

where venturing beyond the realms of air conditioning is an uncomfortable experience and although there is no such thing as an unfit F1 driver in 2011, those at the lower end of the fitness spectrum will find the going very tough. It's tough for cars too. Lewis Hamilton points out that "you need a very stable rear end of the car" to thrive at Sepang.

"It's an awesome track," says Jaime Alguersuari, one of the

stars of last year's race after overtaking Nico Hulkenberg around the outside of the super-fast Turn 5.

"It's wide and there are so many places that you can overtake – on the outside or inside. It's not only the slow corners, but you can also make a move on the outside of Turn 5 because there's a lot of grip."

 **P18 THE EXPERTS' VIEW**

KEY: FITNESS

HEIKKI KOVALAINEN

"It is a big challenge and you need to take it seriously. You get to Malaysia as early as possible – I got there the Monday after Australia to acclimatise. It's one of the toughest races so you need to be prepared, although most of the fitness work has been done over the winter. If you've done that right, it's not much harder than any other race and certainly not to the point where it affects your driving. It's hot and humid, but it's not over the limit, although last year was probably the first time I felt really comfortable there."



KAMUI KOBAYASHI

"The temperature will be very high in Malaysia and that will make a big difference. It's not only for the driver as I expect the tyre degradation to be significantly higher so this might result in some different strategies."



RUBENS BARRICHELLO

"We all work hard in training to be ready, but it is really hard. I once lost 3.2kg during the race, so you need to have yourself together. It's one of the hardest races on the calendar but I enjoy the challenge."



BALLSY CORNER

TURNS 5/6

The fast, downhill left/right combination of Turn 5/6 is Sepang's signature corner. Taken in fifth gear, it is a huge challenge for both car and driver, demanding commitment, downforce and stability for the change of direction. "You don't lose a huge amount of time by getting it right or wrong, but it's great to drive," says Rubens Barrichello.



CLASSIC MOMENT

2003: DAWN OF A NEW ERA

The 2003 grand prix was a momentous race in Formula 1 history, marking a key moment in the careers of two drivers who would go on to be among



the best in the sport. Aged just 21 years and 236 days, Spaniard Fernando Alonso, in only his second race for Renault, became the youngest pole-position starter. On race day, McLaren driver Kimi Raikkonen, who was only 23 years and 157 days, took his maiden Formula 1 victory. It made the Finn the second-youngest to win a world championship grand prix and it showed the changing of the guard was underway.

TRACK GUIDE

NUMBER OF LAPS

56

CIRCUIT

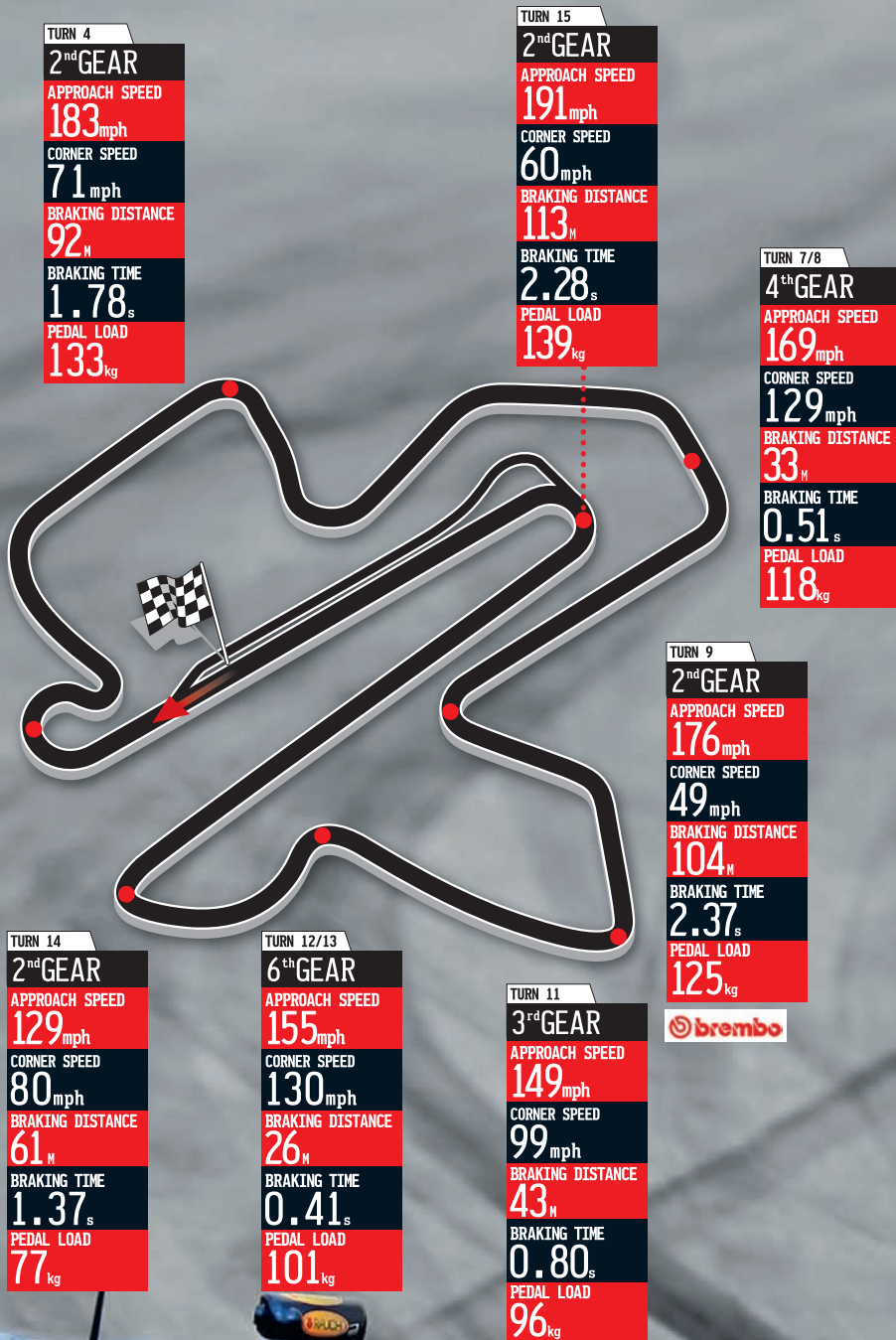
3.44m

LAP RECORD

1m34.223s



JUAN PABLO MONTAÑA (2004)



brembo

F1 set for Asian invasion

Here's more of the lowdown for this weekend's stop-off in Malaysia



➔ **P19 WEEKEND TOPICS**

LIVE TV AND RADIO LISTINGS

■ FRIDAY APRIL 8

0255-0435 Free practice 1 LIVE (BBC red button and online)

0655-0835 Free practice 2 LIVE (BBC red button and online)

■ SATURDAY APRIL 9

0555-0705 Free practice 3 LIVE (BBC red button and online)

0800-1030 Qualifying LIVE (BBC1 & Radio 5 Live and online)

■ SUNDAY APRIL 10

0800-1115 Grand Prix LIVE (BBC1 & Radio 5 Live and online)

2010 POLE POSITION

MARK WEBBER



2010 WINNER

SEBASTIAN VETTEL



TYRE ALLOCATION

HARD



SOFT



ALL PICS: LAT

SETTING THE PACE

Alonso 101.730

Perez 102.733

Maldonado 103.315

Button 101.496

Massa 102.478

Sutil 103.252

Hamilton 100.931

Petrov 102.057

Buemi 102.817

di Resta 103.843

Vettel 100.000

Webber 101.037

Kobayashi 102.246

Alguersuari 103.082

Despite only winning the season opener by 23 seconds, Vettel's single-lap dominance in Australia was mighty. He was close to one per cent faster than the next fastest driver, Lewis Hamilton.

Rosberg 102.265

Schumacher 102.913

Heidfeld 103.851

Barrichello 103.281

100%



LAST YEAR

VETTEL STEALS IT FROM WEBBER

SEBASTIAN VETTEL cruised to his first win of the season after he snatched the lead from team-mate and polesitter Mark Webber at the start. Webber was dejected after leaving the door open for Vettel at the start. Ferrari and McLaren had to repair the damage of bad calls in rain-affected qualifying. Lewis Hamilton put in a charge, although he did come under fire for weaving while defending from Vitaly Petrov. He had to settle for sixth when he was unable to pass Adrian Sutil. Just behind them, Felipe Massa's quiet run to seventh allowed him to leapfrog Ferrari team-mate Fernando Alonso as points leader, after the Spaniard suffered an engine failure two laps from the flag. **RESULTS:** 1 Sebastian Vettel; 2 Mark Webber; 3 Nico Rosberg; 4 Robert Kubica; 5 Adrian Sutil; 6 Lewis Hamilton.



RACE ODDS

Vettel	11/8
Hamilton	4/1
Alonso	5/1
Webber	5/1
Button	8/1
Rosberg	25/1
Massa	25/1
Schumacher	33/1
Petrov	33/1
Heidfeld	66/1
Barrichello	100/1
Kobayashi	150/1
Sutil	200/1
Perez	200/1
Buemi	200/1
di Resta	200/1
Alguersuari	300/1
Maldonado	300/1
Trulli	500/1
Kovalainen	500/1
d'Ambrosio	500/1
Glock	500/1
Karthikeyan	500/1
Liuzzi	500/1

Sebastian Vettel's

Melbourne win knocks all value out of backing him, although Mark Webber at 5/1 is reasonable for arguably the second favourite. Nick Heidfeld at 14/1 for a podium seems worth a shout at a track where he has a second and a third place to his name, and where his knack for strong results in wet races could prove valuable.

THE DRIVER

LUCAS DI GRASSI

thedriver@autosport.com



MALAYSIA IS the worst nightmare for an F1 driver.

It is just so unbearably hot that a normal person wouldn't last 10 minutes inside the cockpit. I remember seeing my sweat evaporating from my overalls in the garage during free practice last year.

The ambient temperature is 35C. You're wearing four or five-layer fireproof underwear, plus overalls, balaclava, helmet and gloves. Your seat is a thin plate of carbon surrounded by very hot devices, such as the ECU, which is far hotter than your laptop battery, and you are between the 120C radiators and KERS.

While driving, your heart rate goes up to 170bpm (the same as running at 9-10mph), and you have to keep focused for 90 minutes. You want a drink? Well, the drinks bottle is like hot tea in just 20 minutes. Add to that a highly technical track, with lots of high-speed corners generating 3-4g.

But the most important point this weekend is the tyres. If, as Pirelli expects, the tyre doesn't last as long as in Melbourne because of the heat, the drivers will have to be smart to adapt their style to minimise tyre wear without compromising performance.

I would like to use my last lines to say that motorsport lost an important person on Sunday. My dearest friend, Gustavo Sondermann, died in an accident at Interlagos. Rest in peace, my friend.

TW STEEL LUCAS DI GRASSI



GARY ANDERSON
Technical consultant

SUSPENSION

The circuit is relatively smooth, so a stiff set-up will not compromise you too much, other than causing the inside-front tyre to lock up as the road drops away into Turn 1. Traction is especially important off Turns 14 and 15, as they are very slow corners followed by very long straights.

DOWNFORCE

With the introduction of the adjustable wing (DRS), the downforce level required will be more difficult to set

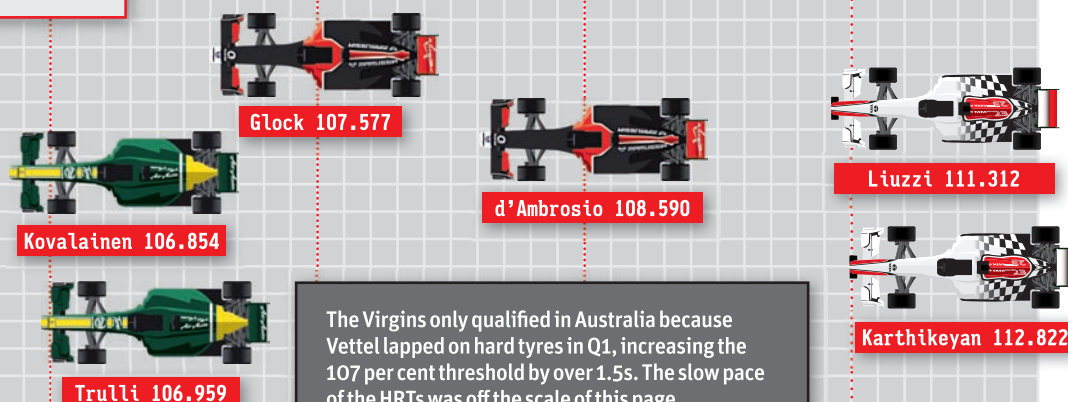
than usual. There are seven good straights at Sepang, so the DRS will make a huge difference to laptime, possibly by around two seconds. The leading car will need to run a lower level of downforce in the race to make sure it can at least try to defend.

GEAR RATIOS

In the Australian GP, most teams geared to hit the rev limiter when the DRS was used on the start/finish straight in the race. But because of the number of straights at Sepang, they will not want to spend too long on the limiter during qualifying, when the use of the DRS is permitted anywhere around the lap. For this reason I would expect cars to use ratios that hit the limiter a lot less, so we will see some very high top speeds.

AUTOSPORT technical correspondent Gary Anderson is compiling an index, created by taking each driver's percentage deficit to the outright pace over the season, using

their best laps from each grand prix weekend. This is how they stand after the Australian Grand Prix. The theoretical absolute pace is expressed as 100.



The Virgins only qualified in Australia because Vettel lapped on hard tyres in Q1, increasing the 107 per cent threshold by over 1.5s. The slow pace of the HRTs was off the scale of this page.

107%



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10th Apr	Scottish Championship Car Racing (SMRC)	
17th Apr	Hot Hatch Car Trackday	
24th Apr	Knockhill Motor Sports Club Bike Racing	NEW
27th Apr	Stock Car Summer Series (Wed - 6pm)	
1st May	Scottish Championship Car Racing (SMRC)	
8th May	Knockhill Motor Sports Club Bike Racing	NEW
15th May	Modified Live - The Scottish Spectacular featuring European Drifting & Time Attack	
21/22 May	The Official Scottish Motorshow	
25th May	Stock Car Summer Series (Wed - 6pm)	
29th May	Total Vauxhall Show & Hot Hatch Trackday	NEW
4/5 June	National Classic Motorcycle Racing	
18/19 June	MCE British Superbike Championship	
22nd June	Stock Car Summer Series (Wed - 6pm)	
25th June	Knockhill Motor Sports Club Bike Racing (Sat)	NEW
26th June	Scottish Ford Live & Hot Hatch Trackday	NEW
2/3 July	SMRC & Mazda MX5 Festival	NEW
17th July	Total Jap Car Scotland & Hot Hatch Trackday	NEW
20th July	Stock Car Summer Series (Wed - 6pm)	
23/24 July	North East Motorcycle Club Bike Racing	
31st July	Scottish SpeedFair & Classic Festival	
6th Aug	Stock Car Saturday Spectacular (6pm)	
7th Aug	Hot Hatch Car Trackday	
14th Aug	Scottish Championship Car Racing (SMRC)	
17th Aug	Stock Car Summer Series (Wed - 6pm)	
21st Aug	British Drift Championship	
27/28 Aug	BMW Motorrad Central Extreme Challenge Weekend	NEW
3/4 Sept	Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship	
10th Sept	Scottish Championship Car Racing (SMRC)	
11th Sept	Streetcar Scotland & Hot Hatch Trackday	
18th Sept	British Rallycross Championship	
25th Sept	Knockhill Motor Sports Club Bike Racing	NEW
9th Oct	Scottish Championship Car Racing (SMRC)	

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MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

As our grand prix editor heads north of the equator from Australia to Malaysia, here is what he is pondering...

With the Australian Grand Prix out of the way, what are the big questions looking ahead to Malaysia this weekend?

Is the Mercedes really as quick as McLaren and Ferrari?

Among several intriguing bits of information from Australia was Merc team boss Ross Brawn's explanation of why his car was not showing anything like its final pre-season testing speed. A combination of a stall-prone rear wing and a KERS problem meant neither Nico Rosberg nor Michael Schumacher were able to get anything like the best from the car. Ross gave the distinct impression that both glitches were easily solvable, and put the car's potential deficit to Red Bull at no more than 0.8s — which is a big chunk, but would put the MGP Wo2 directly on the pace of McLaren and Ferrari.

Will the DRS wing be more effective here?

The prospect of Rosberg and Schumacher slugging it out with Fernando Alonso, Lewis Hamilton

and Jenson Button is a tantalising one, especially as the DRS wing is expected to be much more effective on the long straight down to Turn 1 here than on the somewhat shorter one of Albert Park. Although the distance allowed for the wing's stall operation isn't set to be any greater, the longer straight should still make it more powerful, as the following car will have gained more of a slipstream even before it deploys the wing.

Can Red Bull get away with not using KERS again?

Despite its huge single-lap pace advantage, the Red Bull was definitely vulnerable around the first stops in Melbourne to Hamilton, simply because its rear tyres were finished and the McLaren's weren't. Sebastian Vettel's final lap before pitting was a full 1s slower than he'd been going just a couple of laps earlier, and he admitted "the tyres were just about to fall off a cliff". If the RB7 is congenitally harder on the tyres than the opposition, might that be the real reason the team disconnected its KERS? A regular 80bhp acceleration boost, no matter that it's deployed when the car is no longer traction-limited, will quickly use up a marginal tyre's energy.

The circuit layout at Albert Park allowed Red Bull to get away with not using it, but around Sepang the car would be much more vulnerable to being passed into the final and first turns, regardless of how much quicker it is over a lap. They may, in other words, be forced to use it — and the extra tyre wear that induces may just put the RB7 in bother. That's got to be the main straw of hope for the opposition, at any rate.

Is the real Felipe Massa ever going to return?

Watching Massa in Australia was like a re-run of last year. He was unable to switch on the tyres, lacked front-end grip going into the turn, with edgy oversteer once into it, constantly trimming the grass of the run-offs. Yet in the sister car Alonso was solidly on it, as always. The Sepang track, as well as featuring a middle sector with plenty of long, fast corners, also invariably has a track temperature in the 40s, way higher than at Melbourne. The combined effect of these factors will surely allow even the Ferraris to comfortably get their tyres up to temperature — in which case Massa will not have that as a crutch. It's difficult to imagine him ever again scaling the heights of 2007 and '08, but if he is to do it he really needs to make a breakthrough this weekend.

How much pace does Renault have?

Even with a significant package of updates, it may be too big an ask to bridge the gap to Ferrari/McLaren. Vitaly Petrov qualified 1s slower than Hamilton and his race was flattered through being protected from the faster Alonso and Button by the barrier formed by the struggling Massa. Regardless, Vitaly's performance was impressively quick and error-free throughout. But no matter how much he has progressed from the rookie of last year, he is fated always to have the inevitable question hanging over him: 'Yes, but where would Kubica have put the car if Petrov can do this?' You can bet Robert himself will be thinking exactly the same, surely the best motivation for his recovery. ☒

Can anyone catch Red Bull in Malaysia?



“If the RB7 is hard on its tyres, is that why its KERS was off?”



NASCAR

TRUEX: FIRED UP AT MARTINSVILLE

Martin Truex Jr (56) and Kasey Kahne both escaped unhurt from this huge NASCAR accident at Martinsville last weekend. Truex, who triggered the accident when his throttle stuck open heading into Turn 3, later paid tribute to the SAFER barrier for allowing them to walk away.

NASCAR

NASCAR welcomes Kimi arrival

Top names back former world champion's decision to try his hand at stock car racing with Kyle Busch's team



Busch (leading) will run Kimi in Trucks

Leading NASCAR drivers have welcomed the news that Kimi Raikkonen will make his stock car racing debut in the third-tier Truck series next month.

The 2007 Formula 1 world champion will race a Toyota Tundra for the team owned by Sprint Cup star Kyle Busch, and his first race is slated for Charlotte Motor Speedway on May 20. Raikkonen took part in a two-day closed test at Gresham Motorsports Park on Monday and Tuesday to get his first

taste of the truck, and some of the sport's top names expressed their excitement at his decision to join their ranks.

"I think it's a neat situation," said Dale Earnhardt Jr. "I'm excited to see how he takes to our sport. It's kind of neat to see some of those guys [racing in Europe] having an interest in our sport because there's a big difference between the two."

Four-time Cup champion Jeff Gordon, who tried a Formula 1 car as part of a swap with Juan Pablo

Montoya at Indianapolis in 2003, said he had a lot of respect for Raikkonen's desire to try his hand at NASCAR.

"I think that's awesome — I'm a big F1 fan and I admire Kimi," he said. "I can't believe it, but I think it says a lot about NASCAR that somebody like him is considering coming here. I admire him for wanting to go Truck racing and not just jump into a Cup car — if you think you're just going to jump into a Cup car and be competitive,

you're kidding yourself."

Raikkonen will drive a second Truck alongside Busch when he makes his debut at Charlotte, with funding being brought in from the Finn's camp rather than the team. He has expressed a desire to compete in "three to five" races this year according to Busch, but the current deal only covers his debut.

"There is money backing him," said Busch. "The funds — he's responsible. I do know that there's three sponsors involved. Right now the deal is only for Charlotte."

Raikkonen's former McLaren team-mate Juan Pablo Montoya suggested that Charlotte will be a hard place for the WRC driver to make his debut. Busch agreed with that, but he also pointed out that it would provide a good first taste of NASCAR style racing.

"It will be good for him to get his feet wet," said Busch. "Throughout the run you're going to have to work on throttle modulation and lines — bottom, top and stuff like that. If he can run top 20, top 15 in his first race, that will be a success. I would like to expect that he runs well here, and maybe this can lead to a longer relationship."



P62 NASCAR REPORT

INDYCAR

Tracy rejoins the Penske fold

PAUL TRACY HAS BEEN BROUGHT

back into the Penske fold for his five-race deal in IndyCar this year after teaming up with Jay Penske, son of ultra-successful team owner Roger.

Tracy is scheduled to race at Long Beach, Texas, Toronto, Edmonton and Sears Point for Penske's Dragon squad. The partnership comes exactly 20 years after Roger Penske took Tracy out of Indy Lights and signed him to his CART team.

Tracy said: "I asked Jay what his dad thought about us teaming up and he told me Roger said: 'Oh great, the two guys who have given me the most problems in my life are getting together.'"

Penske Jr opted to continue with Dragon Racing despite partner Gil de Ferran announcing the closure of the de Ferran/Dragon Racing team last month following failed efforts to fund sponsorship for Tony Kanaan.

"We had a good platform going and we couldn't come up with the

Tracy will race for Jay Penske in 2011



funding for a full season so Gil made a decision to shut things down," said Penske. "But I wasn't ready to quit. I want to be in this series for a long time and develop a team."

Tracy hopes that he will be able to add further races to his schedule now that he has something in place to

build on and sell to sponsors.

Dragon Racing is also scheduled to contest the blue-riband Indianapolis 500 in May, although with Tracy having already signed to do that race with Dreyer & Reinbold, it will have to find another driver for its car.

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



Looking at the lap times, it's easy to criticise the new Next Generation Touring Cars for their performance at Brands Hatch, but that would be missing the point.

OK, so you could argue that the teams should have been supplied with their cars earlier, but how often do we hear of development programmes running behind? Just look at Aston Martin in LMP1...

With such little running to iron out bugs, never mind set up the cars, it's no surprise the NGTCs were off the pace (p22).

It's also worth remembering that all three were run by teams new to the championship. Even the established powerhouses would have struggled with the lack of preparation time.

There may be some philosophical issues with NGTC – just how far down the spec-parts road does a multi-make series want to go? But it's too early to tell what they can do.

The TOCA engine had trouble last year, but looked good last weekend – as did the new turbos prepared by Neil Brown (Honda) and Mountune (Arenas and Motorbase).

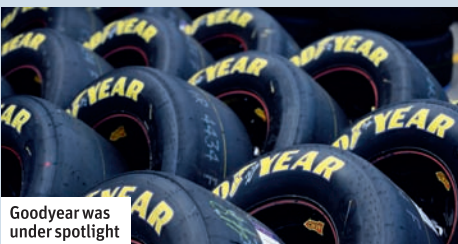
That's why series boss Alan Gow has chosen to phase in the new cars, and why we'll see S2000, turbocars, and NGTC machines racing alongside each other for at least the next two years.



Variety is king in 2011 BTCC

NASCAR

NASCAR tyres draw criticism



Goodyear was under spotlight

SPRINT CUP DRIVERS HAVE URGED GOODYEAR

to improve its tyre-testing procedures prior to introducing new compounds after another weekend marred by problems at Martinsville.

Drivers reported exceptionally high wear rates in the opening sessions, and while the top teams eventually got on top of the problem, some cars further back in the field suffered repeated failures.

Dale Earnhardt Jr was one of those who felt that more work had to be done before new compounds were put into service.

"There was a reason they had to make a change," he said. "[But] if they're not sure about what's going to happen, then we probably should have some reliable data from testing to make sure it's OK."

Four-time champion Jeff Gordon said that the problem wasn't as bad as two weeks ago at Bristol, when 1200 new tyres had to be trucked in, but that it was a concern nevertheless.

"They keep saying they're minor changes," he said. "But if you're going to make a change, I'm a fan of the test."

NASCAR

Bayne closes on All-Star deal

DAYTONA 500 WINNER TREVOR BAYNE IS CLOSE TO securing a deal to contest the invitation-only Sprint Cup All-Star race at Charlotte in May.

Bayne is only scheduled to contest 18 Cup races with the Wood Brothers team this year, and a lack of funding meant that the All-Star race was initially not part of his programme. But team co-owner Len Wood said that a sponsor was close to being finalised.

"I think we've got [a sponsor] that just popped up in the last 36 hours for the All-Star race," he told reporters at Martinsville on Friday.

Bayne's limited programme means that it will be difficult for him to finish the year in the top 35 in owner points, which would give him an automatic entry for the first five races in 2012. Wood said that finding backing for points-paying races was the main priority.

"The [non-points] All-Star Race is important," Wood said. "But if you had to pick... if it paid points, it would be more important to the end goal."



Bayne could join All-Star after all

MILESTONES



MARTIN JOINS THE 800 CLUB

Mark Martin became the eighth driver to notch up 800 starts at NASCAR's top level when he took to the track at Martinsville last weekend for Hendrick Motorsports. Richard Petty tops the list with 1185 starts.

IN BRIEF



DTM SKIPS SHANGHAI

The DTM has dropped Shanghai from its 2011 schedule, meaning that Hockenheim will host the season finale. It hopes to return to the street circuit (above) in 2012. The cancellation of this year's race was put down to a clash with the World Touring Car Championship round at Guangdong on the same weekend.

JUNQUEIRA GETS FOYT DRIVE

Bruno Junqueira has signed a deal with AJ Foyt Racing to race the team's second entry in this year's Indianapolis 500. The Brazilian, who took pole position for the race back in 2002, will join Foyt's regular driver Vitor Meira in the team.

SCHECKTER IN FOURTH KV

KV Racing has signed Tomas Scheckter to drive its one-off fourth car in this year's Indianapolis 500. The car will be run in conjunction with newly-formed team SH Racing, which announced a partnership with KV last October.

CHAVES LEADS THE WAY

GP3 rookie Gabby Chaves set the pace over three days of testing at Silverstone last week. The Addax driver led the way from fellow newcomer Lewis Williamson, while Michael Christensen was third.

MONRAS TOPS F2 TEST

Formula 2 newcomer Miki Monras topped the times in testing at Snetterton last week. The GP3 convert led the way from F2 returnees Will Bratt, Tobias Hegewald and Alex Brundle.

RICCIARDO TO SKIP OPENER

Red Bull Formula 1 reserve driver Daniel Ricciardo (below) will miss the first round of the Formula Renault 3.5 season at Motorland Aragon next weekend. The Australian will instead be driving in the first F1 free practice session ahead of the Chinese Grand Prix that weekend.



BTCC

No concern over NGTC cars

BTCC chief relaxed despite cars running to new regs hitting trouble on first weekend

British Touring Car boss Alan Gow is not concerned about the performance of the Next Generation Touring Cars, despite a troubled debut for the new machines at Brands Hatch.

Three NGTC cars appeared last weekend, the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Avensis of Tony Hughes, the similar car of Frank Wrathall's Dynojet squad, and the Audi A4 of Rob Austin Racing.

Supply issues meant the Audi, due to be driven by David Pinkney, did not make it out on track for a competitive session (see top right). Both Toyotas hit various technical issues.

Wrathall was the quickest NGTC in qualifying, setting a time over three seconds slower than the polesitting turbo Honda of Matt Neal. Only Hughes recorded a finish, being last home in races two and three.

Nevertheless, Gow believes it is too early to make a judgement on the cars, which have been designed to bring down costs in the BTCC.

"I'm pleased to see them, but they're new cars and new teams so this weekend has been a test session for them," he said.

"They're doing the right thing by the fans and the championship by bringing them."

The teams, all of which had completed minimal or no running prior to Brands, were also confident the cars would improve rapidly.

BTCC rookie Hughes, who suffered oil temperature, brake vibration, and front suspension issues, said: "The engine is good, the gearbox is good and if we can sort these teething problems the potential is awesome."

Wrathall, who was making his BTCC debut after winning the Ginetta G50 Cup last year, agreed the cars have a lot to offer.

"Given that we were running with the power turned well down so as not to stress the engine, which is completely

GP2

Carlin drafts in Turvey for test

OLIVER TURVEY'S HOPES OF STAYING

in GP2 for a second season remain in doubt despite the Briton being drafted in to test for Carlin at Silverstone this week in place of Mikhail Aleshin.

The 2006 McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner has been struggling to put together a deal all winter after losing his

backing from the Racing Steps Foundation. He entered the two Asia Series rounds at the start of the year with Ocean Racing Technology, but that was one of the few deals on the grid that didn't include the main championship as well.

Carlin has parted ways with Aleshin due to the Formula Renault 3.5 champion running out of budget. AUTOSPORT understands that Turvey's test is not a precursor to a race deal at the moment, as the 24-year-old is still short of sponsorship and the team is in talks with a handful of drivers.

Team boss Trevor Carlin said that Aleshin was still working on putting his funding together, and that the team called on Turvey because of his GP2 experience and his relationship with the squad after racing for it in British F3 and Renault 3.5.

"We know Oliver extremely well and he is the perfect driver to help us progress further with the car," said Carlin. "We're still assessing all the options for our second driver for the season."

Turvey finished second in British F3 with Carlin in 2008, and took fourth in Renault 3.5 a year later with the team.



Hughes was only NGTC race finisher at Brands

new, I am pleased," he said.

"The car felt good, it was handling well given the lack of set-up time we had, and was great under braking.

"I've had a glimpse of the car's potential, which is enormous, but it's going to take some time to get up to speed. It was a difficult weekend for everyone, just as we expected."

The two-litre TOCA turbo engine is also part of the new NGTC package, and showed improved form at Brands after reliability issues in its inaugural season in 2010. Andrew Jordan qualified second in his Eurotech Racing Vauxhall Vectra, while James Nash finished second in race one on Triple 8's debut with the unit.



P58 BTCC REPORT



Turvey joined Carlin for Silverstone test



BTCC

LESSER-SEEN AUDI

Audi's return to the BTCC was delayed after supply issues meant Rob Austin Racing's A4 only made it out on track briefly before race three at Brands Hatch last weekend.

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

Supercup for Nordschleife run

THE PORSCHE SUPERCUP FIELD HAS been added to the marque's Carrera World Cup race on the fearsome Nurburgring Nordschleife later this year.

The Formula 1-support category will be added to the one-off race, which was initially set up for drivers in the manufacturer's various domestic championships. Porsche has decided to add its flagship series to the race instead of running it on the support bill of the European Grand Prix at Valencia.

Porsche motorsports director Harmut Kristen said: "With the Carrera Cup taking place on the Nordschleife, we wanted to provide another season highlight. I'm sure that this race will be an unforgettable experience."

More Porsches will race at the 'Ring



The Supercup runners will join the field of domestic racers for the six-lap race, and Porsche is predicting an entry of "up to 200" cars.

Nick Tandy, who narrowly missed out

on the Supercup and German Carrera Cup titles, backed the idea.

"I've been pushing for the Supercup to go there because it'll possibly be the best race of the year," said Tandy.

Gustavo Sonderrmann 1982-2011

EX-FORMULA RENAULT UK AND

FRenault Eurocup racer Gustavo Sonderrmann was killed in an accident at Interlagos last weekend.

The Brazilian was racing in the opening round of the Copa Chevrolet Montana series when he was pushed

wide and into a spin at the fast Cafe corner. With visibility having been reduced by poor weather conditions, Sonderrmann's car was T-boned by Pedro Boesel. The 29-year-old suffered a brain hemorrhage and fractured vertebrae.

He died a short time later in hospital.

Sonderrmann formed part of a Motaworld line-up that also featured Oliver Jarvis and Katherine Legge during the 2004 British Formula Renault 2.0 season, scoring a pole position and two podiums at Knockhill.



Confusion created a mess in the pack

LE MANS SERIES

Start crash prompts action

Controversial pile-up in LMS season opener leads to swift change in GTE points system from series organisers

A multi-car startline shunt at last weekend's Paul Ricard Le Mans Series opener has resulted in an immediate change to the points system.

The three factory-backed Porsche 911 GT3-RSs fielded by the ProSpeed, Imsa Performance and Felbermayr-Proton teams in the GTE Pro class were all put out of the race in the crash, which was caused by the green lights coming on at the start when the safety car was still on track. This resulted in a protest from the three Porsche teams, which called for the French event to be declared null and void on the grounds that the race organisers were to blame for their failure to compete.

A compromise was put forward

by the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, which sets the rules for the LMS, whereby teams competing in the GTE Pro class would be able to drop one score from the five rounds of the series. This required the unanimous agreement of all full-season entrants, which was secured late on Sunday night, long after the race had finished.

ACO sporting director Vincent

Beaumesnil said: "We had a problem at the start that was clearly not the fault of the competitors and put half the field out of the game. If we had not done something, the championship would have been as good as over for them after the first weekend."

"Everyone agreed that in the interests of the championship that this was the right thing to do. It is the common-sense solution."

ProSpeed team boss Rudi Penders said: "This is a very sporting decision. It is still advantage to the Ferrari teams [which finished 1-2-3-4], but this gives a chance to those teams that weren't able to run the race on Sunday through no fault of their own a chance to compete for the championship."

Jim McWhirter, whose JMW Motorsport team won the GTE Pro class with its new Ferrari 458 Italia, was not available for comment.

AF Corse boss Amato Ferrari, whose lead car finished second last weekend, said he would prefer not to comment on what he called a "bad situation".

The accident happened after race director Daniel Poissenot opted to start the race under yellow flags because the grid had split into two packs on the first formation lap. He described the showing of the green lights, both on the start-line gantry and the timing screens, as "clearly a mistake".



Three Porsche teams missed out in France



P60 RICARD REPORT

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LE MANS SERIES

Aston uses Ricard race for testing

ASTON MARTIN RACING HAS ADMITTED

that it was doing its "testing in public" after its new AMR-One Le Mans 24 Hours challenger made a low-key debut in the Paul Ricard 6 Hours last weekend.

The new LMP1 car arrived at the Le Mans Series opener with only three one-day tests under its belt. AMR team principal George Howard-Chappell described the race as "an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the new car".

"Hopefully people will bear with us and our new car," he said. "When we arrived here at Ricard we'd only done 500km.

"We entered the race and are booked in for two days here on Tuesday and Wednesday, so what were we going to do, test somewhere else? This gives us a chance to test in a real-world situation."

Howard-Chappell said it would be wrong to read too much into the AMR-One's lap times, which in qualifying were 5.5 seconds from the pole-winning



AMR-One underwent race test at Paul Ricard

Rebellion Lola-Toyota, because "we are being conservative with everything".

Rumours that the all-new AMR straight-six turbo engine had suffered a series of failures on the bench and in testing were rubbished by Howard-Chappell.

"At no time have there been bits of engine and oil everywhere," he said. "A

blow-up means rods out of the block and that hasn't happened."

A misfire resulted in a two-hour stop for the AMR-One in the race. It was fixed and the car continued for the final half hour.

Howard-Chappell said: "We could have kept going, but by stopping we learned something."

IN BRIEF



PEUGEOT KEEPS TESTING

Peugeot continued its Le Mans 24 Hours preparation at Paul Ricard last week. The French manufacturer put more than 30 continuous hours of running on one of its new 908 HDi coupes (above).

HAND GETS LE MANS DEAL

Joey Hand, a regular with the Rahal BMW team in the American Le Mans Series over the past three seasons, will make his Le Mans 24 Hours debut in June. The 32-year-old will be reunited with his class winning team from the Sebring 12 Hours, Andy Priaulx and Dirk Muller, aboard one of the Schnitzer-run BMW M3 GTes.

ZHUHAI CONFIRMED

The Chinese finale of the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, scheduled for the weekend of November 12-13, has been confirmed to take place at Zhuhai as expected.

KIMBER-SMITH RETURNS

Former Le Mans 24 Hours class winner Tom Kimber-Smith returned to the cockpit with an LMP2 class victory at the Le Mans Series opener at Paul Ricard on Sunday. The 26-year-old Briton, who has only raced twice over the past two years, will complete the year with Graves Motorsport alongside Karim Ojeh and Gary Chalandon.

LMS SHARES CHANGE HANDS

FIA GT1 World Championship boss Stephane Ratel and Lola Cars International owner Martin Birrane have sold their stakes in the company that owns the Le Mans Series. Its shareholders are now the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the Peter Organisation.

LUYENDYK TO RACE AT SPA

Two-time Indy 500 winner Arie Luyendyk will join the all-star cast of veterans in the United Autosports Audi line-up at the Spa 24 Hours in July. The Dutchman (below) hasn't raced regularly since 1998.



LE MANS SERIES

RML wants changes

THE RML LMP2 TEAM IS THREATENING to boycott the second round of the Le Mans Series unless the engine rules are changed.

The 2010 LMS P2 champion team claimed that last weekend's LMS opener at Paul Ricard proved that turbos such as the 2.8-litre V6 that powers the HPD chassis run by RML and Strakka are not on a level-playing field with normally-aspirated powerplants under the new production-based engine rules. RML shareholder and driver Mike Newton said that it was "unlikely that we will be at Spa if nothing changes".

"It is clear that if you punch in the numbers – restrictors, volume and boost – we come out 50-60bhp down," he added.

Newton argued that the lack of

power had safety implications, because P2 cars are now slower than GTE cars on the straights. He said that meant he and his team-mates were "having to take unacceptable risks to overtake in the corners".

HPD's rivals, Nissan and Judd, urged against hasty changes.

John Judd Jr, whose company has developed a BMW engine for LMP2, said: "We don't think there is anything wrong with the equivalence. Perhaps the HPD is not a good base engine."

Le Mans sporting director Vincent Beaumesnil explained that it was always the plan to review the equivalency after two races, the Sebring 12 Hours and Paul Ricard. His only comment was that "we and our consultants now have plenty of data to compare".

RML felt its engine was off the pace



LE MANS



Singer (right) is on board at ACO

ACO role for Singer

PORSCHE DESIGN LEGEND NORBERT

Singer is to work on the regulations for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Singer, who as senior engineer at Porsche led the design of cars such as the 935 and the 956/962, has joined the organiser of the 24 Hours, the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, as a consultant. He will be involved in the enforcement of existing rules and the formulation of future regulations.

ACO sporting director Vincent Beaumesnil said: "It is great to have someone of Norbert's experience on board at the ACO. He has huge knowledge and a fantastic approach to performance analysis."

Singer, 71, retired from Porsche in 2005 but maintained a presence in motorsport. He successfully engineered Felbermayr-Proton drivers Marc Lieb and Richard Lietz to the Le Mans Series GT2 title in 2009-10.

Singer has replaced former Renault Sport operations manager Denis Chevrier, who has joined the FIA.

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THIS WEEK...

Flashback

October 4, 1992

ROUSE TAKES HIS 60TH WIN

After equalling Andy Rouse's record tally of British Touring Car Championship wins at the end of last year, Jason Plato moved to the top of the charts on his own with two wins at Brands Hatch last weekend. Rouse's record had stood since this Silverstone victory in 1992.



TOP FIVE

BTCC race winners

1 JASON PLATO (62)

Brands Hatch double takes Plato to the top of the all-time standings.

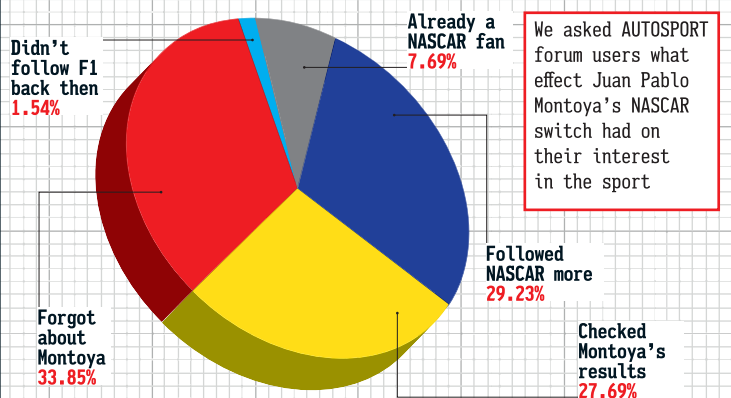
2 ANDY ROUSE (60)

Four-time champion was a dominant force during the 1970s and 1980s.

3 MATT NEAL (37)

The Midlander moves into a clear third after race-three win at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Weekly poll: JPM in NASCAR



top tweets



@KevinHarvick

Ben our swan just attacked our truck on the way to the track.



@alex_wurz

On way 2 austria for knee operation (cutting time 19.00). Usually I go 2 hospital's only after a crash or to pick up wife with a new kid.



@mwinterbottom

Got an earlier flight home from Sydney. I'm sensing a nappy change when I get home. Not mine obviously :)



@JCourtney01

Cutting the old death trap driveway out we hit the water main. Had a water feature in the middle for a while



@Elliott_Sadler

We just saw a place called "slick willie's family pool hall" how can pool hall be a family place?? Very funny



@tomasscheckter

Iracing ruined my night. I get so angry at that sim. I must look like a nutter swearing at my laptop

...NEXT WEEK



MALAYSIAN GP REPORT

F1 2011 heats up at Sepang. Can McLaren or Ferrari prevent Red Bull from repeating its 2010 one-two?

CHINESE GP PREVIEW

Back-to-back races could mean a few Shanghai surprises in F1



PLUS

World GT1 report from Zolder; full season previews for FRenault 3.5, FIA F2 and British F3 championships

ON SALE
APR 14



4 THREE-WAY TIE

Champions Alain Menu, Yvan Muller and James Thompson all have 36 wins to their names.

5 FRANK GARDNER (35)

The Australian picked up three titles in between assorted sportscar and F1 exploits.

WRC

Rally GB chiefs pick classic route

A move back to the quintessential Welsh stages for Britain's WRC qualifier is among changes to help secure future



Great Orme: proper old RAC Rally stage

Rally GB chief executive Andrew Coe says this year's route will make the event a classic adventure again – but it remains to be seen if it will be enough to save it for next season.

This year's rally is coming together against a backdrop of uncertainty for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship. Coe and his organising team must present a business plan for the future of the event to the FIA in just over three weeks in order to save Rally GB from being dropped as a world rally qualifier for the first time since 1973.

November's Rally GB will start outside Cardiff for the first time since 1999, when the crews cross the ramp in Llandudno. The ceremonial start will be followed by a run around the classic headland asphalt test, the Great Orme. The opening day will include action in further returning classic stages, Penmachno, Clocaenog and Dyfi. The opening leg will end with the cars arriving in Cardiff for the end of day service in front of the Millennium Centre.

Saturday's mileage is a repeat of day one last year, with two runs through the mid-Wales stages in

Hafren, Sweet Lamb and Myherin, separated by a remote service in Builth Wells. The final day will use Epynt and Crychan with Monument Hill featuring as the televised Powerstage on Sunday afternoon.

The route has been sent to the FIA for approval and will be revealed publicly later this month.

Coe said: "We are proposing an exciting route which we believe will return this event to the classic adventure people loved. For 10 years or so, we have been pegged in one corner of Wales, well not any more. This year rally fans will see some of the world's greatest stages returning – and a classic spectator stage."

On the subject of retaining its place on the calendar, Coe remains optimistic for the future.

"We are talking seriously with two regions [about hosting the event]," he said. "We're working flat out to make it happen and we're optimistic we'll be there."

Coe confirmed that the popular Rally Fest concept – launched in Llandudno last year – would be repeated in June. "We want to spread the word about Rally GB. We saw how successful this was last year and we're aiming to achieve that again this time around."

HISTORIC

Delecour wins Porsche debut

FOLLOWING HIS DEBUT WIN IN THE

Tuthill Porsche Challenge, Francois Delecour is hoping to tie-up a deal for this year's Safari Classic Rally with the British team.

After not competing regularly since 2002, Delecour won the opening Tuthill event on Saturday's Bulldog Historic Rally.

"I really enjoyed the Porsche – it was great fun," said Delecour, "and I would love to do Safari in November."

The Frenchman now turns his attentions to Corsica, where he will drive a works Peugeot 207 S2000 – an identical car to that used by Britain's Guy Wilks and Monte Carlo Rally winner Bryan Bouffier.

"I cannot say I can win," said Delecour, "but I will be trying."



Delecour starred in Tuthill Porsche 911

Confusion reigns over
SupeRally regulation



WRC

SupeRally rule set for major overhaul

THE CONTROVERSIAL SupeRally regulation allowing retired cars to re-enter WRC rounds will be overhauled for next season.

World Rally Commission president

Jarmo Mahonen has confirmed that, in line with FIA president Jean Todt's dislike for the rule, the current regulation will be dropped at the end of the season.

"SupeRally is a stupid name," said Mahonen. "And the trouble is the people who are watching the rally see the car go off the road and then they see him in the final classification. This is difficult for them to understand. We are definitely going to change it."

Having been at the top of one of the WRC's most commercially successful rallies, Rally Finland, Mahonen says he is well aware of the need to keep cars on the stages.

"You can imagine," he continued, "what my people [organising] Rally Finland would think if Mikko [Hirvonen] went out on the first stage and [Jari-Matti] Latvala went

out on the second stage – you can imagine what this would do to ticket sales. It is confusing to have them in the classification if they retire, but at the same time we have to provide a point-scoring incentive for the manufacturers to run the cars after they retire."

Ford's Malcolm Wilson says SupeRally makes sense now.

"I think people do understand it," he said. "You get a penalty, which is fair, but at the same time you get experience of the rallies even if you have a problem, which is vital for young drivers. And, if there are no points on offer, why would we send the cars out again?"

IN BRIEF

WRC '12 CALENDAR REVEALED

A 12-round WRC 2012 calendar is expected to be announced later this week. Hopes of returning Monte Carlo Rally to the front of the schedule have been put back, with the French alpine event expected for 2013. Rally Japan has been removed from the schedule at the manufacturers' request. The rallies included are: Sweden-Norway, Portugal, Mexico, Acropolis, New Zealand, Argentina, France, Catalunya, Great Britain, Abu Dhabi, Finland and Germany.

CLOSED-ROAD RALLY PLAN

The British government has announced a three-month public consultation period to look into closed-road motorsport in Britain. Currently, only the Jim Clark Rally runs on closed roads in mainland Britain. If the consultation, which comes following lobbying from the MSA, is successful, event organisers would not need an Act of Parliament to suspend the Road Traffic Act. Instead permission for this could be transferred to local authorities.

DMACK PLAYS ITS JOKER

DMACK will join Michelin in running its 'joker' tyre on the Jordan Rally later this month. The Chinese firm, which supplies private drivers in the WRC, struggled to make its hard compound work on the Rally of Portugal last month.

EVANS JR BREAKS DUCK

British Rally Championship Pirelli Star Driver Elfyn Evans collected his maiden series win on the Bulldog International Rally of North Wales. The 22-year-old won the event, which serviced in the town where Evans works in his father Gwyndaf's Ford dealership, from David Bogie. Bogie retains his series lead.

CITROEN FOR McCORMACK

Northern Irish driver Marty McCormack will drive a factory-supplied Citroen DS3 R3, run by the French Sainteloc team, on the remaining rounds of this year's British Rally Championship. He finished second in class R3 on Saturday's Bulldog International Rally North Wales. Former JWRC frontrunner Kevin Abbring will also drive a Sainteloc-run DS3 R3 in the French Championship this season.

MINI WINS IN ITALY

Mini scored its first win with the Countryman S2000 on Saturday's Rally dell'Adriatico. Andrea Navarra (below) beat Skoda UK's Andreas Mikkelsen on the Italian event.



WRC

Ford raises more tyre anxieties



Michelin's tyre wear could still be a problem

FORD'S TYRE ENGINEER GEORGE

Black has voiced fresh concerns over Michelin's all-new gravel compound for the Jordan Rally later this month.

The French firm ditched its initial gravel rubber after suffering punctures, most significantly during Citroen's pre-rally test in Mexico, and on the last round in Portugal. The new tyre, which Michelin states is part of its on-going WRC development, features a stronger construction to avoid punctures. This is the cause of Black's concerns.

"This has been a knee-jerk reaction from Michelin," said Black. "I'm worried that we're just moving the problem. In testing, we have seen much higher wear rates on the new tyre. There's not the flexibility to allow the new construction to mould to the road surface and grip; it's so hard, it sits on top of the road and spins causing more wear. Going into Jordan, Sardinia and Greece, we could well have an issue with tyre wear."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

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Chris Atkinson. Remember him? He's the one who out-scored Petter Solberg in his final season at Subaru. Which unexpectedly turned out to be Subaru's last in the WRC.

When the Impreza WRC became obsolete at the end of 2008, Atkinson was pretty much at the top of his game. Okay, forget the monster shunt he'd just had on Rally GB, but take a look at the other end of that season – he was on the podium on four of the first five rallies. He was hot property. Was.

For a season and a bit, Atkinson was left out in the cold. In a world championship with virtually no paid seats, there wasn't one for the super-quick Queenslander. Fortunately for him, Proton rocked up and offered him a ride in the Asia-Pacific Championship. For a while last year, it looked like Atkinson was drinking from the poisoned chalice, but last weekend, everything came together for the British-based MEM team (which runs Proton) and the laconic Aussie himself. Finally, Atko and the Satria clicked and he kicked everyone else off the field. Granted, Alister McRae would have been closer had his sister Proton not snorted a load of grass and overheated. But Atkinson's Malaysian Rally win was a real breakthrough – and not just because it was his first big win.

It's great to see him returning to the kind of form that had people tipping him as a world champion in the making just a couple of seasons ago.



Atkinson took first big win in Malaysian Rally

BIG NUMBER



The number of international rally wins Chris Atkinson has scored in his career. Despite 67 WRC starts in four years as a factory Subaru driver, Atko had never won before his Proton success in Malaysia last weekend.

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MO411P

‘I feel like I’m in a family at Red Bull’

Since winning the world championship, Sebastian Vettel has become a superstar. But there’ll be no big-money moves to cash in on his fame. *MARK GLENDENNING* caught up with him

When Sebastian Vettel passed his driving test in 2005, at the age of 18, he celebrated by hopping into his new car and going on a solo road trip. Exiting Germany, he skimmed the Netherlands, made quick time across Belgium, skirted the top of France, and crossed the Channel into England.

“I had a BMW; a 3-series,” he recalls. “I was quite lucky, because I was supported by Red Bull but also BMW, so as soon as I got my licence I had a company car. So when I got my driving licence I went in my car, on my own, and drove to Milton Keynes to look at the Red Bull factory. It was the first opportunity I’d had at the time to look at a real Formula 1 car.”

In the six years that have passed since his made his unlikely pilgrimage, Vettel continued working his way through Formula 3, underlined his growing reputation by delivering a win for Toro Rosso at a wet Monza in his first full F1 season in 2008, and confirmed his talent by remaining calm as his more experienced rivals faltered around him to clinch the world championship at last year’s finale. Weirdly, his public image has become

increasingly dented with each step he has taken towards the mastery of his craft. Fleet Street began to cast him as the ‘bad guy’ in the story of the 2010 title fight, rival teams lashed out after incidents such as his crash with Jenson Button at Spa, and large chunks of the online fan community essentially wrote him off as a spoiled brat.

Neither the British newspaper press nor the online forums have ever been afraid to let a little exaggeration get in the way of an opportunity to get shouty, but the fact remains that Vettel does not make a convincing pantomime villain. At least Fernando Alonso, who filled the ‘evil mastermind’ role for the UK papers in 2007 and ‘08, did his bit to get into character by working the Spanish press to his advantage. Plus, he’s better equipped than Vettel to grow a sinister-looking moustache.

The evidence against Vettel was scattered, and a lot of it boiled down to the question of favouritism within Red Bull’s garage walls. The team’s decision to take the new-spec front wing off Mark Webber’s car and put it onto Vettel’s for the British Grand Prix, after Vettel damaged his own earlier in the weekend, was just that – a team decision. It was a similar case when Red Bull driver consultant

Helmut Marko publicly blamed Webber for the crash between the two in Turkey, forcing team principal Christian Horner, who’d initially supported the Australian, to perform an awkward backflip. Vettel had nothing to do with how either situation was managed, yet somehow emerged from both with his image having taken a turn for the worse.

A few months on, and it’s difficult to reconcile the ‘self-centred whiner’ with the grinning figure sitting across the table in the Red Bull motorhome. Trademark knitted hat yanked down around his ears, Vettel conveys a sense of being entirely bereft of excess baggage. His expression is that of someone who has just planted a whoopee cushion and is waiting for his target to sit down. But then it must be easy to look pleased with yourself when you’ve already achieved your life’s ambition at the age of 23.

Jacques Villeneuve and Jenson Button have both spoken of how winning the title gave them a sense of freedom, in that regardless of what path their careers took afterwards, they would always have proven their ability to win a world championship. Vettel sees where they are coming from.

“Winning makes things easier,” he ►



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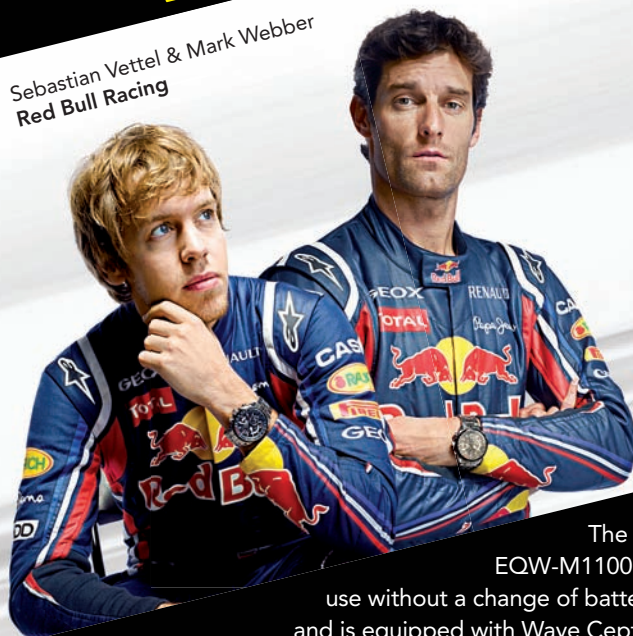
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◀ says, “but not in a way that you believe everything will just happen. Whatever comes now, no-one can take away what has happened, but there is no guarantee that just because of that, now I will win so many more races or championships, or whatever. Having the number 1 on the car doesn’t make me two seconds quicker per lap. I know, and I think this is important, that I still have to work like crazy and push like hell to win races.”

The obvious problem when you hit the top is finding somewhere to go next, particularly if you’re still young. Some drivers used their championships as insurance that allowed them to take risks with their careers that they might not have done otherwise – see Villeneuve again – whereas others have gone down the Michael Schumacher route of simply hitting the reset switch and going for another. Vettel belongs to the latter camp.

“It’s true that it was always my dream to become world champion,” he says. “We made it happen last year. I’m not asking this question to myself every day when I wake up, but I think naturally, as a sportsman, you always look forward. When you have a problem you want to solve it; when you solve it you look forward to the next one. You go race by race. You don’t really look back that much.

“In 2009 I know that I could have won the championship if, if, if... but the bottom line is I didn’t win it. Last year I won it, and that’s important for

understanding that you are good enough to achieve it. My target this year is to win the world championship and make sure that the trophy stays in my house. You get more confident because you know you can do it.”

The entire monologue is delivered in perfect Vettel-speak. He’s animated, never drops eye contact and, if he’s not grinning, then he appears permanently on the verge. Again, it doesn’t tally with the ‘brat’ label, but it takes more than a chirpy interview to dispel a myth. Firmer evidence comes from within the team itself, specifically the aftermath of the Korean Grand Prix. What was shaping up to be a comfortable win ended when his engine exploded, and at the time he had every reason to believe that his title campaign had been a casualty of the shrapnel. Despite this, Horner later remarked that, while the team slumped into post-race depression, it was Vettel who tried to snap them out of it.

“It’s very important to try to be positive in a situation like that,” Vettel explains. “As the driver you rely on the whole team, not just at the track but also at the factory, to provide you with a great car. If something goes wrong they need to know that it’s one race out of the season and together you need to work towards the next challenge, the next race. So it’s very important to keep looking forward.”

There were other incidents that pointed to Vettel being more of a team player than he sometimes got credit



“I wasn’t angry about Mark winning Hungary. He did a fantastic race, pulled time on soft tyres and came out ahead. I was angry with myself”

for during 2010, but getting through the layers of noise that shroud every element of F1 to find out the truth is another matter. The best example was Hungary, where it has been suggested – and, indeed, hinted at by Vettel himself – that the penalty behind the safety car that cost him victory was a poorly-executed attempt to give Webber – who hadn’t pitted yet – a jump at the start, and maximise the team’s constructors’ championship points. But if there really is a historical footnote that needs correcting, Vettel clearly has little interest in doing so.

“I said after Hungary what was going on and I don’t think anything has changed,” he says, grin ▶



Vettel was motivating force after Korea failure



Australian GP 2011:
first race with #1



Germany's new
motor racing hero



Celebrating first
victory of 2011

◀ momentarily vanishing. “But surely if you look at the pictures of the podium I don’t look very happy, simply because I should have won the race easily. I got the penalty and lost the race because of that; because of a mistake that I made. I wasn’t angry about Mark winning. He did a fantastic race, he pulled enough time out of the soft tyres, and came out ahead of us. I was angry with myself.”

He admits to being self-critical (“not just sometimes – I am self-critical always”, he insists), but he says that winning the championship has

actually made him more open to the fact that everyone now wants a piece of him, rather than forcing him to retreat behind a wall of PR. Schumacher became progressively less accessible with every title; Vettel tries to treat the attention as an opportunity to gain an extra edge.

“When I came back to my hometown [Heppenheim] and there were more than 10,000 people waiting... it’s not as if, when you go on stage, you think ‘[groans], Now I have to go up there,’” he says. “I mean, how often in your life does it happen that

10,000 people in front of you start to scream and cheer? It’s a good feeling – there’s energy you get through that.”

There is, he admits, a downside.

“Sometimes you have very nice requests, cute, and sometimes it’s a bit dodgy. You have little kids writing and they send little invitations to their birthday, and they write that it is ‘extremely important, please come, we will have everything prepared, cake, you will have the time of your life!’” Vettel pauses, then shrugs. “But of course, you cannot.”

His other source of energy is the

VETTEL’S BEST F1 MOMENTS

1 “The first live experience I had with Formula 1 was, I think, in 1993 or ’94 at Hockenheim. It was raining like crazy during free practice [that makes it ’95 then – *German GP weather history* Ed], and we bought some tickets at the first chicane. So we walked all the way to the first chicane, which at the old Hockenheim was quite a long way. We didn’t have an umbrella, and there was mud everywhere, and no-one was driving. It was free practice and there was so much water that

no-one came out. Then eventually someone did, and just to hear the noise, the sound... there was just the spray passing; you couldn’t really see the car, it was way too quick. But just the sound – you could feel it in the ground. It was... [eyes gleaming] soooo much better than you can imagine from the TV. Now when people tell me that they saw me on TV I tell them that they should actually go to the circuit and see it live at least once, just to hear it, feel it, and see it.”

2 “Number two is the first race I can remember watching – it was when Ayrton Senna won in Brazil in 1991 (right), the only time he won his home grand prix. He lost more or less all his gears, but carried the car home and he was destroyed after the race. I don’t remember all of the race because I was quite young, but watching them lift him up... he couldn’t take the trophy because he was destroyed.”

3 “For the last one, I obviously have to name myself at Abu Dhabi.”





“I know the people in this team, I know if they are married or not, I know if they have more women than underwear!”

team. Vettel has been part of the Red Bull fabric for most of his racing life, and he will remain so for the foreseeable future after signing an extension to his deal prior to this year's season-opening Australian Grand Prix – which, of course, he won to give himself the initial lead in the 2011 world championship.

“It makes me feel like I am in a family,” he says. “More than looking, I don't know, at my bank account, I enjoy coming here, seeing my team, seeing my friends, working with them, driving the car, and having fun together. I mean, friendship is a difficult word. How many real friends do you have in your life? Maybe three, four? Not many. But yes, I know the people in the team, I've known the guys for a couple of years, I know if they are married or not, I know if they have more women than underwear...”

“But the main criterion for me is performance. You always want to have a car where you feel you can fight for the championship. OK, there might be years where it just doesn't go that way – that's Formula 1. Secondly, if not as important as the first one, is do I feel comfortable? At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what your job is. If you enjoy it, that's fine. If not... look at your life. You only have one life to live. Even if people offer you a lot of money, you need to decide what you want. It needs to be a decision made from your heart, because if you don't feel comfortable in the team you're with, even if they give you a fast car, then you're not enjoying life as much as you probably should. So if you have the possibility, you should change.”

In committing himself to Red Bull until at least 2014, Vettel has proven that change is not high on his list of priorities. The magnitude of his victory in the season-opener in Australia proved that having the number 1 on the car has done nothing to dent his motivation. But if he's going to continue to play the role of the bad guy in the popular press this year, he's going to have to work a bit harder on his villain credentials. ☼



COATES/LAT

Sergio Perez shone for
Sauber in AustralianGP

Back in the old routine

Independent status, customer engines and fast young drivers: Peter Sauber's team is back in its element. By *EDD STRAW*

It's almost as if the BMW days never happened. Double disqualification notwithstanding, Sauber was back to its old tricks in Australia with a tidy, brisk car good enough to qualify and finish in the top 10 on merit. With the reassuring sight of 67-year-old Peter Sauber at the helm, it's easy to forget just how far the team has come over the past 18 months.

But the crew who celebrated behind the garage after Sergio Perez and Kamui Kobayashi took the chequered flag for an illusory seventh and eighth place in Melbourne wouldn't have forgotten. Certainly they remember all too well the period from September 15 2009 to December 3, when the team was bereft of an entry for the 2010 season, and the trauma of the staff being slashed from just under 700 to its present mark of around 280. Sauber has returned from the edge of oblivion and re-established itself as what it was in the pre-BMW days: well-run, efficient and capable of keeping the big guns honest.

That it has done so is testament to Peter Sauber's determination not to see the team that he had built up from nothing since 1970 to wither and die. It came very close to doing just that, as BMW's desire to realise a return on the team led it first to strike an ill-fated deal with Qadbak Investments, then turn down Sauber's offer to retake control when the deadline for signing the Concorde Agreement loomed. On August 6 2009, Sauber (who at the time owned 20 per cent of the squad) ►

◀ described BMW's demands as "too high" and talked of the "bitterest day of my 40-year career in motorsport". The future was bleak. Fortunately, he was eventually able to take over at what is believed to be far-more-favourable financial terms than he had originally been offered, and Toyota's departure opened up an entry. Then the real work – a process of renewal, retrenchment and restructuring – started.

"Believe me, it was an extremely difficult decision to buy a team without a grid slot and sponsors," says Sauber. "The past 18 months were particularly hard – we had a white [unsponsored] car and, with the miserable start to the 2010 season, it was even more challenging to find new partners."

"The team has overcome many challenges since the exit of BMW and now it is on course to return to the efficiency that has always been one of its strengths. Following the drastic cut of resources, the operations have stabilised, although of course more funds would help in being faster!"

As Sauber points out, his team is very much in the small-midfielder category – at best it's the seventh or eighth biggest in terms of staff and resources. But its C30 is a fast, consistent car (forget the red herring of the illegal wing – this car will continue to show decent pace). It's 38-year-old James Key, who relocated to Switzerland when he joined from Force India as technical director last year, who deserves a large amount of credit.

Making the car quick is one thing, but Key has had to oversee a painful downsizing process and overhaul of the technical structure to cut Sauber's cloth in accordance with its post-manufacturer circumstances. While the heavy investment of the BMW era has left Key with a facility arguably above Sauber's station in terms of CFD and other core technologies, that process of not so much pruning the team as hacking it back has been difficult.

"The legacy of BMW at the factory helps the situation," says Key, "but on the negative side, downsizing is much more difficult than building up because you have a certain way of doing things. Where you had a group of, say, 12 people, now it's two, so you have to completely change the way you work. So facilities-wise it's very good, but adapting to make use of them has been the challenge. We're not 100 per cent there yet, but we are getting there."

That process was undertaken against a backdrop of hardship. Timescales prevented Sauber from bringing any major backers on board for 2010. Last year's car showed promise in testing, but proved uncompetitive and desperately unreliable when the serious stuff started – with a diabolical finishing rate of just under 17 per cent

in the first six races. Reliability improved drastically, and the car emerged as a points contender on faster tracks in particular, but at best you have to regard last year's Sauber team as an interim entity, as the continued presence of BMW in the official team name hinted.

This year's car is the first 'real' post-BMW Sauber, and is visibly one of the most stable cars in the field, particularly in quicker corners. That probably explains a little of how easy the C30 is on its tyres, although that characteristic appears to be in the Sauber DNA – it was just the longevity of the Bridgestone tyres that nullified this particular advantage last year.

While F1 is very much a team effort, Sauber's technical director's input has



Kobayashi chases Schumacher

"Sergio surprised us all, but in order to properly assess him we have to wait three more races"

been, appropriately, 'key'. Like all good technical bosses, he prizes clear technical direction. AUTOSPORT's Gary Anderson, who worked with him at Jordan, regards him as particularly strong on that front.

"The most important thing is getting everyone pulling in the same direction so you don't end up with a diverse set of projects going on with different ways of thinking that aren't compatible," says Key – who is not overly comfortable talking up his own strengths. "I try to make sure that the communication is right and say that this is what we need to do and then run with it. Sometimes it's wrong and you have to step back, but hopefully most of the time it's the right thing to do. You have to have a clear plan and follow it as best you can. As a small team with a budget, you have to do it that way."

Key and his boss share similar objectives in that regard. There were ridiculous rumours after the Australian GP that Sauber was sacking his technical director. It would have hardly been in keeping with a man who has employed precisely three technical directors in a quarter of a century.

300 AND RISING



Sauber is one of only nine teams to have started 300 world championship grands prix. Since JJ Lehto finished sixth on the team's debut in South Africa 1993, Sauber has notched up 305 starts.

'C' WHAT I MEAN



All Saubers, dating back to the C1 that Peter Sauber drove to the 1970 Swiss Hillclimb title, carry the 'C' designation in honour of Sauber's wife, Christine. Although the cars during the BMW era did not, they were unofficially dubbed C25 through to C28.

Yes, responsibility for the wing blunder falls to the technical director, but it's just one black mark on an otherwise remarkable 12 months.

"James joined us when the car was neither reliable nor fast," says Sauber. "In the second part of last season, he succeeded in improving both. The Sauber C30 is the first car constructed under him and it left a good impression in Melbourne – but it's too early to make a concluding assessment. He has integrated well into the team, and its infrastructure is a good basis."

With the technical side of the team in good hands, Sauber has concentrated on trying to bring in sponsorship, while delegating CEO Monisha Kaltenborn to focus on areas such as working with FOTA. Bringing on board Telmex owner Carlos Slim has proved vital in financial terms, not least because it has brought with it the services of Perez. The Mexican is a pay-driver only in the technical sense of the word, and it's clear he has huge potential. His drive to seventh on the road in Melbourne highlighted good pace, awareness while battling wheel to wheel and impressive tyre management to execute an unlikely one-stop race. For a man characterised as conservative, Sauber is certainly willing to put tremendous faith in rookies (see panel, right).

"Clearly, Sergio surprised us all in Melbourne," says Sauber. "But we should not forget that he performed well in GP2 and at the last Barcelona test he was solid. However, in order to properly assess his skills we have to wait until after the next three races."

You'd have to say that Sauber's decisions have, by and large, proved to be the right ones over the past couple of decades. When he first came into F1, Ken Tyrrell famously told him that it was madness to run an F1 team out of Switzerland, yet Sauber's cars ran fourth and fifth at the end of their first lap in a grand prix in 1993, and the team still has a healthy future as it approaches its third decade in F1.

Recapturing that famous day when Robert Kubica triumphed in Canada 2008 (if you want to deny Sauber any credit for that win, remember that he owned more of the team at that stage than Ron Dennis does of McLaren) seems a long way off, but in the current circumstances, surviving and running strongly in the midfield is a world away from the black future he faced 18 months ago. While not as spectacular as the Ross Brawn/Honda story, Sauber's survival is similarly heart-warming tale on a smaller scale.

It's largely down to a man who in 2005 had retired from being a team principal, operating out a country where circuit racing is banned. The unlikely story of Sauber in F1 appears to be a long way from its end. ❧



Scaled-down team has plenty to motivate it



De la Rosa struggled with sponsorless team



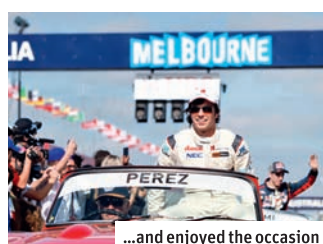
Kobayashi, here in Australia, is a fighter



C30 is first 'real' Sauber...



Perez is latest Sauber debutant to shine...



...and enjoyed the occasion



...to be project-led by Key

SAUBER'S ROOKIE WONDERS

Sergio Perez is the eighth driver to have made his grand prix debut for Peter Sauber's team. After finishing seventh on the road on his debut, he looks set to be the latest rookie hit for the squad.

HEINZ-HARALD FRENTZEN (1994)

HIT

The former Sauber-Mercedes sportscar young gun qualified fifth on his debut in Brazil and finished fifth in his second start at Aida. After 15 points finishes in three years with Sauber, went on to win three grands prix with Williams and Jordan.



JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BOULLION (1995)

MISS

The reigning International F3000 champion replaced Karl Wendlinger, who was still suffering the after-effects of his 1994 Monaco crash, for 11 races. Scored points in Germany and Italy. After that, returned to testing for Williams and was soon racing touring cars.



NORBERTO FONTANA (1997)

MISS

Started four races in place of Gianni Morbidelli, but the 1995 German F3 champion failed to make an impression. Single-seater career fizzled out after a brief stint in Indycars in 2000. Now races tin-tops in his native Argentina.



KIMI RAIKKONEN (2001)

HIT

After impressing the team – and one Michael Schumacher – when he tested at Mugello, the reigning Formula Renault UK champion was promoted to F1. Was sixth on debut. A year later was in a McLaren.



FELIPE MASSA (2002)

HIT

Finished sixth on his second start. After three seasons (and one year off as Ferrari tester) joined the Scuderia in 2006.



ROBERT KUBICA (2006)

HIT

Made a huge impression with his Friday outings for BMW Sauber and replaced Jacques Villeneuve for the 2006 Hungarian GP. Made the podium two races later.



SEBASTIAN VETTEL (2007)

HIT

Finished eighth in the United States GP filling in for Kubica, who was recovering from his Montreal crash. Shortly after he was racing for Toro Rosso.



LOCAL HERO

Lewis Williamson has gone from the karting scrapheap to GP3 in just three years, with the help of his friends from the Scottish Highlands.

By *MARCUS SIMMONS*

He's a sparky little bundle of talking-at-100mph energy outside the car, a spiky little racer from whom you can almost see the intensity radiating when he's driving it. He is also, arguably, the most exciting British talent to emerge since Lewis Hamilton (he could also be the best, but it's too early to say yet).

Within the past few months, Lewis Williamson has come agonisingly close to winning the Formula Renault UK title, stunned everyone in the GP3 Series with an extraordinary debut test, won the McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award and the attendant McLaren Formula 1 test drive, and now joined the MW Arden GP3 team of Red Bull luminaries Christian Horner and Mark Webber.

"If you'd told me a year ago that would all happen I wouldn't have laughed, but I'd have thought it was pretty hard," the 21-year-old reflects. "It's helped me believe in myself."

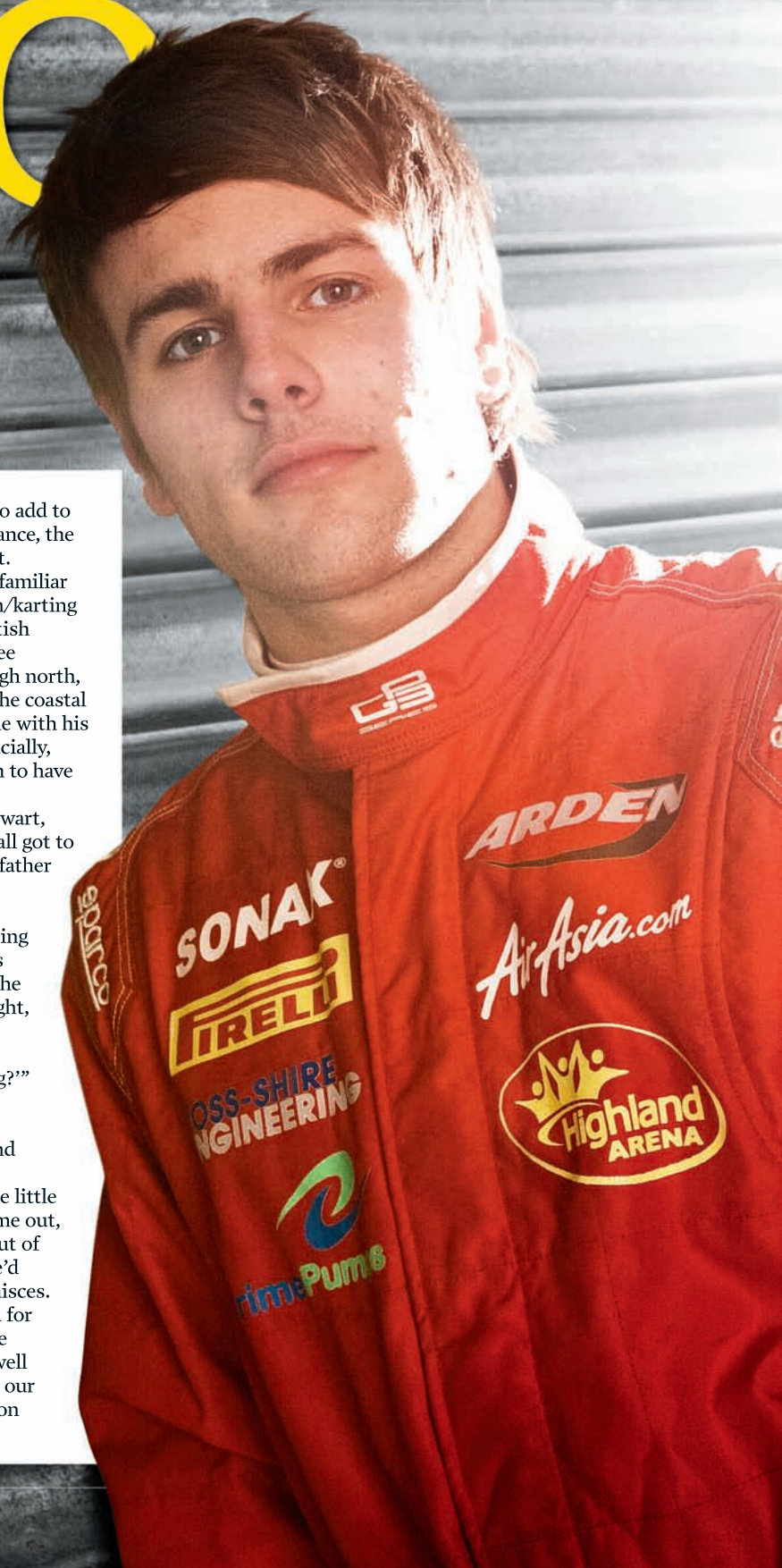
And that should act as a warning. It didn't look like he was lacking in self-belief last year in Formula Renault when he pulled out 2.2 seconds on the field in one lap, on slicks in the damp, on the Brands Hatch GP circuit, or when his first sector in qualifying on the Silverstone GP track was 0.2s up on everyone, or when he raced from eighth on the grid to second on the Silverstone National layout. If he's

got even more self-belief to add to that improvisational brilliance, the world had better watch out.

That talent was already familiar to a bunch of businessmen/karting enthusiasts from the Scottish Highlands. As if his Dundee birthplace wasn't far enough north, Williamson moved up to the coastal Sutherland town of Golspie with his family at the age of 11. Crucially, Golspie is civilised enough to have its own kart track...

Amateur karters Jeff Stewart, Allan Dallas and Ian Hart all got to know Williamson and his father (who deals in agricultural machinery). "Lewis always seemed up against it, fighting every step of the way," says Stewart. "When he was 17 he stopped, and we just thought, 'Why are we racing when there's a lad of that talent sitting there doing nothing?'"

For 2008 the trio got together to support their protege, under the Highland Arena banner, in the 125cc gearbox-karting class. "The little bugger was second first time out, and second time he won out of a field of 46 on a circuit he'd never seen," Stewart reminisces. "Excitement gathered, and for fun I paid for him to do the British Grand Prix at Cadwell Park. We thought we'd get our backsides kicked but he won – it was mental!"





Williamson flew in MW Arden GP3 test



The Scot took P2 in 2010 F1 Renault UK



Success came early on in cadet karting

Williamson recalls Cadwell as “absolutely insane, pulling 190mph with three of us pushing each other bumper to bumper”. Remember that when GP3 visits Monza later this year...

With such success, he made an early transition to cars. After a one-off in Formula Jedi at Brands in mid-2008 (he won), he graduated to F1 Renault in the Winter Cup. A promising '09 campaign with CRS Racing was followed by a switch to Manor Competition and a superb fight with Tom Blomqvist last year.

Sarah Shaw, his engineer at Manor, recalls: “We could see that for his level of experience he’d been punching above his weight. With us he was quick out of the box. The biggest thing was that because he went so mental he was fantastic on cold tyres, and could pass people where you’d never believe. By the end of the season he’d also learned to be consistent where you needed – he was a different driver in that respect.”

Shaw pinpoints qualifying as the major weakness Williamson had to work on: “It’s in cool conditions, where you’ve got to bring the tyres in gently, that he struggled. But in GP3 there’s not much testing – he doesn’t need to do miles and miles anyway; that frustrates him. He’s at his best on a track where the tyres go off straight away – on grippy tracks, with a lot of rubber down, his style will be perfect.”

It proved so in that maiden GP3 test at Estoril, with Atech CRS. Team boss David Hayle remembers: “He missed the first day because it was so last-minute. The next morning he acclimatised, then we gave him a new

set of tyres and he leapt from P25 or whatever to P1. You just went, ‘Bloody hell!’ It was easy, and he repeated it on the second set. He was uncomplicated and easy to work with. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to do anything with the funding he had, but I would’ve loved to have had him in the team.”

It appears that MW Arden was able to take that risk, and it seems that as a result the Highland Arena boys have found further support. Sadly, due to the GP3 numbering system Williamson has had to drop the number 17 he’s carried since his move to cars, but will continue to carry it on his helmet.

That’s a tribute to David Henderson, a boyhood karting pal of Stewart’s who died of leukaemia at age 14. Henderson’s number was always 17, Stewart carried it on, and Williamson has continued to do so, as well as the logo Haggis Racing, the name of the team Henderson said he would run when he grew up. Henderson’s father, Harry, is another backer of Williamson.

This is a very close-knit bunch. He may be racing around Europe this year, but Williamson will continue to live in Golspie, and is working to complete his apprenticeship with Dallas’s Ross-Shire Engineering company. “I’m lucky enough to have work and racing,” he asserts. “And my family and girlfriend are there.”

And so are the guys without whom he wouldn’t be racing. “We saw a boy who was going nowhere because he didn’t have the finance,” says Stewart. “It’s personal enjoyment for us when we see him do well.” Let’s hope they enjoy 2011. ❧

STATS FROM GOLSPIE (As the crow flies)

Sumba 255 miles



Golspie is as close to the Faroe Islands as it is to Croft, the nearest circuit in England... “In the middle of summer, it doesn’t get pitch dark until 12.30 at night, and it starts getting light at 2.30am,” says Williamson, “but the midges are terrible. You need nets to go running!”

Golspie



Croft 255 miles



Formula 1 and a lover's



The two-minute board had been raised. The Team Ensign mechanics had started the engine and left me alone on the grid. I was about to become a bona fide grand prix driver and yet my mind felt blank. It was as if I wasn't really there – I mean, how could I be? Surely dreams never actually come true.

Only one thing came to my mind, the haunting bass line from Fleetwood Mac's *The Chain*, which had been adopted as the BBC's *Grand Prix* signature tune. Somehow I felt I must be watching this on the television but I wasn't, I was there on the grid at Zolder, ready for the start of the 1980 Belgian Grand Prix...

It was round five of the Formula 1 World Championship. The previous

race had been at Long Beach on the west coast of the United States and I'd been at home in bed, listening to the commentary on the radio late in the evening, when Clay Regazzoni had had a massive accident in the single Ensign entry. It was obvious that he was seriously injured which, I am afraid, meant only one thing to me – there would be a drive going at the next race.

When seats became available for whatever reason, you either waited for the phone to ring or, if you were like me, you got out there and started knocking on doors.

My problem was deciding how soon to make that call. Jumping in too early would be seen as insensitive, but leave it too late and you ran the risk of being thought not keen enough. I

decided not to ask Mo [Nunn] directly but approach Unipart instead. I'd raced for them in Formula Three so knew them quite well and they told me that I was already on the list. As so often in this sport, it was down to the usual 'don't call us, we'll call you' scenario.

With nothing to do other than wait for Unipart to call I took myself off to the third round of the European Formula 2 Championship at the Nurburgring. It would also help take my mind off that call. While I've always tried to look on the optimistic side of life, at the same time I've always tried to prepare myself for disappointment – and there's always plenty of it in motor racing – so I'd pretty much persuaded myself that it wasn't going to happen. And then it did.

I was to get just half a day testing

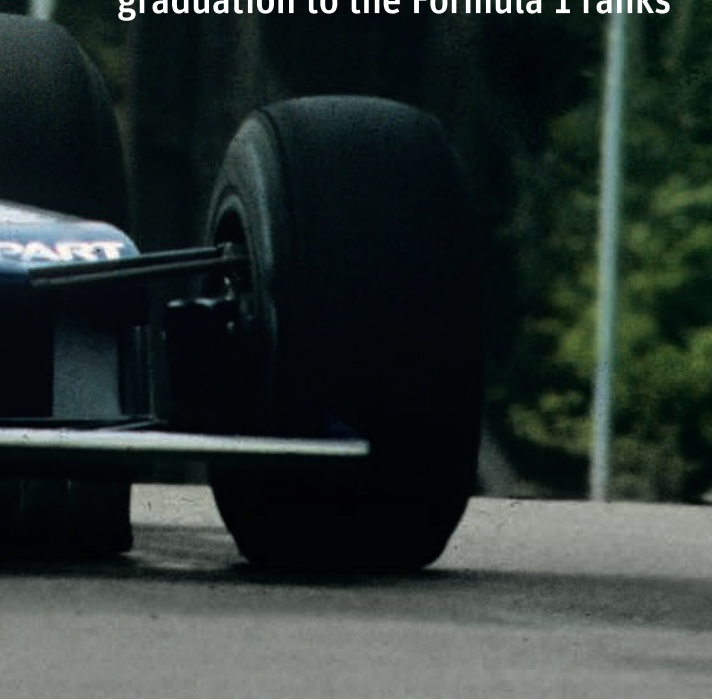
May 1971, FFord: the journey begins



ALL PICS: LAT

Tiff

In an extract from his new autobiography, racer/TV presenter **TIFF NEEDELL** recalls his brief graduation to the Formula 1 ranks



'Dream' debut:
Belgian GP 1980

at Donington before the team would head to Belgium. The test day came and went in a blur. It was an incredible experience, plunging down Donington's daunting Craner Curves at over 170mph, forcing myself simply to believe the grip would be there. The test seemed to have gone okay.

The Ensign was far from the fastest car in the field so my first challenge was just to qualify for the race. There were no guaranteed places on the grid, with 27 cars entered and only the fastest 24 getting a start.

Somehow, by the end of Friday's qualifying, I was provisionally 'on the grid': I was 23rd fastest, the same as Clay in Long Beach, and one spot ahead of my schoolday hero, Emerson Fittipaldi, who I'd out-qualified by over half a second. But would that be enough? There was still the Saturday session to come... and then Saturday dawned beautifully dark and rainy.

Of course I felt I could go faster and move up a place or two, but on the other hand if it rained then Saturday's qualifying times would be much slower and I would be guaranteed a place in the race.

The team wouldn't even let me go out in the untimed session – they were worried their rookie might stick it in the fence – but, come the afternoon, with the track still wet and a place on the grid now guaranteed, some wet-weather running was obviously a good idea should race day dawn the same. By the end of that session I was 12th fastest on the day.

So the great day dawned and I took

my place on the last row of the grid for the Belgian Grand Prix. Alongside me was double world champion Emerson Fittipaldi, on the row in front future world champion Keke Rosberg and just ahead of him future quadruple world champion Alain Prost – so it was a pretty classy bottom six. John Watson, the only other British driver on the grid, was also there, in 20th spot.

'Red light'... hold a steady 9,000 and ease the clutch up to its biting point. 'Green light'... slip the clutch ever so slightly before dumping it completely as you hammer the throttle to the floor and plunge downhill towards the first corner. Nothing, but absolutely nothing, gives a bigger adrenaline rush than this – the opening corner of your first grand prix.

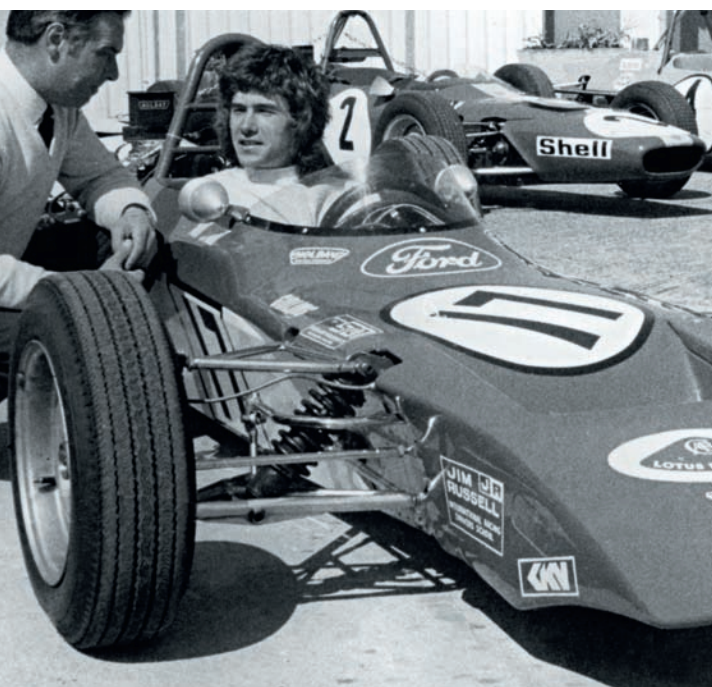
I stayed ahead of Emerson for four glorious laps before conceding the place. By lap 12 we were up to 18th and 19th, with Watson, having pitted, now behind me and four cars already on the retirement list. Unfortunately I was to be the next. Without warning the engine suddenly lost power exiting the chicane behind the pits and emitted the dreaded death rattle... there was nothing I could do other than switch everything off and coast to the side of the road.

Nine years after I'd had the incredible luck to win a racing car in a magazine competition, I'd worked my way up to the peak of a huge mountain. What had started out as a schoolboy's fantasy had turned into reality: Tiff Needell was a grand prix driver.

It was the most satisfying moment ►

“The team wouldn't even let me go out in the wet, untimed session – they were worried their rookie might stick it in the fence”

Tiff Needell on Belgian GP 1980



Unipart F3 tie-up
would be crucial



Failing to qualify at Monaco in '80

“Reutemann slowed and blocked me. Again! What was a complete no-no for the novices was obviously fair game for the big boys”

Tiff Needell on Monaco GP 1980

◀ of my career but all the time I knew it might not last. All I could do was make the most of my opportunity, but with Monte Carlo as the next grand prix that wasn't going to be the easiest of tasks, especially as the tight street circuit meant that only the fastest 20 cars in the field would be allowed to start the race.

Saturday dawned bright and dry and in the morning session I walloped the massive kerb in the fast chicane that fired you back from the exit of the tunnel on to the harbour front. Back in the pits I discovered I'd damaged the suspension pick-up point on the chassis so I would have to switch to the spare car, which hadn't been run all weekend and had a completely different set-up.

With brand-new brakes all round I

had to bed them in first – a process which in those days meant gradually building up the heat over a series of laps, then getting them hotter than they would ever get in the race and then cooling them back down for a couple of laps. Well, of course I rushed the job and tried to go too fast too soon and ended up down the escape road at St Devote. The one-hour session that would form the grid was rapidly passing by and I'd yet to set a representative time...

Back to the pits for my final set of new tyres – which would be at their best for just three or four laps – and the pressure was on. After one-and-a-half laps bringing the tyres up to temperature I had no-one in sight until I came across a cruising Carlos Reutemann in the middle of the

Famous 'Tiff' lid was only raced once in F1



swimming-pool complex, towards the end of the lap. With nine grand prix wins already to his name the Argentine racer was in his first year with Williams and one of the favourites for the title that year. He was a man to be respected.

I moved to go past – and he moved to block me! Okay, he was going for it on the next lap, so I'd go with him. By the time we got back to the swimming pool he was well ahead but my lap had still been a good one... until dear Carlos suddenly slowed around the swimming pool and blocked my path once more. Another lap... and he did it again! What was a complete no-no for the novices was obviously fair game for the big boys.

On the fourth lap we once again got a clear run and this time as I entered the swimming-pool section Carlos was nowhere to be seen, but as he headed for a time that would put him on the outside of the front row and lead to his first win for Williams, I headed backwards into the Armco barrier.

As it was, I headed back to the pits with the wing hanging off the back and that was it. I hadn't even done one representative lap time and I languished in 26th spot, 1.5 seconds short of qualifying. John Watson failed to qualify as well, so there were no British drivers on the grid for the 1980 Monaco Grand Prix – and I would never have the chance again. ☹



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Wilson: time to deliver

Back in January 2006 we were told to judge 18-year-old Matthew Wilson in five years' time. Talk of podiums, wins and titles were confined to the later years, but there's still been no podium. DAVID EVANS asks why

When you set out in the WRC, you did it with a five-year plan and talked about winning rallies at the end of that plan. What has happened?

You can say it all, but doing it is a different story. We wanted to get to a level where we were looking at podiums and good results and, if you get them, opportunities start arising. We said that at the start of the five years and we were lucky to have that commitment from Stobart for the five years.

Your best result is a fourth place – what about the podiums?

We're getting closer. A few years ago, beating Henning [Solberg] would have been like beating Sebastien Loeb, but now we're doing that regularly. A lot of people say somebody else should have had my drive, but what people don't realise is that we had to go out and find the funding to go rallying. We're not taking this seat away from anybody else, we went out and found the seat. This hasn't been handed to me on a plate – I had to go out and find it.

Has your dad [Ford WRC boss Malcolm] been a help or hindrance?

For sure a help, of course. But you're right, there is a little bit of both effects. I knew that from the start, though. In some ways I could never win, but equally I knew I could never change it.

How do you feel when you come out of a stage and there's that gap between you and the fastest time?

A lot of people have summed it up that I'm the 'best of the rest' and that's about right. Look at Dani Sordo – he started out at the same time as me. OK, he was in a works team and he did finish on the podium, but he still hasn't won a rally.

But Sebastien Ogier started some time after you and he has won three rallies?

There's no doubt he is the new Loeb and every now and then – in all sports – you get somebody who can come in and perform at that higher level. Look how long it took Jari-Matti [Latvala]. He's the same age as me, but it took him a long time to get to the podium and start winning rallies. There was



Wilson: lots of effort, no podiums to show for it

always a lot more hype with me as well. We were coming at a time when there was no Colin McRae or Richard Burns and there was no chance for us just to come in and quietly build ourselves up. The results we started to get in the second year, the fastest times and the points finishes, we couldn't do that quietly – we were thrust into the spotlight a little bit with the name. It would be naive to think it wasn't going to be this way, though.

What do you say to the people who criticise your performances on the rally forums or say that somebody else should be in the seat?

If you listened to that kind of stuff, you'd be pissed off every day. At the end of the day, if that's what they want to whine about, then let them. But let's not forget, if they wanted to go rallying, they had the same chance as me. OK, I had a leg up, but we've still had to bring the money to the table.

A bit of that stick comes from back home in the UK. How much would you like to go home and do a BRC round or the IRC Rally of Scotland?

I'd love to. I don't think people really realise how difficult the WRC is. There's nothing to prepare you for this level. To go back and do something at that level would actually show what it takes to be getting within a second per kilometre of Sebastien Loeb.



CV

MATTHEW WILSON

2011

Stobart Ford WRC 2007/10

Stobart Ford WRC. Best result: 4th, Japan 2007 2006

First full WRC season. Best result: 8th in Argentina 2005

BRC/WRC outings. Wins Trackrod Rally 2004

WRC debut on Rally GB (13th, Ford) 2003

FRenault UK (18th): Rallying debut 2002

T-Cars champion

Has it been harder than you thought?

It has been tough. I never thought it would be easy, but, yes, it has been tough. One of the things that was tough for me was the accident I had in Wales in 2005. I don't think people realise just how big that was and what it took to come back from it, physically more than mentally. I was in a wheelchair for a long time after that. I had that big shunt in the April and then in the following January we were competing in Monte Carlo at the start of the programme.

What about the mental side?

For the first year, I don't think it did affect me, there was so much other stuff going on. But I would be lying if I said it didn't affect me. It's hard to explain how it affected me, it's just something that's there. When you're driving, you have to blank it out, but we are doing something about it, even now. As much as being physically fit, you need to have your head in the right place and that's what we're working on.

I remember you looking pretty nervous at shakedown that year in Monte Carlo in 2006...

I was. I remember Marcus [Gronholm] saying: "This is the worst Monte Carlo in years..." And I'd never competed outside the UK before. I thought, 'What the bloody hell am I doing?'

Would you change anything over the past five years?

Of course. Hindsight's a great thing. There are things I'd do differently, but there's nothing I can do about it now.

What about the future?

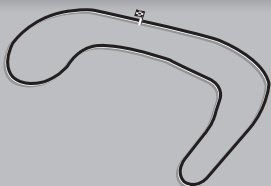
We want to get funding for the second half of this year and next year if we can. That's when things are going to happen with new manufacturers coming back in. The goal for me is still to get on the podium and to one day get the win – that's the ultimate aim.

Do you still want it as much now as when you started out?

More. It's been such a fight to get here this year but, believe me, I want this more than ever now. **M**

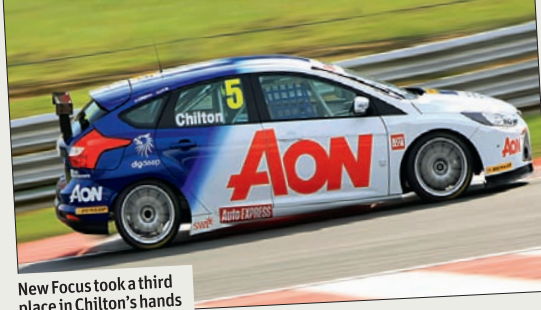
BRANDS

GB
April 2-3
BTCC
Round 1/10



AT A GLANCE RACE 1

- Winner **Jason Plato**
- Pole **Matt Neal**
- Fastest lap **James Nash**



New Focus took a third place in Chilton's hands

JP owns Brands Hatch

Jason Plato always stars in Kent, and his two wins gave him a slice of BTCC history



JASON PLATO IS NOW THE most successful British Touring Car Championship driver ever. The double champion's two wins at the Brands Hatch season opener last weekend not only put him at the top of the 2011

table, but moved his personal tally to 62 victories, two more than four-time champion Andy Rouse.

Thanks to the greater number of races per season now than in Rouse's era between the 1970s and early

'90s, Plato has managed the feat in rather less time, but there's no doubt he has become a true stalwart of the series since his debut in '97. The record means a lot.

"Andy was a childhood hero of mine, so to beat his record is brilliant," said Plato, who scored his first win at Snetterton in 1997 with a Williams Renault Laguna. "I held the pitboard for the TWR Jaguar team at the European Touring Cars in 1984 – [team boss] Tom Walkinshaw was my first sponsor and that's what ignited the fire about touring cars. I watched Rouse in the BTCC."

Record broken, Plato already has his sights set on a new target. "It's work in progress," said the

43-year-old. "I think there's a lot left in me and I'm determined to push that record well up the road."

"My target is to get 100 BTCC wins before I even consider stopping, assuming I stay. I love this championship and my

touring car team in the world. The reason Schumacher won seven F1 titles is because he was the best and he put himself in the best environment."

Plato had to use everything at his disposal to take the record-breaking

"The reason Schumacher won seven F1 titles is he was in the right environment. I've got the best engineers and designers"

Plato rates RML in same breath as Ferrari and Benetton

motivation to do this is as strong as it's ever been."

That is undoubtedly helped by the RML-run Chevrolet squad that took him to his second BTCC title last year.

"I think I've got the best engineers and designers," said Plato. "This is the best

victories. Whereas at Brands last year Plato dominated, last weekend was different as the various turbos – Neil Brown-prepared Hondas, Mountune Fords and the Swindon-tuned TOCA engine – upped the ante.

Tom Chilton's Ford Focus was the quickest car across



MacDowall fired off Neal into Druids gravel in opener

RACE RATING

★★★★☆

A lot of interest, but there were a few too many clashes on the tight Brands Indy layout

MILESTONE

Debuts for Nick Foster, Tony Gilham, Liam Griffin, Chris James, Dave Newsham, Tony Hughes, Frank Wrathall, and Next Generation Touring Cars

REPORT BTCC BRANDS HATCH

KEVIN TURNER
reports



Plato heads Nash en route to first victory



Nash (left) and Jackson both took podiums



Neal bounced back to win race three



Plato (left) and Neal shared wins between them

PLATO AND NEAL FIRE THE OPENING SHOTS

There were victories on both sides of the new fight between the normally-aspirated engines and the incoming turbo units of the NGTC era at Brands Hatch.

Reigning champion Jason Plato maximised his opportunities to win the opening two rounds, while old rival Matt Neal showed the pace of the new turbo-engined Honda Civic with victory in race three.

Neal stormed to pole from Andrew Jordan's Eurotech Racing Vauxhall Vectra and held the lead at the start of race one. Plato snatched second from Jordan into Paddock Hill Bend, just as Neal slid wide. Plato was only too happy to fill the gap and the pair headed to Druids side-by-side.

When they got there, Plato's team-mate Alex MacDowall, who had got away well from row three, hit Neal into retirement. MacDowall claimed James Nash's Triple 8 Engineering Vectra had hit him, but Nash said otherwise and it was MacDowall who was handed three points on his licence.

Jordan was also delayed, allowing Nash into second and MacDowall third as the safety car came out.

A brief electrical cut for Nash at the restart allowed Plato to escape. Nash closed him down, but Plato held on to take his record 61st win.

The Fords of Tom Chilton and Mat Jackson, and Jordan, all fought their way past MacDowall, but Jordan was denied fifth when debris punctured his left-front tyre.

Gordon Shedden's Honda therefore completed the top six thanks to an aggressive drive from the back after a practice crash had forced him to miss qualifying.

With 45kg of ballast, Plato's job was more difficult in race two, but he led from pole. A fast-starting Jackson was soon putting the Chevy under pressure, after a great round-the-outside pass of Nash at Paddock.

Jackson pushed Plato hard until Shedden arrived on his tail. The Honda's attack allowed Plato to edge away. Shedden forced his way into second with three laps to go, but Plato was out of reach.

Neal followed Jordan through the field to finish seventh, which became pole for race three. Neal led away, but was tracked by a confident Jordan until the Vectra driver hit the kerb at Surtees too hard and punctured another left front.

Jackson instead moved forward to challenge the Honda, losing out by less than 0.2s at the flag.

Paul O'Neill had a lonely run to third in his Tech-Speed Chevy, while Shedden defeated Plato in a hard-fought battle for fourth.

the finish-line speed trap in 2010, hitting 124.7mph, with Plato seventh quickest on 122.7mph. This year the normally-aspirated Cruze improved to 124mph, but Matt Neal's Honda Civic and Andy Neate's new Focus hit 129.8mph. Plato was only 13th fastest, and the top 10 places were filled by turbos.

The result was that, although Plato beat his 2010 pole time, he was still nearly 0.4 seconds away from Neal's qualifying-topping Team Dynamics Honda.

It meant the starts last weekend were even more crucial. "We put a lot of effort into our starts last year and I knew I had a good chance of getting the lead," said Plato.

"The second race I really enjoyed. I knew the turbo

cars would be all over me because of the success ballast. I had to concentrate on Graham Hill Bend, Surtees and Clearways to eke out a bit of an advantage to keep me safe. I had to think about it.

"Last year here I knocked my pace off by a tenth to look after the tyres. I can't do that now because I've got to keep away from the turbos."

The straightline-speed disadvantage was more obvious in race three, which Plato started in seventh.

Again he made a good start to reach fifth, and he inherited fourth when Andrew Jordan's rapid Eurotech Racing Vauxhall Vectra got a puncture. But that was as far as he got.

Despite being considerably faster than the chasing

Honda of Gordon Shedden at Clearways, Plato often found himself under attack by Paddock, and on the run to Druids. Eventually, Shedden found a way by at Graham Hill Bend, leaving Plato to narrowly fend off the TOCA turbo-engined Triple 8 Vectra of James Nash.

It could be a crucial weakness in his title attack this year, particularly at faster tracks. "I have to back away [from cars ahead] to get corner speed," he said. "If I get too close it compromises me. We can't race and our computer says we'll be a second off the pace at Donington [the next round]."

Unsurprisingly, Plato's rival Matt Neal, who is now the third-most-successful BTCC driver after his 37th victory in race three at



New boy Newsham leads BMW trio

AT A GLANCE RACE 2

- Winner **Jason Plato**
- Pole **Jason Plato**
- Fastest lap **Matt Neal**

AT A GLANCE RACE 3

- Winner **Matt Neal**
- Pole **Matt Neal**
- Fastest lap **Matt Neal**

◀ Brands, doesn't think it is so simple. He pointed to the increased tyre wear and lack of agility of the turbos as areas where the normally-aspirated cars have an advantage.

"In qualifying I think we're strong and we've got the kit to fight for the championship, which is exciting," he admitted. "But our tyres were having a hard time in race three. I could feel them hurting."

"We tested at Oulton Park and we were 6km/h slower through the corners than last year. The new car has its strengths, but it also has its Achilles' heel, and that's what we're working on."

Series boss Alan Gow has vowed to aim for parity between the two types of engine and could reduce the turbos' power, but any change is unlikely to happen before Donington, especially after Plato's double win.

Motorbase Performance boss David Bartrum, who

switched from normally-aspirated BMWs to Mountune turbo Fords for 2011, believes it is too early to make a change. "So far I would say that once again Mr Gow has got it spot-on," he said after Mat Jackson took the first of his two Brands podiums for the team in race two. "The Chevys seem to be able to compete with the turbo cars on pace and battle with them at the front."

"The BMW doesn't seem to be competitive, but BMW stopped development on that a while ago – the Chevy is a current car and is still being developed."

"Until we really stretch our legs at Donington and Thruxton we can't be sure, but I'm pleased we made the change – you've got to embrace the NGTC rules. I don't think we know enough about it yet – we're still learning."

Ultimately, Gow has the power to decide if, when,

Rapid Jordan was hobbled by punctures



"So far I would say that once again Mr Gow has got it spot-on. The Chevys seem able to compete with the turbo cars on pace"

Motorbase chief Dave Bartrum butters up the TOCA chief



O'Neill grabbed podium with his new Chevrolet

and to what extent the turbos need pulling back, and it seems unlikely he'll change anything with the record-breaking Plato at the top of the table. "At the moment the Honda is the best car out there," Gow said at Brands. "I think they've got the best package."

"The simplest way to get parity is to compare the fastest normally-aspirated car and the fastest turbo car, and it depends on the circuit – Donington is probably more of a power circuit."

"I don't expect to be playing with this all year, and during the course of the season the turbos may get quicker because they are new in most of these cars. If that happens we may have to pull them back."

Until then, Plato, RML and their Super 2000 Chevrolet will have to be at their best to hold off the likes of Neal, Shedden, Jackson, Nash and Jordan to add to that BTCC record. ❧



Neal leads race three as Neate spins



Triple 8's Gilham was best rookie

NEXT ROUND DONINGTON April 16-17



REPORT BTCC BRANDS HATCH

DRIVER BY DRIVER

Jason Plato (1/1/5)



Had to be on top form against the new turbos, and he was, taking two well-judged wins.

Alex MacDowall (5/13/16)



Quick, but blotted his copybook with Neal clash and a penalty for jumping start of R2.

Matt Neal (R/7/1)



Quickest car-driver combo over the weekend. Deserved R3 win after being taken out of R1 by MacDowall.

Gordon Shedden (6/2/4)



Great recovery after practice crash, though some of his passing moves were a little rough.

Tom Chilton (3/8/8)



Felt he might have got pole if new Focus hadn't failed ride-height test. Good third in R1, then fell away.

Andy Neate (11/12/15)



Set-up issues and midfield contact hampered his challenge in promising new Focus.

Mat Jackson (4/3/2)



Great weekend with strong race pace gave him second in the table. A big threat for 2011.

Liam Griffin (R/18/18)



Trying BTCC debut. Didn't start R1 after hitting Collard on warm-up lap. Later suffered puncture.

Rob Collard (17/9/7)



Led the charge of the unfancied BMWs, but could have done without clash with Griffin before R1.

Nick Foster (12/14/14)



Sensible debut weekend for ex-GT racer, building up his mileage with three solid finishes.

Tony Gilham (8/10/9)



Best of the newcomers. Put in three competitive top-10 drives and improved his pace with every race.

James Nash (2/4/6)



A factor at the front all weekend. Fighting R3 drive after startline clash with Jackson.

Paul O'Neill (7/5/3)



Admitted should have qualified better with new Cruze, but got faster with each race.

John George (14/15/17)



Had a few moments on his way to three finishes as he works on transition from old Honda to new Chevy.

Andrew Jordan (16/6/20)



A case of what might have been. Had frontrunning pace, but two left-front punctures were costly.

Jeff Smith (9/16/13)



Provided entertainment with some attacking driving and lurid slides in encouraging outing.

Tom Boardman (R/R/10)



Showed good speed, but was assaulted several times in R1. Then a victim of his own aggression in R2.

Tom Onslow-Cole (13/R/12)



Unsung star of the meeting. Pushed hard in turbo Golf, despite lack of straightline speed.

Dave Newsham (10/11/11)



Another impressive rookie, even managing a fine fight with BMW benchmark Collard in R2.

Frank Wrathall (R/NS/NS)



No chance to show potential on what was effectively a test weekend for his new NGTC Toyota Avensis.

Tony Hughes (R/19/21)



See left, but had more pre-Brands running than Wrathall, so was first man to record finish in an NGTC.

David Pinkney (NS x 3)



Driver and new Audi were there, but supply issues meant it was limited to half a demo lap on Sunday.

Chris James (15/17/19)



Was never going to challenge the front, but was happy enough to rack up miles on his BTCC debut.

RESULTS

British Touring Car Championship, Brands Hatch (GB), April 2-3, round 1 of 10

GRID	DRIVER	TIME
1	NEAL	48.210
2	JORDAN	48.465
3	PLATO	48.583
4	NASH	48.623
5	MACDOWALL	48.658
6	JACKSON	48.667
7	CHILTON	48.668
8	BOARDMAN	48.752
9	O'NEILL	48.849
10	NEATE	49.036
11	GILHAM	49.045
12	COLLARD	49.130
13	SMITH	49.176
14	GRIFFIN	49.220
15	NEWSHAM	49.248
16	O-COLE	49.540
17	FOSTER	49.587
18	GEORGE	50.065
19	JAMES	51.169
20	WRATHALL	51.449
21	HUGHES	51.736
22	SHEDDEN	no time

RACE 1 - 24 LAPS, 28.766 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Jason Plato (GB)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze	20m31.736s	3
2	James Nash (GB)	Triple 8 Engineering	Vauxhall Vectra	+0.709s	4
3	Tom Chilton (GB)	Team Aon (Arena)	Ford Focus	+4.318s	7
4	Mat Jackson (GB)	Airwaves (Motorbase)	Ford Focus	+4.746s	6
5	Alex MacDowall (GB)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze	+13.078s	5
6	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Honda (Dynamics)	Honda Civic	+14.663s	22
7	Paul O'Neill (GB)	Tech-Speed Motorsport	Chevrolet Cruze	+15.260s	9
8	Tony Gilham (GB)	Triple 8 Engineering	Vauxhall Vectra	+16.259s	11
9	Jeff Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing	Vauxhall Vectra	+21.946s	13
10	Dave Newsham (GB)	Geoff Steel Racing	BMW 320si	+23.508s	15
11	Andy Neate (GB)	Team Aon (Arena)	Ford Focus	+24.798s	10
12	Nick Foster (GB)	WSR	BMW 320si	+26.706s	17
13	Tom Onslow-Cole (GB)	AmD Milltek Racing	Volkswagen Golf	+28.240s	16
14	John George (GB)	Tech-Speed Motorsport	Chevrolet Cruze	-1 lap	18
15	Chris James (GB)	Team ES Racing	Chevrolet Lacetti	-1 lap	19
16	Andrew Jordan (GB)	Eurotech Racing	Vauxhall Vectra	-1 lap	2
17	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR	BMW 320si	-2 laps	12
R	Tom Boardman (GB)	Special Tuning Racing	SEAT Leon	22 laps-acc damage	8
R	Tony Hughes (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Avensis	15 laps-oil pipe	21
R	Frank Wrathall (GB)	Dynojet	Toyota Avensis	13 laps-electronics	20
R	Matt Neal (GB)	Honda (Dynamics)	Honda Civic	0 laps-collision	1
R	Liam Griffin (GB)	Airwaves (Motorbase)	Ford Focus	0 laps-warm-up crash	14

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Plato	38
2	Jackson	30
3	Nash	26
4	Shedden	25

5	Neal	23
6	O'Neill	20
7	Chilton	16
8	MacDowall	6
9	Collard	6
10	Gilham	6

RACE 2 - 26 LAPS, 31.164 MILES			
POS	DRIVER	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Plato	22m21.689s	1
2	Shedden	+2.128s	6
3	Jackson	+2.588s	4
4	Nash	+3.001s	2
5	O'Neill	+4.232s	7
6	Jordan	+5.859s	16
7	Neal	+6.286s	21
8	Chilton	+9.868s	3
9	Collard	+11.816s	17
10	Gilham	+16.019s	8
11	Newsham	+16.526s	10
12	Neate	+17.468s	11
13	MacDowall	+22.893s	5
14	Foster	+28.476s	12
15	George	+31.259s	14
16	Smith	+31.395s	9
17	James	-1 lap	15
18	Griffin	-1 lap	22
19	Hughes	-3 laps	19
R	Onslow-Cole	1 lap-acc damage	13
R	Boardman	0 laps-accident	18
NS	Wrathall	electronics	20

Race1 Winner's average: 84.07mph.
Fastest lap: Nash, 48.683s, 88.63mph.
Race2 Winner's average: 83.61mph.
Fastest lap: Neal, 48.498s, 88.97mph.
Race3 Winner's average: 87.01mph.
Fastest lap: Neal, 48.639s, 88.71mph.
*Includes 20s penalty for clash with Neate





1997

Win #1 comes
at Snetterton
for Renault



2000

Success in first weekend
with Vauxhall at Brands



1998

Second year yields
one win - at Oulton



1999

Only win: Silverstone

Jason Plato's BTCC

The tin-top veteran started his winning run at Snetterton in 1997 and he's still doing it.



2005

Snetterton - one of
three wins in Toledo



2006

Switch to Leon brings
another eight victories



2007

Filming burns spoil his
title bid after six wins



2008

Showboating to two out
of three at Knockhill



2009

Brands finale triple caps
mega first Chevrolet year



2001
Thruxton, round two:
first win in the Astra



2001
Eight wins that year
ensures first title



2004
Comeback with SEAT
nets seven wins

record in pictures

Here, AUTOSPORT celebrates his record-breaking achievements since then



2010
Andy Rouse's
record is matched
at Brands Hatch...



2010
...and a second
drivers' title
is the long-
overdue reward



2011
Record 61st win is then
followed by #62 in
Brands season-opener

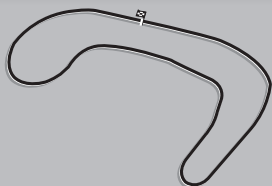
BRANDS

Great Britain

April 2-3

TOCA supports

Round 1/10



FORMULA RENAULT AT A GLANCE

→ Race 1 Alex Lynn

→ Race 2 Lynn

→ Poles Lynn

→ FLs Ollie Millroy/Lynn



Morris took a Ginetta Jr double



Winter Cup champ Lynn was top dog in F Renault

FORMULA RENAULT & CLIO CUP BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 2-3

Dominant Lynn justifies status as title favourite

THE GOLDEN BOY OF

Formula Renault UK pre-season testing carried his momentum through to the first race weekend at Brands Hatch.

Alex Lynn is in a very good place at the moment, and the lanky Essex teenager took a pair of decisive wins, decimating his pal Tom Blomqvist's lap record for good measure.

A trio of three successive 43.4s, when no one else got below 43.5s, put Lynn's Fortec Motorsport machine on pole for race one. He didn't think his getaway

was that good, but outside-front-row starter Will Stevens was slower away, and an impeccable opening lap from Lynn opened a 1.3s advantage. "I've been working on my first laps in winter testing," he beamed after a dominant win.

Stevens, on a warm-up mission before his Eurocup campaign with Fortec, was forced to defend from feisty Formula Ford graduate Tio Ellinas. The Atech Reid-run Cypriot never gave up, but it was a forlorn chase on a circuit where it appears there are local byelaws to

prevent overtaking. "It's the first time I've experienced these things with aero, and this circuit is the worst for that," he explained.

Ellinas felt he'd lost out in traffic in first qualifying, but in the second session he was pipped by Lynn by just 0.059s. He chased Lynn all the way, homing onto his gearbox at the final corner as he kept the victor under pressure. Impressive stuff from Ellinas, who looks a great prospect.

On a disappointing weekend for Manor Competition, Ollie Millroy at least bagged a pair of fourths, plus fastest lap in race one, after passing new boy Oliver Rowland around the outside at Druids on the opening lap. "The problem is that fastest lap is the same as we're doing in qualifying on new tyres," he shrugged.

Fortec man Rowland said he was learning all the time, and proved it by replicating Millroy's move with a pass on Stevens in race two! Suspension failure put him out while chasing Millroy, who in turn pursued Jack Haworth. The Mark Burdett Motorsport rookie qualified third and, although

he lacked race pace, he did a sound defensive job to complete the podium.

The Clio Cup looks impossibly close this year, but wily double champ Paul Rivett and his Stancombe Vehicle Engineering car arguably had the edge on pace at Brands. The only hitch was getting mired in traffic on his first qualifying run. That left him third on the grid, and he was forced to watch as James Dixon jumped first-time poleman Jake Packun at the start.

Dixon's stout defensive drive meant the winner of the last two races of 2010 repeated the trick in his Total Control Racing car. "As soon as I got in front I knew they wouldn't pass me," he said. Packun, running this year with his own family Get on Track Developments team, tried hard but also had to keep an eye on Rivett, with James Colburn not far behind in fourth.

Rivett was edging away in race two when second-placed Packun went off at the top of Paddock (he suspected coolant on the track). Tin-top debutant Luke Wright had already disappeared from third, the

Scuderia Vittoria man running wide at Clearways on a hitherto excellent drive, while Dixon had been knocked out of contention at Paddock on lap one after a tap by Jack Goff. Goff emerged second, from Pyro team-mate Aron Smith and comeback man Matt Allison. ● Marcus Simmons

RESULTS

Formula Renault UK (24 laps)

1 Alex Lynn; 2 Will Stevens +1.979s; 3 Tio Ellinas; 4 Ollie Millroy; 5 Oliver Rowland; 6 Jack Haworth; 7 Alice Powell; 8 Jordan King; 9 Josh Hill; 10 Felix Serralles. **Fastest lap** Millroy 43.803s (98.51mph). **Race 2 (24 laps) 1 Lynn;** 2 Ellinas +0.293s; 3 Haworth; 4 Millroy; 5 Stevens; 6 Mitchell Gilbert; 7 Hill; 8 Oscar King; 9 J King; 10 Serralles. **FL** Lynn 43.570s (99.03mph) **record. Points 1 Lynn, 66;** 2 Ellinas, 53; 3 Stevens 48; 4 Millroy, 46; 5 Haworth, 43; 6 Hill, 28.

Renault Clio Cup (23 laps) 1 James

Dixon; 2 Jake Packun +0.193s; 3 Paul Rivett; 4 James Colburn; 5 Lee Pattison; 6 Aron Smith. **FL** Rivett 52.804s (81.71mph). **Race 2 (23 laps) 1 Rivett;** 2 Jack Goff +2.781s; 3 Smith; 4 Matt Allison; 5 Pattison; 6 Tom Grice. **FL** Rivett 52.684s (81.90mph). **Points 1 Rivett, 61;** 2 Smith, 43; 3= Dixon & Pattison, 40; 5 Colburn, 36; 6 Chris Swanwick, 30.



Dixon leads Packun and race-two winner Rivett

CARRERA CUP AT A GLANCE

- Race 1 Euan Hankey
- Race 2 Stephen Jelley
- Poles Jelley x 2
- FLs Jelley x 2

"I think I've fallen into this - the new car suits my driving style. It's like the old but with structural rigidity to allow you to attack the corners well"

Stephen Jelley likes his new toy for 2011

REPORT TOCA BRANDS HATCH

OTHER BTCC SUPPORTS BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 2-3

Jelley and Hankey take Parker to hell and back

"YOU'VE MADE MY LIFE HELL for a week," called team boss Stuart Parker as Stephen Jelley descended from the Porsche Carrera Cup podium. "Thank God you didn't let me down!"

The same accusation and gratitude could be levelled at Euan Hankey, who benefited from an error by Jelley to win the first of the two races at Brands Hatch. Just one week before the season opener, neither Hankey nor Jelley knew they were racing in 2011, yet they dominated for Parker's team in brand-new cars.

In qualifying the evenly matched pair were 0.35s up, even against a quality driver such as James Sutton, and it was only the 2007 champion who kept them honest on his full-time return with RedLine Racing. It meant that when Jelley made his slip in race one - he ran wide at Druids, and the resultant brake-pad knock-off meant his pedal went to the floor at Graham Hill Bend - Sutton was able to slot into second and hold off the clearly-faster Jelley.

Jelley kept Hankey at bay throughout race two. "You only need a tiny gap here to be able to relax," he grinned. Unfortunately for Hankey,

he was hit with a 15s penalty for running wide at Graham Hill Bend, relegating him to 11th in the results a day after he was "so, so happy" to finally break his Carrera Cup duck.

That penalty meant Tim Harvey inherited third. It was a tough weekend for the reigning champion, who feels he is giving away performance due to the series' new minimum weight limit. A left-rear puncture put him out of contention in race one, but he brought his Motorbase car home for a solid result in race two, holding off Sam Tordoff, Michael Meadows and Richard Plant.

Meadows beat impressive rookies Tordoff and Plant to fourth in race one, with frustrated veteran Michael Caine also ahead of Plant.

Tom Sharp won all three races as the new Ginetta GT Supercup got underway, but it was far from plain sailing.

Shortly after claiming pole, Sharp dropped his shiny new G55 into the Druids gravel. Fortunately, the new engine's drive belts are enclosed and, while no lasting damage was done, his close-knit IDL outfit faced a major clean up.

Sharp then survived a

race-one coming together with Nathan Freke, the 2009 G50 champ spinning into the gravel at Paddock.

Sharp was never headed in race two which, like earlier, featured an ever-improving Adam Morgan emerging second best.

Sunday's final encounter got off to a nerve-jangling start when Morgan stalled, one of his rivals somehow squeezing between the stricken machine and the pit wall at unabated pace!

It took Sharp a bit longer to get to the front this time,

but he kept his nerve in a twice safety-car-interrupted race to beat Carl Breeze. Freke had better fortunes to fill third spot.

Meanwhile, the G50 class provided three different winners, with Jody Fannin, Andrew Richardson and cash-strapped Tom Ingram sharing the spoils.

Seb Morris won both races in the Ginetta Junior double-header.

A hefty shunt brought out red flags in race one and Jake Giddings, who'd spun before they appeared, was handed a second chance. But Morris was too strong for polesitter Giddings in the shortened rerun.

They traded the lead in a thrilling curtain closer, but Giddings undid all his good work when he went into the gravel at Paddock, so Tom Howard shadowed Morris at the flag.

● M Simmons & Dud Candler

RESULTS

Porsche Carrera Cup (34 laps)

1 Euan Hankey; 2 James Sutton +4.930s; 3 Stephen Jelley; 4 Michael Meadows; 5 Sam Tordoff; 6 Michael Caine. **CW** Rory Butcher; George Brewster. **FL** Jelley 46.570s (92.65mph). **Race 2 (35 laps)**

1 Jelley; 2 Sutton +7.561s; 3 Tim Harvey; 4 Tordoff; 5 Meadows; 6 Richard Plant. **CW** Jonas Gelzinis; Brewster. **FL** Jelley 46.717s (92.36mph).

Points 1 Jelley 40; 2 Sutton 36; 3= Meadows & Tordoff 26; 5 Hankey 25; 6= Caine & Plant 19.

Ginetta GT Supercup (19 laps)

1 Tom Sharp; 2 Adam Morgan +1.497s; 3 Carl Breeze; 4 George Murrells; 5 Colin White; 6 Joachim Ritter. **G50** Jody Fannin. **FL** Breeze 49.329s (89.28mph). **Race 2 (27 laps)** **1** Sharp; 2 Morgan +2.408s; 3 Murrells; 4 White; 5 Ritter; 6 Clint Bardwell. **G50** Andrew Richardson. **FL** Sharp 48.082s (89.74mph). **Race 3 (27 laps)** **1** Sharp; 2 Breeze +1.237s; 3 Nathan Freke; 4 Murrells; 5 Bardwell; 6 Tom Ingram. **G50** Ingram. **FL** Sharp 47.976s (89.94mph) **record**.

Points 1 Sharp, 108; 2 Breeze, 73; 3 Murrells, 70; 4 Morgan, 60; 5 Bardwell, 54; 6 Freke, 52.

Ginetta Junior (11 laps)

1 Seb Morris; 2 Jake Giddings +3.321s; 3 Tom Howard; 4 Charlie Robertson; 5 William Foster; 6 George Gamble. **FL** Robertson 56.365s (76.55mph).

Race 2 (19 laps)

1 Morris; 2 Howard +0.930s; 3 Foster; 4 Max Coates; 5 Gamble; 6 Robertson. **FL** Robertson 56.072s (76.95mph) **record**. **Points 1** Morris, 71; 2 Howard, 56; 3 Foster, 46; 4 Robertson, 42; 5 Gamble, 38; 6 Coates, 34.



Jelley's last-minute deal bore fruit for Team Parker

Sharp scored a hat-trick in GT Supercup



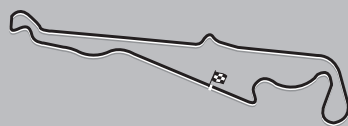
PAUL RICARD

France

April 1-3

Le Mans Series

Round 1/5

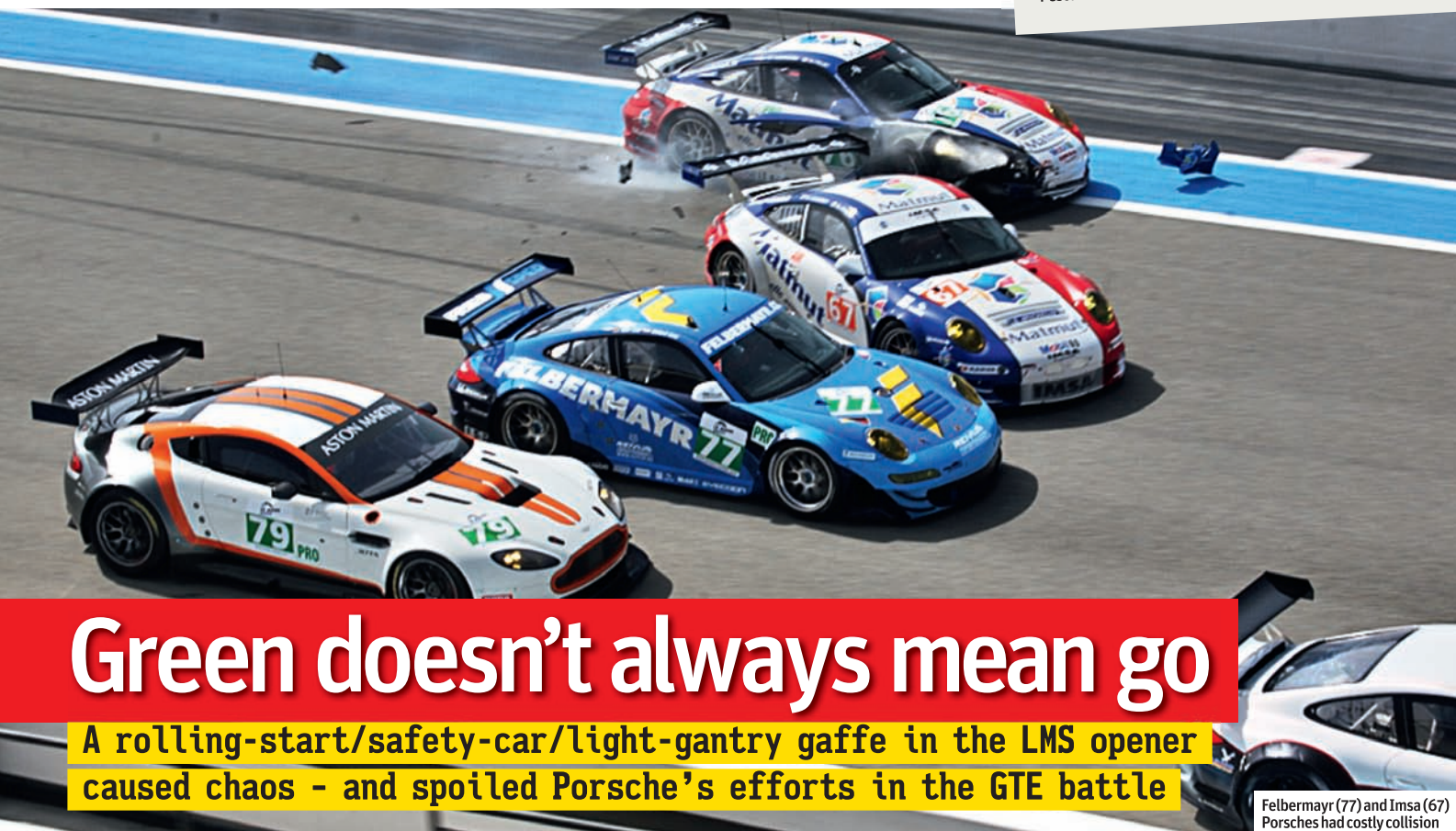


AT A GLANCE

- **Winners** Collard/Jousse/Tinseau
- **Pole position** Neel Jani
- **Fastest lap** Jani



Pesca celebrates first win since Algarve '09



Felbermayr (77) and Imsa (67) Porsches had costly collision

Green doesn't always mean go

A rolling-start/safety-car/light-gantry gaffe in the LMS opener caused chaos - and spoiled Porsche's efforts in the GTE battle

LAST YEAR'S LE MANS SERIES opener at Paul Ricard turned into a farce as the chequered flag approached. A year on, the race entered the absurd moment the lights went green. Quite literally.

The series organisation got it wrong 12 months ago when it was left with no choice but to invoke a little-known double-points rule after the Ricard 8 Hours exceeded the normal LMS race distance of 1000km by a full 50 per cent.

This time a mistake in race control resulted in the most confused start this reporter has seen in over 20 years on the racing beat.

The safety car stayed on the track at the end of the first formation lap, but as the pack crossed the line the

lights on the gantry turned to green. For those drivers who couldn't see the safety car, and that was just about everyone from the second row back, the race went live.

The result was inevitable: a multi-car pile-up that could have been much worse. As it was, only five cars were seriously damaged and, bizarrely, four of them were GTE Pro-class Porsches. And the three cars that retired from the Le Castellet 6 Hours as a result were the trio of factory-blessed 911 GT3-RSRs. The ProSpeed Porsche started by Marco Holzer was out on the spot, while the Felbermayr-Proton 911 and the lead Imsa Performance, with Richard Lietz and Patrick Pilet at the

wheel respectively, were too badly damaged to continue after limping back to the pits.

The exact cause of the accident remained unclear at press time. Race director Daniel Poissenot, to his credit, did go on the record to discuss the accident, though there was one detail he wouldn't talk about.

"We had two groups of cars on the first formation lap, so we decided to do an extra one," he said. "There was clearly a mistake with the green light."

The next question was obvious. Who pressed the button? To that there was no answer.

Whoever did so was at fault, reckoned an angry Pilet afterwards. "You cannot blame one driver for this," said the Frenchman, who reckoned the cars "were falling like dominoes" as the accident unfolded.

The chaos that followed certainly blew Porsche's race out of the water, but for 10 hours or so it looked like it

Farnbacher 458 was in GTE mix until trouble hit



had destroyed the German manufacturer's title defence.

"The championship is over for us," said Pilet, who is this year paired with fellow factory driver Wolf Henzler at Imsa. "In a five-race championship, you can't miss the points from one race."

Darkness had already fallen on Paul Ricard when a compromise, resulting from a protest by the Porsche teams, was thrashed out (see Pit & Paddock). Pilet, Lietz, Holzer and co maybe behind in the points, but as a result of the deal they aren't out of the running altogether.

The factory Porsches may have qualified badly, but according to Lietz, they

would have been in the mix in the race.

"We were competitive all weekend, just not in qualifying," said the Austrian, who again shares with Marc Lieb. "We just had no grip in qualifying, but knew we were competitive over a long run."

The battle for GTE Pro honours at Ricard was turned into an all-Ferrari affair by the events on the startline. First, four of the Italian marque's new 458 Italias battled for supremacy, then three and finally two, before JMW duo Rob Bell and James Walker came through in hour six to win.

The AF 458 shared by Toni Vilander and Jaime



The Bell/Walker JMW Ferrari took GTE win

RACE RATING

☆☆☆☆

The top GT cars provided the best racing even though half of them had been removed at the start

MILESTONE

Paul Ricard was the Pescarolo's team 11th win under Le Mans rules, a tally including victories in the LMS, the ELMS and the Asian series

REPORT LMS PAUL RICARD

GARY WATKINS
reports



Melo needed two stops to fix a pair of identical, though unspecified, rear suspension problems. The Farnbacher car, in which Allan Simonsen and then Dominik Farnbacher had been a match for the AF cars on unfancied South Korean Hankook rubber, dropped back first with a stop-go penalty for a pitstop infraction and then with a puncture and finally a suspension issue.

That left JMW against the other AF car driven by

Gianmaria Bruni and Giancarlo Fisichella. The Italians looked to have the race in the bag until a fuel pick-up problem struck late in the penultimate hour.

Bruni came to a halt on the Mistral Straight, losing 40 or so seconds. The problem resulted in the car having to make two extra pitstops before the end.

The battle had its moments before going off the boil. The shame is that Porsche wasn't there to turn up the heat on Ferrari. ☒



Pilet Imsa Porsche limped to retirement

PESCAROLO BACK TO FRONT TO WIN

Henri Pescarolo felt like he'd never been away. His team had missed 2010 but with the same car, same staff and two of its old boys behind the wheel, not a lot had changed. Including its ability to win major endurance races.

The solo Pescarolo-Judd O1 driven by Christophe Tinseau, Julien Jousse and Emmanuel Collard won the Paul Ricard 6 Hours last Sunday with some ease. The reason? The team, like so many times before, enjoyed a mistake and trouble-free run through the race. Unlike its rivals.

The winning car had qualified second in Collard's hands but was sent to the



Collard took pole but car started last

back of the grid when its skid-plank was found to be worn beyond the prescribed limits. Not that it really mattered. Tinseau took the lead in the space of 16 laps, a position it didn't lose.

The two Rebellion Lola-Toyota coupes had hit trouble by this stage. The pole-winning car shared by Neel Jani and Nicolas Prost was already in its garage

having the paddle-shift pneumatic pump changed, while the sister car driven by Jean-Christophe Boullion and Andrea Belicchi lost time when a pin fell out of one of its door hinges.

The flapping door caused Boullion to spin on lap three and repairs cost a lap. The Frenchman briefly got the car back onto the lead lap, but the Pescarolo was long gone.

RESULTS

Le Mans Series, Paul Ricard (F), April 1-3, round 1 of 5

GRID	
1 JANI	2 PLA
1:46.783	1:47.231
3 BOULLION	4 BECHE
1:48.491	1:48.928
5 KRAIHAMER	6 K-SMITH
1:49.692	1:50.008
7 EBBESVIK	8 RUSSO
1:50.356	1:51.744
9 ROSTER	10 MUCKE
1:52.158	1:52.267
11 GAROFALL	12 WATTS
1:53.414	1:53.582
13 MARROC	14 JULIAN
1:53.659	1:54.044
15 KEEN	16 SIMON
1:54.081	1:55.829
17 MISSLIN	18 BRUNT
1:56.806	1:58.522
19 ENGE	20 BELL
1:58.773	1:59.199
21 VILANDER	22 SIMONSEN
1:59.144	1:59.244
23 HOLZER	24 ARKINDO
1:59.244	1:59.370
25 LIETZ	26 PILET
1:59.455	1:59.457
27 HANCOCK	28 F-MAYR JR
2:00.336	2:00.354
29 CIOCI	30 PETER
2:00.470	2:00.698
31 CHRISTO*	32 AGUAS
2:01.137	2:01.691
33 COLLARD	34 ERDOS
1:47.025*	no time

185 LAPS, 665.695 MILES						
POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME	GRID
1	Christophe Tinseau (F)/Emmanuel Collard (F)/Julien Jousse (F)	Pescarolo Team	Pescarolo-Judd O1	LMP1	6h00m09.139s	33
2	Jean-Christophe Boullion (F)/Andrea Belicchi (I)	Rebellion Racing	Lola-Toyota B08/60	LMP1	-1 lap	3
3	Tom Kimber-Smith (GB)/Karim Ojeh (SA)/Gary Chalandon (F)	Greaves Motorsport	Zytek-Nissan Z11SN	LMP2	-6 laps	6
4	Matias Russo (RA)/Luis Perez Companc (RA)/Pierre Kaffer (D)	Pecom Racing (AF)	Lola-Judd B11/40	LMP2	-6 laps	8
5	Jonny Kane (GB)/Danny Watts (GB)/Nick Leventis (GB)	Strakka Racing	HPD ARX-01d	LMP2	-8 laps	12
6	Dominik Kraihamer (A)/Nicolas de Crem (B)	Boutsen Energy Racing	ORECA-Nissan O3	LMP2	-10 laps	5
7	Neel Jani (CH)/Nicolas Prost (F)	Rebellion Racing	Lola-Toyota B10/60	LMP1	-10 laps	1
8	Olivier Pla (F)/Miguel Amaral (P)	Quifel-ASM Team	Zytek 09SC	LMP1	-11 laps	2
9	Simon Phillips (GB)/Barry Gates (GB)/Rob Garofall (GB)	RLR Msport	MG Lola-Judd EX265	LMP2	-11 laps	11
10	Michel Bell (GB)/Thor-Christian Ebbesvik (N)/Ralph Meichtry (CH)	Race Performance	ORECA-Judd O3	LMP2	-11 laps	7
11	Tommy Erdos (BR)/Ben Collins (GB)/Mike Newton (GB)	RML	HPD ARX-01d	LMP2	-12 laps	34
12	Patrick Simon (D)/Julien Schell (F)/Mirco Schultis (D)	Pegasus Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	FLM	-15 laps	16
13	Christian Zuegel (D)/Elton Julian (USA)/Jens Petersen (D)	Genoa Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	FLM	-15 laps	14
14	Rob Bell (GB)/James Walker (GB)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPro	-15 laps	20
15	Gianmaria Bruni (I)/Giancarlo Fisichella (I)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPro	-16 laps	18
16	Maurice Basso (CH)/Fabien Rostier (F)/Jean-Pierre Lucu (CH)	Extreme Limite AM Paris	Norma-Judd M200P	LMP2	-16 laps	9
17	Horst Felbermayr Sr (A)/Christian Ried (D)/Horst Felbermayr Jr (A)	Team Felbermayr-Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTAm	-18 laps	28
18	Marco Cioci (I)/Piergiuseppe Perazzini (I)/Stephane Lemeret (B)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT	GTAm	-18 laps	29
19	Michal Broniszewski (PL)/Philipp Peter (A)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 430 GT	GTAm	-18 laps	30
20	Adam Christodoulou (GB)/Phil Quaife (GB)/Klaas Hummel (NL)	CRS Racing	Ferrari 430 GT	GTAm	-19 laps	31
21	Allan Simonsen (DK)/Dominik Farnbacher (D)	Hankook Team Farnbacher	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPro	-22 laps	22
22	Robert Kauffman (USA)/Rui Aguas (P)/Giuseppe Ciro (I)	AF Corse	Ferrari 430 GT	GTAm	-22 laps	32
23	Toni Vilander (FIN)/Jaime Melo (BR)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPro	-24 laps	21
24	Phil Keen (GB)/John Hartshorne (GB)/Steve Keating (GB)	Neil Garner Motorsport	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	FLM	-28 laps	15
25	Manuel Rodrigues (F)/Nicolas Misslin (F)/Jean-Marc Menahem (F)	JMB Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	FLM	-43 laps	17
26	Nicolas Armino (F)/Raymond Narac (F)	Imsa Performance Matmut	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTAm	-48 laps	24
NC	Alex Muller (D)/Tomas Enge (CZ)/Christoffer Nygaard (DK)	Young Driver AMR (Fischer)	Aston Martin Vantage	GTPro	140 laps-powersteering	19
NC	Sam Hancock (GB)/Simon Dolan (GB)	Jota	Aston Martin Vantage	GTPro	-80 laps	27
NC	Darren Turner (GB)/Stefan Mucke (D)/Harold Primat (CH)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin AMR-One	LMP1	-89 laps	10
R	Zhang Shan Qi (PRC)/Luca Moro (I)/Nicolas Marroc (F)	Hope Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	FLM	93 laps-clutch	13
R	Mathias Beche (CH)/Pierre Thiriet (F)/Jody Firth (GB)	TDS Racing	ORECA-Nissan O3	LMP2	91 laps-accident	4
R	Patrick Pilet (F)/Wolf Henzler (D)	Imsa Performance Matmut	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTPro	2 laps-accident	26
R	Marco Holzer (D)/Marc Goossens (B)	ProSpeed Competition	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTPro	0 laps-accident	23
R	Richard Lietz (A)/Marc Lieb (D)	Team Felbermayr-Proton	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTPro	0 laps-accident	25

LMP1 POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	C'lard/Jousse/T'seau	15
2	Belicchi/Boullion	13
3	Prost/Jani	12
4	Amaral/Pla	9

LMP2 POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Ojeh/C'don/K-Smith	15
2	Companc/Russo/Kaffer	13
3	Watts/Kane/Leventis	11
4	Kraihamer/de Crem	9
5	Gates/G'fall/P'lips	8

GTE-PRO POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Bell/Walker	15
2	Bruni/Fisichella	14
3	Farnbacher/Simonsen	11
4	Melo/Vilander	9

FLM POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Schell/Simon/S'ttis	15
2	Julian/Zugel/P'sen	13
3	Keen/Keating/H'horne	11
4	M'hem/M'lin/R'gues	9
5	Zhang/Marroc/Moro	1

Winners' average: 110.902mph. Fastest lap: Jani, 1m47.465s, 120.542mph. LMP2: Kraihamer, 1m50.252s, 117.495mph. FLM: Keen, 1m55.084s, 112.562mph. GTE: Bruni, 1m59.246s, 108.633mph. Driver listed on grid set qualifying time. First-named driver in each car in table started the race.

- Winner **Kevin Harvick**
- Pole position **Jamie McMurray**
- Most laps led **Kyle Busch**



Truex (r) and Kahne bring out the red flag



Harvick triumphed at Martinsville Speedway

NASCAR SPRINT CUP MARTINSVILLE (USA), APRIL 3, RD 6/36

Harvick comes from nowhere for two in a row

THEY CALL HIM 'THE CLOSER' and, for the second weekend in a row, Kevin Harvick showed just why.

This time he led four laps – the final four – having spent most of the previous 496 at Martinsville buried in the midfield. But his Childress team was confident his Chevrolet was a potentially winning package, and that was proven when Harvick pounced on an error by Dale Earnhardt Jr to take a lead he would hold to the flag.

"I didn't believe them when they told me this thing was fast, but when I got to the front I found out they were right," he said.

It was heartbreak for Earnhardt, who was in touching distance of a first Sprint Cup win in two years. But his Hendrick Chevy didn't have the pace to hold on to a position he secured with a classic 'bump-'n'-run' move on the Gibbs Toyota of Kyle Busch.

"There wasn't much I could do," he admitted. "I got

down into Turn 3 – I wanted to keep my nose in there, but I don't know what more I could have done different. We had a top-10 car, nothing more; it was the strategy that got us up there."

Busch had probably the fastest car in the race, but the stilted nature of the closing stages meant he was unable to show the true pace his car possessed.

"The car was awesome," he said, "but we didn't have a short-run car here today and that's the way it

played out in the end."

The race was red-flagged midway through following a huge crash involving the Waltrip Toyota of Martin Truex Jr and the Red Bull version of Kasey Kahne. The throttle stuck open on Truex's Camry, which pitched him into Kahne and then the wall at almost unabated speed. There was a brief flash fire, but both drivers were able to walk away, although their races were run.

● Connell Sanders Jr

RESULTS

1 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet Impala), 500 laps in 3h32m41s; 2 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy), +0.727s; 3 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry); 4 Juan Pablo Montoya (Chevy); 5 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 6 Matt Kenseth (Ford Fusion); 7 Jamie McMurray (Chevy); 8 David Ragan (Ford); 9 Clint Bowyer (Chevy); 10 Mark Martin (Chevy).
Points 1 Kyle Busch, 219; 2 Carl Edwards, 214; 3 Jimmie Johnson, 207; 4 Kurt Busch, 205; 5 Harvick, 204; 6 Ryan Newman, 203; 7 Montoya, 201; 8 Earnhardt, 199; 9 Kenseth 195; 10 Martin, 181; 11 Stewart, 180; 12 J Gordon, 170.

VLN NURBURGRING NORDSCHLEIFE (D), APRIL 2, RD 1/10

BMW one-two at the 'Ring

THE OPENING ROUND OF THE long-distance series on the Nurburgring Nordschleife was a demonstration run for the works BMWs, with a one-two in the sunshine.

The M3 GT of Uwe Alzen, Augusto Farfus and Jorg Muller took the win from the sister car of pole-position winner Andy Priaulx, Dirk Muller and Dirk Werner.

"Fantastic weather, great crowd and a brilliant race for us," said Alzen. "This one-two victory shows that

BMW has done a really great job during winter."

There was plenty of attrition. The Mercedes of Chris Mamerow and tin-top legend Armin Hahne led the race, but dropped out due to technical problems with seven laps left. The Black Falcon Merc, which had former Porsche Supercup champ Jeroen Bleekemolen on the driving strength, completed the podium.

The N.Technology P4/5 Competizione, which Nicola Larini, Fabrizio Giovanardi

and Luca Cappellari were due to drive, went out after Mika Salo had driven the opening stint.

Among other Brits, Nick Tandy was 11th and Peter Dumbreck 26th in Porsches.

RESULTS

1 Dirk Muller/Augusto Farfus/Uwe Alzen (BMW M3 GT), 28 laps in 4h05m32.821s; 2 Andy Priaulx/Dirk Muller/Dirk Werner (BMW), +51.096s; 3 Jeroen Bleekemolen/Jan Seyffarth/Thomas Jager/Kenneth Heyer (Mercedes SLS AMG); 4 Sascha Bert/David Horn (Merc); 5 Marc Basseng/Sabine Schmitz/Niclas Kantenich (Porsche 911 GT3 R); 6 Christian Menzel/Mike Stursberg/Hans Guido Riegel (Porsche).

IT'S SAUTER GOOD IN MARTINSVILLE

Johnny Sauter celebrates after a thrilling win in Saturday's NASCAR Truck race at Martinsville. He passed a momentarily sideways Kyle Busch with just two laps to go



INTERNATIONAL RACES & RESULTS

F3 EURO SERIES

Paul Ricard (F), Rd 1/9

QUICK RESULTS

- Race 1 winner **Nigel Melker**
- Race 2 winner **Roberto Merhi**
- Race 3 winner **Daniel Juncadella**

RACE RATING

★★★★☆

First race was good, and others weren't too bad for low entry

REPORTS

WORLD OF SPORT

F3 EURO SERIES PAUL RICARD (F), APRIL 2-3, RD 1/9

Juncadella is a very rapid fella in F3 opener

WITH THREE PODIUM

finishes from as many races, Spain's Daniel Juncadella returned home as the F3 Euro Series points leader after the season opener.

With Juncadella and fellow Spaniard Roberto Merhi in its Mercedes-powered Dallaras, the Prema Powerteam appeared to have the edge. The Italian squad appeared to get the best out of the new Kumho control tyres, and was only beaten in the first race by Dutch F3 rookie Nigel Melker and his Swedish team-mate Felix Rosenqvist, who made it a one-two for the Dallara-Merks of Mucke Motorsport.

Merhi started from pole, but could only claim fourth behind Juncadella.

In the second race, run over 10 laps with a reversed grid, Merhi moved up from fifth on the grid to win from the Signature Dallara-VW of Marco Wittmann.

Melker fought a tight battle for fourth with Belgian Laurens Vanthoor, but both were relegated: Signature driver Vanthoor was dropped from fifth to seventh for dangerous driving, while Melker was relegated from fourth to 12th with a 30s penalty for a track-limits crime.

Merhi led most of Sunday's race, but Juncadella benefited from a slipstream to take the lead and motored on to a victory that propelled him into the lead in the standings.

Wittmann completed the podium, followed home by Melker and Vanthoor, but the Signature team was unhappy with the new Kumhos, which they claim favour the characteristics of the Mercedes engine.

Kumho competitions manager Steven Thompson said: "Our brief was to develop a tyre that would have a drop in performance during the race. Some teams and drivers have already found out how to handle it, some are still struggling, but that is a common thing."

● Rene de Boer

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Nigel Melker (Dallara-Mercedes F308), 19 laps in 36m32.728s; 2 Felix Rosenqvist (DM



Juncadella took three podiums in France

F308), +4.090s; 3 Daniel Juncadella (DM F308); 4 Roberto Merhi (DM F308); 5 Marco Wittmann (Dallara-VW F308); 6 Carlos Munoz (DV F308). **Race 2 1 Merhi**, 10 laps in 19m10.637s; 2 Wittmann, +0.800s; 3 Juncadella; 4 Rosenqvist; 5 Munoz; 6 Kimiya Sato (DV F308).

Race 3 1 Juncadella, 19 laps in 36m30.294s; 2 Merhi +0.95s; 3 Wittmann; 4 Melker; 5 Laurens Vanthoor (DV F308); 6 Jimmy Eriksson (DV F308). **Points** 1 Juncadella, 46; 2 Merhi, 40; 3 Melker, 37; 4 Wittmann, 33; 5 Rosenqvist, 23; 6 Munoz, 18.

BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP BULLDOG RALLY, WELSHPOOL (GB), APRIL 1-2, RD 2/7

Evans beats Bogie – and his dad's Welsh bogey

ELFYN EVANS MUST HAVE

wondered what all the fuss was about. After hearing his dad speak of the difficulty of winning your home round of the British Rally Championship, Gwyndaf's boy did it the first time he had any real hope.

Evans, 22, drove a superb rally in his homeland last Saturday. He'd worked on the set-up of his Pirelli Star Driver Subaru Impreza after the opening round in Bournemouth, and he was on top of the car in his own backyard.

It was Adam Gould's Impreza which was quickest out of the box, the Bristolian leading for the first loop with two

fastest times, but he slipped back as he struggled with understeer.

Evans won the event on the first run through the Dyfi stages. Fastest in Main, Big Ray and Gartheniog, he was able to throttle back for the final two repeated stages with a lead of almost half a minute.

Gould lost second soon into the afternoon as David Bogie passed him in SS6. Gould will be hugely grateful to take third after his Subaru caught fire in the penultimate test.

Second for Bogie maintained his title lead after another solid and sure-footed drive in the Lancer.

Jonny Greer's Skoda was the first Super 2000 car home in fourth, while Jason Pritchard made it two Welshmen in the top five.

Mark Donnelly (Renault) just did enough to beat Marty McCormack (Citroen) to the R3 class and seventh overall, while Craig Breen won the R2 division in his Fiesta.

● David Evans



Evans seized his chance to win in Wales

RESULTS

1 Elfyn Evans/Andrew Edwards (Subaru Impreza WRX).

1h12m15.4s; 2 David Bogie/Kevin Rae (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X), +17.7s; 3 Adam Gould/Sebastian Marshall (Subaru); 4 Jonny Greer/Dai Roberts (Skoda Fabia S2000); 5 Jason Pritchard/Robbie Durant (Subaru); 6 Tom Clark/Alastair Wylie (Subaru).

Points 1 Bogie, 38; 2 Evans, 36; 3 Gould, 31; 4 Greer, 28; 5 Tom Clark, 24; 6= Tom Cave & Siim Plangi, 18.

IN BRIEF

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS

Caca Bueno wasn't the fastest at Interlagos, but he was able to take the lead after initially running third when polesitter and leader Ricardo Mauricio made a mistake in the pits, and Marcos Gomes was sidelined by a misfire. Daniel Serra moved up to take second, ahead of the recovering Mauricio and points leader Thiago Camilo.

SOUTH AFRICAN F.VW

Jayde Kruger was victorious in race one at Killarney in Cape Town, but couldn't get around Robert Wolk to make it a double later in the day.

SOUTH AFRICAN V8s

Jimmy Aubrey (Ford Falcon) led an all-Aubrey podium in the first race at Killarney. Jaco Correia (Corvette) won the second race.

Castrol **EDGE** Rankings

CURRENT STANDINGS

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Sebastian Vettel | ↔ | 24,621 |
| 2 | Mark Webber | ↔ | 22,237 |
| 3 | Sebastien Loeb | ↔ | 20,354 |
| 4 | Fernando Alonso | ↔ | 19,836 |
| 5 | Lewis Hamilton | ↔ | 19,454 |


Ranking the world's best drivers

WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Kevin Harvick's (10) Martinsville win moves him into the top 10 for the first time in five weeks. Even bigger moves come the way of fellow winners Caca Bueno (252) and Nigel Melker (285) as the pair gain 36 and 77 positions respectively.


To see the full list, visit castrolriverrankings.com

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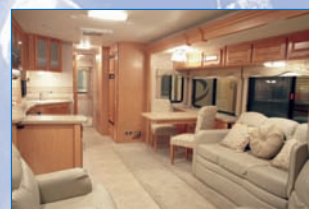
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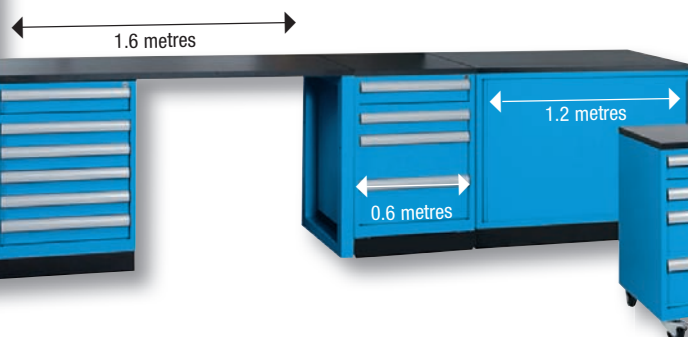


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Yoon to guide Ford racer, **p78**



Sportscar ace Simonsen will race an Abarth PA1

More star names get set for historic racing move

Simonsen, Cleland and Herbert aim to follow Moreno into historic racing



INTERNATIONAL GT ACE

Allan Simonsen and double British Touring Car champion John Cleland are among the latest star names set to step into historic racing.

Simonsen, who races Ferraris in both the Le Mans Series and British GT, will undertake a programme of Masters Historic Racing events at the wheel of an Abarth-Osella PA1.

Cleland, who has only raced sporadically over the past decade, is hoping to drive in the Historic Sports Car Club's Jaguar E-type Challenge.

Three-time Grand Prix winner Johnny Herbert is also considering a return to FF1600, while fellow ex-Formula 1 racer Roberto Moreno and Fortec Motorsport boss Richard Dutton recently made their historic debuts.

SIMONSEN'S SPORTSCAR

The 32-year-old Dane will race the Abarth-Osella with its new owner, former BTCC and GT racer Ian Khan.

Simonsen, whose previous outings in historic racing came at the wheel of an ex-Joest Porsche 962C and a Datsun 240Z at Silverstone and Copenhagen respectively, said: "Ian and I live within walking distance of each other in Monaco.

He asked me if I'd like a go, and I thought that as I drive most other types of car, I would give it a shot."

Khan and Simonsen are due to race the car for the first time in the Proto 70s race at Barcelona this weekend. Further outings in the World Sportscar Masters races at Silverstone and Nurburgring are also on the car's schedule for this season.

"We're going to see how it goes this weekend," added Simonsen. "We're planning to do two races right now, but it could be more."

BIG CAT FOR CLELAND

Cleland, BTCC title winner in 1989 and 1995, has been asked by an unnamed E-type owner to share a car in the E-type Challenge, which will mark the 50th anniversary of the famous GT model.

"I've been approached to drive and I've said I'm up for that," he said. "It sounds like it'll be good fun."

The E-type Challenge, which has already attracted nearly 70 entries, kicks off at the Brands Hatch Superprix in July, before moving to the Silverstone Classic, Nurburgring Oldtimer, Oulton Park Gold Cup, and the Goodwood Revival.

Herbert, who has previously raced a Jaguar D-type, is up for campaigning an

FF1600 Quest of the type in which he won the Brands Hatch Festival in 1985.

"I still like my modern racing, but if something came along when I was free I'd like to do it," he said.

DUTTON UPS THE ANTE

Having returned to racing for the first time in three decades at Oulton Park last month, Dutton is now preparing another Ford Lotus Cortina.

"We'll be taking it a bit more seriously later in the year," he said. "We knew at Oulton that we were 55kg overweight. We've looked at it and can only get 5kg off [with the current car]."

"We've got another Cortina now [an ex-Charlie Kemp car] and it's on the weight limit. It's immaculate but has had engine problems. [Race partner and engine tuner] Neil [Brown] bought it and he's going to rebuild the engine."



Cleland is excited by Jaguar E-type race offer

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER NATIONAL EDITOR

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GIVEN ONE OF THE CRITICISMS

I hear about historic racing is that the cars aren't always driven hard enough, the fact aces like Allan Simonsen are joining in is good news. Not only do these drivers show what the cars can do, they also give the established historic racers the chance to demonstrate their abilities against known quantities.

That Richard Dutton is building a 'new' car also indicates how high the level of competition can be, and how serious things can get - just because they're enthusiasts, rather than professionals, doesn't mean they don't want to win. And historic car preparation is big business...

All that's well and good up to a point - some historic categories are bound to be among the more costly ways of going racing. But when cars start acquiring new, non-period parts things start to go wrong.

The idea should not be to see how fast you can make, say, a Jaguar E-type go with modern bits. It's to race them to as close to original spec as possible, enjoy them for what they were, while racing as hard as possible. Over the years I've heard stories of big engines, windtunnel work, and the use of new suspension, to name but three ways of 'enhancing' old racers.

Of course, things can't be unlearned: if you know the angle of a rear wing was so high in period it was stalling, of course you're going to change the set-up. But organisers need to make sure a line is drawn. Somewhere...

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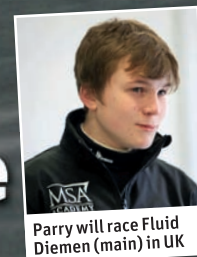
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UK FORMULA FORD



Parry will race Fluid Diemen (main) in UK

Parry joins Team Lotus scheme

British Formula Ford racer to get help from F1 squad's driver-development programme



BRITISH FORMULA FORD racer Matt Parry has been selected for the AirAsia Team Lotus Development Program.

The initiative, involving the Malaysian-owned F1 squad, aims to help young talent through career guidance, coaching and sponsorship procurement.

Parry, 17, is one of seven drivers now

on the scheme, which is overseen by ex-F1 racer Alex Yoong.

Parry, who is the only British driver to have been selected, said: "The chance to link up with Team Lotus is fantastic. I am looking forward to making full use of the experience and facilities on offer to me as I make the transition from karts to cars."

Van Diemen boss Lindsay Allen, who

will run Parry in the British Formula Ford Championship this season, believes the deal could lead to other karters joining the series. "It's good for us because it's a long-term relationship," he said. "The intention is they'll place other drivers with us."

"They've got some karting lads coming through, who they'll put with us, which

would be good for Formula Ford."

The other six drivers selected are Formula Renault 3.5 racer Alex Rossi, and karters Daim Hishamuddin, Senna Iriawan, Weiron Tan, Max Klinkby-Silver, and Tanart Sathienthirakul.



P87 FFFORD PREVIEW

Ginetta GT Supercup

Freke lands late Supercup deal

FORMER GINETTA G50 CHAMPION

Nathan Freke headed a litany of late entries to the inaugural round of the Ginetta GT Supercup at Brands Hatch last weekend, which swelled the combined G55/G50 grid to 21 cars.

The 2009 G50 title winner finished 17th in race one, after a clash with triple race winner Tom Sharp, took 10th in race two after being punted into a spin, and claimed third in the finale.

Freke said: "The car will come into its own [in the next round] at Donington, where I'm always strong anyway."

"The BTCC prize drive [on offer to the champion] is nice, but it's not my number-one target. If I can finish the season I'll be a happy man."

Mark Steward and Clint Bardwell

both joined Freke's Century Motorsport squad for the season opener.

Ex-CSL Cup racer Steward plumped for Ginettas after initially setting his sights on the BTCC.

Bardwell, 50, leased the Hetherington family-owned G55, which Freddie Hetherington will race in British GT. He took fifth, sixth and seventh in the races,

while Steward posted a best of 12th.

Reigning Ginetta Junior champion Tom Ingram was another late addition to the field, having only finalised a single-round deal to drive a Plans Motorsport-run G50 on Thursday. He qualified fastest in class, but stalled in race one, before taking second in race two and a maiden win in race three.



GT Supercup kicked off with strong grid

British Formula Ford

Anttila to race new works Ray

THE WORKS RAY FORMULA

Ford team is set to snap up Jesse Anttila for an assault on the British championship this season.

The 16-year-old Finn was 13th in the standings last year after a part-season with the factory Van Diemen squad.

He has already started testing for Ray, which will run its new GR11 for the first time at the Silverstone season opener this weekend.

Gavin Ray said: "He's not had much testing, but I expect after Silverstone he should be able to run in the top six."

Ray also confirmed he hopes to sign a second driver very soon.

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Porsche Carrera Cup

Latecomer Hankey takes win as Harvey suffers in new car

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB ACE

Euan Hankey made a late return to the series at Brands Hatch last weekend – and took his maiden win in the category – but series veteran Tim Harvey is considering his long-term future.

Hankey, 24, ran under the Parker with Jutta banner. He is the first former Porsche scholar to win in the series.

On the Carrera Cup GB's first weekend with the latest-spec car, Hankey and Parker-run team-mate Stephen Jelley outpaced former champions James

Sutton and Tim Harvey. Harvey believes he and other heavy drivers have been disadvantaged this year by a 10kg decrease in the minimum combined weight limit for car and driver.

He claims the new car is heavier than the old, and that he is now 35kg over the limit, but a Porsche statement said the weight is based on: "The average dry weight of the entire fleet of new cars plus the weight of an average driver."

Harvey refuted this. "I'm considering my future in the championship," he

warned. "The whole attraction, as well as the enjoyment of driving the cars, is the fairness of competition, and it's ruined that principle. Porsche need to ask the MSA if they [Porsche] can sort it out [through a change in regulations]."



Hankey scored his first Porsche win

British Rallycross

Circuit ace gets rallycross Escort

CIRCUIT RACER RICK MAY HAS

bought Andy Grant's Ford Escort Cosworth Supercar and is planning to use the car in circuit events and rallycross this season.

May, 2009 class champion in the Dunlop Motorsport News Saloon



May will race and rallycross Escort

championship, has switched to the Escort after three successful seasons in a Sierra Cosworth.

May said: "We've stripped the car to a bare shell and are going to rebuild it completely before we go racing.

"Julian Godfrey builds the engine and he's been persuading me to have a go at rallycross. I'd like to be out during the summer and do a few circuit events and then have a go at the rallycross at Lydden on August Bank Holiday weekend.

"If I like rallycross I'll stick with it and try to do a full season in 2012."

SPEED EuroSeries

WFR wins SPEED Euro races

THE BRITISH WFR

team's new Group CN chassis scored a double one-two victory on its race debut at Paul Ricard last weekend.

The WRO3 notched up victory in the first 90-minute SPEED EuroSeries race on Saturday with Warren Hughes and Jody Firth.

Former single-seater aces Joey Foster and Nigel Moore won the second race.

WFR team boss Jonathan France said:

"We're happy to start out with good results, ahead of names such as Alex Caffi and Robbie Kerr."

Geoff Kingston has upgraded the original WFO3 design tested last year. He is working on a

B-spec car that should appear later this season.

France confirmed that WFR has already sold its first customer car. Xero Competition should run the car in round two at Spa next month.



Both WFR cars took wins at Paul Ricard

MARCUS PYE

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



Hoverd's Sylva J15 (50) adds to RGB's variety

Despite widespread economic gloom, the 750 Motor Club's Road-Going Bike-engined (RGB) championship is going places in 2011. An influx of bold new rear-engined cars over the winter has changed the feel of the competition and, while chassis with engines ahead of their drivers were still competitive at Sunday's Mallory Park opener, the 'prototypes' are in the ascendant.

From its dorsal fin – a design cue plucked straight from the latest sports-racers on the world stage – to its underpinnings, Paul Nightingale's Spire GT3 (which won the day in John Cutmore's capable hands) is entirely new. Whereas the previous GT-R was based on a road car, this is pure racer.

All-inboard suspension, fresh bodywork honed in the MIRA wind-tunnel to achieve balanced downforce, and a sharper one-litre Honda CBR 'Fireblade' engine running in 2008 configuration – in place of Kawasaki's larger ZX12, of which the team blew seven in 2010 – make a strong package. "All credit to Paul, the car has been finished since November, but the winter was so bad that we've hardly been able to test," enthused series stalwart Cutmore. "The GT3 has done so few miles that we're only scratching the surface of its potential. There's so much more to come."

Contour Cars' David Dawson has also espoused the latest regulations by switching from 1200cc Kawasaki

to one-litre Suzuki engines, and supplying a second chassis to RAW Fulcrum convert Gary Goodyear. The combo's pace, and the sight, albeit brief, of Goodyear's white car circulating with Paul Rogers in the black development version (debuted victoriously at Brands Hatch in '09) was heartwarming.

New Genesis Evo (with designer Tim Pell up), Sylva J15 (Tim Hoverd), BDN S3 (Bob Mortimer) and front-engined MNR Vortex (David Watson) were also in the colourful field, which is expected to grow as the season continues.

Alas, following an encouraging test at Mallory, an injury precluded Richard Wise from racing the lightened and uprated Sabre, designed by single-seater engineer Steve Wills, which series backer Andy Bates of AB Performance is fielding for him.

Speeds are certainly rising in line with the construction of the latest cars. Cutmore lapped at an average of 102.45mph in qualifying last weekend, and the top four – anchored by former champion Derek Jones's conventional Fisher Fury – all beat the magic 'ton'.

Next stop for the RGB circus is Brands Hatch on April 16-17, where the Indy circuit's contours, coupled with frenetic traffic, are bound to produce some great racing. A couple more new cars will hopefully join the fray in Kent. See you there.

“An influx of bold new rear-engined cars over the winter has changed the feel of the competition”



British Historic Rally

Elliott's Escort gets level in Mk2 rivalry

NICK ELLIOTT AND

Chris Brooks levelled the score with arch-rivals Julian Reynolds and Ian Oakey on the second round of the British Historic Rally Championship, the Bulldog Rally in Wales, last Saturday.

After being pipped by a second on the opening-round battle of the Ford Escort Mk2s, Elliott took control in the Dyfi and Aberhirnant complexes to win by 21 seconds and take a third straight win on the rally.

"It was fairly comfortable for us really," said Elliott after setting the pace from the start.

Former World Rally Championship ace

Francois Delecour returned to the Welsh forests to contest the opening round of the concurrent Tuthill Porsche Challenge, but could not match the pace of the leading Escorts with his three-litre 911.

"The car was superb and surprised me a lot," said the Frenchman, who took 16th in Category Three.

David Stokes and Guy Weaver overcame fellow Escort Mk1 duo Stefaan Stouff/Joris Erard to take Category Two.

Simon Wallis rolled his Lotus Cortina out of Category One, and it was a surprised Ian Beveridge and Peter Joy who took the spoils in their Volvo PV544.



Elliott/Brooks Mk2 won by 21sec



Vernon is late addition to bulging BARC grid

Formula Renault BARC

Vernon moves to Fortec

Ex-Formula Ford and Palmer Audi ace joins top team for Renault BARC; Webster stays on at squad for crack at 2011 title

TOP FORMULA RENAULT TEAM FORTEC Motorsport has snapped up ex-Formula Palmer Audi and British Formula Ford ace Kieran Vernon for the BARC championship this year.

Vernon, who finished fourth in FPA last season, was then awarded a Porsche Carrera Cup scholarship, but he has been unable to raise the budget to contest that series. He will get his first taste of the Formula Renault Tatuus chassis in a test next week.

Team manager Steve Lynch said: "It's good for us that he's decided to do BARC Renault. A lot has been expected of him, but he will have limited testing.

Hopefully he will get up there when he's up to speed."

The 21-year-old will join Josh Webster, 17, who has committed to a second season with Fortec after winning the 2010 BARC Winter Cup title.

Lynch has high hopes for Webster. "We were keen to get him back on board," he said. "He got a lot stronger last year and he'll be a definite frontrunner. We'd expect him to fight for the title."

Fortec is also running ex-Carrera Cup racer Archie Hamilton (see AUTOSPORT, March 3). Spaniard Victor Jimenez, who contested some FPA races last year, completes the team's four-car line-up.

'My advice is: don't try to take Paddock Bend flat-out'

McLaren F1 star Lewis Hamilton dropped in on the Brands Hatch BTCC meeting last weekend to see his brother Nicolas make his race debut in the Clio Cup. Nicolas finished 12th and 15th in the two races.



VSCC

Ferguson to race at Silverstone

THE FERGUSON P99 FORMULA 1 car will be part of a strong entry at the Vintage Sports-Car Club's Silverstone season opener on April 23.

Stuart Rolt will drive the car - which became the only four-wheel-drive machine to win an F1 race when Stirling Moss took the 1961 Oulton Park Gold Cup - in the pre-1966 HGPCA event.

Two American drivers will also fly

over to compete in the Patrick Lindsay and Amschel Rothschild Memorial Trophy race. Paddins Dowling will race ERA R10B, while Charles McCabe will drive ERA R5B on its first VSCC appearance since 2008.

The 80th anniversary of the Talbot 105 will be celebrated with a parade, and several examples have been entered for the pre-war sportscar race.



P99 (leading) raced at Goodwood in 2008

IN BRIEF

FORMER GINETTA Junior frontrunner Jake Hill (below) suffered a fraught debut in the G50 class of the GT Supercup at Brands Hatch last weekend. A collision with G55 runner Jordan Skinner put them both out of race one, before Hill took third in class in race two. He was punted into a spin at Druids by Alistair James (G55) in race three, before being collected by Adam Morgan.



GP3 RACER Alexander Sims is planning to contest the Radical European Masters race at Silverstone next weekend. The 2008 McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner will join Club Cup racer Rachel Davies in a Team Bruichladdich-run car.

ANGLO-SWEDISH tin-top racer Freddy Nordstrom has been confirmed for Lotus Sport's GT4 assault on British GT this season. He will share a CM Consolidated-run Evora with Leyton Clarke.

FORMER TVR Tuscan star Steve Cole missed his debut in the FF1600 Northern series at Oulton Park last Saturday after damaging his car in testing.

KEITH FARRANCE, the 1988 Formula First champion and 1994 Caterham Vauxhall Challenge runner-up, broke a 15-year layoff at Mallory Park last Sunday when he made his Formula Vee debut in a GAC. He finished 10th.

GENESIS DESIGNER Tim Pell's new Evo RGB chassis appeared at Mallory Park last Sunday. The 1200cc Kawasaki-engined car (built to the series' old rules) was quick in a straight line, but Pell was rusty after a four-year absence.

LOTUS RACER Nick Fennell, who drives an F1 Type 25 in HGPCA events, debuted his FJunior Type 27 at Mallory Park last Sunday (right). Classic Team Lotus has returned it to the Ecurie Ford France livery in which Jean Vinatier and Jo Schlesser raced it in 1963.



PETER MEYRICK, winner of last year's FIA Historic F1 title, has bought the ex-Elio de Angelis 1978 Monaco F3 race-winning Chevron B38 from Paul Smith with the intention of entering next year's GP Historique in the Principality.

SPORTS 2000 Duratec champion Neil Burroughs is making good progress following his recent head injury. He has been allowed home from hospital in between treatments.

Tasman Cup

Dwyer doubles up in F5000 revival finale

BRITON MARK DWYER WON BOTH legs of the MSC Formula 5000 Tasman Cup Revival Series finale, which supported the Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne's Albert Park at the end of last month.

Driving the Lola T400 originally raced by Aussie Max Stewart, the Yorkshireman took his tally of wins in F1 support races to three, having won one leg at the inaugural Melbourne event in 2009.

Neither Ken Smith (Lola T430) nor title rival Steve Ross (McRae GM1) made the trip from New Zealand this year, thus period F5000 ace Smith completed a hat-trick of titles with David Abbott's ex-Team VdS T-car.

Dwyer qualified on pole, besting James Davison - son of 1970s F5000 racer Jon and grandson of quadruple Australian GP winner Lex - in his Lola T332. Hopes of a local win soon faded in the Saturday race when Davison's magneto failed on the opening lap.

Fresh from a win at Phillip Island, Greg Thornton (Chevron B24) slid off while attacking Dwyer and local hero Andrew Robson (T332) suffered fuel starvation, leaving Aussie Aaron Lewis (B24) and Kiwi Abbott (T430) to claim podium places.

Robson and Davison blasted from the back in the Sunday event to chase Dwyer home. Thornton was equally feisty in the chase and set fastest lap en route to fourth.



Dwyer cleaned up in absence of Kiwi aces

Formula Jedi

Fletcher impresses on his Jedi debut

SUPER 1 KARTING graduate James Fletcher took a second-place finish in his first ever car-racing event at Oulton Park last weekend.

The 17-year-old has moved up to a Marc Campfield-run Formula Jedi for his maiden season in cars, after financial constraints prevented him from entering further up the racing ladder.

The Ascot driver qualified on the second row, 1.8 seconds behind pacesetter Richard Mitcham and third of the 18 cars that practised.

He lost ground at the beginning of the first race, prompting a comeback drive to fourth, behind Mitcham, reigning champion Andrew Dunn and Daniel Cook. Fletcher improved to second in race two, as 2009 champion Mitcham extended his winning streak to 10 races.

Fletcher said: "It's a good start to the championship, and I'm in it to win it this year. If this season goes to plan I'm not certain what I would do next year, but it would probably be Formula Renault."

Ford Fiestas

Sutton switches to Fiestas

FORMULA VEE RACE winner Ashley Sutton will move into the British Racing and Sports Car Club's Ford Fiesta championship this season after failing to secure the budget to compete in the BTCC-supporting Renault Clio Cup.

Sutton, 17, won three races and finished fourth in the Formula Vee standings in

his first season of car racing last year. The 2007 British Rotax Mini-Max karting champion sold his red Storm to crash-helmet painter Joe Holmes as he set his sights on a tin-top campaign.

Sutton will get his first taste of front-wheel-drive racing in a Daniels Motorsport-run ST at Silverstone this weekend.



Sutton adapted quickly to Formula Vee in 2010

Masters Historic Racing

Masters plots British-built sportscar race at Snett



New Snett race for old UK sportscars

MASTERS HISTORIC RACING IS TO run a race for British Sportscars at its Snetterton 300 event on April 23.

The 30-minute race will be for British-built sportscars produced between 1950 and the end of '69. The event will be open to one or two-driver teams and will include a mandatory pitstop.

Event manager James Beckett said: "When you consider how many

British sportscars exist, road or race cars, there's no reason why this can't be a great success. We have already had a good response and are working on MGs and Triumphs to join the fun, but there is no reason why Lotus owners shouldn't head to Snetterton.

"Then there are race constructors like Lola or Chevron, and we'd be happy to run them if there is competitor demand."

QUICK RESULTS

→ Golf GTI R1 winner **Bark**
→ Golf GTI R2 winner **Hopkins**

**"I was just gutted when
I saw that safety car"**

Jamie Martin rues race-two turning point



IN BRIEF



RADICAL CLUB CUP

David Jacobs (above) took a maiden win in the first race at Donington Park after slicing past James Abbott at Goddards with four laps to go. Abbott dominated race two.

MSV F3 CUP

With poleman Aaron Steele left on the startline in the first race at Donington, Louis Hamilton-Smith got the better of Chris Needham to win. A red flag in race two failed to prevent a comfortable win for Needham.

MONOPOSTO

Tristan Cliffe and Barry Smith shared the Donington Mono 2000 spoils after Cliffe's Dallara won the first smaller Mono race, before Adrian Wright (GEM) took a red-flagged race two when Jeremy Timms's Van Diemen incurred a 10s penalty.

PRODUCTION BMW

Ben Winrow just held off Tim Wilson in the first race at Donington, with Mike Tovey third having briefly led. Tovey had the measure of his rivals to score a maiden win in race two.

FORMULA JEDI

Two wins for Richard Mitcham at Oulton Park made it 10 in a row since mid-2010. Last year's champion Andrew Dunn took second in race one, before star debutant James Fletcher took the place in race two.

NORTH FF1600 POST-90

Anglesey winner John Murphy spun out of contention in both races at Oulton. Doug Crosbie took the first race, before a fuel issue on the final lap of race two handed a first win to Jamie Jardine (below, leading).



MK2 GOLF GTI DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 2-3

Bark and Hopkins on top in thrilling round of Golf

IT WAS FAR FROM A cut-and-dried affair in either of the VW Golf races, as the popular tin-top series made its first appearance of 2011.

Poleman James Bark made an early escape in the first race, and was lucky to get away with a trip through the gravel at Goddards before claiming his win.

Simon Hill and Lewis Hopkins were joined by Mike Thurston in their scrap for second. Former Porsche Carrera Cup and Citroen 2CV racer Hopkins briefly dropped to fourth before surging back into second with a double pass at Craner Curves. But then he went wide at the Goddards chicane, forcing him to surrender to Thurston again.

Behind, Jamie Packham ousted Hill for fourth

on the very last lap.

As Bark fell back with a problem, Packham grabbed the lead of race two. But then he went straight over the gravel trap at Goddards on the second lap, handing Jamie Martin the lead.

"I had got a great start and then just locked up into the chicane," said Packham.

Martin had broken the tow and looked to be in the clear, only to be thwarted by a safety car to remove a stricken car from Goddards. "I was just gutted when I saw that safety car," he said.

That allowed Packham and Hopkins to attack at the restart, and it was Hopkins who moved ahead with a couple of laps remaining.

He then managed to stay clear over the last two laps for a maiden win, with Martin just holding off Packham for second. Hill



Winner Bark leads Golf pack

retained fourth, but had Nick Porter closing towards the end.

● Peter Scherer

RESULTS - RACE 1 (11 LAPS)

1 James Bark; 2 Mike Thurston +8.054s; 3 Lewis Hopkins; 4 Jamie

Packham; 5 Simon Hill; 6 Nick Porter. **Class winner** Guy Stevens.

Fastest lap Bark 1m25.754s (83.08mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)**

1 Hopkins; 2 Jamie Martin +1.864s; 3 Packham; 4 Hill; 5 Porter; 6 Henry Wright. **CW** Stevens. **FL** Hopkins 1m35.306s (74.75mph).

PROJECT 8 RACING SALOONS DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 2-3

BMW man stays Sharpe for double

A STRONG AND VARIED grid of Project 8 Racing Saloons was headed by a duel for supremacy between Colin Tester and Adam Sharpe, in Ford Sierra Cosworth and BMW M3 respectively.

Sharpe had qualified on pole for the first race, but dropped back at the start. "I selected fifth gear instead of third [on the way up]," he said. Tester

was flying and left the rest to sort themselves out behind. Sharpe was soon back into second and closing, leaving Mike Dugdale's BMW M3 in a lonely third.

The pressure told on Tester, and he ran off at the Old Hairpin on lap five of 13 to leave Sharpe with a decisive lead. Lawrie Dunster (M3) closed on Dugdale and completed the

podium, while Tester's recovery got him fourth, after a duel with Stephen Primett's Escort, another off at the Old Hairpin, and the demotion of George Haynes (BMW M3) in the closing laps.

It was more of the same in race two, with Sharpe shadowing Tester until three-quarters distance. "He ran wide at Coppice; I think he outraked

himself. But that was much harder," said the victorious Sharpe. "Yes, a lot closer," Tester agreed, having retained second.

Haynes had a solitary run into third, after a queue formed up behind Dunster. The BMW finally had its defence breached and Primett took fourth, but he lost out to Dugdale with three laps to go.

Dunster retained sixth behind Primett, who was a double class winner.

● Peter Scherer

RESULTS - RACE 1 (13 LAPS)

1 Adam Sharpe (BMW M3); 2 Mike Dugdale (BMW M3 E36) +24.062s; 3 Lawrie Dunster (BMW M3 E36); 4 Colin Tester (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 5 George Haynes (BMW M3 E36); 6 Stephen Primett (Ford Escort). **CW** Primett; James Carpenter (Honda Civic); Alan Wileman (BMW 320). **FL** Sharpe 1m19.289s (89.85mph).

RACE 2 (12 LAPS) **1 Sharpe**; 2 Tester +1.899s; 3 Haynes; 4 Dugdale; 5 Primett; 6 Dunster. **CW** Primett; Ian Clark (Ford Capri GXL); Carpenter; Tom Ibrahim (BMW 320). **FL** Mike Collins (BMW M3 E36) 1m19.155s (90.00mph).



Sharpe (33) is on a roll in Racing Saloons

GT TROPHY DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 2-3

Ferrari and Porsche prove an old adage

ON PAPER, 10 CARS SET to race for two hours would hardly raise your blood pressure in anticipation, but the GT Trophy proved once again that it only takes two to make a race.

On this occasion it was Gary Eastwood's Ferrari 430 and Nick Dudfield's Porsche 997 GT3. For 40 laps Eastwood fended off tremendous pressure and successfully kept his rival behind, despite Dudfield drawing alongside on many occasions. But neither would win a race that ultimately fell to Ferrari duo Leon Price and Rob Barff, after an early spin.

Mike Donovan took over the In2 Porsche from Dudfield at the mandatory pitstops and emerged with the lead, while ex-Formula Palmer Audi champ Ryan Lewis gave chase after

jumping in for Eastwood.

The gap started to come down as Lewis began to set the fastest lap times of the race. But before he could get close enough to challenge, the Ferrari was back in the pits with a broken driveshaft. So it was that FF Corse team-mate Barff now became Donovan's biggest threat.

The gap was still looking too big as the clock ran down, but with less than a handful of laps remaining Donovan exited Goddards with a cough and a splutter. "I know we had fuel in but it just wouldn't pick up. I thought about pitting, but just kept going," said Donovan.

Barff reeled him in and snatched the lead, before surging to a comfortable victory by over 27 seconds. "It's on until the chequered



Dudfield's Porsche tracked Eastwood (8) for 40 laps

flag drops," said Barff. "I just got my head down, kept it fast accurate, and if you do that Donington rewards you."

Lee Atkins had been third initially, but retired early on with a fuel-pump failure in his Ginetta G50. The Ferrari 430 of David Back/Michael Broadhurst had to make an

unscheduled stop with a puncture, but recovered to take third, while Peter Belshaw's KTM (which he shared with Marcus Clutton) also figured before slipping to fifth, behind the similar car of bit-part British GT racers Athanasios Ladas and Michael Mallock.

● Peter Scherer

RESULTS (98 LAPS) 1 Leon Price/Rob Barff (Ferrari 430); 2 Nick Dudfield/Mike Donovan (Porsche 997 GT3) +27.671s; 3 David Back/Michael Broadhurst (Ferrari 430); 4 Athanasios Ladas/Michael Mallock (KTM Xbow); 5 Peter Belshaw/Marcus Clutton (KTM Xbow); 6 Andy Yool/Neil Primrose (Chevron GR8). **CW** Dudfield/Donovan; Ladas/Mallock; Yool/Primrose. **FL** Barff 1m10.037s (101.72mph).



Shaw (3) 'pounced' for race two win

CATERHAM R300 SUPERLIGHTS OULTON PARK, APRIL 2

Shaw takes the hard road to Caterham glory

A MIXED DAY FINALLY yielded the right result for Scottish driver Mark Shaw, albeit in a slightly unexpected fashion.

Tipped in the programme notes as a contender, the man who finished fifth in the championship last year duly qualified on the front row, a tenth slower than Paul Wilson.

"I was quite hopeful until I threw it off at Island Bend

on the first lap," he admitted. "Then I was about 25th and I had a lot of overtaking to do."

The DPR Motorsport entrant climbed to seventh position, while up ahead there was a fine race. Gordon Sawyer was part of a breakaway of three – also including Wilson and Andrew McMillan – when he spun at Old Hall. Despite dropping to 10th, Sawyer

finished on the podium.

Wilson pulled out a comfortable gap for the last quarter of the race.

After a safety-car period in race two (the much-tipped JJ O'Malley having collected his second DNF of the day with an off at Old Hall), the contest boiled down to the same three-way fight. McMillan left the fray on lap eight, but Wilson and Sawyer continued their scrap almost until the end.

When they collided at the hairpin with half a lap to go, Shaw pounced to grab the win from reigning Roadsports champion Jamie Orton and Supersports title winner James MacLachlan.

● Ian Sowman

RESULTS - RACE 1 (16 LAPS)

1 Paul Wilson; 2 Andrew McMillan +1.262s; 3 Gordon Sawyer; 4 Jamie Ellwood; 5 James MacLachlan; 6 Jamie Orton. **FL** Sawyer 1m50.308s (87.85mph). **RACE 2 (14 LAPS)**

1 Mark Shaw; 2 Orton +4.141s; 3 MacLachlan; 4 Simon Young; 5 David Pearce; 6 McMillan. **FL** Shaw 1m50.628s (87.60mph).

FF1600 PRE-90 OULTON PARK, APRIL 2

Dolan's luckless day

NIGEL DOLAN AND Ian Parkington were the main protagonists as Van Diemen battled Reynard at Oulton Park.

Parkington grabbed the lead at the start from pole, but Dolan soon forged back ahead, only to miss a gear into Lodge and lose three places.

The Birmingham driver benefited when Matthew Ridge's brakes failed and then picked off Mike Stewart to take the challenge to Parkington.

Dolan got back in front on occasion, but would later be let down by the same gear-selection problem that cost him earlier, as Parkington won.

A brilliant safety car restart in the second encounter seemed enough to secure victory for Dolan, but the gearbox problems

returned at Shell on the final lap and Parkington could not avoid contact.

Parkington survived to win but Dolan was out, allowing Jeff Hodgson to move up to second, ahead of Andrew Thomas.

After earlier woes, Ridge and David Franklin charged to fourth and sixth respectively.

● Ian Sowman

RESULTS - RACE 1 (11 LAPS)

1 Ian Parkington (Reynard 84FF); 2 Nigel Dolan (Van Diemen RF86) +0.093s; 3 Jeff Hodgson (Reynard 88FF); 4 Mike Stewart (Van Diemen RF86). **CW**

Hodgson; John Swift (Van Diemen RF80). **FL** Parkington 1m52.127s (86.43mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)**

1 Parkington; 2 Hodgson +0.317s; 3 Andrew Thomas (Reynard 89FF); 4 Matthew Ridge (Van Diemen RF86). **CW** Hodgson; Swift. **FL** Parkington 1m52.623s (86.05mph).



Tibbs took Stock Hatch victory

RGB MALLORY PARK, APRIL 3

Inspired Cutmore rings the bells for Spire

JOHN CUTMORE

has played a major role in developing Paul Nightingale’s Spire sportscars into 750MC Road-Going Bike-engined winners since 2009, and the all-new GT3 model easily outpaced rivals to win out of the box at Sunday’s season opener.

Cutmore planted the inboard-suspended Honda CBR-engined prototype on pole. The Suffolk man’s confidence-boosting 47.44s charge (on the newly-resurfaced, and faster, circuit) eclipsed Paul Rogers’s Contour mark in a busy session. The Suzuki-engined Contours of Gary Goodyear (new) and Rogers came closest, fractions apart, with Derek Jones fifth in his faithful front-engined Fisher Fury.

Sadly, the track was damp come the afternoon’s race,

which precluded a representative entry into the championship’s lap-record annals. Cutmore made a good start, but Duncan Marshall’s STM Phoenix hooked up sensationally on row three and screamed through to challenge him into Gerards.

Marshall kept Cutmore more than on his guard for six laps, but on lap nine dropped the white car at the foot of Devil’s Elbow. Instead of a sickening thud, the high-speed spin ended with fibreglass damage as its left-rear corner smote the barrier. Marshall continued, undeterred, and almost did it again next time round...

Goodyear spun and Mathew Green (Spire GT-R) had a moment at Shaw’s Hairpin on lap 10, which left Cutmore comfortably ahead of Rogers and Jones.



Cutmore dominated in RGB 2011 opener

Green fought back to fourth ahead of Marshall, while Tim Pell’s extraordinary new Kawasaki ZX12-motivated Genesis Evo — built to the old regulations over a four-year layoff — completed the top six.

Mallory specialist Tony Gaunt (whose second Wolfe is due mid-season) battled for much of the race with

Tim Hoverd, who has made the transition to the rationalised series’ rear-engined division with the purposeful-looking J15, from the drawing board of Sylva Autokits founder Jeremy Phillips.

After a super-reliable 2010, defending champion Alastair Boulton’s STM Phoenix broke down

on the opening lap.

● Marcus Pye

RESULTS (15 LAPS)

1 John Cutmore (Spire GT3); 2 Paul Rogers (Contour) +14.25s; 3 Derek Jones (Fisher Fury); 4 Mathew Green (Spire GTR); 5 Duncan Marshall (STM Phoenix); 6 Tim Pell (Genesis Evo). **Class winners** Jones; Pell. **Fastest lap** Cutmore 56.41s (86.15mph).



Anderson scored Vee win in the wet

FORMULA VEE MALLORY PARK, APRIL 3

Anderson leads GAC attack in deluged season opener

HOBBLED BY ENGINE

detonation in qualifying, thus surprised to qualify third, AUTOSPORT’s Ben Anderson won the Formula Vee opener on a red-letter day for GAC constructor Alan Woodward, whose chassis filled the top six.

The result was far from plain sailing for Anderson, for the race was red-flagged twice without reaching maturity. With drizzle turning to torrential rain

it was halted initially for the recovery of Alan Swain’s iguana-skinned GAC, which had been assaulted by newcomer Ben Miloudi’s Ray at the hairpin.

Earlier, as racing returnee Keith Farrance (of Formula First and Caterham fame) spun his GAC, Steve Ough had wiped his AHS Dominator’s nose off against the inside wall there.

Anderson — who had survived a huge tankslapper

off the kerb at the foot of Devil’s Elbow, yet lay fourth behind Ian Buxton, John Hughes (Scarab Mk5) and Martin Farmer at the break — ducked into the paddock to swap his smoked visor for a clear one and came out fighting at the restart.

Hughes led for a lap before Anderson (his car’s handling transformed in the wet) zapped him and Buxton ran through the Gerards gravel. Hughes went off at the hairpin on lap five, triggering reds, which left Anderson ahead of Farmer, Taylor and impressive ‘newbies’ Henry Chart — who has no karting experience — and Michael Epps. The recovering Buxton pipped another promising novice, James Clennell (AHS), for sixth.

● Marcus Pye

RESULTS (4 LAPS) 1 Ben Anderson

(GAC); 2 Martin Farmer (GAC) +5.99s; 3 Paul Taylor (GAC); 4 Henry Chart (GAC); 5 Michael Epps (GAC); 6 Ian Buxton (GAC). **FL** Anderson 58.92s (82.48mph).

STOCK HATCH MALLORY PARK, APRIL 3

Tibbs tops the Stocks

TWICE A WINNER

last season, former Saxmax competitor Andy Tibbs opened his 2011 Stock Hatch campaign with a cracking victory over Terry Roughton, but it took the lad 13 laps to forge his Citroen Saxo VTR past the veteran’s version.

Tibbs qualified 0.1 seconds adrift of the Silver Fox’s pole time. Half a second back, barely the same margin blanketed Patrick Fletcher, Rory Cooper, Mark Armstrong, Adam Stokes (amid the Saxos in the ex-Jeff Humphries 2009 title-winning Peugeot 106 XSi), Carl Swann and Jake Farndon.

Roughton made the perfect getaway, while Fletcher squeezed past Tibbs and kept him

behind for four laps. Once back to second, Tibbs nibbled into Roughton’s advantage, whereupon a three-way lead battle ensued.

“I didn’t realise the old man could be so much trouble,” grinned Tibbs, who rounded Roughton off Devil’s Elbow with two laps to spare. “I heard him miss a gear before the left-hander and was able to make my move.

Roughton finished 0.29s down, with Fletcher within a second of the winner.

● Marcus Pye

RESULTS (15 LAPS) 1 Andrew Tibbs

(Citroen Saxo VTR); 2 Terry Roughton (Saxo) +0.29s; 3 Patrick Fletcher (Saxo); 4 Carl Swann (Saxo); 5 Shaun Hagen (Saxo); 6 Rory Cooper (Saxo). **FL** Hagen 55.48s (87.60mph) record.

CATERHAM GRADUATES SILVERSTONE, APRIL 2-3

Packman eats his Mega Graduates rivals

LAST YEAR'S CATERHAM Mega Graduates runner-up Myles Packman got his 2011 campaign off to the best possible start with a double at Silverstone.

A group of five cars soon broke clear in race one. Packman, Daniel Malkin, Paul Manyweathers, George Longmuir and Nick Frost fought it out, with the lead changing several times throughout the race; cars were often three-abreast

going into Copse.

Getting away from this bunch looked impossible yet, somehow, Packman managed to get into the lead, break the tow, and pull away slightly while the others squabbled.

Malkin eventually won the multi-car scrap, but he was 0.798 seconds behind Packman at the flag.

Packman's victory in race two was in much the same vein. He ran as low as

sixth before again charging to the front in the last two laps. Again, he broke the tow and got away.

"I'd like to claim it was tactics, but I don't know how I got that break," admitted the winner.

The Classics produced some particularly close racing. Poleman Graeme Smith led the field away, but Rowan Williams took the initiative when he dived up the inside at Brooklands just before half-distance.

Williams managed to eke out a half-second lead by the end of the race, only for his car to be found underweight. He was excluded, handing victory to reigning champ Smith.

Williams wanted to make amends in race two and did just that, pipping John Parker by just 0.063s. James Russell was third, while Smith took fifth, 0.8s behind the victor!

Neil Shinner took honours in the first Super race. He got the better of Reece Somerfield, Dylan Stanley and Luke Tzourou.

There was however, no such luck for Shinner in race two, as Somerfield took the win. Shinner lost third at the line to Toby Briant by 0.021s.

● Matt Upton

RESULTS

MEGA RACE 1 (19 LAPS) 1 Myles Packman; 2 Daniel Malkin +0.798s; 3 Paul Manyweathers; 4 George Longmuir. **FL** Longmuir 1m06.816s (88.30mph). **RACE 2 (19 LAPS)**

1 Packman; 2 Martin Amison +1.811s; 3 Mark Brunning; 4 Manyweathers. **FL** Malkin 1m06.498s (88.72mph).

CLASSICS RACE 1 (18 LAPS)

1 Graeme Smith; 2 John Parker +0.074s; 3 James Russell; 4 Paul Hawker. **FL** Amanda Black 1m13.599s (80.16mph).

RACE 2 (18 LAPS)

1 Rowan Williams; 2 Parker +0.063s; 3 Russell; 4 Hawker. **FL** Thompson 1m13.532s (80.24mph).

SUPERS/SIGMAS RACE 1 (19 LAPS)

1 Neil Shinner; 2 Reece Somerfield +0.798s; 3 Dylan Stanley; 4 Luke Tzourou. **CW** Ian Anderson. **FL** Toby Briant 1m08.370s (86.30mph).

RACE 2 (19 LAPS)

1 Somerfield; 2 Stanley +0.206s; 3 Briant; 4 Shinner. **CW** Anderson. **FL** Shinner 1m07.713s (87.13mph).



Packman started 2011 with a double

KUMHO BMWs SILVERSTONE, APRIL 2-3

Whittaker wins twice as rival Kempton crashes

GARRIE WHITTAKER won both Kumho BMW races by almost half a minute, but that fact hides the strength of David Kempton's challenge.

Whittaker blasted his E36 M3 clear in the early stages of race one, only for traffic to allow Kempton to close up in his similar machine. The duo were embroiled in

a great dice for several laps.

On lap 11 of 19, Kempton clipped the back of Whittaker's car, causing him to lose a chunk of front spoiler, but a lap later Whittaker was blocked by a backmarker at Becketts.

Kempton grabbed the lead, only to be forced out of the race a few corners later by another backmarker.

Going into Luffield, Stuart Laws hadn't seen the charging Kempton, and subsequently turned in on him. Kempton suffered heavy damage, and so Whittaker took an easy win, with the new Z4 of Colin Wells a long way behind.

Whittaker also took race two: he led from start to finish, and it looked as if his

car was on rails. Wells was a distant second.

After retiring from race one due to a sticking clutch pedal, Ian Crisp started at the back of the grid in his E36 M3 Evo. By the end of the first lap he was in sixth.

He climbed to third, fell to fourth again after the sticking clutch pedal reared its ugly head once more, then finally overcame Graham Heard to take a well-deserved podium.

● Matt Upton

RESULTS (BOTH 19 LAPS)

RACE 1 1 Garrie Whittaker (E36 M3); 2 Colin Wells (Z4) +27.938s; 3 Graham Heard (3-series); 4 Colin Whitmore (M3); 5 Mark Smith (M3); 6 Rodger Card (E30 M3). **CW** Smith; Simon Hudson (E30); Paul Bellamy (318is). **FL** Kempton 1m03.139s (93.45mph). **RACE 2** 1 Whittaker; 2 Wells +29.769s; 3 Ian Crisp (E36 M3 Evo); 4 Heard; 5 Whitmore; 6 Smith. **CW** Smith; Hudson; Bellamy. **FL** Whittaker 1m03.559s (92.83mph).

Kempton chases Whittaker before off



IN BRIEF



750MC ALLCOMERS

Simon Knighton sizzled his brother's ingenious 325bhp Suzuki Hayabusa turbo-powered 'Stratos' (above) to victory at Mallory. Knighton's 43.39s (112.01mph) pole time was beyond reach in traffic, which enabled Steve Cave (JKS) to close to within 1.47s at the flag.

KIT CAR/SR>

Jon Milicevic (Caterham-Vauxhall) bested Cheng Lim's 6.6-litre RAM SC in the dry race at Mallory, with champion Andy Hiley (Taydec) third. Hiley won the soggy finale, but Matthew Smith (Ginetta G20) charged past Lim to a brilliant second.

FORMULA JUNIOR

Mallory's Formula Junior entry was split by engine position. Jon Milicevic, Sam Wilson and Simon Armer led a Cooper T59 rout among the 'rears', while Andrew Tart won a damp front-engined encounter after a poor start.

STOCK HATCH B

Andrew Lightfoot's Ford Fiesta XR2 won at Mallory, as poleman Lee Scott took sixth after an off.

AUSTIN HEALEY CLUB

It was a win apiece for David Smithies and David Grace at Silverstone, but both made mistakes. Grace spun in race one, while Smithies made a poor start to race two but still recovered to second.

V-TEC & OPEN PROD

Richard Voaden's Integra took a double victory in the new Honda V-Tec Challenge at Silverstone, despite stiff opposition from Charlie Butler-Henderson in an ex-Team Dynamics BTCC Civic. Both events of the new Open Production series were won by the Westfield of Nick Flowers.



British F3 & GT

UK season premiere

23rd and 25th April at Oulton Park - the UK season premiere of the Cooper Tires F3 International Series and the Avon Tyres British GT Championship. Who will be the anniversary British F3 Champion?

British GT sees the British brands, Aston, Chevron, Lotus and Ginetta up against the world's finest – Ferrari, Porsche, Mercedes and Audi – who will come out on top at Oulton Park?



More info visit www.britishf3international.com
and www.britishgt.com

The race is on for the 2012 Sunoco Rolex 24 At Daytona Challenge. Who will win the coveted race seat in a Daytona Prototype at the 2012 Rolex 24? For all the latest news and results visit www.sunocodaytonachallenge.com



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Mygale (centre), Ray (l) and Van Diemen will battle it out in 2011



Fordsters are ready to rock

The British Formula Ford championship kicks off this weekend. KEVIN TURNER looks at the likely contenders

ENTRY LIST	
DRIVER	TEAM
Jeroen Slaghekke (NL)	Jamun Mygale
Scott Malvern (GB)	Jamun Mygale
Nick McBride (AUS)	Jamun Mygale
Spike Goddard (AUS)	Jamun Mygale
Jake Cook (GB)	Jamun Mygale
Dan de Zille (GB)	JTR Mygale
Geoff Uhrhane (AUS)	JTR Mygale
Tristan Mingay (GB)	JTR Mygale
Matt Parry (GB)	Fluid Van Diemen
Jesse Anttila (FIN)	Ray Sport Ray
Neil Alberico (USA)	CDR Ray
Cavan Corcoran (GB)	Getem Mygale
Luke Williams (GB)	LWR Mygale
Jake Jackson (GB)	Tockwith Ray
David Moore (GB)	Tockwith Ray
David Ellesley (GB)	Racecar Juno
Antti Buri (FIN)	LMS Mygale
Philippe Layac (F)	RV/Enigma Mygale

Under normal circumstances, an 18-car field for the British Formula Ford opener would be considered weak. But the struggles of Formula Renault UK and the new InterSteps series to top a dozen cars makes the grid for Silverstone this weekend not seem so bad.

There's probably more to come too. Cliff Dempsey Racing has only one entry and is hoping for a second driver, while the works Van Diemen team is likely to add to its single car during the year.

Topping the entry, as ever, is Jamun Racing. On paper, the Mygale squad that has run the last six champions allied to the runner-up last year – former Ray driver Scott Malvern – looks unbeatable. The 22-year-old has tended to lead the way in testing and is comfortably the top 2010 returnee.

But it's rarely that simple. Dutchman Jeroen Slaghekke, 10th last year, is back and has run his new team-mate close over the winter. Team boss James Mundy says: "Jeroen has stepped up his pace. Scott's had the edge, but there's not a lot between them."

Jamun's bumper entry is completed by Australians Richard 'Spike' Goddard and Nick McBride, who have shown promise but have an experience gap to

bridge to get on terms with their team-mates. Jake Cook, who impressed for Getem Racing last year, will also run with Jamun at Silverstone and could be a frontrunner if he can find a full budget.

Jamun's rivals have often started on the back foot in recent years through late deals and a lack of testing, but that isn't the case this year. JTR signed Australian Formula Ford runner-up Geoff Uhrhane months ago. He has been racking up the miles and Mundy has picked out the 19-year-old, along with third-year driver Antti Buri (in his own Mygale), as Jamun's biggest threat.

JTR boss Nick Tandy has also added Dan de Zille, who showed flashes of pace last year, and Scholarship champion Tristan Mingay to produce JTR's most experienced line-up. "I really think between our three guys we've got a depth in the team we've not had before," he says. "They don't have to spend the first part of the year learning."

As ever, one of the intriguing aspects of the year should be the inter-constructor fight. Mygale might have had the upper hand in recent years, but Van Diemen and Ray are not far behind.

Works Van Diemen squad Fluid only has Matt Parry confirmed so far, but he is a highly-rated karter and has done a

decent amount of testing. In the right conditions – and hands – the chassis can win, as Dennis Lind demonstrated at the Brands Hatch Festival last year.

Ray is the only marque to come up with an all-new car for 2011, but CDR, which led the firm's attack last year, won't start the season with the GR11. Inexperienced American Neil Alberico will instead drive the 2010 machine.

"He hasn't got the experience to set up the 2011 car," says Dempsey. "We know the settings for last year's car, so he can concentrate on learning. If things are going well and the new car is significantly faster – or we can get a second driver – we'll run it."

The works Ray team will run the GR11 for Jesse Anttila, who took two fourths in a part-campaign with Fluid in 2010, as it bids for its first win since '06. ☐



Uhrhane could lead fight against Jamun

YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



You won't need the beanie hat in North Carolina, Kimi

Kimi just wants to have fun

I see Kimi Raikkonen has signed up to race in the NASCAR Truck Series – good for him! He is a man clearly enjoying himself. I guess if you love driving and are good at it then it makes sense you should want to indulge in the many different driving disciplines that the world of motorsport has to offer.

And he's still young enough to return to F1. That said, it may be better he doesn't; Michael Schumacher's return has been so underwhelming it would be a shame to see Kimi make the same mistake. Perhaps Michael should follow Kimi's example...

Caroline White Clavering, Essex

EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

I was appalled to read that the boss of Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi is happy to "help Bahrain by facilitating a date change".

Like many who had sunk a lot of money into a trip to Bahrain, my ticket was non-refundable and the best I could do was pay a 30 per cent penalty to rebook the flight to a different venue. Given the costs were similar, I'd guess many people chose Abu Dhabi.

Bahrain being cancelled was nobody's fault, but moving another event is adding insult to injury.

Tim Pollard
By email

It was quite clear that after all the pre-season hype from them, Lotus were the biggest disappointment in Melbourne.

The Norfolk boys had given us hope that they had a car which would now be firmly challenging the mid-field opposition.

There will be many fans watching and hoping for some serious improvement this weekend.

Duncan Sabiston
Didcot

So the drivers have been consulted on how to create overtaking at the Yas Marina Circuit. It's obvious to anyone who spectates at Donington Park. Bypass Turn 6, so you have a fast straight on to a hairpin followed by an even longer straight. Any drivers defending the inside line in to the hairpin will be slow down the back straight.

Let's hope the drivers put us spectators first and don't create yet more high-speed aero-dependant corners for their own amusement.

Steve Morris
Chiswick

Lewis Hamilton's new management (under Simon Fuller) must be doing a good job if he's going to star in Disney Pixar's new film *Cars 2*. Being immortalised in a movie is an accolade surely anyone would enjoy.

Clearly Lewis has a lot of fans in the US and Disney believes he has universal appeal.

Moreover, his appearance could generate a greater interest in F1 from a younger audience, which can only be good for the sport.

Geoff Cullen
Saffron Walden, Essex

AUTOSPORT.COM

TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **HAMILTON: RED BULL WILL NEED KERS**

2. **McLAREN: SEPANG TO SHOW TRUER PICTURE**

3. **GLOCK WORRIED ABOUT VIRGIN**

4. **MERCEDES IN 'FIGHTING MOOD' FOR SEPANG**

5. **STONER SLAMS 'LACK OF HELP' AFTER CRASH**

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

TOP STORY ONLINE

WHY RED BULL NEEDS MORE THAN THE FASTEST CAR

To read this exclusive feature and many others like it, log on to autosport.com/plus and choose which package you'd like. A month will cost £5.50, a year £46. Includes access to Forix – the ultimate stats website.

WIN!



ROAD ANGEL VANTAGE

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Vantage – a dedicated safety camera and blackspot locator that displays the legal speed limit of every road you drive, automatically and wirelessly updating its database every few minutes as you drive. For more details on Road Angel visit www.roadangelgroup.com. Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- The John Webb mentioned in the John 'Jack' Turner obituary (p97, March 24) is not the man of the same name who was executive director at Brands Hatch.
- On p29 of the March 17 issue we said that Nasser Al-Attiyah won the Middle East Rally Championship opener in Kuwait. In fact this was round two – round one was the Qatar International Rally in February.
- The gap between Red Bull and its closest opposition is up by 240 per cent, not 340 per cent (p9, March 31).

THE LATEST GEAR

The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts



SPARK 1:43-SCALE FORMULA 1 MODELS

£51.99 each

autosport.com/shop

Chinese-built Spark diecast models are comfortably a match for rivals Minichamps and IXO when it comes to attention to detail in the 1:43-scale range and three of the firm's new F1 cars are no exception. Tom Pryce's 1974 German GP Shadow DN3 (in which the Welshman scored his first point), Derek Warwick's Renault RE50 from 1984 and, bringing the story up to date, Heikki Kovalainen's 2010 Lotus T127 showcase the variety of historic F1 cars now available in miniature.



LOTUS IN FORMULA 1 BOOK

£29.99 (978 394 000 4826)

autosport.com/shop

Interest in Team Lotus – or is it Lotus Racing these days? – has blossomed since the famous name returned to F1 last year.

This book tells the story from the beginning, in 1958, to the present day and includes video and podcast material from the team on two free CDs, as well as unseen imagery.



WILLIAMS F1 ZIP TOP

£27.99

autosport.com/shop

Show your allegiance to the Williams F1 squad with this official team zip top worn by the crew.

Made from 'moisture function' polyester (we think that means you stay dry whatever the weather may be doing), it's resplendent in Williams colours and is adorned with sponsors' branding.



TAMIYA McLAREN M23

£49.99

hobbyco.net

Re-released to much 'hurrahing' from model-making fans of 1970s F1 cars, Tamiya's McLaren M23 from 1976 can be assembled to James Hunt championship-winning spec, or slightly slower Jochen Mass configuration.

Sadly, you'll have to find your own Marlboro decals to complete a very cool kit.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: MATT NEAL'S 1994 SILVERSTONE ROLL



SEARCH FOR: 1994 BTCC Silverstone Neal Rolls LIVE (2:04)

BTCC veteran Matt Neal gets tipped into a barrel roll on the run to Becketts aboard his Mazda Xedos back in 1994. As the inimitable Murray Walker exclaims: "Roll, roll, roll and roll again!"

WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online

SILVERSTONE

BRSCC

April 9-10

**Admission £10 each day, or
£15 weekend (advance purchase)**

Tel: 0844 3728 200

The British Formula Ford Championship gets going in Northamptonshire this weekend, with category giant Jamun Racing bidding for a seventh straight title. Also on the bill are Ford Fiastas, Porsche Championship, Open Sportscars, FF1600, Euro Saloons and the Nippon Challenge.

BRANDS HATCH

MGCC

April 9-10

**Admission £13 on the gate,
£10 in advance**

Tel: 01474 872331

MG Trophy, MGCC Peter Best Insurance Challenge, Metro Cup, Thoroughbred Sports Cars, BCV8s, MGOC and Equipe GTS will all feature, along with Porsche Club, Porsche GT3 Cup, BARC Tin Tops, BARC Intermarque/Tigers, and Julius Thurgood's new HRDC Grand Touring Greats.

Formula Ford to
star at Silverstone



The (Knock)hills are
alive this weekend



SNETTERTON

CSCC

April 9-10

**Admission £13 each day,
or £16 weekend (online purchase)**

Tel: 01953 887303

PEMBREY

BARC

April 9-10

Admission £12

Tel: 01554 891042

KNOCKHILL

SMRC

April 10

Admission £12

Tel: 01383 723337

LYDDEN

SEMSEC

April 9

Admission £12

Tel: 01304 830557

MONDELLO PARK

MPSC

April 10

Admission £15

Tel: +353 (0)45 860 200

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 2/19

Malaysian Grand Prix, Sepang

April 10

formula1.com

After his dominant victory in Melbourne, world champion Sebastian Vettel arrives in Malaysia in top form with the quickest car in the field beneath him. Will Sepang's medium-to-quick sweepers help his cause even more? Very probably! Mark Webber is in need of a big race, as is Ferrari if it is to take the fight to Red Bull this year. Sepang is likely to give McLaren a truer picture of how it stands in the pecking order.



Guess the Malaysian
oil company...

IndyCar on rare
trip to Deep South



INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 2/17

**Barber Motorsports
Park, Alabama, USA**

April 10

indycar.com

INDY LIGHTS

Rd 2/12

Barber, Alabama, USA

April 10

indycar.com/fil

GRAND-AM

Rd 3/12

Barber, Alabama, USA

April 9

grand-am.com

FIA GT1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 2/10

Zolder, Belgium

April 9-10

gt1world.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 7/36

Texas Motor Speedway, USA

April 9

nascar.com

NASCAR NATIONWIDE

Rd 6/34

Texas Motor Speedway, USA

April 8

nationwide.nascar.com

TC2000

Rd 2/12

Santa Fe, Argentina

April 10

tc2000.com.ar

SUPERSTARS

Rd 1/10

Monza, Italy

April 10

superstars.it

Television

THURSDAY APRIL 7

1035-1240, 1855-2100 **Motors TV**
LMS: Paul Ricard highlights
1445-1620 **Motors TV**
Superstars preview
1650-1855 **Motors TV**
GP2 Asia: Imola

FRIDAY APRIL 8

0235-0350 **ITV1**
BTCC: Brands Hatch highlights
0255-0435 **BBCi LIVE**
F1: Malaysian GP first practice
0500-0600 **ESPN**
F3 Euro Series: Paul Ricard
0655-0835 **BBCi LIVE**
F1: Malaysian GP second practice
1855-2000 **Motors TV**
Masters Historic Racing: Oulton Park
2100-2205 **Motors TV**
WRC: Rally Portugal highlights
2245-2345 **ESPN**
WRC Rally World

SATURDAY APRIL 9

0555-0705 **BBCi LIVE**
F1: Malaysian GP third practice
0725-0755 **Channel 4**
The Grid
0800-1030 **BBC1 LIVE**
F1: Malaysian GP qualifying
1300-1415 **BBC1**
F1: Malaysian GP qualifying repeat
1435-1545 **Motors TV LIVE**
Ferrari Challenge Europa: Monza race one
1500-1700 **Bloomberg LIVE**
FIA GT1: Zolder qualifying race
1500-1630 **ESPN LIVE**

FIA GT1: Zolder qualifying race
1825-1855 **Motors TV**
Production Touring Cars: Silverstone
1855-1925 **Motors TV**
InterSteps: Silverstone
1925-2000 **Motors TV**
Caterhams: Oulton Park
1930-2100 **ITV4**
BTCC: Brands Hatch highlights
2300-0400 **Premier Sports LIVE**
NASCAR: Texas
The Samsung Mobile 500 from
Texas Motor Speedway.

SUNDAY APRIL 10

0800-1115 **BBC1 LIVE**
F1: Malaysian GP
Can anyone beat the Red Bulls?
0805-0905 **Motors TV LIVE**
Superstars GT Sprint: Monza race one
1030-1130 **Motors TV LIVE**
Superstars: Monza race one
1115-1215 **BBCi**
F1: Malaysian GP post-race forum
1300-1500 **BBC1**
F1: Malaysian GP repeat
1330-1530 **Bloomberg LIVE**
FIA GT1: Zolder championship race
1420-1515 **Motors TV LIVE**
Superstars GT Sprint: Monza race two
1530-1625 **Motors TV LIVE**
Superstars: Monza race two
1830-2000 **ESPN**
FIA GT1: Zolder championship race
1900-2000 **BBC3**
F1: Malaysian GP highlights
2030-2300 **Sky Sports 3 LIVE**
IndyCar: Barber Motorsports Park

Online

AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

MALAYSIAN GRAND PRIX

After an intriguing Australian GP, F1 resumes in Malaysia (right) for a race teams expect to give a more accurate flavour of 2011 form. As ever AUTOSPORT.com is the place for live text commentary, the fastest news, reports and analysis, and comprehensive preview features, plus the weekend's IndyCar, NASCAR and World GT1 action.



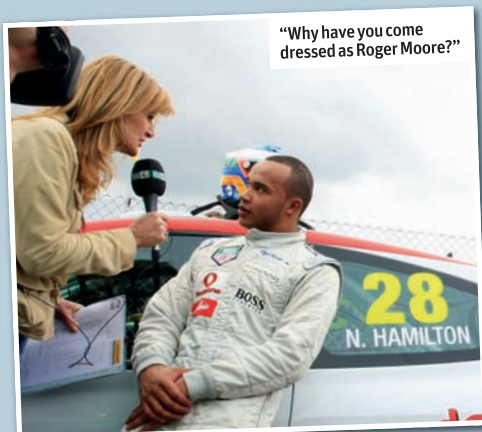
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REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



WHEN LEWIS HAMILTON made his debut on the TOCA package at Brands Hatch in 2002, there wasn't live TV coverage of the support races to chart his early course towards superstardom. Nine years later, it was his younger half-brother Nicolas in the live TV spotlight on Sunday afternoon (ITV4). As CNN's Don Riddell discovered in one of many pre-weekend pieces on the major news networks, cerebral palsy sufferer Nicolas considered himself back then to be a "little disabled kid, and I was scared [of racing]." Mum Linda admitted: "We were told he possibly would never walk, at best

with a stick." Yet here Nicolas was, all grown up, conquering his condition in his first race weekend in the Renault Clio Cup. For a channel often rebuked for its gushing outpouring over Lewis in its F1 days, here was ITV's quandary: how to satisfy casual observers only interested in 'Hambro', while doing justice to a live race for its hardcore regulars. Overlooking the Hamilton story was not an option; striking a balance was the key. Tricky. Hamilton's on-track performance was what you'd expect from a rookie, and he was lucky to be able to rejoin from the gravel after getting

punted off. He drove round on his own after that, probably a Godsend for the director who could concentrate on the proper racing upfront and in the midfield, although there were some over-effusive in-race comments whenever he was in shot. But it was the post-race interview with Goodman (who had come dressed as Roger Moore in Octopussy) that hit the tone about right. Lewis joined in halfway through, and the dream scene was

complete. OK, so they spoke to the Hamiltons before race winner Paul Rivett, but he didn't seem unduly bothered. Job done, hopefully ITV will now lay off the schmooze and let Nicolas get on with the business of learning his craft and building some speed in peace. The next time I want to see him getting as much airtime he'd better be in the middle of a bloody big scrap, giving his new rivals hell. *Revved Up*

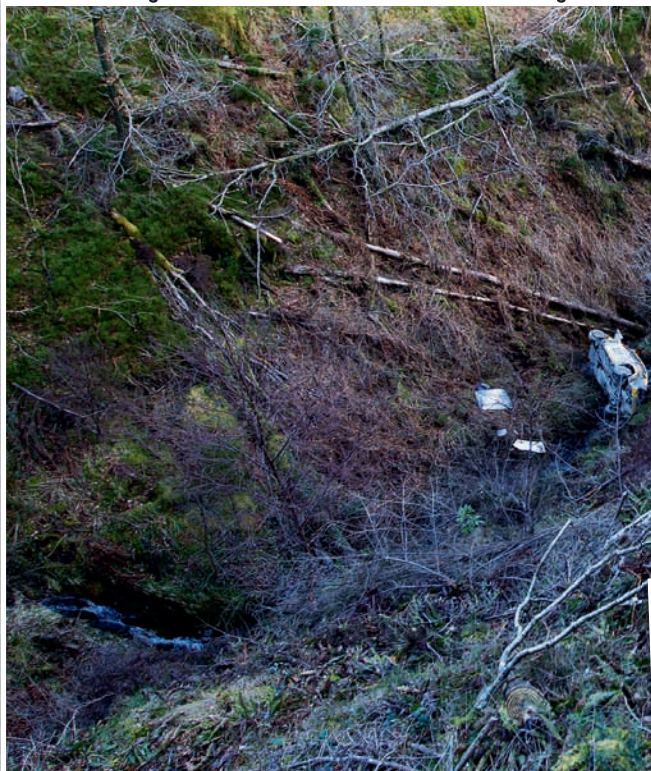
"Hopefully ITV will now lay off the schmooze and let Nicolas Hamilton get on and build some speed in peace"

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

The lensmen pounding the beat a Gartheiniog ravine to Bukit Bintang

LET'S HOPE THEY PACKED SOME CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

Peter Smith and Ross Lansthorne walked away from their Opel Kadett after crashing down a ravine on last weekend's Bulldog Historic Rally



CAR IN GRAVEL? MUST MEAN THE BTCC IS BACK...

BTCC privateer John George has been known to explore the odd gravel trap. Here he christens his new Chevrolet Cruze at Brands Hatch



CHECK OUT THOSE COOPER SPARKLERS

Tyre supplier Cooper celebrated 60 years of championship F3 racing in Britain with this set, fitted to Rupert Svendsen-Cook's Dallara at the series' Silverstone launch



COULTHARD FINDS THERE'S NO HOLE IN HIS BUKIT

The Scot pleases the fans by driving a Red Bull show car down the Bukit Bintang Road in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Beppe Gabbiani, European F3, Paul Ricard 1977



Gabbiani beat Schafer (left) and Ghinzani

DUTCHMAN NIGEL Melker's maiden Formula 3 victory, on his F3 Euro Series debut in the season opener at Paul Ricard last weekend, recalled a seminal moment in the category's history at the French venue. Thirty-four years ago, Italian racer Beppe Gabbiani scored his only Euro F3 win when the series made its first visit to Le Castellet for the opening race of 1977.

Unlike the majority of F3 drivers today, the multiple Italian and European karting champ made the jump from karting to F3 (via a one-off outing in Formula Italia).

"The Italian federation wouldn't deliver me the licence [initially] because they said I was crazy," remembers Gabbiani. He eventually secured his paperwork and signed for the Trivellato Racing Team, which ran four Chevron B38s for Gabbiani and his teammates, who included future F1 winner Elio de Angelis.

"The Chevron was very quick in the first laps," says Gabbiani. "But then you would screw your tyres and it would be understeering, then oversteering – it was terrible. We went to Paul Ricard and I was the quickest – I was really quick, but I didn't know why. I was young at the time – 19 – a young driver without any experience."

Gabbiani was one of only five drivers to break 1m19s in morning practice and stayed in contention with a solid frontrunning performance during the heats. As others squabbled in the final, Gabbiani broke away with early leader Bertram Schafer and set about attacking the reigning German F3 champion's Ralt.

"He was quick on the straights, but I was quicker [over a lap]," recalls Gabbiani, who Schafer held at bay for 12 laps before the Italian nipped down the inside at the first right-hander. "I said 'I'm leading!' I was driving quickly, but not efficiently – making mistakes. The laps went down: 4-3-2-1 and I won! So all my friends from go-karts, de Angelis, many other drivers, they all go, 'Fucking hell! You won! You are quick!'"

But that was as good as it got for Gabbiani, who managed three more podiums, but never won again in Euro F3. "I was quick and always leading races, but you had to finish," he reflects. "I crashed at the Nurburgring – I was second, I crashed at Imola – I was leading, I crashed at Vallelunga – I was leading. I always crashed!"

"I really lost the Italian and European championships. Now I'm 54, I can realise you don't need to be the quickest to be the guy that wins the championship." ❧

THIS WEEK IN...



APRIL 8, 1999

FERRARI DRIVER Eddie Irvine spoke to AUTOSPORT after taking his first grand prix win at the 82nd attempt in the previous month's Australian GP.

He reflected on his new-found world-championship-leader status in an interview with Maurice Hamilton. "All of a sudden, I'm seen in Italy as a proper driver as opposed to Michael's lackey," Irvine said. "[But] the win did not affect my standing within Ferrari because the team is focused on Michael winning the championship."

Elsewhere, BTCC privateer Matt Neal scooped a £250,000 jackpot for winning outright in the season-opener at Donington Park (below).

Poleman Neal recovered from stalling in the pits to overhaul Honda's James Thompson in the closing stages of the feature event. "Awesome," said Neal. "We've been through some rough times and it's really nice that I've won with Team Dynamics and not another team."



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CHRIS AMON

■ French GP, Clermont-Ferrand ■ July 2, 1972 ■ Matra-Simca MS120D ■ Puncture denies dominant victory



Amon had a big lead until he picked up a puncture

PROBABLY THE race that sticks in my mind is the 1972 French Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand with the Matra. It was the first race for the MS120D.

We'd been having all sorts of problems with the engines and when we got to Clermont there were no F1 engines available so we had to use a sportscar engine. It had three-ring pistons, while the F1 engine had two-ring pistons, and a few other differences.

The F1 engine was quoted as having 30 or 40 more bhp, but once in the chassis the sportscar engine was probably giving more power because it allowed the oil to scavenge better.

The MS120D felt very good straight out of the box. Right from early on I knew we had a pretty good chance. I was right up there in practice and got pole position.

The big worry I had was that we carried so much more fuel in the V12s than the [Cosworth DFV] V8s – 30 to 40kg more at the start. The first few laps were always a battle because you were fighting that extra weight.

I managed to get away in front, just, albeit under a lot of pressure

"I thought I could afford to ease back a bit and got a bloody puncture. It was a comedy stop – the wheel jammed and I was in the pits for a minute and a half. After that I just went for it and drove as quickly as I could"

from Denny Hulme [McLaren M19C] and Jackie Stewart [Tyrrell 003]. Then, as the fuel burned off, I started to pull away a bit and it was feeling really good.

Then Denny dropped back and I had a reasonable cushion back to Jackie. I thought I could afford to

ease back a bit and I got a bloody puncture. There were a lot of loose stones – they were all over the track, you couldn't pick a line through them.

It was a comedy pitstop. The wheel jammed and I was in the pits for a minute and a half or so.

IN PROFILE



CHRIS AMON is arguably the greatest F1 driver never to win a Formula 1 world championship grand prix. Amon started racing in his native New Zealand and came to the attention of Reg Parnell, who persuaded him to come to Europe. Between 1963 and 1976 Amon started 96 GPs, scoring 11 podium finishes and two non-championship GP wins. He took many other successes, including victory in the 1966 Le Mans 24 Hours, sharing a Ford Mk2 with fellow Kiwi Bruce McLaren, and the 1969 Tasman title for Ferrari. Amon, now 67, moved back to New Zealand after retiring.

From that point I just went for it. I drove as quickly as I could and I lapped almost as quickly as my pole time. I managed to pass Francois Cevert [Tyrrell 002] and Ronnie Peterson [March 721G] on the same lap, which I was quite pleased about.

With one lap to go I was eight or so seconds behind Emerson Fittipaldi [Lotus 72D] and I ended up four seconds behind in third. One more lap and I'd have got past him. I was 30 seconds behind Jackie at the end – I'd taken a minute or so out of him, though he might have backed off.

I really felt nobody could touch me that day. I had a clear margin over everybody. I wish I knew why – I'd have done it every time! ✖ *Chris Amon was talking to Kevin Turner*

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Porsche Carrera Cup GB

Rounds 1 and 2, Brands Hatch, April 2-3

Race wins for Euan Hankey and Stephen Jelley
 Pro-Am1 wins for Rory Butcher and Jonas Gelzinis
 Double Pro-Am2 win for George Brewster
 Overall podiums for James Sutton, Stephen Jelley and Tim Harvey
 'Driver of the weekend' award for Stephen Jelley
 'Team of the weekend' award for Parker with Jutta

Round 1 results

- 1 Euan Hankey (Parker with Jutta)
- 2 James Sutton (SAS/Redline)
- 3 Stephen Jelley (Parker with Jutta)
- 4 Michael Meadows (SAS/Redline)
- 5 Sam Tordoff (Team Parker Racing)
- 6 Michael Caine (Nationwide/Motorbase)

Round 2 results

- 1 Stephen Jelley (Parker with Jutta)
- 2 James Sutton (SAS/Redline)
- 3 Tim Harvey (Nationwide/Motorbase)
- 4 Sam Tordoff (Team Parker Racing)
- 5 Michael Meadows (SAS/Redline)
- 6 Richard Plant (Team Parker Racing)

For more information on the Porsche Carrera Cup GB visit
www.porsche.com

Overall points' position after round 2

1	Stephen Jelley	40
2	James Sutton	36
3	Michael Meadows	26
=	Sam Tordoff	26
5	Euan Hankey	25
6	Michael Caine	19
=	Richard Plant	19
8	Tim Harvey	16
9	Jonas Gelzinis	14
10	Ben Hetherington	10
=	Derek Pierce	10
12	Ahmad Al Harthy	7
13	Michael Leonard	6
14	Rory Butcher	5
=	Alex Martin	5
16	George Brewster	3
=	George Richardson	3
18	Andrew Shelley	1

Pro-am1 category

1	Jonas Gelzinis	16
2	Derek Pierce	11
3	Ahmad Al Harthy	7
4	Rory Butcher	6
=	Michael Leonard	6
6	Alex Martin	5
7	George Richardson	3

Pro-am2 category

1	George Brewster	22
2	Andrew Shelley	17
3	Tautvydas Barstys	13
4	Keith Webster	11
5	Steve Parish	10
6	John Taylor	9
=	Tommy Dreelan	9
9	Richard Denny	8

Team championship

1	Parker with Jutta	65
2	SAS/Redline	62
3	Team Parker Racing	45
4	Nationwide/Motorbase	35
5	Redline/Oman Air	17
6	Dextra by Team Parker	15

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