EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WHY KIMI CAN WIN AT SPA
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160 HP T-JET 1.4 TURBO

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Abarth 595 Competizione fuel cons mpg (l/100km): urban 33.2 (8.5) / extra-urban 52.3 (5.4) / combined 43.5 (6.5). CO2 emissions: 155g/km. New Abarth 500 range starting from £13,975 OTR. Model shown: Abarth 595 Competizione (from £18,725 On The Road) with optional Record Grey Paint (£400).
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The 2007 world champion’s F1 comeback has been a success – but it still lacks a win. On the eve of the Belgian GP, a race he effectively owns, he gives his verdict, while the Lotus men talk of their pleasure working with the Iceman.

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Congratulations to the winners of the 6 Hours of Silverstone!

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Pole Position

Spa is the perfect stage for Kimi to show his true class

KIMI RAIKKONEN’S SELF-EFFACING claim in our exclusive interview this week that he’s nothing special at Spa doesn’t really stand up to scrutiny.

A quick glance at the numbers is impressive enough: four wins in seven years. But the full picture is even better. The 2009 Ferrari was one of the Scuderia’s worst in recent years – as Luca Badoer and Giancarlo Fisichella would surely attest – yet at Spa Kimi made it a winner.

The story of his comeback season with Lotus has been one of narrowly missed opportunities and solid if unspectacular performances. But recent changes to what was already a highly competitive car should mean it’s right in the mix this weekend.

A Kimi victory, with Fernando Alonso enduring an eighth winless F1 outing in Belgium, will add even further spice to this tasty title fight.

The first half of F1 2012 has been thrilling; the second half ought to be every bit as compelling. And what better place to kick it all off again than on one of F1’s truly great circuits.

BAMBER’S WEEK

...ER, LET ME GUESS. YOU’VE GOT MARRIED AGAIN?
It's not quite the German job for Sordo

Prodrive's Mini WRC programme continued to flatter to deceive among the vineyards of Mosel, as Dani Sordo climbed into the top three before a puncture and then a shunt on the fearsome Panzerplatte stage dropped him out of the reckoning. Rally Deutschland report, p56.

Pic: McKlein.de
Why Lotus can be ‘mighty’

Team’s tech chief predicts that Raikkonen and Grosjean will be able to star in Belgian GP. By EDD STRAW

Lotus technical director James Allison believes the team’s drivers Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean will be “mighty” in this weekend’s Belgian Grand Prix.

The former Renault team has not tasted victory since the 2008 Japanese Grand Prix, a run of 68 wireless races. But its improving form, culminating in Raikkonen’s strong second place last time out in the Hungarian Grand Prix, has proved it has the pace to win.

Progress has been made with the team’s approach to qualifying, while the Lotus E20’s pace in the British Grand Prix suggests that the fast configuration of the Spa circuit — similar in characteristics to Silverstone — should suit it.

Raikkonen has won at Spa four times in Formula 1 (see below) and is tipped by many as favourite. Grosjean also has a strong record at Spa, where he won in GP2 and Auto GP.

Allison told AUTOSPORT: “Both of them [Raikkonen and Grosjean] are going to be pretty mighty at Spa. That’s our hope anyway. If Silverstone was a gauge, we were very strong there. I don’t think anyone was even within touching distance of us at Silverstone. I know we didn’t win or even come in the top four, but if you look at the pace of that car in the race, it was just mighty.

“This weekend will play to the strengths of the E20. It’s pretty useful around fast corners and there’s a lot of them at Spa.”

Allison’s point about the car’s Silverstone form is valid. Raikkonen set fastest lap on his way to fifth place, while Grosjean charged to sixth having run as low as 22nd. On top of that, AUTOSPORT understands that Lotus has every intention of running its so-called ‘double-DRS’ concept in the race at Spa, having now converted both chassises to accommodate it.

It is not a forgone conclusion that it will be raced and, if the system does not perform as expected during practice, the team will remove it. But Allison has no doubts that the system is fundamentally sound.

RAIKKONEN AT SPA

Kimi Raikkonen has an exceptional Formula 1 record at Spa, winning four times in seven attempts. If he wins on Sunday, he will match Ayrton Senna’s mark of five Spa wins and move to within range of Michael Schumacher’s record of six victories.

- 2001 (Sauber)
  Start: 12th Finish: DNF
  Doesn’t take the restart after being hit by a gearbox failure shortly before the red flag caused by Luciano Burti’s massive accident.

- 2002 (McLaren)
  Start: 2nd Finish: DNF
  Qualifies on the front row for the first time in his Formula 1 career, but suffers an engine failure while running fifth.

- 2003 No Belgian Grand Prix

- 2004 (McLaren)
  Start: 10th Finish: 1st
  Rain compromises his qualifying performance, but charges through to win a chaotic grand prix after three safety car periods.

- 2005 (McLaren)
  Start: 2nd Finish: 1st
  Runs second for much of the race, but jumps team-mate Juan Pablo Montoya at the second round of pitstops to take the victory.
“It’s a fiercely complicated thing,” he said of the design before the August break. “We’ve got quite a bit to do between now and Spa so that we are comfortable that it won’t have us over. If we don’t get it for Spa, we’ll get it later. But it’s of a particularly rich benefit at Spa because of the nice long straights.”

This device could give the team the edge it needs to claim its first pole position since the 2009 Hungarian Grand Prix. Even if Raikkonen or Grosjean miss out on pole, overtaking is relatively straightforward at Spa, meaning the car with the quickest race pace should be able to make up places.

With nine races to go, a victory at Spa could form the foundation for a championship push. Raikkonen is 48 points adrift of leader Fernando Alonso in the title race, while Lotus is 54 points behind Red Bull in the constructors’ standings. Allison is confident that the team can maintain its development rate in the second half of the year, particularly having banked plenty of work on its 2013 challenger in the first part of ‘12.

“We’ve adjusted our working year slightly relative to the last two to give us more of a development push after the summer break,” said Allison. “We did a bit more of next year’s car up front so that we can do more on the current car after the break. So the car we have now has already paid the price for the effort we’ve put into 2013.

“I’m only talking in the marginal sense here. If you looked at it from afar, you would see that the effort on this year’s car starts high and tapers down as the next one picks up. That curve is conventional, but the shape is biased to giving a bigger lift on the 2013 car early to free up more for the ’12 car. Hopefully, we will be able to bring a few more interesting things as the year progresses.”

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

EDD STRAW
F1 EDITOR
edd.straw
@haymarket.com

Everyone at Lotus is doing a very good job of trying to convince the world that there is no frustration that its prodigiously quick E20 machine has not won a race so far. Don’t buy it. The real value of racing teams is counted in just one currency — victories — and it’s inconceivable that Lotus won’t soon be rewarded with a new winning trophy to display in the reception of its Enstone base.

That’s not to belittle the achievements of the team so far this season. It would be grossly unfair to suggest the lack of wins was any kind of failure; it’s more that the elusive victory would be a just reward for a job well done to date.

Technical director James Allison puts it best: “The unreasonable bit of me is a tiny bit disappointed, and I think that everyone in the team feels that to a degree. But all of us know that the car and the drivers are operating way above the expectation that the rest of the paddock had of us. Hopefully, the few things that haven’t gone quite as well as they might have done will be put right for the second half of the season.”

Don’t forget that this team knows success. As Benetton in 1994-95 and as Renault in 2005-06, it picked up four drivers’ and three constructors’ titles. Just as it did with the odd wins it picked up in 1992-93 and 2003-04, when the victory does come it will be seen as a waypoint on the return to title contention, not the limit of Lotus’s ambitions.
Ross Brown believes that Mercedes has now put in place the final pieces behind the scenes to become a regular frontrunner in Formula 1.

On the back of a topsy-turvy opening half to the campaign for the Brackley-based outfit, Brown thinks that recent efforts to tweak the way it operates will address shortcomings that have been exposed this year.

His confidence is based on the relationship bedding down between the triumvirate of technical directors in Bob Bell, Geoff Willis and Aldo Costa, allied to the recent promotion of Mike Elliot as new Head of Aerodynamics replacing Loic Bigois.

In an exclusive interview with AUTOSPORT, Brown said he had full faith that Mercedes at last has what it needs to move forward. And when asked if the new structure was enough to make Mercedes a genuine frontrunner, Brown said: “Well, that is the plan. And if it is not enough, we will have to do something about it.

“I would say sat here today that I believe it is. If we don’t get there, we will have to work out why we are not getting there, and rethink our ideas.

“But I am not planning any more major changes in the team for the foreseeable future. What we have got is settling down very well now, and that is what we plan to have.”

WHAT’S BEEN WRONG?

Mercedes has made a good step forward in its form this year. It won its first grand prix under the ownership of the German car manufacturer in China and has scored more points at this stage of the season than it had last year.

Yet, the season has also uncovered weaknesses at the team, highlighted by the spate of retirements that derailed Michael Schumacher’s campaign and the ongoing tyre struggles it has had.

Brown admitted that both factors were unexpected; but that lessons have been learned which should ensure the team is better prepared for the future.

“We had a bit of a shock in Melbourne because we had not seen the characteristics of these tyres until we got into some hot races, so that wasn’t good,” said Brown. “It caught us out.

“There have also been the reliability problems we have had with Michael’s car. That was unusual for the team, and we had to have a good long hard look and see if there was any systematic reason why that was happening, and we didn’t believe there was.

“Nobody took their foot off the pedal at the factory in terms of looking after things, but we realised we were possibly weak in a few areas where we just had not been exposed before.

“That is frustrating because there were 50-60 points we gave away through DNFs with Michael, which could have put us in a much more respectable position in the championship now. Instead we have a lot of catching up to do.”
Clues to 2012 tyre problems

While every team has faced its struggles to get on top of the tyres in 2012, Mercedes has had to work harder than most.

Its difficulties in Australia (tyres too hot) and Malaysia (tyres too cold) ultimately helped it get things spot-on in China, as Nico Rosberg triumphed.

But the W03 is still overheating its rear tyres, which punishes it on circuits where performance is governed by rear tyre wear. It has become clear too that the car excels on tracks with short corners (like Monaco), rather than long sweeping bends (like Hungary).

But other factors have been at play too. The fact that Rosberg and Michael Schumacher have often struggled with tyres on the same days that McLaren and Force India had difficulties prompted a theory that the superior mid-range power of Mercedes-Benz's V8 engine could be having a side-effect of increasing tyre wear because of greater wheelspin.

The engine map controversy that engulfed Red Bull Racing was in Germany highlighted how advanced Renault was in understanding that power-unit performance was impacting on the 2012-spec Pirellis.

TIME TO TURN THINGS AROUND

Mercedes’ drop-off in form in recent races (see graph right) has proven there is still plenty for the team to do, but Brawn feels that good will come out of its tribulations.

“We can look at some positives of the first half of the year but we are perhaps ending the first half of the season less competitive than we started it, and that is something that we have to address,” he said.

“But I feel much more optimistic looking ahead. You really see the strength of a team when it gets stressed, when it gets strained and when it gets put under pressure.

“I feel really confident that we have a good group of engineers and we now have the depth that we need to be able to do all the things that we need to do to get results.

“The benefits of the re-organisation we have done are starting to feed through, so I am sure that we can have an even stronger second half than we did first half.”

The rollercoaster speed of Mercedes this season is highlighted by the form of Nico Rosberg. The Chinese Grand Prix winner has gone from adrift of the title contenders. AUTOSPORT has taken the five-race points tally for each of the leading drivers over 2012 – beginning at round five in Spain and running until the last event in Hungary – to indicate their short-term form.

It highlights how in the five-race spell between China and Canada, Rosberg was equal top scorer with Sebastian Vettel on 67. But recently he has fallen away dramatically.
Who will conquer fear of failure?

AUTOSPORT’s sports psychologist DON MACPHERSON describes what it takes mentally to win the title – and who can do it in 2012

FERNANDO ALONSO
The world championship leader has excellent mind management, and he is definitely my number one so far this season. If he can maintain his healthy points cushion, his monkey mind will be happy, and resist interfering. His doubters could say he can deal with the pressure if the others start to close the gap? Yes, he can. No fear.

LEWIS HAMILTON
When all is well, Lewis has excellent mind management, but if not his monkey behaves like a spoilt brat. He needs to maintain the momentum of his Hungarian GP win, or his monkey will start sulking again. He needs to focus more on what he can do to make the difference (like Alonso), and stop wasting valuable mental energy on ‘mind coaching’ the McLaren team.

W e all fear failure. Even as I write this, I am fearful that my editor won’t think it’s good enough, or that you, the reader, might turn the page. But read on, because some of us — including Formula 1 stars — deal with it better than others, especially when the pressure is really on.

Are we born with this ability to handle fear and anxiety? If not, can it be learned? If so, who teaches it? I believe there are three ways to deal with ‘The Fear of Failure’...

1. Fake it until you make it
(Muhammad Ali)

2. Practise preparation
(Team GB’s cycling team)

3. Lean into it, embrace it, and just do it anyway
(Jessica Ennis, Usain Bolt)

Like millions, I was glued to the Olympics and was fascinated by Team GB’s athletes — some coped with fear of failure and some did not. Sadly, the higher expectancy level of performing at home revved up the ‘monkey minds’ of several of our medal hopefuls.

The ‘monkey mind’ is what Chinese Buddhists call the voice in your head. He’s great for words, numbers and logic — but needs to be silent when elite sportspersons and women perform at their peak, using only the subconscious part of their brain. If not, he springs to life — commenting and criticising their every move with disastrous consequences.

Once again, our cyclists dealt superbly with the pressure because they were better prepared — not just physically and technically, but mentally. Nothing was left to chance; they were all given the tools to deal with anything that may impact negatively on their performances. Their monkeys were suppressed.

As with Team GB’s cycling success, to become Formula 1 world champion it is essential to deal with the fear of failure. As the season rolls on the expectancy level cranks up. So, who has the best monkey-mind control?
CLOCK TICKING?

MARK WEBBER
Sunday July 11, 2010: “Not bad for a number two driver,” he said on the radio having just won the British GP. To me it sounded more like a statement of fact, an acceptance that indeed he is Red Bull’s number two. Deep down, does his monkey mind believe he can be a number one? This year is his best chance. Can he convince the monkey? No, I think not.

FEARLESS

SEBASTIAN VETTEL
Double and current world champion — his monkey knows how to deal with the pressure of closing a title, as opposed to his team-mate’s who does not. Can he make it three in a row? I think so but, more importantly, Vettel believes so. Sebastian can sedate his monkey mind by saying “we’ve been here before, and we have the car to win it again — let’s just go and do it.”

FEARLESS

KIMI RAIKKONEN
Takes his monkey partying in order to keep him sweet, and let off some steam. This seems to work, as he has done a great job in convincing his monkey that he can still do it, even after taking him rallying. However, I think he knows he has too much to do this year, but he’ll give it a good crack all the same. Only Alonso has better mind management.

BUTTON AND SCHUMACHER
Of the rest, Michael Schumacher and Jenson Button have interesting monkey mind challenges, for very different reasons. Neither will be this year’s champion and, the way things are going, might never be again. Button should stop worrying about setting his car up, and focus on setting his brain up instead. He has far too much clutter in his racing mind. I recommend he goes into iTunes and downloads Alistair Griffin’s Just Drive, and plays it to his monkey mind before every qualifying session.

Schumacher has had great mind management from the moment he arrived in Formula 1. Can he keep his monkey motivated enough, and have the patience to wait for Ross Brawn to work his magic again? I think Michael’s monkey is a bit lost, wandering around in a fog, trying to answer one big question, ‘If I am not an F1 racing driver, who am I?’

Don Macpherson is a mind coach with a background in sports psychology, who works with many world-class sports professionals.
www.donmacpherson.co.uk
THIS WEEK IN F1

SPA GETS NEW DEAL

Spa-Francorchamps will continue to host the Belgian Grand Prix until at least 2015 after signing a new deal with Formula 1 commercial boss Bernie Ecclestone last week.

The race’s future had been in doubt, with Circuit bosses having considered share deals with the Nurburgring and Magny-Cours.

Those plans never came off but, after getting an agreement to a reduction in the race-hosting fee, Spa chiefs are convinced enough about the financial viability of the event to commit to an extra three years beyond 2012.

FERRARI TURBO ON DYNOM

Ferrari has revealed that its next-generation 2014 Formula 1 V6 engine has started dyno testing at its Maranello factory. The Scuderia’s head of engine and electronics Luca Marmorini said: “It is an interesting project, and this is a very challenging period for the powertrain people.”

The number of grands prix Fernando Alonso has driven at Spa without securing a front-row start or a victory. He has triumphed at 19 venues in his F1 career.

CLOS TO TEST AGAIN FOR HRT

Dani Clos is to drive for HRT again in first practice at the Belgian Grand Prix, taking over Narain Karthikeyan’s car.

The Spaniard has already tested for HRT in four Friday practice sessions this year as he bids for track experience to help boost his chances of a race seat in 2013.

ANNIVERSARIES

This week is the 30th anniversary of Keke Rosberg’s maiden Formula 1 victory in the 1982 Swiss Grand Prix at Dijon.

“Neil Armstrong showed me, and many others like me, that in our own small way we could also dare to try – and ‘dare to try’ remains a McLaren mantra to this day.”

Ron Dennis on the death of Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon.

MAGNY-COURS TEST IS ON

Magny-Cours is to play host to Formula 1 machinery again in the week after the Italian Grand Prix when it holds the latest young-driver test.

Ferrari, Mercedes and Force India are all set to take part in the three-day test, which runs from September 11-13. It was put together after the three teams elected not to join the shortened Silverstone test last month, when Williams, HRT and Marussia ran.

The final young-driver test of the season will take place at the Yas Marina circuit in the week after the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix in November.
A victory lap for the Mobil 1™ forensics team.

At the end of the 2008 Turkish Grand Prix, a routine trackside oil test conducted by the Mobil 1 technology team detected a fault with driver Lewis Hamilton’s engine. Post-race evaluation identified a defective pump, which was then replaced. The following race, this engine powered Hamilton to victory at the Monaco Grand Prix, and he went on to win the season championship.

Trackside partnership. The relationship between Vodafone McLaren Mercedes and Mobil 1 has resulted in an impressive 74 race wins and four championships. Part of that success can be attributed to trackside support. Because not only does Mobil 1 provide their high-performance lubricant products and fuel for every race, they also bring the expertise of their engineers.

Race-day oil analysis. Before and after each track session, an expert embedded in the team takes oil samples which are tested on the spot in the portable Mobil 1 Analytical Centre. The analysis gives detailed information on the health of the engine, monitoring its inner workings.

Winning technology. Mobil 1 specialists keep their eyes open for microscopic traces of metal and contamination in the oil that can provide an early warning of potential issues. The ability to pinpoint the precise source of a potential problem helps improve reliability and keeps the car running at peak performance. For more information on Mobil 1, the world’s leading synthetic engine oil brand, visit mobil1.com

Above: Under the microscope: Lead, indium, copper, tin and iron are five of 15 elements monitored during oil-analysis tests to help keep the race cars on the track.

Below: A Mobil 1 Race Engineer takes over 20 engine oil samples from the car during a race weekend.

MANY FANS. ONE OIL.
Schumacher makes it to 300 starts

At the scene of his grand prix debut 21 years ago, the grand old man of F1 will pass a historic milestone this weekend

Michael Schumacher’s career will forever be tied to Spa-Francorchamps: it was where he made his Formula 1 debut in 1991; it was where he took his first win in 1992; and it is where, in the Belgian Grand Prix this Sunday, he will make his 300th grand prix start.

The seven-time champion is only the second driver in the history of Formula 1 to reach the triple-century. It puts him 26 starts behind record holder Rubens Barrichello, and he will need no reminding that, if he signs another contract with Mercedes, he could end up top of the list by the end of 2013.

But Schumacher is not a man who is satisfied simply logging the numbers. Mercedes’ form has trailed off in recent races, but the 43-year-old’s pole position lap in Monaco and his podium finish in Valencia are evidence that he is still capable of delivering when the car is on form.

For all of his love affair with Spa, the circuit’s characteristics may not be ideal for him. The long straights may be the perfect hunting ground for Mercedes’ double DRS, but the W03 has shown weaknesses on the kind of long high-speed corners that are so common there. It will be tough for his landmark start to net a win.
Most wins at Spa by team

**Ferrari** 12

**McLaren** 11

**Lotus** 5

**Williams** 3

**Benetton** 2

---

Winning drivers

6 Michael Schumacher

5 Ayrton Senna

4 Kimi Raikkonen

Jim Clark 4; Damon Hill 3; Juan Manuel Fangio 3; Alberto Ascari 2; Alain Prost 2; Nino Farina 1; Peter Collins 1; Tony Brooks 1; Jack Brabham 1; Phil Hill 1; John Surtees 1; Dan Gurney 1; Bruce McLaren 1; Pedro Rodriguez 1; Nigel Mansell 1; David Coulthard 1; Mika Hakkinen 1; Felipe Massa 1; Lewis Hamilton 1; Sebastian Vettel 1

---

Races at Spa-Francorchamps: 44

Average number of finishers: 12.110

Average winning margin: 35.084s

Biggest: 4m54s (1963); smallest: 0.7s (1961)

Safety cars: 14

Percentage of winners who went on to win the title: 36.3%

---

Belgian GP TV and radio listings

**Friday August 31**
- 1800-1900 Free Practice 1
-/live (Sky Sports F1)
- 1900-2000 Free Practice 2
-/live (BBC Interactive and Red Button)
- 2000-2100 Qualifying

**Saturday September 1**
- 0900-1100 Free Practice 3
-/live (Sky Sports F1)
- 1100-1300 Qualifying
-/live (BBC Interactive and Red Button)
- 1300-1400 Race
-/live (BBC Interactive and Red Button)
- 1400-1430 Race

**Sunday September 2**
- 1000-1615 Race
-/live (Sky Sports F1)
- 1200-1615 Race
- BBC 1
- 1300-1630 Race
- BBC 1

GET THE LATEST FROM THE F1 PADDOCK AS IT HAPPENS WITH AUTOSPORT+

ONLINE COVERAGE AUTOSPORT.com will bring you up-to-the-second coverage of every race weekend from our team of reporters in the paddock. Look out for improved features and live commentary too.
GARY ANDERSON'S SUPERGRID

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 lap from each grand prix weekend. This graphic shows each driver's average after 11 races compared with the theoretical absolute pace, expressed as 100.

Lewis Hamilton remains comfortably ahead of Sebastian Vettel, but Romain Grosjean and Nico Rosberg have swapped positions, with the Mercedes driver dropping back towards a resurgent Jenson Button. Kimi Raikkonen has moved ahead of Michael Schumacher on the supergrid as he seeks to keep in title contention, helped by Schumacher's nightmare race in Hungary.

The two Sauber drivers have switched positions in midfield, with Sergio Perez now heading Kamui Kobayashi. Meanwhile, Pastor Maldonado is closing in on Schumacher. Felipe Massa still trails the Force India of Paul di Resta as he seeks to retain his Ferrari seat.

FLASHBACK

VETTEL DOMINATES IN 2011
Sebastian Vettel cruised to victory, recording his seventh win of the season after pre-race controversy surrounding Red Bull's camber levels and concerns over tyre blistering. Vettel re-passed Nico Rosberg, who had slipped past on the opening lap. Vettel's triumph was in stark contrast to Lewis Hamilton, who continued his troubled season with a race-ending clash with Kamui Kobayashi.

2011 BELGIAN GP RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plc</th>
<th>Driver</th>
<th>Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sebastian Vettel</td>
<td>Red Bull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mark Webber</td>
<td>Red Bull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jenson Button</td>
<td>McLaren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bruno Senna has crept ahead of Daniel Ricciardo's Toro Rosso after a points-scoring performance in Hungary. Jean-Eric Vergne remains on his own, although has closed the gap slightly.

**AND AS FOR THE REST**

Timo Glock remains the fastest of the Marussia and HRT drivers, while Narain Karthikeyan brings up the rear. The Marussia drivers continue to head the HRT pairing, but progress seems to have stalled.

Glock 105.188  
Pic 105.475  
de La Rosa 106.022  
Karthikeyan 106.603

Heikki Kovalainen and Vitaly Petrov stay in similar positions to where they were before last time out in Hungary after making steady improvements in recent races.

**TRACK GUIDE**

- **BIG BRAKE**
  - BUS STOP 200MPH-45MPH
  - 125 METRES, 5.9G 2.35

- **TOP SPEED - 200MPH**

- **FASTEST CORNER**
  - BLANCHIMONT 199MPH
  - 7TH GEAR 3.0G

**SPA FRANCORCHAMPS**
- **NUMBER OF LAPS**: 44
- **CIRCUIT LENGTH**: 4.352 MILES
- **LAP RECORD**: 1:45.108 K RAIKKONEN (2004)
- **UK START TIME**: 1PM
ENJOY THE THRILL AT SILVERSTONE

Ferrari is delighted to announce that the spectacular Ferrari Racing Days will be back in the UK on 15th - 16th September at the world famous Silverstone Grand Prix circuit.

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In some ways Spa is a bit of a sacred cow of F1 – it’s not as much of a challenge as people make out. But it’s still a magical venue and one that perfectly suits Kimi Räikkönen’s style.

Finally, after five weeks away from the Formula 1 paddock, we get to go back to work. And I can’t wait, especially as it’s the annual trip to one of the most historic and wonderful circuits on the calendar: Spa-Francorchamps.

Ferrari is reaping the benefits of having an absolute legend in the form of Fernando Alonso driving its lead car, but I have a funny feeling that the current pace gap between him and Felipe Massa could be his undoing. It would be much better to have Felipe acting as a buffer between Fernando and the rivals.

I don’t think this will be such an issue at Spa though, as McLaren and Red Bull will probably have faster all-round packages anyway, making their drivers favourites for the race.

KIMI IN THE ARDENNES

And then there’s the wild card: Kimi Räikkönen. I can’t quite put my finger on what makes him so good around Spa. Four wins – and it could have been five if 2008 had gone his way – do not come easily at this place.

Kimi’s style seems to be to not use a huge amount of steering lock, and I’m not quite sure how he manages it. The thing this allows him to do is to lean incredibly heavily on the front tyres, and you can get away with doing this at Spa because there isn’t a technical corner worth its name. Compare it to, say, the Hungaroring, where you have to commit to your turn-in before you take the speed off because you risk missing the corners all together.

Spa is a circuit that rewards a car with a strong rear end and punishes oversteer horribly. You always want high top speed too, and the teams that are strongest in this department will be better equipped to trade off some of this in favour of extra downforce for the middle sector; in my experience you could gain three quarters of a second from Les Combes to Stavelot by being clever with this. You have to make the most of it though, because you’ll lose time in sectors one and two as a result.

If the Lotus is strong in this area – and all the signs we’ve seen so far this year suggest that it is – then we could quite easily see Kimi on the top step of the podium. The question is whether the team can get it together in qualifying.

THE MAGIC OF SPA

The fact is – and some people might not like reading this – but from a technical point of view Spa is a circuit crammed full of long straights and standard corners. La Source is a normal hairpin, the blast up to the top of the hill is easily flat, Les Combes is a regular chicane. I could go on...

But there’s the massive amount of elevation change that you just don’t get anywhere else, the super-quick sweeps of Pouhon and Blanchimont. And, of course, Eau Rouge. OK, so it’s not the challenge it once was. I remember even when I started grand prix racing in the mid-1990s that to take it flat you needed low fuel and new tyres in qualifying, and even then it wasn’t a guarantee. Now, with the aerodynamics being what they are and the barriers having been moved back for safety reasons, it’s easy flat, and that removes some of the respect and the challenge. But I defy anyone to go on a rollercoaster 50 times and not feel the adrenalin pumping at the end, and it’s the same with Eau Rouge. When you come into the left at the bottom of the hill, you can’t see what’s coming. And that’s a massive thrill even now.

Then there’s the history of the place. Fangio, Clark, Senna and Schumacher have all won there and I was immensely proud to add my name to the winners’ list in 1999 as I’d always considered it my favourite circuit. On reflection, I probably hold Monaco in higher regard given the unique challenge it presents, but Spa is still pretty awesome.

"The wild card at Spa is Kimi – and I’m not sure how he does it"
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When the late Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, human spirit was enough to overcome fear of the unknown. Now we can't push beyond what's familiar – but, in F1’s case, it's about entertainment more than pushing frontiers.

A day and a half after the epic Silverstone fight between Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt over the destiny of the 1969 British Grand Prix, Neil Armstrong—who passed away last weekend—became the first man to walk on the moon.

The moments of Armstrong’s final descent onto the lunar surface, piloting the Eagle landing craft, were perhaps the most vivid anyone has ever lived. He was in crisis mode—a matter of life and death, not to mention the success or failure of the most audacious mission mankind has ever attempted.

There was less computing power in those Apollo rockets than you’d find today in your smart phone and, with touchdown just 10 minutes away, Armstrong realised that the computer aboard Eagle had got it wrong. Comparing what the radar was telling him with what Buzz Aldrin was reading out from the computer told Armstrong that they were overshooting the planned landing location by several thousand feet. He made the decision to switch to manual control, using only the information from the radar.

There were two potential hazards: 1) the computer was buzzing out an alarm, flashing a code ‘1202’ that neither Armstrong nor mission control had ever heard of; and 2) now just 1000 feet above the surface and racing past the nice flat plain on which they were supposed to land, they were running out of time and fuel.

The landing had to be made with enough fuel to get back off there—and the moment where they were down to that fuel load was rapidly approaching as Armstrong desperately looked around for a suitable improvised landing place amid the hills and craters.

Now down to 250 feet, Armstrong looked out of the window and thought he’d found his spot, only to realise it was precariously close to a crater. He moved the craft forward, found another clearing and began to put down. Then Eagle began drifting backwards and, as he fought the controls, he now could no longer see the landing spot from the window, but just had to trust his judgement and the radar. He needed to be careful not to land sideways, for that could snap off the still-like landing leg. Eagle settled gently into the dust with barely a jolt. They’d done it— with 10 seconds to spare before the computer would have reacted to the low fuel level and automatically spat them back into space.

This drama had been unfolding as the Lotus boys would have been getting back to their Norfolk base, gutted that Rindt had been denied a possible victory by one of the endplates of the newfangled wings rubbing against the rear tyre and forcing a pitstop. The wing had worked itself loose, no one quite sure what forces were being fed through these structures that were grinding the cars into the ground to give previously dreamed-of cornering speeds.

Humanity’s reach was greater than its grasp at this time. No one quite knew what was beyond the edge, whether it was even achievable. There were no adequate simulation tools with which to test the theories; someone just had to get in and try it, as an act of faith, with oblivion staring them in the face. That spirit of those times, of reaching for new horizons, with only barely adequate knowledge and tools, led to efforts that still inspire awe.

Now, of the 12 men who knew what it was to look at the Earth from the moon, only eight are left and one day there will probably be none. Meanwhile, in racing we compete to a tightly-controlled set of parameters; we know where the outer limits of speed are and we are regulated to stay well inside of them—leaving us with F1 cars lapping tracks probably half a minute slower than current technology could allow. We do this in the name of entertainment and entertainment keeps the money coming in. Our reach is now way shorter than our grasp.

"That spirit of those times led to efforts that still inspire awe"
IndyCar war nears conclusion

Arguments over cost of spare parts set to be resolved in time for Baltimore event. By MARK GLENDENNING

The arguments over costs that have split the IndyCar paddock this season have taken a huge step towards resolution, with the series and car maker Dallara having reached the final stages of agreeing to reduce the cost of spare parts.

While reductions have been sought across the board, some team owners had made Dallara the focal point of their grievances after claiming that the cost of spares for the new DW12 were as much as 40 per cent higher than they had expected. The situation was made more volatile by a rule change that gave Dallara exclusive rights to provide spares, meaning that teams could no longer fabricate or self-source cheaper parts as they had done previously.

Demands from the teams for a 40 per cent cut in the price of spares resulted in an offer from Dallara to reduce the costs by half that amount; a proposal that AUTOSPORT understands was initially ignored by the teams. However, after ongoing mediation by the series, a second, similar offer has now been accepted.

“We've made a lot of progress, and I think we're going to get to a resolution no later than this [coming] weekend,” IndyCar president of race operations Brian Barnhart told AUTOSPORT.

“I think we're going to be able to offer them [the teams] something that is at least in the neighbourhood of what they're looking for. It's been because of a lot of hard work by a lot of parties that we've managed to get there.”

Dallara's chief of US operations, Stefano di Ponti, concurred that the fundamental aspects of a deal are now in place.

“There are some details to finalise, but the contract has been put together,” he said. “It has been a big effort for us.”

Among the details that are currently being hammered out are the duration of the deal and the extent to which it will be backdated, with the most likely outcome being a price reduction that is retroactive from August 1 and valid through to the end of 2013.

While IndyCar has long insisted that the onus for reducing the burden on the teams is not the sole responsibility of Dallara, Barnhart is confident that reaching a compromise with the chassis and bodywork supplier will make it easier for other suppliers, including Xtrac and Firestone, to fall into step.

“Dallara are kind of the leader in the overall big picture, so we do kind of look to them to set the precedent, the leadership position, if you will,” he added. “And because of that, I think the others will come into line pretty quickly.”

IndyCar's cost-reduction ambitions are not limited to suppliers in the championship, with Barnhart having stated several times that the series is investigating everything that contributes to the cost of competing.
**Bourdais crash could cost $1.5m**

**INDYCAR SQUAD DRAGON RACING**

is weighing up the ramifications of Sebastien Bourdais’ accident at Sears Point last weekend, which has effectively ruled the team out of being eligible for a substantial end-of-season payout from the series.

Under the ‘Leaders’ Circle’ scheme, entries that finish in the top 18 in the owners’ points receive bonuses of US$1.59m each, although Dragon successfully pitched for one of last year’s additional payouts that was made available after Newman/Haas Racing withdrew from the series.

Prior to last weekend’s race Bourdais, who has not competed in the oval races since the team cut its programme down to one car, was 26th in the standings, putting a premium upon good results at Sonoma and this week’s Baltimore outing. He was running third on Sunday when he collided with the lopped car of Josef Newgarden.

“[payment] is gone now,” Bourdais told AUTOSPORT. “It was basically a $1.5 million crash.”

The final cost could be higher, with the team and Dallara still evaluating whether the tab was a write-off as AUTOSPORT closed for press.

Meanwhile, team owner Jay Penske has confirmed that the Frenchman is close to securing a deal to remain with the team next year, and perhaps beyond that.

“We’ve come to a verbal agreement to have him in the car for next year and we’re finalising the contract right now,” he said. “He and I opened up how to take that into multiple years thereafter. We see him as a key part of this franchise. As long as he is racing, we’d like to be racing with Sebastien Bourdais.”

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**IN BRIEF**

**HYGATE’S PROPOSAL**

Hygale has submitted a proposal in conjunction with US importers and IndyCar team owners Bryan Herta and Steve Newey to design the next generation Indy Lights car. If successful, it plans to use Toyota Motorsport’s Cologne facility to develop the aero.

**NEWGARDEN INJURES FINGER**

IndyCar rookie Josef Newgarden injured his left Index finger in his crash with Sebastien Bourdais at Sears Point last weekend. He was expected to undergo examinations in Indianapolis to determine his fitness for this weekend’s Baltimore race.

**BOOST DELAY TO BE DROPPED**

IndyCar is set to drop the activation delay on its push-to-pass system in time for Baltimore. Experiments at Mid-Ohio and Sears Point failed to elicit overtaking and were unpopular with drivers.

**VINCI BACK IN FR3.5...**

Former F3 Motorsport owner Roy Vinci returned to the Formula Renault 3.5 fold at Silverstone last weekend, working for Comtec Racing. Title outsider Nick Yelich said: “He knows how to win titles and he’ll bring a lot to the team.”

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**HVM engine uncertainty**

HVM RACING IS YET TO FINALISE a back-up engine supplier if its current partner Lotus withdraws from the IndyCar Series at the end of the year. Lotus confirmed to AUTOSPORT last month that its programme is under review after a disappointing season, with a final decision expected in the coming weeks. IndyCar regulations require manufacturers to be prepared to supply 60 per cent of the field if there are only two suppliers, although both Honda and Chevrolet insist that they have not entered into any discussions with the team.

“If Lotus doesn’t participate in 2013, then by contract we have a different level of support we have to provide,” said Chevrolet IndyCar manager Chris Berube. “I haven’t considered picking HVM up specifically – I have a few options for 2013, and I’m going to start with our existing teams.”
WEC pledges no Sebring clash

FIA series to leave date clear, even if it replaces historic 12 Hours with Austin fixture. By GARY WATKINS

Next year’s FIA World Endurance Championship schedule will allow teams to contest the Sebring 12 Hours, should the classic sports car fixture not feature on the series’ calendar.

WEC boss Gerard Neveu made the pledge amid mounting speculation that Sebring will be dropped as the US’s round in favour of a race at the new Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, which will host the United States Grand Prix this November. At the same time, Neveu refused to confirm that Sebring will disappear from the schedule next year.

Neveu told AUTOSPORT: “If we don’t go to Sebring, we will have a calendar that will allow teams to do it.”

When asked specifically whether the American Le Mans Series blue-riband would disappear from the calendar, Neveu said: “I will not announce the calendar until September. The US will be on the calendar, but we need the best compromise for everyone.”

Sebring has been used as a warm-up for the Le Mans 24 Hours by a number of teams and manufacturers. Audi continued to field cars in the 12 Hours after it withdrew from the ALMS and before the race became a round of the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup.

Accommodating the ALMS and WEC entries at Sebring is the major obstacle in the way of a combined race, despite an increase in the capacity of the pitlane to 64 cars for this year. At the same time, the FIA believes that world championship events should be standalone.

Neveu also denied that there were plans to expand the WEC from this year’s eight races to nine next season. A race at Buddh in India and an event in Russia are believed to be under discussion.

“We have to consider the economic situation, which means that eight races is probably the best way, but we don’t want to drop a race,” he said. “My main concern for next year is to reduce transportation costs for the teams.”

Neveu and his team will take over the running of the European Le Mans Series from Patrick Peter’s Peter Auto organisation. Neveu said it was a common-sense move to link the organisation of the two series.

It is unlikely that any ELMS events will race on the same grid as the WEC, but Neveu said that it is possible that the two series could race on the same weekend.

“We know that it is difficult to have them in the same race because we probably can’t accommodate 60 cars on the grid, but why not on the same weekend?” he said. “We could have one race on the Saturday and one on Sunday. We are exploring this, not only for Europe.”
LE MANS AERO

Audi has called into question a new rear-end aerodynamic treatment that made its debut on the Toyota TS030 HYBRID in last weekend’s Silverstone 6 Hours round of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

The Toyota rear wings that were attached to the rear wing that effectively increased the wing’s width from the maximum 1800mm allowed to the full 2000mm width of the car. The development was cleared because the wings were attached to the rear wing and a second endplate, and there were no extensions to the rear wheel arches rather than part of the wing.

Asked if Toyota’s new rear-aero package was in the spirit of the regulations, Audi Sport head of racing commitments Dieter Gass said: “That is exactly the question. We need to have a discussion about that and how we deal with it for next year. The rear wing should be 1800mm wide and it is difficult to argue that this bodywork has any other purpose than being part of the rear wing.”

Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon denied that his organisation was exploiting a loophole left by changes to the regulations when wheelarch openings were mandated for the current season.

“It is not tricky,” he insisted. “It is the design of the wheelarch. That’s it. It is creative considering the new regulations, a creative interpretation…”

He urged the FIA and the Automobile Club de l’Ouest at Le Mans, which jointly write the LMP1 rulebook, not to outlaw the development for next season. “Rules should not kill creativity,” he said.

GRID PENALTY FOR TOMCZYK

Reigning DTM champion Martin Tomczyk has been given a five-place grid penalty for the next round at Oschersleben after stewards judged the RMG BMW driver responsible for spinning Gary Paffett out of fourth place at Zandvoort last weekend.

MERCEDES MECHANICS INJURED

Four AMG mechanics were hospitalised after being hit by a flying air line that was ripped from its mounting by Ralf Schumacher’s Mercedes during last Friday’s DTM practice session at Zandvoort. All have since been released.

BTCC DRIVERS PENALISED

British Touring Car Championship racers Aron Smith, Dan Welch and Chris James were all penalised three points on their licences and fined £500 for contact with rivals at Knockhill. Gordon Shedden was given two points for a clash with Jeff Smith.

DI GRASSI’S AUDI DRIVE

Audi has refused to be drawn on new signing Lucas di Grassi’s future as part of its prototype squad beyond next month’s Interlagos FIA World Endurance Championship round. His drive alongside Allan McNish and Tom Kristensen in the R18 ultra is billed as a one-off.

Gravity keeps Stanaway

INJURED FORMULA RENAULT 3.5

racer Richie Stanaway will retain the backing of the Gravity Sport driver scheme for next year.

The 27-year-old New Zealander has been out of action since suffering back injuries in an airborne crash at Spa at the start of June. While doctors recently ruled out any hopes he had of returning to racing this year, he has been boosted by the confirmation that Gravity will continue to support him for 2013.

“After the accident I was a little bit concerned about my career, but without Gravity’s support it’s difficult for me to race at all,” Stanaway told AUTOSPORT.

“I’m very fortunate that they have been extremely supportive. They still believe in me and they are giving me another shot, which I’m very grateful for.”

Fortec makes race after test crash destroys Frijns chassis

FORMULA RENAULT 3.5 POINTS LEADER

Robin Frijns was given a scare last week when his Fortec Motorsports car was destroyed in a straightforward testing crash.

The Dutchman and his team feared for his title hopes in the run up to last weekend’s Silverstone round of the championship after a test driver crashed heavily at the Millbrook proving ground four days before the race. The tester, who was at the wheel instead of Frijns because Millbrook requires drivers to have a permit to use the facility, was knocked out in the crash and trapped as the car went underneath a barrier.

Fortec faced a race against time to retrieve a new chassis from Renault Sport in France. After picking the tub up on Wednesday, the team had to get race-ready by 2am on Friday, just seven hours before free practice kicked off at Silverstone.

Team boss Richard Dutton told AUTOSPORT: “We thought it was game over for the championship. When you destroy a car on a Tuesday afternoon you can’t imagine having one ready for Friday morning. Our guys worked flat-out, and it was a relief to see the car do its first flying lap.”

Oak to build all-new LMP1

OAK Racing is to design and build a new car for the LMP1 rulebook. In the meantime, the French team will return to P1 after a three-race hiatus with a Honda Performance Development 3.4-litre V8 in the back of its OAK P01 chassis at the final two rounds of this year’s WEC.

Albers back in a sportscar

Ex-Formula 1 driver Christian Albers returned to the cockpit for the first time in two years at the Silverstone WEC round last weekend. The Dutchman drove the Lotus LMP2 Lola-Judd/BMW B12/80 in place of Luca Moro, who was unavailable for personal reasons.

Albers drove Lola
Loeb could go part-time

World champion could scale-back rally commitments in 2013. By DAVID EVANS

Citroen is preparing to run Sebastien Loeb on a part-time basis in next year’s World Rally Championship – and the Frenchman has confirmed he’s thinking about only competing on his favoured events.

The French manufacturer confirmed that a decision regarding Loeb’s future will be revealed before the end of September, with speculation rife on last week’s Rallye Deutschland that the eight-time champion will announce a decision to stay in the series at the Paris Motorshow next month.

“Only doing some of the rallies is one of the options I am thinking about,” said Loeb.

“But I also think about stopping and also about carrying on like normal with all of the rallies. I still didn’t decide. The travel is not so nice, I don’t like all of the airports, the race and all of that kind of thing. It could be good to compete on the rallies I like to do and have the chance to do some other things as well.

“I have to think about everything for the future, what I do with Citroen either in the WRC or as an ambassador and I have to think about what I want to do for myself.”

A part-time deal could also allow Loeb to drive in the DTM, should Citroen’s rumoured interest in the series become a reality.

“Having him some of the time is better than not at all,” said Citroen team principal Yves Matton. “Why not? The main idea for the moment is to have him for the whole year, but for sure if this is not possible then we can find some solution.

“We hope to finalise at the maximum end of September, ahead of the Rally of France. We are getting close to a decision. We talk about this every week.”

More than ever, the WRC is hanging on Loeb’s every consideration with moves elsewhere in the driver market depending on his decision – not to mention the potential ramifications for Citroen’s WRC participation if he retires.

EXPERT VIEW

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

Is Sebastien Loeb interested in winning 10 world titles? Does a decade of dominance really do it for him? In a word, no.

What does get the super-successful Frenchman out of bed in the morning is the prospect of driving the world’s best roads in the world’s best rally car. Simple.

That said, there must be a tiny part of Loeb that would like to be the man – and likely the only man ever – to dominate a premier motorsport world championship for 10 years. And, let’s face it, he could still do that with a part-time programme.

He did it in 2006, don’t forget. Back then, when he was driving for the supposedly private Kronos Racing team, he missed the last four from 16 WRC rounds after breaking his arm. He still managed to beat no less a driver than Marcus Gronholm to the world championship by a single point.
Knockhill BTCC layout could be run in reverse

KNOCKHILL'S BRITISH TOURING CAR

Championship round could be run in a reversed direction next year, according to series boss Alan Gow.

The Scottish circuit has retained its spot on the calendar for 2013 as part of an unchanged line-up of venues named in a provisional calendar released by series organiser TOCA this week.

Gow confirmed that running the Knockhill round in reverse was a possibility. “I’ll have to look at it,” he said. “Tim Harvey [1992 BTCC champion] and I drove round, but it’s not a decision that needs to be made any time soon. The important thing is it’s good for racing and it is safe.”

AUTOSPORT understands that, although Knockhill is licensed for events in both directions, the run-off at the hairpin may be insufficient for the downhill approach if the races are run anti-clockwise.

The only significant changes to 2013’s calendar from this year’s is a more spaced-out schedule. This year’s calendar was designed in such a way as to avoid clashes with Euro 2012 and the London Olympics.

Svendsen-Cook set for British F3 return

FORMER BRITISH FORMULA 3

International Series race winner Rupert Svendsen-Cook is in the frame for a return to the championship with Double R Racing.

Svendsen-Cook, 21, could replace Malaysian Fahmi Ilyas, who has called time on his campaign due to a lack of results. The Briton tested a Double R Dalana-Mercedes at Pembrey last week. He started his racing career with the team in Formula BMW before switching to Carlin to race in F3 in 2010 and ’11.

Although he has been on the sidelines in 2012, except for a one-off appearance in the European F3 Open at Brands Hatch, he has acted as Double R’s driver coach.

Team boss Anthony ‘Boyo’ Hieatt said: “It looks like Rupert could do the last round at Donington [on September 29-30]. He may do Silverstone [on September 8-9], but we could run someone else who needs to do an F3 race to be eligible for the Macau Grand Prix.”

It is understood that several drivers from Formula Renault 3.5 and GP3 are lining up Macau deals. All would need to contest an F3 race in Europe or Japan beforehand to qualify for an entry.

VW keeps up push to debut Polo this year

VOLKSWAGEN WILL APPEAL TO THE

World Rally Championship manufacturers to allow its Polo R WRC to take its series bow on November’s Catalunya Rally, the last round of 2012.

WV had originally hoped to run the car on Rally d’Italia next month, but with its homologation not finalised, the plan has been shelved. VW motorsport director Jost Capito believes Catalunya would be the ideal place for the Polo’s debut as the German firm will have filed its homologation papers with the FIA on November 1.

“The car won’t be homologated – that comes on January 1,” said Capito. “But we can’t change anything on the car after November 1 once the FIA has the papers.

“Running in Spain would give us good experience of the car in competition. The car would run in the rally, not as zero car – but it wouldn’t be in the results.”

Prodive WRC Team boss Dave Wilcock said: “We would want to see the car homologated before it competes in a rally, as it stands there’s nothing really to stop VW from altering the specification between November and January.”
Time to step up a gear, Kimi

There’s a championship to be won, but is Kimi Raikkonen up to it in his first season back in Formula 1? EDD STRAW finds out
Kimi Raikkonen’s assessment of his Formula 1 comeback is characteristically brief: “There are some races where we could have done better for different reasons, but if we’re honest it has been OK.”

It’s a fair evaluation. Eleven races in, the 33-year-old’s return after two years in the World Rally Championship has been a success. He’s fifth in the points, been in the mix for wins, finished on the podium five times and proved he’s still a bankable commodity as a grand prix driver.

But “OK” implies there is still more to come. That’s surely the case with Raikkonen, or at least it is if we are ever to see again the heights of the mid-2000s Kimster, the driver who took one of the greatest grand prix victories of all time in Japan seven years ago.

This is no criticism. Any driver returning to F1 after a break, no matter how great, needs time to settle back in. Michael Schumacher is proof of just how hard that is to do. If anything, Raikkonen is significantly further along his relearning curve after 13 races than he has any right to be. From his first lap in testing, he has been his old, committed self on-track.

But with success come heightened expectations. If he finishes the season as he started it, his comeback will have been a good one. If he can find the final five per cent, enough to turn near-wins into victories, it could be great. It’s reasonable to ask if the Raikkonen who passed Giancarlo Fisichella for victory on the last lap at Suzuka in 2005 would have completed the move on Sebastian Vettel for the lead of the Bahrain Grand Prix that 2012-spec Kimi backed out of.

“The same thing could have happened five years ago” says Raikkonen, “You choose your options and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. Usually you get more chances, but unfortunately in Bahrain I didn’t. It doesn’t make any difference if I had been doing that in 2004 or ’05, I would have done the same thing in that situation. I wouldn’t put it down to not having raced. I wouldn’t say that it made much difference.”
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“I don’t know if a driver can make a bigger difference at Spa than anywhere else really.”

Even if he was a little cautious in Bahrain, there have been signs that Raikkonen is back in the groove in battle. In Germany he was incisive while climbing from 10th to third. In Hungary a week later he hung team-mate Romain Grosjean well and truly out to dry at the exit of Turn 1 as the pair disputed second after emerging from the pits. If the blow-out racing sharpness was lacking early in the year, and it seemed to be, there is evidence that Raikkonen is regaining his edge. His timing is perfect, for Lotus is emerging as an ever-stronger contender. It now seems to be a question of when, rather than if, one of the team’s drivers wins a race.

“We have the speed, but there’s a lot of small things that have to go right,” says Raikkonen. “In Germany I felt like we found where we want to be with the car. It hasn’t been right all the time as there has been something small missing. Typically straightforward, Raikkonen makes no attempt to make excuses or run down the pace of his in-house rival.

Unlocking such speed will be key to Raikkonen’s challenge for the remainder of 2012. He’s 48 points behind championship leader Fernando Alonso but, if he can find that little extra pace, turn a couple of podium finishes into wins, it’s conceivable that he could haul himself into championship contention. And what better place to do that than Spa, scene of the next race and a track where Raikkonen has four times won the Belgian Grand Prix?

“People always say there’s something special about Raikkonen and Spa,” he says. “I like the circuit but I wouldn’t put my money on myself this year or any other year, even though I’ve won there before. Our car is pretty good at high speeds, so I think we can give ourselves a chance, like any weekend. But we have to make it happen and I will enjoy the driving. It’s not like I’m much better than anyone else! Obviously it would be great to win at Spa for a fifth time, but we will still have to try hard if we’re to win it.”

The history books would suggest otherwise. Raikkonen is a master at Spa, even taking the recalcitrant 2002 Ferrari to its sole victory there after passing pole-starting Michael Schumacher’s Force India for the lead. Even by Raikkonen’s standards for understatement, he’s selling himself short.

“For some reason we did well there [in 2009],” he says. “Without the safety car, we probably couldn’t have won but it gave us the chance to get in front and I managed to do so. I don’t really know if the driver can make a bigger difference there anywhere else because, if you think about it, it’s nonsense. There would be as good a chance of that at any circuit. But we were a bit surprised to win there in 2009 and we should have a better chance than in 2009 this year...”

That’s as close as Raikkonen ever gets to laying down the gauntlet. Nevertheless, the team is bullish about its chances (see news), and there is a feeling that Spa will be the former Renault team’s best shot so far of ending a four-year win drought.

According to Lotus technical director James Allison, Raikkonen’s contribution to the team’s rate of improvement shouldn’t be overlooked. “I don’t have an operational role so I’ve probably not exchanged more than 500 words with Kimi since the start of the year, because my job doesn’t involve doing that,” says Allison. “But from what I can see Kimi is someone who is not in love in the sound of his own voice! He is perfectly content to give his feedback in a very concise, well-considered and articulate way. And he’s consistent from race to race, so we are not dragged in one direction and then the other by what he says. He has a clear sense of what he wants from the car.”

“He’s a good, professional driver who helps us by letting us know what we need to do. The measure of him is that he was prepared to sacrifice all of Friday in Germany, and even running in Hungary, to help us develop something for the car [the double DRS] that we hope to use later on in the season, but which there was no prospect of him getting any benefit on in those two races. He has the self-confidence to compromise his Fridays but signed up for it. That gives you an idea of the straightforward nature of the bloke.”

Lotus trackside operations director Alan Permane is perhaps best placed to assess the way Raikkonen has gelled with the team. He has no complaints, despite the mythology that has the ex-Ferrari star painted as a poor team player.

“He’s absolutely fine,” says Permane. “His feedback is as good as any other driver and he’s happy to sit and talk at length about the car; he doesn’t disappear off in his private plane at the drop of a hat! He just wants to drive, to go quick and that’s it.”

Key to the success of the partnership is...
**RAIKKONEN’S SEASON SO FAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
<th>Best Finish</th>
<th>Average Finish</th>
<th>Podiums</th>
<th>Qualifying v Grosjean</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>17th</td>
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**AUSTRALIA**

Comeback starts disastrously: goes out in Q1 after delay caused by a visor change and an off means he doesn’t get his final qualifying lap in. Shows little race rustiness in recovering to seventh.

**MALAYSIA**

Five-place grid penalty (gearbox change) means he starts on the fifth row after showing pole-containing pace. Poor track position prevents him from fighting for a podium, although he has good speed.

**CHINA**

Can’t do anything about Nico Rosberg’s pace, but is in the mix for second place. Runs second after his second and final pitstop, but tyre grip falls off a cliff and he drops out of the points in just two laps.

**Bahrain**

Misses the cut in Q2 trying to save tyres, but charges up to third in the first stint. Grosjean lets him through, but Raikkonen can’t get past race leader Sebastian Vettel.

**Spain**

Raikkonen has a quiet first half of the race, but makes his final stop later than leaders Pastor Maldonado and Fernando Alonso. Makes up around 20 seconds in the final stint.

**Monaco**

Sporting a James Hunt helmet, misses most of FP1 after demanding a power-steering change. Struggles to match Grosjean’s raw pace and battles tyre degradation in the race.

**Canada**

Hydraulic problems leave him down the grid, but a long first stint sets him up for a better result. Then he struggles to make the super-soft tyres work as well as Grosjean.

**Germany**

Struggles to get the car/tyre combination to work in wet qualifying, which hurts him in the race as he isn’t able to threaten the top two, even though he has frontrunning pace.

**Hungary**

Pressures Lewis Hamilton in the final stint after a superb race drive, but again there’s the feeling that there was a potential win had he put the car on the front row alongside the McLaren driver.
"We mustn't forget about things just because he's not whingeing"

Lotus’s Alan Permene

"Lotus understanding how to get the best out of a driver who is somewhat esoteric in his approach. Conscious of Raikkonen's lack of patience with some of the commitments of being an F1 driver off-track, the team ensures his workload is kept to a minimum.

That said, it's not all concessions. The squad has also had to adapt to the fact that, unlike Robert Kubica, Raikkonen doesn’t push the team continuously. At Ferrari, he'd raise an issue about how he wanted the car to behave and all too often this feedback was disregarded because he didn’t hammer home his point.

"We’re learning that side of him as well," says Permene. "Much has been made of the power-steering and the press has blown that up into some kind of feud between us. I saw some stuff about how the wanted the car to behave and all too often this feedback was disregarded because he didn’t hammer home his point.

"I'm very conscious of the fact that he's not a whinger and that statement of what he wants still stands. We mustn't forget about things just because he's not whingeing. Raikkonen was a screw-up as much on our part as his. He asked for something which, in hindsight, wasn’t going to work. He gave us the impression it was something he’d used before there and we did it but, yes, it was a loss. The right thing to do was to change it because I think he’d have been in the wall without it. It was a disaster because the next session was wet and that compromised his whole weekend. We really chuckled that race away and that was as much our fault as his — we should have been firmer."

Raikkonen himself is happy with the environment at Lotus. Despite some interest from Ferrari, primarily driven by team principal Stefano Domenicali, an admirer of the Finn, it seems very likely he will remain next year. Not least because, thanks to its results this season, Lotus is understood to hold an option on him.

Raikkonen refuses to draw comparisons between his current working environment and the often-strained situation at Ferrari during his time with the Scuderia.

"It's not fair to compare the teams as every team has good and bad sides," he says. "I had good times in all the teams where I've been and you sometimes have harder times in all the teams. I enjoy it here, the people are very nice and, because it's not a manufacturer team, they are probably more relaxed. It doesn't mean they don't push as hard as other teams. It's just a great atmosphere and I really enjoy it. I'm happy that I came to this team and not any other team.""

ENSTONE'S MOMENTUM REGAINED

After the false dawn of back-to-back podiums in Australia and Malaysia, the team formerly known as Renault struggled last year. Stuck with an innovative forward-exit exhaust concept that was pursued for all the right reasons, but that lacked ultimate development potential, results tailed off badly. This year's Lotus E20 has shown that to be nothing more than a blip in the Enstone-based team's re-emergence.

"Last year, we were prisoners of a decision I took in September 2010," says technical director James Allison. "You went to every race feeling like a condemned man because you knew it was a weekend to be endured, hoping not to do too badly but knowing it was never going to be pleasurable.

"But the team did do a brilliant job of implementing the forward exhaust last year. It was the wrong thing to do as things turned out, but the underlying strength of Enstone and the underlying car aside from that concept was still good."

The 2011 campaign was the latest in a series of difficult years for the team. Since taking back-to-back drivers and constructors' titles with Fernando Alonso in 2005-06, the team had gained more attention for off-track reasons than results. Alonso's departure and Michelin's pull-out, combined with a lack of progress on windtunnel/track correlation, hurt competitiveness. Negative noises about F1 by Renault supremo Carlos Ghosn didn’t help the spirit in the camp, and the sweetness of a couple of wins in '08 turned to despair when it emerged that Nelson Piquet Jr had been ordered to crash to set up the circumstances needed for Alonso to jump into the lead of a race he went on to win.

"Last year's results didn't make it look as if there has been continuous progress, but there has," says Allison, who first joined the team in 1991 and is in his third stint there after spells at Larrousse and Ferrari. "We had a bit of a lean patch a few years ago but we've come back strongly. When you hear of teams that are traditionally punting for the championship mentioning us as a threat, that's a good thing."

Problems for Nick Heidfeld in Hungary 2011
**Audi meets its match**

The German giant secured the 2012 World Endurance Championship for manufacturers at Silverstone - but not without a fight from Toyota

The solo Toyota of Alex Wurz, Nicolas Lapierre and Kazuki Nakajima finished second after six hours of racing at Silverstone — no mean feat in itself. Yet its final 55s deficit to the winning Joest-run Audi R18 e-tron quattro of Andre Lotterer, Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler might have been much closer.

The TS030 was at the very least a match for the hybrid R18, and there were times when it had a clear edge. Most notably that was the case after the final three-quarters of Wurz's opening stint.

The Austrian used his hybrid system to jump ahead of Tom Kristensen in the non-hybrid R18 ultra at the start, and on lap 12 swept past Lotterer for the lead when the Audi was baulked on the exit of Copse.

It wasn’t quite a dramatic as Lapierre taking to the grass to jump into the lead at the Le Mans 24 Hours in June, but what happened next was just as impressive — Wurz pulled away, and with some ease.

The Toyota was nearly four seconds clear in the space of three laps, a gap that had grown to double figures by the time Wurz pitted 10 laps after making the move. The gap continued to grow during the second half of Wurz's opening double, ending up at 210s when he handed over to Nakajima.

But there was a catch. The Toyota was significantly less fuel efficient than its rival last weekend.

The Cologne-based Toyota Motorsport squad had concluded that the fastest way around Silverstone was in high-downforce trim, and arrived with a new aero set-up that included an innovative and not altogether uncontroversial rear end (see news).

That inevitably took its toll on fuel consumption in comparison with the two Audis, whose lower downforce levels were...
borne out by their superior speed on the straights. Toyota's one-lap deficit on fuel to its German rival at Le Mans grew significantly last weekend.

The Toyota was running with four laps fewer than the hybrid Audi, and five or six fewer than the non-hybrid R8, which fell out of contention in the hands of Kristensen and Allan McNish after a botched first pitstop, a puncture and a luck behind the safety car.

A lap of Le Mans is a long way at eight and half miles, but four laps of the late iteration of the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit is nearly 15. That meant that the Toyota was always going to require an extra fuel stop, and would need a lead of around a minute if it was going to make up for that penalty.

It never happened for various reasons, including the intervention of the safety car on two occasions. The first of these wiped out Nakajima's lead over Treluyer, which stood at a shade under 10s at the time. The second, when Wurz was chasing Fassler in the fifth hour, increased the gap by a similar amount because

the Toyota was picked up by the second of the two safety cars that took to the track under WEC rules.

Then were was an increase in pace by the winning Audi. The Toyota was only significantly quicker than Lotterer and co for the first three stints. Thereafter, it was not much in a track. Exactly why this was isn’t clear. The Audi drivers had complained of tyre issues early on, just as they had during the early evening at Le Mans when the Toyotas came back at them. The suspicion in France had been that Audi kept something in reserve, and perhaps they did, too, over the early stunts at Silverstone.

There was an additional factor: the R8 took on its fuel faster than the TS050. This was the case at Le Mans, but at Silverstone the difference in refuelling times grew from two seconds to five.

TMG technical director Pascal Vasselon suggested that a victory could have been possible without what he called these two “adverse” factors.

“If you add the 35s we lost refuelling to the 20-25s we lost under the safety car, you arrive at the gap to the Audi,” he said. “That means we were able to compensate on the track.”

Vasselon’s maths, it should be pointed out, don’t take into account a stop-go for the winning Audi after Lotterer had nudged the GTE class Krohn Ferrari in traffic.

A stop-go also decided the outcome of the privateer LMP2 class. The lead Rebellion Racing Lola-Toyota B18/60, driven by Neel Jani and Nicolas Prost, would have finished fourth behind Kristensen and McNish but for its penalty. Like the Lotterer car, Prost made contact with the Krohn Ferrari, but unlike the Audi driver he appeared to be in no way at fault. Which made the penalty all the more galling, as did the puncture he picked up on his out-lap leaving the pits.

The second Rebellion car, in which Andrea Belicchi was joined by Harold Primat, ended up hanging on to fourth place by six-tenths of a second after a frenetic comeback drive from Danny Watts on taking over the Strakka HPD ARX-05a from Nick Leventis.

The privateers were predictably nowhere at Silverstone, but Toyota was right with Audi — not that the latter is complaining. “We’re expecting a tough second half of the season,” said Joest technical director Ralf Juttner, “and that has to be good.”

Fewer fuel stops give Ferrari the edge over rivals

There was hope — perhaps not much more, but hope at least — in the Porsche and Aston Martin camps that they could take the fight to the all-conquering AF Corse Ferrari squad in GTE Pro.

The lead Feberney-Proton Porsche and the all-pro factory Aston Martin may have led the Italian car to the first round of pit stops, but their dreams of depriving Gianmaria Bruni and Giancarlo Fisichella of victory in the AF Ferrari 488 Italia evaporated at the end of the first hour.

The Porsche 911 GT3-RSR and the Aston Martin Vantage GTE made their first fuel stops minutes before the one-hour mark, while the Ferrari kept circulating until five minutes past. The 4S8, courtesy of its direct-injection engine, would be able to complete the race on just four stops, whereas its rivals would need five. Given that Bruni had trailed the leaders by fewer than five seconds before they dived into the pits, it was more or less game over.

“You always have hope,” said Aston driver Darren Turner, who shared the GTE Pro class Vantage with Stefan Mucke, “but after the first stops we knew that we couldn’t win.”

The pole-winning Porsche, which was on the pace in the hands of Richard Lietz and Marc Lieb courtesy of a series of performance breaks, lost its chance of a decent result when the right rear suspension collapsed during the third hour.

The Aston looked on course for second until its front splitter broke. The resulting stop dropped Mucke to fourth, but he was able to hunt down the second AF Ferrari of Andrea Bertolini and Oliver Beretta, and claim final podium spot.

Mucke got alongside Bertolini into Vale, at which point the Ferrari driver lost it under braking and tagged the Aston as he spun. The Aston swept through to take third behind the JW Marriott Ferrari 4S8 shared by Jonny Cocker and James Walker, while Bertolini was unclassified after the Ferrari beached itself in the gravel.

The JW Marriott, which was only invited to race at Silverstone 10 days before the event, didn’t have the pace of the lead AF car, but it did have the same fuel mileage. Cocker and Walker reckoned they might have edged the Aston for second even without its problems.
ADR-Delta’s home run

Silverstone-based team finally fulfils early promise to take maiden sportscar victory

THE ADR-DELTA SQUAD has been knocking on the door of LMP2 glory in the FIA World Endurance Championship this season, but it finally came good for this joint-venture operation at Silverstone. Which was somehow fitting given that both parts of the team, Alan Docking Racing and Delta Motorsport, are based on site at the British circuit.

ADR-Delta’s Nissan-engined ORECA 03 was at least as fast as anything else in the secondary prototype class at the weekend. Drivers John Martin, Tor Graves and Jan Charouz, as a package, outperformed their rivals, and the local squad finally completed the kind of clean run that had been missing over the first three rounds of the WEC.

Martin trailed Stephane Sarrazin in the Starworks HPD ARX-03b initially, and then took over at the front when Enzo Potolicchio climbed aboard the US entry at the second round of stops. The ADR car then extended its advantage during the first yellow flag period after its closest rivals got caught behind the second of the two safety cars.

The Starworks entry lost more time when Potolicchio handed over to Ryan Dalziel after he stopped too far away from the refuelling gantry, but the HPD gained back some of the lost time during the second safety car period, allowing Sarrazin to come back at Charouz.

More seconds were gained by Starworks at the final round of stops when the ADR-Delta team changed the left-front tyre on its ORECA as a precaution. Sarrazin was able to close to within 10s, but the Czech driver controlled the gap to give ADR-Delta its maiden sportscar victory by a margin of just six seconds.

“Esso didn’t have the best of stints and Graves drove really well,” he said. “They did a really good job, and I don’t think the result would have been different whatever happened.”

The second Signatech ORECA-Nissan also closed on the leader in the final hour under the impressive guidance of Nelson Panciatici. This car, which Panciatici shared with Pierre Ragues and Roman Rusinov, also gained ground on the leader during the final safety car period, but had ultimately lost too much time early on with Ragues at the wheel to have any hope of the win.

There were other potential contenders in P2, most notably the Graves Zytek-Nissan ZsSN in which Alex Brundle had claimed pole position. It started to go wrong for Graves at the start when Brundle had to take to the asphalt run-off when Peter Dumbreck spun the JRM HPD.

And things got worse as the race went on. Martin Brundle, who joined his son Lucas Ondermatt in the car
I didn’t see Alex [Wurz] coming, but he was quicker at that stage of the race. If he hadn’t got me there, he would have got me later.” Andre Lotterer

to reprise their Le Mans 24 Hours line-up, was penalised for overtaking before the start-finish line at the end of the first safety car period and then Ocon got a cone stuck under his car.

Greaves engineer Alan Mugglestone was in no doubt how things could have turned out but for the problems that restricted the car to fifth place in class.

“We would have walked it,” he said. “We had the pace today.”

The lead OAK Morgan-Nissan LM P2 2012 came alive once Olivier Pla took over from Mathieu Lahaye.

However, any chance of a decent result disappeared as Pla climbed back aboard after taking over from Jacques Nicolet.

The safety car had just come out on track, and Pla was held at the end of the pitlane until both safety cars had passed, dropping the Morgan to eighth place, which turned into sixth after a string of fastest laps from Pla.

**RESULTS**

FIA World Endurance Championship, round 4 of 8, Silverstone 6 Hours, Silverstone (GB), August 26

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<th>TEAM</th>
<th>CAR</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Audi Sport Team Joest</td>
<td>Audi R8 LMS e-tron quattro</td>
<td>1h40m49.594s</td>
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<td>Toyota TS030 HYBRID</td>
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<td>Audi R8 LMS ultra</td>
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<td>Murphy Prototypes (BR)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>25 Christian Zugel (D)/Ricardo Gonzalez (NL)</td>
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<td>Ferrari (Italy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 Marco Cioci (I)/Christian Jaudel (CH)/Jörg著名的</td>
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<td>Audi Sport Team Joest</td>
<td>1h40m60.86s</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1h40m60.86s</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 Jean-Luc Landru (F)/Christian Albers (NL)/Marcell Schütz (D)</td>
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<td>Signatech Alpine</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Pipo Derani (BR)/Marcelo Gazzola (BR)/Lucas Ordonez (AR)</td>
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**Points Distribution**

Points: 25, 15, 10, 6, 4, 2, 1

Points for Manufacturers:

1. Audi
2. Toyota
3. Toyota
4. Toyota
5. Audi
6. Toyota
7. Audi
8. Toyota
9. Toyota
10. Audi

Points for Private Teams:

1. Rebellion
2. Rebellion
3. Rebellion
4. Rebellion
5. Rebellion
6. Rebellion
7. Rebellion
8. Rebellion
9. Rebellion
10. Rebellion

Points for LMP2 Teams:

1. OAK Racing
2. OAK Racing
3. OAK Racing
4. OAK Racing
5. OAK Racing
6. OAK Racing
7. OAK Racing
8. OAK Racing
9. OAK Racing
10. OAK Racing

Points for GTE Manufacturers:

1. Ferrari
2. Porsche
3. Ferrari
4. Ferrari
5. Ferrari
6. Ferrari
7. Ferrari
8. Ferrari
9. Ferrari
10. Ferrari

Points for GTE Pro Teams:

1. Ferrari
2. Porsche
3. Ferrari
4. Ferrari
5. Ferrari
6. Ferrari
7. Ferrari
8. Ferrari
9. Ferrari
10. Ferrari

**Points for Drivers:**

1. Tom Kristensen (D)/Allan McNish (GB)
2. Karun Chandhok (IN)/Maxime Soulet (F)
3. Stéphane Sarrazin (F)/Ryan Dalziel (GB)/Nicolas Lapierre (F)
4. Christian Zugel (D)/Ricardo Gonzalez (NL)
5. Giacomo Rondinella (I)/Jamarie Labbé (F)

**Qualifying Times:**

- Benoît Tréluyer (F)/Maxime Soulet (F): 1:40m59.56s
- Jean-Luc Landru (F)/Christian Albers (NL)/Marcell Schütz (D): 1:40m60.36s
- Fabian Béguèt (F)/Jean-Philippe Busnelli (F)/Kenji Itoh (J): 1:40m60.86s
- Christian Zugel (D)/Ricardo Gonzalez (NL): 1:40m60.86s
- Giacomo Rondinella (I)/Jamarie Labbé (F): 1:40m60.86s
- Jean-Luc Landru (F)/Christian Albers (NL)/Marcell Schütz (D): 1:40m60.86s
- Fabian Béguèt (F)/Jean-Philippe Busnelli (F)/Kenji Itoh (J): 1:40m60.86s
- Christian Zugel (D)/Ricardo Gonzalez (NL): 1:40m60.86s
- Giacomo Rondinella (I)/Jamarie Labbé (F): 1:40m60.86s
- Jean-Luc Landru (F)/Christian Albers (NL)/Marcell Schütz (D): 1:40m60.86s

August 30 2012 autosport.com
Title race hots up at Silverstone

Wins for Bianchi and Bird close the points gap to Frijns and turns this year’s championship into a three-way fight

THIS YEAR’S FORMULA Renault 3.5 championship fight exploded into life at Silverstone last weekend. The 26-point gap covering the top three in the standings is now down to just six. It’s game on for Robin Frijns, Sam Bird and Jules Bianchi.

Prior to the series’ summer break, Frijns and Bird were not speaking lengths about the title, both were singing from the same hymn sheet “taking it race by race” and “not looking at the standings”. Bianchi, meanwhile, had long been saying he needed to make up for the points he and Tech 1 had thrown away in the early races.

By Sunday afternoon, after race two, it was Bianchi who was relaxed, with Frijns and Bird admitting they could no longer ignore what is turning into a captivating scrap.

Frijns let his guard slip for the first time in the week before the race; in fact. When he got the news that his chassis had been destroyed in a nasty accident during a straightline test in England last week, he confessed that he now feared for his season.

“The first thing I thought was that it meant the title was finished,” said the Dutch rookie, who sang the praises of his Fortec team for getting a brand-new chassis ready by 2am on Friday.

Frijns was clearly in points defence mode in race one when he followed Bianchi into the wet tyres on the second lap, while many others thought it was too early (see panel right). As it turned out, both had made the right call, and after a race stoppage they cruised home first and second. Frijns was happy, despite not winning.

“We were just following Jules the whole time,” he said afterwards. “Everything that he did, we did, because he was my closest rival in the championship at that point. So when he came into the pits, I just followed. When you have a race like this one [only 10 cars made the finish in awful conditions], it’s so easy to throw points away. You have to finish and just see where the others end up.”

Bird, as one of seven cars to crash at a flooded Luffield corner, also referred to his title hopes properly for the first time all season.

“It’s typical this has to happen to us when our two main rivals finish first and second;” he said dejectedly after getting back to the pits.

Race two was just as eventful from a series perspective. Bird got his payback for race one by inheriting the win from race-long leader Marco Sorensen when the Dane suffered a puncture with a lap and a half to go.

Bianchi also made the podium, while Frijns dragged a hobbled car home to ninth. The Dutchman had locked up heavily as he tried to respond to pressure from Bianchi as the pair battled for third early on, and the vibrations from his flat-spoilt left-front tyre affected the toe angle of his front wheels. He gave Bianchi a fright as he tried to defend third into Copse, and their scrap allowed Red Bull junior Antonio Felix da Costa to slip by.

Bianchi, however, wasn’t happy with the series leader.

“He pushed me into the wall,” said the Ferrari junior driver. “It wasn’t fair. It was pretty dangerous. I will try to talk to him because this is not the right way to fight.”

Frijns, not for the first time this year, was pretty unimpressed at hearing complaints about his ruthless approach.

“Why does he want to talk to me?” he said. “I left him enough space. What does he want me to do, drive on the grass to let him through?”

Frijns would plummet down the order in the
“If you’re going to win two races in a season, then Monaco and your home race are two of the best.”

Sam Bird is happy with his two winner’s trophies

Rain catches out the unwary

Alexander Rossi couldn’t believe his eyes. The sun was shining and, as far as he was concerned, the smattering of rain that had arrived over Silverstone as race one started was easing up. So, he wondered, how had Kevin Magnussen crashed on the approach to Becketts, and why were Jules Bianchi and Robin Frijns pitting for wet tyres on just the second lap of the race?

By the time the Arden Caterham driver – now leading – got to the end of the Wellington Straight, he had changed his tune. And just seconds after calling “Box” on the radio to signal that he too wanted to change tyres, his four Michelin slicks lost contact with the track surface, sending him aquaplaning into the barriers at Luffield. Seven more cars would follow him into retirement from the race – every single one of them floating off the road.

“I guess I hit the wall hardest because the others were able to slow down when they saw I’d gone off,” Rossi said afterwards. “There was a massive difference between the two laps. It was totally unexpected.”

After Rossi’s crash, Sam Bird, Marco Sorensen, Nico Muller, Nicolai Martsenko, Yann Cunha, Anton Nebiulitsky and Kevin Korjus all slithered off the road to join him. The mood among this gaggle of drivers was better than expected, however.

“We were all starting to make our way back, and everyone was sort of like, ‘Well, I guess the race is over,’ but then everyone started laughing,” said Bird. “It was crazy.”

Sorensen, who suffered far greater heartbreak when a puncture on the penultimate lap robbed him of victory in race two, added: “I was going so slowly, but there was nothing I could do. It was a strange feeling not to have any control of the car at such low speed.”

Almost unseen at the end of the chaos, the Arden driver, making his debut in FR 3.5, was the only car to make it out of the gravel. He went on to finish on the podium.

RESULTS

Formel Renault 3.5 Series, round 6 of 9, Silverstone (GB), August 24-26

<table>
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<th>Race 1 Grid</th>
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<td>Driver</td>
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<td>Jules Bianchi (F)</td>
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<td>Robin Frijns (NL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Korjus (EST)</td>
<td>Tech 1 Racing</td>
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<table>
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<td>Jules Bianchi (F)</td>
<td>Tech Racing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Korjus (EST)</td>
<td>Tech 1 Racing</td>
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<td>Kevin Korjus (EST)</td>
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<td>Kevin Magnussen (NL)</td>
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Glen Freeman reports

Punctured robbe Sorensen of win

closing laps, only getting back into the points thanks to the late retirements of Sorensen and Mikhail Aleshin. Those two points could have been crucial. Thanks to that ninth place he leads Bird by five and Bianchi by six, with three double-header rounds remaining.

After running those sums through his head, all three couldn’t help but turn their attention to the implications for the title.

Race two winner Bird, who initially said he would “refuse to comment” on the championship until after the season finale, did loosen that stance ever-so-slightly later on: “It’s only right the points leader has the final say on the fight, which now appears to be turning into a three-horse race.

“Every weekend, we have had something go wrong,” said Frijns. “Hopefully for the next three weekends we won’t have that any more. If so, we will be fine.”

August 30 2012 autosport.com 43
ROB COLLARD HAD A LONG wait to follow up his win in the Brands Hatch British Touring Car Championship season opener. Five months ago in Kent, the WSR squad surprised itself on the debut of the turbocharged BMW 320si, but thereafter tyre-wear issues proved a limiting factor.

Collard has led lots of races in 2012 and struggled together 15 consecutive points scores until engine failure ended the streak at Snetterton, but there had been no more visits to the top step of the podium.

That was until Knockhill last weekend, when Collard led a brace of WSR one-twos in dominant style.

He was quick in wet and dry conditions, and jumped poleman Jason Plato at the start of race one. Apart from briefly allowing Tom Onslow-Cole in front—to give his team-mate a lap-leader point—Collard wasn’t headed again until the reversed-grid encounter, which he had to start 10th.

“I look back at the last two or three years and I’ve had so many seconds and thirds,” said Collard. “Now all of a sudden two wins come along!”

If we’d had this car at the start of the year we could have been genuine championship contenders”

Collard was at one with the newly-sorted BMW

"Collard was at one with the newly-sorted BMW WSR BMWs showed great form“

War of independents ace Rob Collard was peerless at Knockhill to win two battles from team-mate Tom Onslow-Cole as the WSR BMWs showed great form.
BMW dominants before Newsham wins again

ROB COLLARD TOOK the first double of his BTCC career before Dave Newsham scored his second consecutive reversed-grid race victory.

Collard comfortably beat pole sitter Jason Plato to the first corner in race one. After Plato was helped off by Aron Smith, and the cars of Andy Neate and Frank Wrathall also littered the track, a safety car eroded Collard’s advantage.

At the restart, WSR teammate Tom Onslow-Cole shadowed Collard as the two BMWs pulled away from Smith, who gradually began to form a queue behind his S2000 Motorbase Ford Focus. While the BMWs headed to a one-two, the shuffled six-car pack behind Irishman Smith got ever more frantic. It was Gordon Shedden who eventually showed the Focus the hairpin on the final lap and snatched a place on the podium.

Matt Jackson’s NGTC Focus almost pipped Smith on the line, while an impressive Paul O’Neill (Speedworks Toyota) beat Matt Neal and the WSR BMW of Nick Foster to sixth.

Despite extra ballast, Collard and Onslow-Cole led throughout race two, with Collard this time pulling out a bit more of a margin. “The weight has helped the car take off and land at the chicane,” reckoned Collard. Shedden couldn’t challenge the BMWs, but was well clear of the rest to complete the podium.

O’Neill, possibly by racing Tony Hughes’ Avenis for the last time, neatly sliced by Jackson with a move that started at the hairpin and ended at Duffus Dip, then rather less cleanly barged Smith out of the way at the hairpin to secure fourth. “This might be the last time I’m in a touring car so I wanted to go for it,” he said.

As Smith struggled with his tyres, so Foster moved by him to make it three WSR BMWs in the top five. Diff changes have helped Foster with his braking, the main area in which he loses out to his team-mates, and he drove well to turn 14th in qualifying into an eighth, fifth and seventh in the three races.

Newsham made the most of his reversed-grid pole to scamper into a strong lead early on. At one stage he led Jeff Smith’s Eurotech Honda by over four seconds but, as the S2000 Vauxhall Vectra’s rubber went off, the three NGTC Civics of Smith, Neal and Andrew Jordan closed in.

The ES Racing machine just held on, while the three Hondas were covered by about half a second at the flag. Onslow-Cole was the other star of the race. He started alongside Collard on row five, but made better progress.

Once he’d found a way by team-mate Foster, he overcame O’Neill and then took fifth from Aron Smith, who fell back to eighth with power-steering issues.
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but was hamstrung by an issue with the revised Neil Brown Engineering two-litre turbo introduced at Snetterton.

Team boss Steve Neal, who confirmed that Eurotech’s Jeff Smith was the only NCCTC Civic driver to run with the older unit, said: “We had massive problems with the boost control on our cars, more so with Matt, so we had to turn it down because of the [boost] spikes.”

Honda’s problems could have allowed title rival Jason Plato to continue making ground in the drivers’ table. The MG6 remains a difficult beast, but on Saturday Plato made the most of the wet qualifying to set two times good enough for pole.

The following day went less well. It was unsurprising that king of the fast start Collard beat him away, but more of a shock was how defensive he had to be from Aron Smith’s S2000 Ford Focus.

The Motorbase driver had nailed his qualifying opportunity in changeable conditions to start a career-best third. With generous levels of boost allowed, he was also quick in a straight line, allowing him to go on the offensive.

Unfortunately, after a number of taps to the MG’s rear on the opening lap, Smith nudged Plato off at Clark’s on lap two.

“I was having to defend from the engine they’ve got,” said a furious Plato, who called for a harsher punishment than the three licence points and $5,000 Smith was handed. “He must have hit me 15 times; either he did it on purpose to take me out, or it was an accident and he needs to have his licence taken away.

“Now I’ve been nowhere near the Hondas all day, which has a massive impact on the championship.”

For his part, Smith said: “It was a racing incident. He was hanging me out to dry and I got to the point where I had to either drive into the gravel or turn in.”

Things went from bad to worse for Plato when engine problems struck in race two, limiting his recovery to 11th and forcing him to non-start the finale.

“You have these days at times,” said Plato. “A few years ago you’d have called it character-building, but I’ve got enough character now.”

He has now fallen from 10 to 36 points behind Neal. “I thought I was having a bad one and then I saw Jason’s weekend,” said Neal, who couldn’t quite believe such a trying weekend would strengthen his title chances.

Shedden should have left Knockhill with the lead, having gone ahead of Neal after the first two races, but was forced to retire from race three when he went off avoiding a clash involving Nick Foster and Aron Smith.

But this time the title fight was the support act.

On a weekend when the little action there was mainly involved cars hitting each other, Collard and WSR’s success was something even rivals agreed was well deserved.
Rockingham

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<td>International</td>
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**DRIVER BY DRIVER**

**Matt Neal (7/8/13)**
Boost tissue hampered him all weekend, but he emerged with an increased points lead.

**Gordon Shedden (3/3/13)**
Was in fine form at home and would be leading title race without having to avoid R3 incident.

**Jason Plato (8/11/R)**
Great pole, disastrous races thanks to contact and engine issue. Scored just six points.

**Andy Neate (8/12/15)**
RL clash, then technical problems and, finally, a rain-tyre gamble that didn’t pay off in R3.

**Mat Jackson (5/9/10)**
Had to retire from R2 after cracked exhaust let flames into cockpit. Still learning new NGTC machine.

**Arfon Smith (4/6/6)**
Fine qualifying effort, though didn’t make many friends during fraught races. Good points.

**Rob Collard (1/1/9)**
Superb. Was on it all weekend and looked comfortable and composed at the front.

**Tom Onslow-Cole (2/2/5)**
Best 2012 weekend yet, though still can’t match Collard when it comes to race starts.

**Nick Foster (8/5/7)**
Didn’t manage to nail qualifying, but came well through in the races on great weekend for VXR.

**Andrew Jordan (9/7/6)**
Fairly quiet event after disappointing qualifying, but kept his points score ticking over.

**Paul O’Neill (6/4/6)**
Weekend got better and better and culminated in the first BTCC podium of his career.

**Dave Newsham (11/10/3)**
Again got caught up in contact. Tyre gamble in R3 didn’t pay off, but scored points in R1.

**Aidan Morgan (10/9/11)**
Still finding his feet in BTCC. Brake issues in R1 didn’t help as tricky circuit.

**Rob Holland (9/14/14)**
Using one set of wets compromised qualifying. Took reversed-grid opportunity well.

**Daniel Welch (8/12/12)**
Electrical and misfire problems, and handled three points on his licence for contact with Jeff Smith.

**Lea Wood (9/13/13)**
First time at the circuit, which helps to explain the dip in form after solid recent rounds.

Olympic star Chris Hoy was an onlooker

New NGTC Ford Focus issues, but showed promise

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**RESULTS**

**British Touring Car Championship, round 7 of 10, Knockhill (GB), August 26**

**RACE 1 – 27 LAPS, 34.325 MILES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<th>Team</th>
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<th>Lap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Collard</td>
<td>Onslow-Cole</td>
<td>BMW 320si</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30:22:32.448</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Onslow-Cole</td>
<td>BMW 320si</td>
<td>+1.250s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Honda Civic</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31:15:33.163</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Ford Focus</td>
<td>+16.909s</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31:15:33.163</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>Honda Civic</td>
<td>+15.954s</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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**RACE 2 – 27 LAPS, 34.325 MILES**

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**RACE 3 – 24 LAPS, 30.511 MILES**

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**P50 Support races**


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**August 30 2012 autosport.com 49**
Perfect timing is key to Barker’s breakthrough

BEN BARKER BROKE HIS Carrera Cup GB duck in style with two wins.

The ex-Carrera Cup Australia racer and Aussie F3 champ also scored a clean sweep of poles and fastest laps to take full points away from Scotland.

With Formula Renault absent, the Carrera Cup has become the qualifying formula of the TOCA package. Points leader Michael Meadows has been the master this season, but the Redline man was pipped to pole for the second meeting in a row, as Barker nailed a lap on his second set of tyres just before rain washed out the session.

“I like this circuit,” said Barker. “It’s like a street circuit, which they have a lot of in Australia; you can really chuck the car around.”

After a brief phone call to ex-Carrera Cup champ Tim Harvey for some advice on the start procedure, Barker converted his first pole with a controlled drive. He kept Meadows just about at bay before Derek Pierre went off at the chicane and brought out the safety car.

The top four (Barker, Meadows, Sam Tordoff and Jonas Gelzinis) negotiated the restart safely, but a slide for fifth-placed Rory Butcher out of the hairpin delayed Daniel Lloyd and allowed Andy Meyrick to get a run. He dived past Lloyd into Duffus Dip, but locked up and tagged Butcher into a spin that also took out Richard Plant and stopped the race. Meyrick clawed his way out of the gravel but was excluded, promoting Ahmad Al Harthy into the top six.

Barker made a poor start to race two, but held the lead as Meadows tried to go for the lead. Tordoff tucked behind Barker in an attempt to gain second, but contact with Meadows broke the radiator on Tordoff’s Team Parker car and spun Meadows.

Meyrick and British GT3 champion Glynn Geddie then tried to go side-by-side through Butcher’s. Meyrick ending up in the barriers as Geddie collected an advertising hoarding.

Home hero Butcher (son of circuit owner Derek) jumped Lloyd on lap three to claim second, but Barker was gone. A mid-race safety car to retrieve George Brewster’s spun car eroded the gap, but Barker edged away after the restart.

“We’ve had lots of wins with the VIP car, but these are our first as Part,” said team boss Paul Robe. “It’s just one of those weekends you have to savour.”

Meadows survived a grasy moment at the hairpin to recover sixth, behind Al Harthy (who took a career-best fourth when Gelzinis fell back with a sick engine) and Plant, who spun Parker team-mate Derek Pierce at the hairpin on the penultimate lap.

Scottish Minis returned to the TOCA package and delivered the most exciting race of the day on Sunday. A partially reversed grid bunched the field, which then delivered 15 laps of breathless action. Cars were often four or five abreast along the main straight as they jostled for position.

Steven Brewster came through brilliantly from sixth on the grid to win, ahead of double runner-up Malcolm McNab, brother Kenneth, Scottish Fiesta ace George Orr, Ross Wylie and Kyle Reid.

Runaway championship leader David Sleigh took his 10th win of the season with a dominant drive in Saturday’s wet first race, but found himself outmuscled at various points during Sunday’s encounter and only finished seventh.

But with brother Tim absent after rolling his car into oblivion at the back of the field, it was all about the title push. David stood on the verge of retaining his title.

**RESULTS**

**Porsche Carrera Cup GB (26 laps)**


**Scottish Mini Cooper Cup (15 laps)**


Sharp’s salvage job as old hands win

Dry conditions prevailed for the second race and the top two remained unchanged, with Breeze again leading Ingram home.

Ffreke made up for the disappointment of Saturday to finish third.

Sharp drove conservatively in this race. He made it past Jake Hill for fourth and consolidated this place to secure a good grid position for race three; his dreams came true when the top four were reversed to put him on pole.

A startline shunt in race three was triggered when Ingram stalled. Several midfield contenders were taken out in the ensuing mayhem, although thankfully all of them emerged unscathed.

Ffreke drove on to victory after poleman Sharp had to start from the pitlane following an electrical problem. Breeze was a close second, but reduced the points gap significantly to Sharp, who could only salvage fifth.

Scottish youngster Charlie Robertson celebrated his homecoming with pole position in Ginetta Junior. He converted the result into a win in race one with some ease, despite the difficult weather conditions.

Rookie Harry Woodhead stormed back from a lap-one mistake to salvage third, his pace was fast but on the ragged edge.

Woodhead had another spin in race two, but this time in avoidance of title contender Sennan Fielding, who lost his car on the exit of the chicane on lap one.

At the front, Robertson was comfortable to take the initiative in the closely poised title battle.

The deluge that soaked the track for race one of the Scottish Classics made racing particularly difficult, but this was nonetheless no demonstration run for these pristine cars.

Determinedly, Raymond Boyd used the traction advantage of his Porsche 911 to power up the field from a lower-than-usual grid position.

Boyd grabbed the lead just before the safety car was scrambled on lap four and asserted himself when the race resumed. Initially, he seemed set for a shock win, but Andy Smith also relished the wet conditions and his Morgan grabbed the lead on the penultimate lap.

Smith repeated his win in Sunday's dry encounter.

It showed much about the character of the Morgan driver that he declared a preference for his Saturday win in the wet because "it was much more exciting!"

© Jonathan Crawford

RESULTS

Ginetta GT Supercup (16 laps)
FL 1:57.075s (87.46mph).


Briscoe ends victory drought

Penske driver beats team-mate Will Power for first IndyCar win since 2010 after collision between Sebastien Bourdais and Josef Newgarden changes face of race

RIGHT AT THE START OF THE season, someone at Team Penske walked up to a wall calendar and put a big, red circle around last Sunday’s date. The team has a formidable history in the Californian wine country: it went into the Sonoma race having scored a 1–2–3 last year, and with Will Power having won there on his previous two visits.

As it transpired, things went almost totally to script. Penske cars led all but one session (Ryan Hunter-Reay stealing the honours in the Sunday morning warm-up), and there was no point in the race where one of the team’s drivers didn’t hold the upper hand. The only real surprise was that the guy sipping cabernet from the oversized wine glass that serves as the trophy here was not Power, but Ryan Briscoe.

For starters, there had been 813 sunsets since Briscoe last stood in Victory Lane — and that was at Texas in 2010. Sunday’s win was as overdue as it was timely for the Australian, who is two races from the end of his Penske contract with nothing yet signed for 2013. Secondly, the weekend had been overwhelmingly dominated by Power from the opening practice session right through to the final pitstop. Unfortunately for him, the only meaningful laps where he didn’t hold the advantage were the ones that mattered.

Leaving up to his final stop, Power was roughly eight seconds in front of Briscoe. He swung into the pits just as Sebastien Bourdais and Josef Newgarden collided at Turn 8, causing substantial damage to both their cars and the barrier, prompting the first yellow flag of the race. A handful of events in the 20 seconds that followed changed the entire outcome of the race.

Firstly, Power had a slightly slow stop, which he later estimated cost him about four seconds. Pitstop errors on the part of himself and the team had been a factor in his losing the 2011 title, but this was the first such incident for his crew this year. Secondly, he returned to the track amid a gaggle of cars that had slowed for the yellows. That basically handed Briscoe, who stopped a lap later, a free lap at racing speed. Not surprisingly, it was the traffic that caused Power the most consternation afterwards.

“I came across a bunch of guys on the track who just dawdled all the way back,” he said. “That’s when I was using the word ‘wanker’.

I do understand that you’d want to go slow where the accident was. But these guys
Track changes to aid passing neutralised by push-to-pass activation delay

MILESTONE
Briscoe's win secured the engine manufacturers' crown for Chevrolet

REPORT
INDYCAR SEARS POINT

MARK GLENDELING reporting

Barrichello sees the light

Rubens Barrichello has often spoken of the problems he has had with trying to adapt to the particular requirements of IndyCar, but at Sonoma it finally came together, and the Brazilian picked up a season-best result of fourth.

“I don’t think we had the quickest car out there,” he said. “We could see that on the restart with Dario [Franchitti] and the two Penskes, because they opened up quite a big gap on us. But it was solid. We probably deserved to be, in terms of speed, sixth or seventh. But I was lucky I got away on the first crash and overtook a few people.”

Barrichello said that the result owed a lot to the fact that he’d been able to test at the track previously, rather than going in cold as has been the case for most of the season.

“On an Indy weekend, the car evolves a lot and the track evolves a lot,” he said. “When I’ve started the race, at least this year, I haven’t known if we’ve made good [set-up] choices or not. By the end of the day, the track grips up, but sometimes it doesn’t. So it changes a lot.

“But I still haven’t got the balance that I wish to have. I had a good car today — solid — but there was a little bit of understeer. I was able to just push, push, push. But I think it’s more to do with the fact that I knew the track a bit more.”

were slow for a whole lap. It cost me the race, for sure.”

Power’s delay allowed Briscoe to easily leapfrog him when he rejoined after his own stop, and then it was simply a matter of defending his lead against his teammate in two late restarts.

“I wasn’t too worried,” he said. “I could see Will on my outside, but I knew that once we hit the hill, the track was turning, and he was going to have to lift and get in line or go onto the grass.”

If anything, it was Power who had more to worry about during the last two restarts when Dario Franchitti began darting around in his mirrors. Part of the problem from Power’s point of view was the activation delay on the push-to-pass system, which was every bit as unpopular with the drivers — Power in particular — at Sonoma as it had been when it was introduced at Mid-Ohio. The main complaints continued to surround the difficulties of balancing the delay — which had been reduced from Mid-Ohio’s five seconds to three and a half for Sonoma — with the system’s habit of deactivating itself every time the drivers lift from the throttle. On Sunday, Power’s cause was further hampered when he twice managed to hit the pitlane speed limiter rather than push-to-pass.

“[Dario] must have been thinking, ‘What is this guy doing?’” Power admitted.

Frustrated as Power was at having a seemingly safe win slip away, his pain was eased somewhat by the fact that he still reinforced his points

Castroneves pushed hard to claim sixth

Polesitter Power initially led Field away

Legge (6) was racy on her return to Dragon

August 30 2012 autosport.com 53
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lead due to virtually all of his rivals encountering disaster. The worst affected was Scott Dixon, who was punted from behind by fellow championship contender Helio Castroneves at the start of the race. Castroneves was penalised for causing an avoidable accident, while Dixon went off-strategy in the hope of salvaging something from the afternoon, and set about the long task of working his way back through the field.

Dixon was making pretty good progress until he locked up while fighting Hunter-Reay, and bounced off the circuit, dropping a position to Franchitti and damaging his front wing for good.

measure. The Kiwi opted to stay out, but the effects of the shattered wing cost him between 1-1.5s per lap for the rest of the stint, and he was unable to recover the lost ground and trailed in 13th.

Castroneves rallied well from his penalty to finish sixth, but it was a very different story for Hunter-Reay. The Andretti driver’s afternoon started to go south when, like Dixon, he was hit from behind at Turn 7, although in his case the culprit was Alex Tagliani, who appeared to have decided to try to take the hapless flat.

“I braked really late,” said Franchitti, who’d seen the Canadian ski past him just before the accident. “Tagliani still hadn’t braked when he passed me.”

Hunter-Reay lost more time when he stalled while trying to get his car going again, and although he was able to continue after receiving a push-start, he encountered more trouble a few laps later when he clashed with Oriol Servia. On this occasion, Hunter-Reay was found to be at fault, and he was issued with a drive-through penalty.

The Bourdais/Newgarden accident was significant for more than just the effect it had on Power’s afternoon, because Bourdais’ side of the Dragon garage was shaping up to have a superb afternoon. The Frenchman hasn’t been able to hang with the Penskes, but he was on terms was pretty much everyone else, and looked comfortable in third place. He’d just made a stop and had rejoined ahead of Newgarden’s lapped car when he ran into trouble at Turn 8.

“The car just refused to turn,” he said. “I don’t know what was going on. It was my mistake – I’m turning the wheel – but it was very strange. I don’t know how I did it, or what was going on.”

Bourdais was pitched off the track, skidded back on and thumped Newgarden into the outside barrier. Dragon’s hopes of a podium instantly went down the drain, and both teams indicated that their tires were likely to be write-offs. Newgarden, who had been struggling for pace all weekend, also sustained an injury to his left index finger.

RESULTS

IndyCar Series, round 13 of 15, Sears Point (USA), August 24-26

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<th>Team</th>
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CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

1 | Power | 422 |
2 | Hunter-Reay | 366 |
3 | Castroneves | 361 |
4 | Dixon | 348 |
5 | Pagenaud | 337 |
6 | Kanaan | 327 |
7 | Hinchcliffe | 226 |
8 | Briscoe | 217 |
9 | Franchitti | 396 |
10 | Rahal | 286 |

Winner’s average: 95.74mph. Fastest lap: Hunter-Reay, 1:21.888, 104.40mph. Qualifying field divided into two groups for qualifying. The fastest six from each move into the pole shootout. The fastest six from this move into the pole shootout. **10-above grid penalty.**
The master marches on
Sebastien Loeb steamrolls the opposition, taking his ninth win on Rallye Deutschland

RALLYE DEUTSCHLAND
Trier

ROUND 9/13

WINNER
Loeb 3h38m27.6s

QUALIFYING STAGE
Sebastien Loeb

POWERSTAGE WINNER
Petter Solberg

RALLY RATING
Not a classic by any means. All over the bar but nothing to shout about by Bay Two

DRIVERS' STANDINGS
Loeb 199pts
Hirvonen 145pts
Solberg 104pts

MILESTONES
- Citroen takes 10/10 on Rallye Deutschland
- Andreas Mikkelsen scores his first ever powerstage podium place with third

David Evans reports

Citroen's unbeaten Rallye Deutschland run was extended to 10 in Trier last weekend, as Sebastien Loeb made up for the disappointment of finishing in second place on last year's event with a crushing victory on Sunday.

The record will show Ford was well beaten on the first asphalt encounter of the season, but there's no doubt the Fiesta RS WRC was closer than ever before.

Indeed, had it not been for the rain falling at the wrong time on Saturday morning and Petter Solberg smashing a stone on the same day, the result may have been different. Well, not different. Just closer.

LEG ONE (85.65 miles)
Sunny/overcast - ambient temperature range: 16/25

The thunder and lightning that bounced around the Mosel valley last Thursday night woke all but the heaviest of sleepers in the WRC. Fortunately, the choice of tyres they would be making in a matter of hours gave the drivers something to think about while they listened to the electrostatic discharge from above.

Loeb was concerned as he nosed the number one Citroen out of service for the first time. His gravel crew had reported plenty of damp patches, but he still went with a hard Michelin on each corner. Twelve months ago on this event, the French team destroyed the opposition running hard and soft tyres at diagonally opposite corners in changeable conditions.

Jarri-Matti Latvala (Ford) and Dani Sordo (Mini) went for that set-up on the first morning, but a quick glimpse at the early split times on the Mittelmosel test revealed that there wasn't much moisture left from the storm the night before.

Loeb confirmed that.

"I was too cautious in the early part," he said. "I was looking for the damp places, but they weren't there. After that, it was OK."

Loeb waved his hand forward, indicating that he got his foot down. He won the morning's three stages, to open a 13.1-second advantage over Petter Solberg by midday. Solberg's run had been stymied by a mysterious problem.

Further investigation revealed that the Norwegian's Fiesta was running out of brakes towards the end of the second and third stages. A change to the same compound of pads as Latvala in the afternoon cured much of the problem.

The good news for Ford was that the Fiesta was still well and truly at the races. This time last year on the same event, it had been firmly beaten by the DS3 WRC, while also slipping into the clutches of Prodrive's Mini. But, 12 months on, the Fiesta was a real player in Trier.

Sordo's hopes of improving on his third place from last year were hit hard by the placement of tyres on his Mini for the opener - but he also felt the car wasn't running as well as it could.

"It's too lazy," was the Spaniard's frank reaction on the car's efforts over the morning.

His mechanics worked on the transmission through
lunchtime service and delivered a much more responsive car in the afternoon, allowing Sordo to move up to fifth and to re-engage in a podium scrap.

It wasn't just the Ford team that suffered in Germany last year — few could forget the atmosphere at Citroen when Loeb's then team-mate, Sébastien Ogier, launched his verbal salvo about Loeb crying to senior management. That volatility was all gone last week, courtesy of a poorly performing Finn, who was a considerable distance from matching Loeb. And even further from getting under his skin.

Having roused the Citroen on gravel, Mikko Hirvonen was all at sea again on the asphalt. Confidence running on empty, Hirvonen turned to the suspension for solace — softening the car would certainly give him a better feeling, but it wasn't going to tune his times to those of his team leader.

Hirvonen's mood improved for the final two stages of the day, when he felt he'd tuned himself into the car.

"I was overdriving it," he said. "It was just like Monte Carlo again, I was pushing all the time. Then I was pushing harder, and the time was going and taking my confidence with it. When I came back from that, the times were better. Basically, I have to stay away from the throttle in the corners and let the car do the work — because it can!"

Hirvonen turned to the suspension for solace — softening the car would certainly give him a better feeling, but it wasn't going to tune his times to those of his team leader.

Loeb agreed. "I can't back off at all," he said. "Sure, this is a nice lead, but if I start to watch the split times and drop a little time here and there, it can be complicated. I will push tomorrow morning, and then see halfway through.

Just off the podium was the man tipped to take over from Loeb, Thierry Neuville. This was only the Belgian's second visit to this rally, but having grown up on asphalt stages offering varying levels of grip, he was always going to star in the right car in Trier.

Not starring on the first day was Evgeny Novikov, whose early season pace and precision deserted him again on the German opener. He clouted a first stage wall with the right-rear of his Fiesta and retired from the day.

Martin Prokop was another private Ford driver who wouldn't see Friday night parc ferme — or his Fiesta again after the car caught fire in SS3.

Ott Tanak overcame a couple of wrong slots after misheard pace notes to settle for an overnight seventh, one place up on a braceless Mads Østberg. Chris Atkinson was ninth after his first day in the Mini. The Australian's enthusiasm — for going up and down the gearbox in the John Cooper Works — got the better of him in the day's final stage, when he sheared the shift handle.

POSITIONS AFTER DAY ONE
1. Loeb/Elena
2. Sordo/Patterson
3. Hirvonen/Decorse
4. Neuville/Lough
5. Sordo/De Barrio
6. Hirvonen/Decorse

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For the second morning in succession, clouds gathered over Trier. But this time they delivered. And nobody saw it coming. Typical of Ford’s fortunes in these parts, the set-up Latvala had taken 24 hours earlier would have been perfect for Saturday morning... Instead, he faced with a run up through the vineyards and out over the motorway on the eastern side of town with a hard Fiesta on hard tyres. For what felt like the first time in history, Citroen got the call wrong. In an attempt to clarify the situation, the Versailles team relied on Twitter to explain its mistake. “We just have a fog and a ladder to predict the weather,” said @CitroenRacing.

Loeb arrived at the end of the stage with a very smile. The rain had arrived for him, but he was almost before the wipers needed to be deployed. “For sure, there will be more rain for those behind me,” said Loeb.

There was, Ostberg, running in eighth place on the road and starting 16 minutes after Loeb was the most unfortunate. “Just 10 seconds before start,” said Ostberg, “and it started pissing it down. Unbelievable.”

Loeb doubled his lead in an instant, pulling 41.8sec clear of Sordo. “I had no steering,” groaned Sordo. “I had one moment, and that was it, I hacked off.”

Solberg and Latvala did have one soft tyre in the back of their Fiestas, and that was fitted to the right rear for the second stage of the day. Solberg reported an improvement to the balance of his car in the knife-edge conditions, while Latvala dropped it. He slid off and got stuck, losing half a minute and falling to fifth. It was Sordo who made the most through Peterberg, however. The Prodrive Mini rocketed to its first fastest time of the event, leapfrogging Neuville and Latvala for third.

After the drama of the morning came Panzerplatte, almost 30 miles of continually twisting and turning asphalt, gravel, broken concrete and just about every other surface imaginable. Added to that was raining.

Everybody went soft. With service straight after the event’s longest — and one of the season’s toughest — stages, the soft Michelin was the sensible choice. And at that moment it stopped raining.

None of this mattered to leader Loeb. He just got on with it and won the stage. Astonishingly, however, after hundreds of gear changes, thousands of degrees of steering input and millions of bytes of data running through the cars to power them through 28.91 miles (taking 27 and a half minutes), just eight-tenths of a second separated Loeb’s Citroen from Latvala’s Ford. It was even more impressive when they did it for a second time later in the day.

Predictably, even if the weather was being kind, Panzerplatte remains too much of a beast not to feasting on the old WRC stars. And, not for the first time in this part of the world, it was Solberg who failed to master the Baumholder military test roads. Luckily for him, and Ford, it was the right rear wheel of his Fiesta that met one of the tank-containing hillocks — rather than the roof, which had spilled such a spectacular end to his 2004 trip to Germany with Subaru.

The result was just the same, however; Solberg’s disappearance from the leaderboard. That should have put Sordo into second — until the Spaniard suffered a slow puncture.

“I was running soft tyres at the back,” he said, “so when I felt the rear sliding more, I thought maybe the tyres were starting to go off. Then I knew I had a puncture and we had to stop.”

With Sordo and Solberg gone, it was Neuville up to second. But not for long. The Belgian, who had crossed the border at the start of the week targeting a German podium, him his Citroen.

So Latvala was second, with Hirvonen third — and nobody was more surprised than the Finn. With typical self-deprecation, he countered the idea that an early podium spot came courtesy of an upturn in speed by pointing to the two-minute gap between himself and the DS3 driver ahead.

Ostberg’s rise up the leaderboard was even more meteoric than Hirvonen’s,
with the Rally Portugal winner moving from eighth to fourth, and enjoying a Fiesta that slowed when he told it to. The improved deceleration aboard Mads’ Fiesta came courtesy of a significant change to the brakes allied to a strict policy of keeping his left foot well away from the middle pedal unless absolutely necessary.

Here’s a sentence you didn’t think you’d be reading today — the hero of the early part of Saturday afternoon was Tanak. But it’s true. The Estonian was fastest on stages 10 and 11, wresting fourth from Ostberg. As the second quickest time was beamless to the service park, there were some undue suggestions that it might be worth sending the trailer in the direction of Panzerplatte, the final stage of the day.

Unfortunately, that trailer was needed as Tanak skid wide and hit a kerb removing a rear wheel from the car. That accident left Ostberg four minutes ahead of fifth-placed Atkinson, who was content to cruise through picking up experience. “Every now and then I’m doing a bit of exploring,” said Atkinson, “but there’s always the danger you can explode your way into a handicap.”

A tough day on the ranges had certainly taken its toll on the leaderboard — and allowed VW stars Sebastien Ogier and Andreas Mikkelsen up into sixth and seventh in their Skodas.

**POSITIONS AFTER DAY TWO**

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<tr>
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<th>Time</th>
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<td>Mikkelsen/Flomme</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Sordo/Barros</td>
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**LEGG THREE (40.94 MILES)**

**RALLY REVIEW**

The weather turned moody, with heavy rain starting falling, causing the decision to be made — soft tyres all around and no need for anyheroics. That was the story up and down the leaderboard. Loeb was quickest in Sunday’s opener, but he was consistent that he wasn’t taking anything which remotely resembled a risk.

The only potential DNF drama was for Latvala, who feared his bonnet might fly open after one of the pins worked loose. But it didn’t.

There were no positional changes in the top 10 on the final day, but there was a brief flurry of interest in a radio message from the number one car on the penultimate test. Loeb reported a boost ‘problem’ with his Citroen. He’d dropped ‘nine seconds in the stage. Could there be an issue? Could the streets of Trier witness the genius partnership of Loeb-Citroen faltering?

No. The result: Fastest. Again. The master marches on. And that ninth German win will be matched by a ninth world title soon enough.

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**RESULTS**

**Rally Germany, Trier, August 23-26**

<table>
<thead>
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**CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE**

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<td>Tanan/Plantier</td>
<td>Skoda Fabia S2000</td>
<td>3h12m41.6s</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**PWRC**

Mitsubishi driver Michal Kosciukla kept his PWRC title hopes alive with a category victory in Germany last weekend.

The Polish driver was embroiled in a battle with Benito Guerra throughout the opening day of the event, but when the Mexican suffered a puncture on his Landcruiser on the opening stage on Saturday morning Kosciukla took his chance and opened up a two-minute lead.

With two runs through Panzerplatte to come, Guerra refused to give up, but a sure-footed run through the remaining stages was enough for Kosciukla to take his second PWRC win of the season.

Guerra came home second, and remains at the top of the PWRC table.

**PWRC New Zealand winner Marcus Ligato was back on the podium last weekend, taking third place. Britain’s Louise Cook returned on the opening day with electrical issues aboard her Ford Eagle.**
Oppportunistic Mortara grabs win

When the rain came, the Audi youngster caused Mike Rockenfeller to pay the price for his caution

ANY ONE OF FOUR DRIVERS could have been the victor in the DTM at Zandvoort last weekend. But within the confines of the Dutch dunes, only one had enough guile and (most importantly) luck to get the job done.

That man was Edoardo Mortara, who is fast-establishing himself as Audi’s number one driver in the DTM. He is, after all, the marque’s only racer to win in the series this year, and his Zandvoort win was his second of 2013.

After making Q4 for the second weekend running, the Italian pounced on long-time leader Mike Rockenfeller when a short, sharp shower sprayed the circuit with water at two-thirds distance.

Throwing caution to the wind, Team Rosberg man Mortara turned Rockenfeller’s 3.5-second advantage into nothing in the space of just three damp laps, and dived down the inside into Tarzan with 12 laps left to wrest advantage, the Phoenix A5 receiving a subtle shoulder brush as Mortara went by.

The result was perhaps a tad harsh on Rockenfeller. He had, after all, looked imperious in the dry and had established a lead of almost 36 by the time the rain came down.

“I’m not happy,” he said afterwards. “When you dominate a race for two thirds of the distance and you don’t win, you can never be happy. I was trying to be safe. Maybe too safe.”

Mortara, on the other hand, proved that risk usually triumphs over caution, and is now the only Audi driver with even a slight chance of becoming champion this year, albeit from 35 points back with only 75 still available.

“Sometimes you have to take a risk,” he said. “I said to myself ‘Go on, Gamble. Push like hell and you can win.’ I have to tell you, I saw myself in the gravel about three times on the worst lap. It was the right thing to do though.”

The platform for Mortara’s win was created on Saturday, when Audi locked out the top five spots on the grid. But during the early stages of the race it looked as though the Ingolstadt manufacturer might have a job holding back the charging Mercedes of Jamie Green.

In the three racing laps that were undertaken before the opening round of tyre stops began (see panel, top right), Green took 0.5s out of Rockenfeller and 1.1s from Mortara; this despite having to pass HWA team-mate Gary Paffett and the Rosberg Audi of Filipe Albuquerque in a single tour.

His victory hopes disappeared at his first stop, when a sticking left-rear wheel cost him six seconds and dropped him to 10th.
Prior to pitting, he had been just 0.4s behind Mortara. His second stop was bad too, pushing him outside the top 10, but some excellent driving during the wettest part of the race, combined with the misfortune and mistakes of others, brought him back to fourth by the flag. "I can live with 3rd after such an up-and-down race," he said afterwards. No wonder — he’d moved back into second in the championship, just 16 points behind Paffett. "But a win was definitely possible when you look at the pace in the dry — and the wet, actually."

Paffett was himself none too impressed with Green’s pass on him at Tarzan on lap five, especially as there was contact midway through the move. "I was being cautious," he said. "I was under the impression that it was early in the race and we shouldn’t be taking too many risks. So it surprised me when my own team-mate drove on the inside of me at Turn 4. I was a bit in awe of him.

If Paffett had been frustrated with Green, he was positively fuming about an incident with BMW’s Martin Tomczyk at Tarzan when the rain was at its heaviest on lap 30.

Having made a great start from 11th, Tomczyk had passed Adrien Tambay for fifth between the stops and was gaining on Paffett, who had lost third to Mattias Ekstrom’s Abt Audi after staying out too long on his second set of tyres. Sticking to the inside of the track, Paffett braked hard, his Coupé slowing left and creating a gap on the inside for Tomczyk’s RMG BMW, He used all of it and some, making contact with the black Mercedes and spinning it around. Seventh was as high as Paffett could recover, while Tomczyk retired and was also given a grid penalty for the next round at Oschersleben.

"It’s a very bad mistake from him," Paffett added. "When we saw the onboards in the stewards’ office, I realised he was still in fifth gear when he hit me. He had no chance of making the corner and, if I wasn’t there to be his brake, he’d have just missed the turn altogether. That’s an easy podium gone, just like at the Norisring. We had the pace to win too if it had stayed dry."

Another day perhaps.

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**Scheider: the fifth man who wasn’t...**

There was a fifth man who could have won at Zandvoort: Timo Scheider, who took a DTM pole for the first time in 21 months. Unfortunately for the two-time champion, that was as good as it got. Faced with an extremely aggressive pre-loading system on his Audi’s clutch (although less aggressive than the one he’d used at the Nurburgring), he stalled as the lights went out. "Frustrating," was how he summed up his day. It got worse when he rammed David Coulthard’s Mucke Mercedes as the field bunched up awaiting the departure of the safety car. In came for a new bonnet but, with the mounting points damaged, the replacement lasted just a few more laps before flying into his windscreen and rendering him effectively blind.

Scheider’s stall bunched the pack and potentially laid the foundations for Miguel Molina and Robert Wickens bouncing off each other in the Tarzan braking zone. Molina’s Audi slid off into the wall at the entrance to the corner, while Wickens’ Merc was out two turns later, spun around by Christian Vietoris and then whacked by the unsighted Rahel Frey. All three retired. While victory looked to be heading Mike Rockenfeller’s way until the rain came, Mattias Ekstrom lost third to a fine Gary Paffett pass at Tarzan and then it won back at the second uphill.

After Paffett’s incident with Martin Tomczyk, the path was cleared for Jamie Green, Adrien Tambay and Bruno Spengler — up from 8th after a gamble in qualifying backfiring — to complete the top six.

Paffett passed Ralf Schumacher, Dirk Werner and Augusto Farfus to claim seventh. Filipe Albuquerque, inside the top five until the rain came, could have been up there too, but two trips into the Tarzan gravel — one in avoidance of Paffett — damaged his splitter and that was that.

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**RESULTS**

DTM, round 7 of 10, Zandvoort (NL), August 26

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**Championship Table**

1. Mattias Ekstrom (D) 130
2. Green (B) 101
3. Spengler (B) 91
4. Mortara (B) 74
5. Tomczyk (D) 69
6. Rockenfeller (D) 67
7. Ekstrom (D) 62
8. Vietoris (F) 59
9. Furtas (D) 19
10. Scheider (D) 18

Winners average 96.563mph.
Fastest lap: Paffett, 1m03.054s, 102.425mph.
Hamlin calls it right as Chase spot beckons

DENNY HAMLIN SCORED HIS third NASCAR Sprint Cup win of the season — and his first ever at Bristol — to pretty much guarantee his place in the Chase for the Championship.

In a race proliferated by caution periods, a myriad of fuel and tyre strategies were deployed and meant the result was always in doubt.

But Hamlin’s Joe Gibbs Racing team called it right, and he was at the front when it mattered, in the midst of a three-way dice with Carl Edwards and Brian Vickers. Hamlin found a way by the Rough & Ready Ford of Edwards, and when he finally worked his Toyota Camry into the lead he established an advantage he turned into his 20th Cup win.

It was a great turnaround for Hamlin, who struggled early on. In fact, his fortunes only really changed after a collision in the pits with Regan Smith.

“You struggle to say what it means because I grew up watching this race and all the great finishes,” Hamlin said. “You want to win this one. They’ve got one of the best trophies and it’s one of my prized possessions. It’s obviously my biggest win.”

Edwards’ fuel gamble failed to pay off and his Fusion ran dry with four laps remaining, dropping him to 22nd. Vickers got his Michael Waltrip Racing Toyota to the flag in fourth, dropping places to Hendrick Chevrolet men Jimmie Johnson and Jeff Gordon towards the end.

With qualifying rained off, Casey Mears was the beneficiary of the new rule that sets the grid based on Friday practice times. It was the Germain Racing driver’s fourth Cup pole and his first since he drove for Hendrick back in 2007. He held onto the lead from the start, and the first restart, but was finally passed by Joey Logano. Mears continued to battle hard, but hit the wall late on, which dropped him to 21st at the flag.

In a race packed with incident, the highest-profile involved reigning champion Tony Stewart and 2003 title winner Matt Kenseth, who tangled as they disputed the lead. With neither man willing to concede the place they performed a synchronised spin. But ‘Smoke’s’ Chevy hit the inside wall hardest, effectively removing him from the running.

Stewart was livid, and showed his displeasure by hurling his crash helmet with both hands into the front of Kenseth’s Ford as he came into the pits for repairs.

“I checked up twice to not run over him and I learned my lesson there. I’m going to run over him every chance I’ve got from now until the end of the year, every chance I’ve got,” Stewart fumed.

Greg Biffle continues to lead the points after taking 10th in his Rough & Ready Ford, with two races before the standings are reset.

CONNELL SANDERS JR

LOGANO TAKES SIXTH NATIONAL SERIES VICTORY

Joey Logano (18) took his sixth win of the year at Bristol, the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota driver defeating Ricky Stenhouse Jr’s Rough & Ready Ford and Kyle Busch’s Toyota.

RESULTS
1 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry), 500 laps in 3hr59m27s; 2 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet Impala), +1.03s; 3 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 4 Brian Vickers (Toyota); 5 Marcos Ambrose (Ford Fusion); 6 Kyle Busch (Toyota); 7 Clint Bowyer (Toyota); 8 Joey Logano (Toyota); 9 Kasey Kahne (Chevy), 10 Paul Menard (Chevy).

Points 1 Greg Biffle, 819; 2 Johnson, 838; 3 Dario Franchitti Jr, 834; 4 Matt Kenseth, 823; 5 Martin Truex Jr, 799; 6 Bowyer, 794; 7 Brad Keselowski, 790; 8 Hamlin, 775; 9 Kevin Harvick, 767; 10 Tony Stewart, 746.

2 Sebastian Vettel 24,955
3 Fernando Alonso 20,070
4 Mark Webber 19,252
5 Lewis Hamilton 19,097
6 Jenson Button 18,548

Ranking the world’s best drivers

WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Felix Rosenqvist moves back onto the fringes of the top 20 after taking his first F3 win of 2012 at Zandvoort, the Swede securing an 18-spot rise to 202nd. Fellow victor Will Buller (160) rises five spots, but Daniel Juncadella drops a place to 115th.

To see the full list, visit castroldriverrankings.com
Dani buoyed by slicks-in-wet Zandvoort master performance

DANIEL JUNCADILLA WON A thrilling finale last Sunday to firmly re-establish his grasp on the Formula 3 Euro Series and the FIA European F3 Championship.

The Spaniard — racing with a suspended one-place grid penalty hanging over his head following his Nurbugring startline antics — gambled on starting on slick tyres on a wet track and was rewarded as the circuit dried out quickly and left him in the clear.

Juncadella’s team-mates at Prema Powerteam, Sven Muller and Raffaele Marciello, headed the field as the start was taken behind the safety car.

both were eliminated as racing got underway. Muller mishandled his restart, stood hard on the brakes to avoid a penalty for overtaking the safety car before it pitted, and Marciello smashed into him.

Muller was judged to have caused the crash, and was given a grid penalty for the next round at Valencia.

With the safety car back out, Felix Rosenqvist — who had dominated the opening race for Mucke Motorsport — and several others pitted to change to slicks. This handed Mercedes-powered Juncadella the lead from Will Buller’s Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen, and that was how they finished. Buller had won the reversed-grid race from Juncadella and Pascal Wehrlein, and the German snatched another rostrum spot from Mucke teammate Rosenqvist on the final lap of race three.

There was just time for another big crash on Sunday. The wet-tyred Sandro Zeller held up Carlos Sainz Jr, Tom Blomqvist, Michael Lewis and Lucas Wolf, leading to the quietest attempting to go five-wide down the main straight. The result was a collision between Blomqvist and Lewis that put both men into the wall.

Juncadella beat Buller in finale.

RESULTS

Race 1
Felix Rosenqvist (Dallara-Mercedes F312), 26 laps in 60m:02.326s; 2 Sven Muller (DM), +2.053s; 3 Michael Lewis (UM), +2.581s; 4 Raffaele Marciello (DM); 5 Tom Blomqvist (D-Volkswagen); 6 Daniel Juncadella (DM); 7 Christian Mansell (DM); 8 Joel Eriksson (D-Mercedes); 9 Marcus Armstrong (D-Mercedes); 10 Pierre Louis Chovet (D-Mercedes).

Race 2
Will Buller (DV), 5 laps in 21m:06.038s; 2 Juncadella, +1.307s; 3 Pascal Wehrlein (DM); 4 Blomqvist; 5 Muller; 6 Rosenqvist. Race 3

Nykjaer’s home win

MICHEL NYKJÆR WOODED HIS home fans with a lights-to-flag victory in the first of two Scandinavian Touring Car races at Jyllands-Ringen in Denmark.

From pole, the two-time ETC Cup winner won as he pleased, and led home Chevrolet team-mate Rickard Rydell in a one-two for the Croze brigade.

Rydell had passed Johan Kristoffersson’s Volkswagen on the opening lap and left his title rival in third.

Kristoffersson won race two on the road, but had three seconds added to his race time for an ‘improper’ start. The penalty, which has been appealed by his team,
dropped him to third behind Patrik Olsson’s similar Scirocco and Nykjaer.

Fourth went to Rydell, who fell to last on the opening lap after a collision. His fightback concluded with a late pass on Jordi Gene (who started from pole after the top five qualifier’s had their best laps taken away for improving times under yellow flags) for the spot.

Tege Tornell

RESULTS

Race 1
Michel Nykjaer (Chevrolet Croze), 36 laps in 23m:57.794s; 2 Rickard Rydell (Chevy), +1.041s; 3 Johan Kristoffersson (Volkswagen Scirocco); 4 Patrik Olsson (VW); 5 Johan Sturesson (VW); 6 Jordi Gene (VW). Race 2
1 P Olsson, 36 laps in 23m:57.794s; 2 Nykjaer, +2.516s; 3 Kristoffersson; 4 Rydell; 5 Gene; 6 Niclas Olsson (SEAT Leon TFSi).

Points

1 Kristoffersson, 202; 2 Rydell, 194; 3 Nykjaer, 182; 4 Thomas Engström, 166; 5 P Olsson, 128; 6 Sturesson, 111.

Allam is driving-standards chief

ALLAM KHODAIR TOOK ONLY two laps to go from third to first on the narrow, slippery streets of Salvador, and he then rolled off the remaining 29 to make it back-to-back wins in Brazil.

Khodair’s Volvo Motorsport Chevrolet trailed surprise first-time pole sitter Duda Pampolina and reigning champion Caco Bueno off the line, but passed Bueno at Turn 3 on the opening lap to grab second.

He then used the first of his eight 100hp bursts of ‘push-to-pass’ to slipstream past Pampolina’s ProGP Chevy on the main straight next time round.

Khodair was unchallenged after that and completed his win behind the safety car following a late crash between backmarkers. Behind Pampolina, ex-Formula 1 driver

Brazillian V8 Stock Cars

Luciano Burti completed the podium in his Italpava Peugeot. Both Burti and Ricardo Maurício passed Bueno’s Red Bull Chevy late on as the multiple title winner developed bags of oversteer in the second half of the race.

Attila Abreu — a former single-seater rival of Sebastian Vettel — finished sixth.

Mauricio now trails Bueno by only five points in the battle for the title with five races to go.

Lito Cavalcanti

RESULTS

1 Allam Khodair (Chevrolet Sonic), 31 laps in 42m:13.910s; 2 Duda Pampolina (Chevy), +4.975s; 3 Luciano Burti (Peugeot 407); 4 Ricardo Maurício (Chevy); 5 Caca Bueno (Chevy); 6 Attila Abreu (Chevy). Points

1 Bueno, 112; 2 Maurício, 110; 3 Daniel Serra, 95; 4 Thiago Camilo, 86; 5 Max Wilson, 79; 6 Abreu, 75.

Two in a row for Khodair
IN BRIEF

Peters celebrates

NASCAR TRUCKS
Series leader Timothy Peters led every lap at Bristol as he headed home Parker Kligerman for a Red Horse Toyota one-two. Ross Chastain came home third.

JAPANESE FORMULA 3
Tetsuki Naito took his maiden F3 win at Okayama. The Honda-backed HDFC Dallara-Mugen driver took the second race, with the first going to runaway points leader Ryo Hirakawa in his RSS Dallara-Toyota. Hong Kong-based driver Richard Bradley took third, while Matt Howard had a best of fourth in the National Class.

VLN
Racer Motorsport took its maiden VLN win on the Nordschleife, with Frank Brito, Christian Hohenadl, and Thomas Mutzch winning in their Audi R8 LMS. Marc Basseng/Frank Stippler were second in a Porsche 911 RSR, from the Manthey Porsche of Patrick Pilet/Timo Bernhard/Jochen Krumbach.

GERMAN CARRERA CUP
Points leader Rene Rast inherited a victory in race two at Zandvoort when on-the-roader winner Norbert Siedler and Nicki Thiel were penalised for ignoring yellow flags. Rast’s Toyota team-mate Sean Edwards won race one, declared short of half-distance.

GERMAN FORMULA 3
Australian Mitchell Gilbert won at Lausitz, but the Performance Racing man could not deny Lucas Auer (Van Amersfoort Racing) in race three. Artem Markelov took the reversed-grid race. Points leader Jimmy Eriksson took two podiums for Motopark/Lotus.

Gilbert won the opener

V8 SUPERCARS, EASTERN CREEK (AUS), AUGUST 25-26, RD 9/15

JAMIE WHINCUP CONTINUES to lead the V8 Supercar Championship, but only by the narrowest of margins after a dramatic weekend for the reigning champion at Eastern Creek.

A tyre failure on Saturday dropped Triple 8 Holden star Whincup behind Ford rival Winterbottom in the table, but his victory on Sunday moves him back in front — by a single point. Whincup looked to be on his way to fourth on Saturday until a tire started to delaminate. His team decided to leave him on the track rather than pit him and he fell to 23rd place at the flag — in a race that all 28 cars finished.

Whincup’s team-mate Craig Lowndes won race one from Ford Performance Racing duo Winterbottom and Will Davison, with Holden Racing Team’s Garth Tander next up. Whincup’s win means that, from the 39 races to date in 2012, only Triple 8 and FPR drivers have won.

The big news over the course of the weekend was the return to some kind of form by the Walkinshaw Racing-affiliated teams, HRT man Tander leading the way on Saturday with his fourth place.

Fifth and fourth spots for 2009 V8 champion Russell Ingall in a satellite Walkinshaw Holden and a top-six result for James Courtney are signs that, perhaps, the team’s nightmare 2012 may be on the change just as the blue-riband endurance races beckon.

Phil Branagan

RESULTS
Race 1: Craig Lowndes (Holden Commodore VE II). 34 laps in 56m17.321s; 2 Mark Winterbottom (Ford Falcon FG); +1.46s; 3 Will Davison (Ford); 4 Garth Tander (Holden); 5 Russell Ingall (Holden); 6 James Courtney (Holden).

Race 2: Whincup leads from Lowndes

1 Jamie Whincup (Holdens). 36 laps in 1h27m14.937s; 2 Lowndes, +0.44s; 3 Winterbottom, +1.6s; 4 Ingall; 5 Davison; 6 Fabian Coulthard (Holden).

Points Whincup, 2238; Winterbottom, 2237; 3 Davison, 2216; 4 Lowndes, 2064; 5 Shane van Gisbergen, 1634; 6 Tander, 1527.

ADAC GT MASTERS, LAUSITZ (DE), AUGUST 25-26, RD 6/8

Tandy helps Engelhart to points lead with double

NICK TANDY AND CHRISTIAN Engelhart had a perfect weekend at Lausitz as the Schütz Motorsport Porsche duo scored a double win at the East German ‘royal’.

Their first victory came in spite of a healthy advantage twice being wiped out by the scrapping of the safety car; first for Christopher Haase’s Manerow Audi hitting the span Corvette of Andreas Wirth; and then for Porsche backmarker Christoph Schumacher hitting the wall hard. But Tandy resisted pressure from Max Giot’s Mercedes during the latter stages to give co-driver Engelhart the series lead (Tandy missed the Nurburgring round due to his International GT Open commitments).

Their Sunday win was more fortunate. The rival FACH Porsche squad looked set for victory thanks to a sterling opening stint from Martin Ragginger. But his co-driver Swen Dolenc slid into the gravel on the penultimate lap thanks to persistent braking problems, and Engelhart was able to nip through to take the chequered flag.

“Our strategy was to keep Dolenc under pressure to force him into an error. And it worked,” said Tandy.

“We’ve had no mistakes, great pitstops and we’ve won two races.”

Schubert BMW Z4 duo Claudia Hurtgen and Dominik Schwager took the runner-up spot in race two, while Callaway Corvette pair Diego Alessi and Daniel Kellett followed them home. Robert Renauer and Nicolas Armindo completed the podium in race one behind Tandy/Engelhart and Gots/Sebastian Asch.

Rene de Boer

RESULTS
Race 1 Nick Tandy/Christian Engelhart (Porsche 911 GT3-R). 28 laps in 1h10m10.329s; 2 Sebastian Asch/Max Giot (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), +0.42s; 3 Robert Renauer/Nicolas Armindo (Porsche), 4 Mario Farnbacher/Niclas Kentenich (Porsche), 5 Dominik Baumann/Hari Proczyk (Mercedes), 6 Andreas Simonsen/Mike Rockenfeller (Mercedes).

Race 2
1 Tandy/Engelhart, 34 laps in 1h10m17.385s; 2 Claudia Hurtgen/Dominik Schwager (BMW Z4 GT3), +0.72s; 3 Diego Alessi/Daniel Kellett (Chevrolet Corvette C60), 4 Asch/Giot, 5 Simonsen/Rockenfeller, 6 Christopher Mies/Edward Sandström (Audi R8 LMS).

Points
1 Engelhart, 137; 2 Asch/Giot, 112; 3 Tandy, 110; 4 Alessi/Kellett, 108; 5 Ilaro/Lundqvist/Maxime Martin, 90; 6 Renauer, 88.
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FIA plots ‘World Rallycross’
Renowned promoter IMG brought in to revamp European series

THE FIA IS PLANNING TO turn its European Rallycross Championship into a world category after signing a deal with a new promoter.

The ERC will drop its ‘European’ tag from next season as international sports promoter IMG is brought in to run the championship.

IMG, which represents three-time Formula 1 world champion Jackie Stewart, Caterham F1 driver Hekki Kovalainen and US racing starlet Danica Patrick, has already been responsible for increasing the international profile of Speedway GP motorcycle racing.

The championship, which will be known as the FIA Rallycross Championship from 2013, is expected to retain the calendar and venues of the existing ERC initially but will incorporate a new ‘speedway-style’ race format.

This will mean a simpler structure replacing the current system of best lap times from qualifying heats being used to determine grids for finals.

Instead, finishing positions from the heats, in which all drivers will race each other during a round-robin format, will determine grids for semi-finals. The best drivers from the semi-finals will go through to the finals.

There is also a desire to ‘professionalise’ the championship, turning existing ERC ace such as Timur Turumbeynov, Liam Doran and Tanner Foust into household names by contracting them to race in the championship.

Each event is expected to contain 15 drivers in the top-level Supercar category, and IMG will invite ‘wildcard’ celebrity drivers to compete against its regular competitors.

FIA Rallycross is expected to morph into the discipline’s first ever world championship over the next two seasons, and there is hope that this will encourage more manufacturers to compete.

Kenneth Hansen, the most successful driver in rallycross history with 14 ERC titles, said: “Years ago I sat with Tony Richardson[speedway rider] and we both wondered why our sports were not big. Then speedway got a promoter, it became huge, Tony won world championships and is a big star, and I watched that happen while rallycross stood still.

“It’s sometimes difficult to understand why things should change, but this is the best thing that has ever happened for rallycross. It’s a great chance for everyone – drivers, teams, events and fans – that we must take.”

The FIA/IMG initiative is entirely separate from the fledgling Global Rallycross initiative currently running in the US, but it is understood that the two championships are in discussions to avoid date clashes in their respective 2013 calendars.
Hodgetts duo to Silverstone 24
Father-and-son team up to race Team Toyota GB entry in Britcar endurance race

DOUBLE BRITISH Touring Car champion Chris Hodgetts will team up with son Stefan to race for Team Toyota GB in this year’s Britcar 24 Hours at Silverstone on September 22-23.
Hodgetts Sr, 62, who won the 1986 and ’87 BTCC titles for Toyota GB, and his 30-year-old Clio Cup star son will share a Toyota GT86 with two other yet-to-be-confirmed drivers.
Hodgetts Sr, who hasn’t competed for 15 years and last raced a Toyota in 1988, said: “It’s a fantastic opportunity – not just to return to racing but also to be reunited with Team Toyota GB and to have the chance to share a car with my son for the first time. I can’t wait.”
Hodgetts Sr is a veteran of six Le Mans 24 Hours and has also contested the blue-ribbon enduros at Daytona and Spa. Son Stefan’s only twice-30-round-the-clock race to date is the Fun Cup 24 Hours at the Belgian Grand Prix venue. Hodgetts Sr recently visited GPRM, where the GT86 is taking shape under the guidance of Roger King and Gary Blackburn.
“There was the new car and alongside it was a replica of my old AE86 Corolla in its old livery,” asked Hodgetts Sr. “I must admit I shed a tear. It’s so wonderful to be reunited. “I’ve known Roger and Gary for many years and, given their skills, the GT86 will be reliable, competitive and great to drive.”

Britcar return for Short with GT86
FORMER BRITCAR 24 HOURS winner Martin Short will return to the Silverstone enduro next month with a Toyota GT86 on which he started work just two weeks ago.
Short, who won the inaugural event in 2005, purchased a roadgoing GT86 earlier this month and his Rollecentre Racing team will have just over a month to prepare it for the 24-hour race on September 22-23.
His team-mates for the event will include historic Mini racers Harvey and Clive Death.
Short, who last year raced a Ginetta G55 in the Britcar 24 Hours, said: “I bought the car on a bit of a whim. I’m looking forward to doing a 24-hour race for fun and with zero stress. “On the serious side, it will be good for us as a team to get involved with a car that is going to have a big future in motorsport, right at the start of its life.”

Freke wins on Ginetta comeback
FORMER GINETTA G50 AND British Formula Ford champion Nathan Freke won on his return to the GT Supercup at Knockhill last weekend.
Century Motorsport boss finished fourth in the BTCC support series last year, but has been without a regular drive in 2012. He replaced team regular Josh Wakefield and qualified second before scoring a fourth, a third and a win. The 28-year-old also took the lap record. “Josh informed us he wasn’t going to be racing at Knockhill,” said Freke, who confirmed the outing was a one-off. “Team morale was a bit low so I decided to go out and show we are where we need to be with set-up. “I was a bit rusty to start with, but I was confident the car was good and to qualify second, and get a win and a lap record, was exactly what the team needed.”

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Team LNT back together again for G55 Britcar 24 Hour attack

THE DRIVING SQUAD THAT WON

the GT2 class at Le Mans in 2006 is targeting victory in next month’s Silverstone 24 Hours.

Ginetta supremo Lawrence Tomlinson, LMP racer Tom Kimber-Smith and United Autosports boss Richard Dean took victory at the Circuit de la Sarthe in an LNT Panoz and are now planning to team up in a G55.

Michael Simpson, who has shared the G55 with Tomlinson to two British Endurance Championship race wins this season, will complete the line-up.

Tomlinson and Kimber-Smith tested the G55, fitted with various enduro upgrades, at Silverstone this week.

“The old LNT team will be together again,” said Tomlinson, who believes the squad can take overall victory.

“We’re not going there to finish second. We’ve beaten the Mosler this season. We tend to be lighter and with that comes more agility. That and the aerodynamic package give us an advantage and we’re very good on tyres.”

Dean shared a G55 with Tomlinson at the Silverstone event in 2008, but was involved in a serious startline crash that forced the car out.

“It wasn’t the best 24-hour race for me and I’ve done a few,” said Dean.

“It’s a while since I’ve not been running a car and can just jump in and drive. It’ll make a change.”

Ginetta champion wrecks car in startline accident

These are the remains of Ginetta G40 Challenge champion and G50 Cup points leader Mark Daviess car at Knockhill last Sunday, after a shunt in the GT Supercup triggered when Tom Ingram’s G25 stalled.

Marcus Pye

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing

Back when touring cars came in all shapes and sizes, from gargantuan seven-litre Ford Galaxies to diminutive Fiat Abarths, and drifted around race tracks on hard-tread tyres, the genre - not far removed from showroom versions - created terrific entertainment.

Today’s tin-top racers offer a different spectacle. Overly competent, with computer-optimised suspension and slick or wet-pattern rubber, they lack the variety that intrigued onlookers in the 1960s. Then, if you arrived in an Austin A40, swanky Jaguar Mk2 or even in a ‘Yank Tank’, you cheered your ‘team’ on.

Happily, that kind of sport (which it was, first and foremost) can still be sampled with the Historic Sports Car Club, which picked up amateur racing’s baton in 1966 and is now steered by period organiser and racer Graeme White.

At Oulton Park’s Gold Cup showpiece we had a cracking HSRC counter, which not only drew a wonderful 34-car entry, but was staged in that great leveller – rain.

And racegoers have always loved witnessing good little ‘uns taking on the big guns.

Just as half a century ago, when the Cooper Car Company, Team Lotus, Alan Mann Racing and John Willment’s organisation were there to be shied at by highly skilled garageites and weekend warriors, some cars are professionally run. But, again true to period, they are not unbeatable.

Conditions at Oulton were pretty gristy. Exactly what the Mini Cooper S and Hillman Imp brigades had ordered. When ’70s Formula Fordster David Heale rocketed his Imp from ninth on the grid to second before the first corner, and former champ Simon Benoy started battling the Mustangs of Warren Briggs and Richard Dutton, an upset looked on the cards. But vastly experienced Ginetta and GT racer Mike Gardiner (a relative newcomer to historics) had their measure in his pretty special Falcon.

Nonetheless, as the track dried a little to become greasy, defending double champion Roger Godfrey (Cooper S) usurped Heale and started to slash the VBs’ advantage. Veteran 10Cs racers Roger Phillips and Liverpool’s Mike ‘MPh’ Kearton were well in the mix too with their Minis, as was John Pugsley with his Ford Anglia 1200.

Driving standards were superb (following deserved recent criticism at Snetterton and Croft), and were warmly applauded by spectators and the strong marshalling force. This augurs well for the season closer on the Brands Indy and Silverstone National courses.

“Racegoers have always loved witnessing good little ‘uns taking on the big guns”
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GT Cup to fight back in 2013
Beleaguered series cans Knockhill round but promises change for next year

The GT Cup will undergo changes next year in an attempt to boost grids after cancelling its forthcoming Knockhill round.

Marc Haynes launched the GT Cup in 2007 and gained strong support, but entries have been low this season.

He has cancelled the penultimate event and wants to make several changes for 2013. These include cutting the calendar from eight to six rounds, modifying its dropped scores rules, holding two- and four-race meetings instead of 2012's three-round events, and allowing 'pro' drivers at selected rounds.

"It's not in anyone's interests to have small grids and I was concerned we wouldn't have enough at Knockhill," said Haynes. "It has been weak all year for a variety of reasons. Next year we will focus on GP circuits, which is what GTs want to run on.

"I think having three races a meeting made it difficult for two drivers to share and it's good for developing drivers to have their [pro] co-drivers there."

Haynes has also written to the MSA asking it to reverse its insistence on requiring GT Cup drivers to hold a National A licence.

GT Academy
Reip victorious in GT Academy
Belgian Wolfgang Reip sealed victory in the fourth European PlayStation Nissan GT Academy after winning a five-lap race in support of the FIA World Endurance Championship event at Silverstone last weekend.

Reip, 25, led the field of six identical Nissan 370Zs for all but one corner of the event. His title was confirmed after deliberations of the judges in the wake of the race.

The Belgian, who follows in the footsteps of former Academy winners Lucas Ordonez, Jordann Trassan and Jann Mardenborough, said: "I've wanted to be a racing driver since I was a child and the GT Academy has given me the chance to achieve my goal."

Reip will now undertake 10 races at the wheel of a 370Z to obtain his international licence prior to the Dubai 24 Hours in January. The GT Academy will enter two GT4-spec Nissans at Dubai for Reip and the winner of three national competitions in Germany, Russia and the US.

VETERAN RACER JOHN BURTON
escaped injury when his Chevrolet B26 was turned over at the first corner of last Sunday's Martini Trophy race at Oulton Park.

The 70-year-old, runner-up in the European 2-litre championships of 1972 and '73 and already a race winner this season - collided with David Gathercole's Lola T212C at Old Hall, triggering a multi-car shunt.

Burton's car was flicked sideways into the path of Italian Michele Liguori's Lola T296, the long nose of which shovelled it over. In the melee that ensued, James Dodd's Chevron B31 hit the back of Gathercole's machine, taking them both off on the outside, while Jonathan Loader's B19 clipped the rear of Liguori's car and went the other way.

There were several avoidances behind, notably among the Sports 2000 invitees.

Burton was released from hospital after a check-up and drove home to Worcestershire that evening.

A lot of bodywork patching and suspension realignment overnight meant all but his car were back in action on Monday.

IN BRIEF
Darrian T90 win

A DECENT CROWD AT THE BRANDS
Hitchin Kitchen Racing win on Monday found two drivers in different races win by one second from the two cars running Darrian T90s. Third in class, just under two minutes back, was the Me2 Ford Escort RS of Paul King and Alicia Miles.

THE GINETTA G60 SAFETY CAR HAD to be retracted before the start of the first Scottish Classic Sports Saloon race at Knockhill after it came to a halt while leading the cars to the grid. Driver Scott Stringfellow performed his safety car duties in a Porsche for the rest of the weekend.


MORE THAN 60 GRAND PRIX CARS spanning the 1960s to the 80s will race at Zandvoort this weekend as the circuit's new Historic GP event celebrates six decades of competition in the dunes. Stars should include Gary Pearson's BRM Type 25 (to Bonnier's '59 Dutch GP victory) and the Lotus 25 of Andy Middlehurst, which won in 63 with Jim Clark up. More than 20 Historic F2 cars are also expected.

THE RED DRAGON TRACK AND Race Club, organiser of the Nippon Challenge and MR12 Racing Series, will hold a one-hour event at Snetterton on October 27. It will include pitstops and be open to one- or two-driver entries in any sports or saloon car running on MSA Blue Book-listed treaded tyres.

RALLYCROSS SHELLEY WAKELING emerged unscathed from her Honda Civic after a spectacular roll during the British Championship round at Lydden last weekend. It was caused by a roll off from Gary Dixon's Vauxhall Astra.
**Triple gold for Dodd**

THREE SENSATIONAL wins against the odds for James Dodd, in sportscars of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, headlined the HSCC’s annual Oulton Park Gold Cup retrospective.

Dodd’s streak started on Sunday with a brilliantly judged Guards Trophy triumph, having resisted everything Nick Fleming and Martin O’Connell could throw at him in Chevron B8s, to score again in the family Ginetta G16.

The V8 threat was over inside 10 laps, Canadian Jay Estener’s Chinook Mk2 breaking its gearbox at the start and Chris Goodwin’s ex-Chris Amon McLaren succumbing to engine failure while leading.

Dodd’s decision to go solo at the pitstop, rather than let father Graeme face the heat, downed the duelling Chevrons even before a gear-linkage issue halted O’Connell. Michael Schryver’s B6, its nose bandaged after a practice incident, was third.

Following the abandonment of Sunday’s Martini Trophy race after a multi-car pile-up at Old Hall – in which veteran John Burton’s Chevron B26 flipped – Dodd (B31) defied a gearbox problem to defeat poleman Fleming (B23/36) in Monday’s drying encounter.

“I was holding third in and looking for wet patches to keep my tyres alive,” said Dodd, who had to pass Fleming several times. Fleming spun at Druids, but still finished ahead of Michele Liguori’s Lola T296. Chris Snowden bagged Sports 2000 honours from Peter Needham after a fine battle.

Dodd’s triple whammy came in the Stirling Moss Trophy race, in which his dad started their Cooper Monaco, then took over leader Jason Minshaw’s Maserati Birdcage. New to the Maserati that morning, Dodd Sr was passed by his lad three laps from home.

“I wasn’t going to give it to James; he had to work for it,” explained Graeme, straddling the podium’s top steps.

“What a fantastic weekend. To win all three races is unbelievable,” said James, who thoroughly deserved his peers’ plaudits, having driven faultlessly under intense pressure.

Several other races were outstanding too. Jon Milicic and Dave Methley were barely separable in another Formula Junior barnstormer, Milicic’s delicate fingertip control prevailing over Methley’s frenetic reflex-taxing style. Earlier, Stuart Roach danced his Alexis to front-engined victory once poleman Simon Goodliff parked his Lola with gearbox gremlins.

Jaguar E-type Challenge debutant Matt Nicol-Jones (in Michael Wilkinson’s car) led Alex Buncombe for two spectacularly hairy laps on Sunday, with Jason and Jon Minshaw in tow. Buncombe dived ahead into Old Hall on lap two, only to pit without third and fourth gears, leaving the ex-Ginetta champ in front until his diff broke.

The Minshaw brothers now led and made their mandatory stops a lap apart. Jason going ahead as Jon returned to the track. GT racer Jon, short of anchors, had a gravelly spin at Island Bend before sliding down the escape road at Halslops. Jason thus throttled Martin Melling’s low-drag coupe back to win from Jon, while Dave Coyne coasted Chris Scragg’s car in third after its gear lever came adrift.

Starting from the back, Buncombe won Monday’s race as he pleased from a brakeless Jon Minshaw after Nicoll-Jones split his car’s diff oil cooler in an off at Druids.

Knowing that Melling would be taking over the Minshaw E-type, soloist Mike Whitaker shadowed Jason Minshaw in the early part of the Guards GT split. After the stops, Melling was forced to pit when a rear-wheel vibration rattled his contact lenses.

Whitaker’s TVR went unchallenged thereafter, the yowl of its Ford V8 engine up Clay Hill, and wheelspin over the brow in top, wowing onlookers.
Cars poleman Michael Scott (Brahman BT28), then romped away to clinch the title as Scott — with an oil leak in his footwell and gearknob in his lap — settled for second.

Reigning HRS champion Paul Toombs caught fellow Lotus Ean pilot Peter Shaw napping at the start and repelled his breathless lates. Vicky Brooks (Ean) bested Andy Shepherd (Lotus 7) for third after much juggling.

Julian Barrer (TVR 3000M) bagged 708 Road Sports victory after Johan Denkmayer’s Alfa Romeo GTV, straddled at Deer Leap, brought out red flags. They spared Barrer from father Charles, whose Datsun 240Z hared in again after the restart.

Monday was wet for the FR1600s. Staying on was a feat and Rob Wainwright weathered a big moment at Cascades and traversed the Hills laps escape road in beating polesitter David Wild. Printers leader Callum Grant had a topsy-turvy race, but — in a final lap in which four of the top six fell, and he spun at Druids — took third.

Despite conditions favouring the tidiers, Mark Crewther won an exceptional Touring Car race in his Ford Falcon. Richard Evans took a Derek Bell Trophy double in his F2 March, while Jamie Brashow retained his Classic F3 title in the concurrent opener.

Defending F2000 top dog Russell Love was the ‘raining’ champion in a soggy event finale, but Nelson Rowe clinched the 2012 crown with a close second as rivals Andy Park and Andy Huxtable failed to finish.

Mick Aye

Pochciol’s pride in maiden victory

FROM THE DESPAIR of his Jaguar XJ12C being savaged by Chris Ward’s spinning TVR XJS on lap one of qualifying, to the high of a maiden victory in challenging wet conditions, Paul Pochciol’s Monday was one of contrasts.

Fortunately, his spare Esso Ford Capri V6 was in the truck and Simon Hadfield got it from the back to lead within four laps. “New to me and brilliant fun,” said Hadfield who, having relayed Paul, took over on Paul Pochciol’s UFO Jeans tribute Capri and chased Senior home.

JD Classics winners raced in challenging conditions

Chris Scrugg span his Broadspeed XJ12C on the first lap, but charged back to third, powering past the Escort RS500 of Robert and Sean Brown (Mk3) and Mark Wright/Dave Coyne (Klaus Ludwig clone Mk2) as the circuit improved.

RESULTS (17 LAPS)
1 Simon Hadfield/Paul Pochciol (Ford Capri Mk3) 1.30:38.1 +6.369s; 2 Chris Scrugg (Jaguar XJ12C); 3 Robert & Sean Brown (Ford Escort RS1600), 5 Mark Wright/Dave Coyne (Escort RS1600); 6 Denis & Jeremy Welch (Capri Mk3). FL Hadfield (Mk3) 2m08.896s (25.18mph).

LEGENDS JD CLASSICS CHALLENGE DUTTON PARK, AUGUST 27-29

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Belgians on top as RB squad scores hat-trick

THE 22ND RUNNING OF the 2CV 24 hours attracted a bumper grid of 39 cars to Snetterton’s 2.00 layout, with the UK Championship teams bolstered by five modified European 2CVs and four Mini Grands.

Not even a torrential downpour in the early hours of Sunday morning, which flooded the track and halted the race for almost two hours, could deflect the dominant Belgian BNL/L team from claiming outright victory, 13 laps clear of the Minis of ‘Team Ted’ and ‘The Last Ever Works Team’.

But the main focus throughout was on the battle for UK series honours, where the RB Racing Team was bidding for an unprecedented third consecutive win.

Their defence didn’t get off to a great start when gear linkage and carburettor problems dropped them to 17th after three hours. But after a fast and consistent run, they retook the lead of the UK 2CV contingent from TPS Tugzi as dusk faded to darkness.

Thereafter, the two teams traded lap times and the lead against the ebb and flow of pitstops as the clock wound down.

Going into the final hour, Alec Graham was at the wheel for RB, almost a minute clear of Tugzi’s Sandro Proietti.

But with the ever-committed Proietti on a charge, and no shortage of fuel in his tank, the gap dwindled. In the final 10 laps, the inspired Proietti carved 39 seconds from his rival but it was not enough as Graham secured the hat-trick while his jubilant team-mates cheered him past the flag.

Oliver Timson

Revitalised Max5 series delivers great action

THE FIRST OF TWO cracking races for the Max5 series provided a four-way scrap for the lead, with poleman Paul Roddison heading series newcomer Justin Newman and MX5 stalwart Jonathan Halliwell.

Chilcott grabbed second from Newman on lap two, before a mistake through the infield shuffled him down the order. Undeterred, the MX5 Cup regular surged back through the pack, picking off Chapman for second, before stealing round the outside of long-time leader Roddison at Agostini to claim victory.

Roddison briefly dropped behind Chapman before salvaging second with a last-lap move into Riches.

Any hopes Roddison had of re-asserting himself in race two and adding to his haul of eight wins this year disappeared on the formation lap, when a defective wheel rim pitched him into the barriers at Riches as he warmed up his tyres.

“It’s a good job it didn’t happen at full speed!” he reflected.

When the real action started, Halliwell, Chapman and Newman formed a three-car train at the front. But just as Halliwell started to look secure, Chapman and Newman demoted him in successive laps.

A charging Newman looked set to seal his double when he grabbed the lead at Nelson on the final lap, only for an ecstatic Chapman to dive inside him at Murray and win by a whisker.

Oliver Timson

CLUBMANS SHETTERTON 300, AUGUST 26-27

RESULTS (5 LAPS) 1 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20/21), 2 John Harrison (Mallock Mk21) +0.589s, 3 Spencer McCarthy (Mallock Mk20B), 4 Marcus Bicknell (Mallock EB Honda) +0.000s, 5 Nick Evans (Rage), 6 Michael Hayward (Mallock Mk22), 7 Steve Miles (Mallock Mk22), 8 Paul Marshall (Mallock Mk23), FL Harrison 1m58.140s (92.02mph). 

RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Harrison, 2 Charteris +5.808s, 3 Alex Champkin (Viper V8), 4 Jason Money (Mallock Mk26), 5 Barry Webb (Mallock Mk23B), 6 Peter Richings (Mallock Mk20P), CW Champkin, Ian Crumble (Mallock MK28), Rodney Driver (Mallock Mk20B), FL Bicknell 1m57.283s (91.71mph).

Harrison bounced back from his narrow race one defeat.
Moran closes in with Gurston Down double

SCOTT MORAN DUG deep to qualify as final runner for each run-off then put in even more effort for a pair of wins.

He may only have moved himself three places closer to leader Trevor Willis, but is actually two ahead if dropped scores are taken into account.

Willis followed Moran home in the first run-off but was a place further back in the final scoring shoot-out of the day, with Wallace Menzies taking second behind Moran.

Menzies is rapidly getting to grips with what is effectively a new car, having been built around a brand new monoshock tub within the last two weeks, and now looks to be a big threat to Willis and Moran.

M Moran said: “I had to make sure that I got it right this weekend, and cannot afford any mistakes in any round until the end. “Considering the rain on Saturday there was a lot of dust coming out of the track, there was not the usual grip.”

Father Roger drove well but could not get ahead of Willis to assist his son.

Tom New began his career at Gurston and took a valuable first in the third stanza, but faded to seventh later as John Bradburn, Will Hall and Menzies took personal best Gurston times.

Bradburn thus stays two points ahead of New in the championship table.

Eddie Walder

McCullough’s two wins steal the title from Dunne

WITH FOUR DRIVERS IN with a chance of the title, the last two rounds of the championship were always going to be close.

Points leader Noel Dunne took pole, with closest rival Ivo McCullough alongside and third placed Jonny McMullan one row back.

Dunne got the drop on the rest at the start of race one, but it was McCullough who led as the points leader found himself back in the pack. As McCullough pulled away from a scrapping McMullan and Morgan Dempsey, Dunne had to settle for fourth.

The grid for race two was identical and McCullough made the break, but this time Dunne went with him and for 14 laps they stayed together. McCullough held on to win and take the title by just three points.

RICHARD YOUNG

RESULTS (13 LAPS) 1 Ivo McCullough (Van Diemen RF00); 2 Jonathan McMullan (Mondial M895) +5.223; 3 Morgan Dempsey (Van Diemen DP99); 4 Noel Dunne (Van Diemen RF00); 5 Adrian Pollock (Van Diemen DP99); 6 Paul McMullan (Crossfire S6).

CWS McCullough, John Stewart (Reynard F83); McMullan, Pollock.

FL Dunne 1m10.436s (88.59mph)

RACE 2 (24 LAPS) 1 Ivo McCullough; 2 Dunne +0.422s; 3 McMullan; 4 Dempsey; 5 McCullough (Van Diemen RF00); 6 Pollock.

CWS McCullough, Stewart: Stephen McMahan (Crossfire S6).

FL Dunne 1m10.436s (88.59mph)

Sheane wins to Sheane

THE EXCITEMENT began early in the first of the Rover-powered classes when a midfield kerfuffle at Colonial launched several cars skywards and stopped the race.

At the restart, Kevin Sheane departed at speed in the direction of the chequered flag while Brian Hearty and Robbie Allen disputed second, ahead of Choc Cup runnerup David Dickenson. An impressive collection of nosecones at marshall’s posts bore witness to a number of close encounters.

It was Sheane again in race two, with Allen and Sean Hynes in pursuit this time. Hearty finished a winless and lonely fourth.

RICHARD YOUNG

RESULTS (13 LAPS) 1 Kevin Sheane; 2 Brian Hearty +7.561s; 3 Robbie Allen; 4 David Dickenson; 5 Sean Hynes; 6 Tim Swail.

FL Sheane 1m01.238s (88.88mph)

RACE 2 (24 LAPS) 1 Sheane; 2 Allen +6.784s; 3 Hynes; 4 Hearty; 5 John Linnane; 6 Eddy Cleaver.

FL Sheane 1m01.238s (88.88mph)
Ronchetti beats iconic Vauxhalls

JOSSE RONCHETTI claimed victory in the first of the CSCC Special Salons races, despite starting several rows behind his correct grid position in his mighty Talbot Sunbeam Lotus. “I had half a spin at the hairpin on the warm-up lap,” he admitted. Joe Ward powered into the lead of the race in Baby Bertha, with the equally iconic Vauxhall Carlton of Pete Stevens chasing him throughout the first lap. Ronchetti had climbed back to seventh by the end of lap one, and went fourth at the hairpin on lap two, passing Ron Harper’s Triumph Spitfire. The local businessman made up three places to lead by the end of lap four, passing Adrian Beer’s MG MGB at Gerard’s. Stevens on the run to the hairpin, and Ward’s Vauxhall Firenza over the line.

Stevens and Ronchetti resumed their battle from the previous event at Castle Combe, but the Talbot remained ahead. Ward and Beer enjoyed a fight for third, being the only ones to complete the distance.

Climbing to fifth and sixth were two cars that had struggled in practice, the Mazda RX7 of Stacey Vickers and the Mopar Lotus Elan of Paul Sidney. It was the same top four in the second race, with Stevens unable to stretch the Carlton’s legs enough to get ahead of Ronchetti on the run to the Esses.

RESULTS (BOTH 19 LAPS)
1 Joss Ronchetti (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus); 2 Pete Stevens (Vauxhall Carlton); 1:24.435s; 3 Joe Ward (Vauxhall Firenza); 4 Adrian Beer (MG MGB); 5 Stacey Vickers (Mazda RX7); 6 Paul Sidney (Lotus Elan).

The Vauxhalls couldn’t defeat Ronchetti

THE CSCC’S PRACTICE of handicapping race winners in rounds certainly makes a real entertaining race, as David Walley demonstrated as he stormed from his pitlane start to victory. Paul Caller led from pole in his Caterham CSR with Anthony Bennett (R3000) retrieving second from Keith Dunn’s C400 at the hairpin in lap two.

Meanwhile Walley – with the Hayabusa-engined car of Andrew Griffiths chasing in his wake – was up to eighth place by lap four. The Castle Combe winner’s progress continued, and he drove across the outside of Pascal Green’s C400 to go fourth on lap 12.

Walley emerged second after the mandatory stops, but closed rapidly in the traffic and passed Caller into the Esses on lap 35. Caller subsequently spun out of contention at Gerard’s but held on to second with Bennett third.

RESULTS (40 LAPS)
1 David Walley (Caterham CSR); 2 Paul Caller (CSR +11.690s); 3 Anthony Bennett (R3000); 4 Andrew Griffiths (Hayabusa); 5 Bill Hayball (C400); 6 Pascal Green (C400); CW Griffiths; Green; Will Stephens (R400); Mark Roberts/Hugh Smith (Caterham 7); Gary Davison (Tiger). FL Walley 4:18:415 (101.96mph).

Storming drive by Walley
Sumpter on top in Porsche duels

MARK SUMPTER AND
Pete Morris continued
where they left off at Oulton
Park two weekends ago with
another furious Porsche
Club battle at Castle Combe
on Bank Holiday Monday,
with Sumpter coming out
ton top with two wins at
the Wiltshire track.

Sumpter’s 964 led away
on a wet track in race one
with the 996 of Morris, Ben
Demetriou (Boxster) and
Mark McAleen (966) in
close order. Morris looked
for a way past at Camp on
lap two before the lead pair
eased away from the rest,
McAleen heading Demetriou
easily on the loss of ground.
Morris was eager to move
ahead but Sumpter, a double
winner in the series last
season at Combe, had his
ever chance covered. There
was a brief shower part
way through, but Sumpter was
in control and held on to
take the win, Morris falling
away in the later laps.

Demetriou was a lonely
third, with Mark Proctor
(993) finally getting past
Marcus Carriel’s Boxster
to take fourth as McAleen
fell to sixth.

Race two was held in
teeming rain, and followed
the same script as the lead
pair opened a gap on the
rest. Trading fastest laps in
the treacherous conditions,
Morris’ best chance to take
the lead came when he got
inside Sumpter at Camp on
lap five, only for the leader
to sit it out alongside and
get better traction.

Sumpter eased out a gap
of a second by the flag, with
Morris second and Proctor
the best of the rest a long
way back.

👀 Paul & Lucy Jurd

RESULTS (% LAPS)
1 Mark Sumpter (964 C2); 2 Peter
Morris (996 C2); 3 Ben
Demetriou (Boxster S); 4 Mark
Proctor (993 C2); 5 Marcus
Carriel (Boxster S); 6 Mark
McAleen (966 C2).

FL Sumpter 1m19.018s (84.28mph).

RACE 2 (25 LAPS) 1 Sumpter;
2 Morris 1m13.138s; 3 Proctor;
4 John McCullagh (966 C5); 5
Carriel;
6 Richard Ellis (993 C2).

CW Eacook. FL Sumpter 1m34.999s
(70.77mph).

Prebble’s dash to victory
in saloon car thrash

TONY HUTCHINGS’
Audi led the opening laps
of the Castle Combe Saloons
from William Di Claudio
and Mark Funnell, but
on the move was Class A
points leader Adam Prebble.

Fifth on the grid after
going off avoiding a
spinning car in qualifying,
the Rover driver made it
into third by lap five. A lap
later, Prebble went past the
Audi through Camp only
to lose out on the exit
to Funnell.

By now it was three at the
front, Mark Wyatt having
also fought his way up the
order, and Bill Brockbank
having spun.

On lap nine of 15, Prebble
moved back ahead, passing
Hutchings with Wyatt
can’t and taking over the
lead trio separated by less
than a second.

Prebble eased clear
to take the win, with
Hutchings clear of Wyatt.

Di Claudio was a long way
back in fourth, but was a
dominant class winner.

👀 Paul & Lucy Jurd

RESULTS (% LAPS)
1 Adam Prebble (Rover 220
Turbo); 2 Tony Hutchings (Audi TT)
+0.809s; 3 Mark Wyatt (Paxton/R
Astra); 4 William Di Claudio
(PEUGEOT 306 GTI); 5 Mark Funnell
(Mini Cooper S); 6 Robert Ballard
(SEAT Leon).

CW Di Claudio; Charles
Hyde-Andrews-Bird (Ford Fiesta);
Crazz Fynis (MG Zt). FL Prebble
1m16.785s (86.73mph).

Spencer defeats Prior

IAN PRIOR HELD OFF
poker Rob Spencer
through Folly and into
Quarry to take an early
Thoroughbred Sports Car
lead on a wet track, with
Russell McCarthy further
demoting Prior’s MGB to
claim second.

Into backmarkers by lap
four, the lead group set
a rapid pace, McCarthy first
to crack with a spin at
half-distance.

Spencer then started to
reel in Prior and his chance
came on the penultimate
lap as they encountered
more backmarkers.

Spencer seized the
opportunity to make what
proved the decisive move.
McCarthy then retired
from third, James Wheeler’s
MGB Roadster thus
completing the podium,
albeit a lap down on the
V8-powered front-runners.

👀 Paul & Lucy Jurd

RESULTS (% LAPS)
1 Rob Spencer (MGB GT/V8);
2 Ian Prior (MGB GT/V8) +0.823s;
3 James Wheeler (MGB Roadster);
4 Ben Rushworth (MGB Roadster);
5 Richard Evans (Marcos FIA);
6 Neil Fowler (MGB GT/V8).

CW Prior; Wheeler; Rushworth;
Evans; Terry Savory (MGB GT);
FL Prior 1m26.293s (70.21mph).

Tilting’s Radical took another victory

COMBE IN BRIEF

Hall gave his new car the perfect debut

COMBE FF1600
Rob Hall (Mgpa 552000) led
the most important part of a wet
Formula Ford race – from the
final corner to the finish. Hall
dived inside leader Luke Cooper
into Camp as the chequered flag
came out early due to delays.

MORGAN CHALLENGE
Keith Allsop dominates the large
28-car Morgan field, lapping
everyone up to and including
fourth place before the end of
the 30-minute race, despite
a safety car period. Richard Plant
and Robin Pearce were the only
runners left on the same lap as
the experienced Allsop.

FERRARI FORMULA
CLASSIC
A soaking track and heavy
rain greeted the field and it
was James Cartwright who
made the best of the conditions
after poleman Nigel Jenkins
sank the opening lap. Jenkins
recovered to second, clear
of Peter Fisk after lapping
as quickly as fellow 328 GTB
driver Cartwright.

FERRARI OPEN
Gary Eastwood went past Paul
Bailey’s F40 as they started lap
eight after pressuring the leader
through the early stages. From
then on Eastwood eased away
in his F430 to win, the lead pair
of the class of the field.

COMBE SPORTS & GT
Gary Prebble used his
Mitsubishi Evo’s traction to lead
the start on a damp track before
biting tyre issues.Storming through
was Simon Tilling’s Radical, and
he took over on lap four once
Prebble lost pace to win from
Norman Lackford.

Thoroughbred Sports Car & BCW
CASTLE COMBE, AUGUST 27

Spencer won in MGB GT/V8 battle

Prebble overcame Hutchings and Wyatt

Prebble’s saloon car win
SENNAN FIELDING
KNOCKHILL RACE REPORT

Race 1. After a tough wet qualifying session it was no surprise Race 1 was also wet with torrential rain and standing water. Starting from 3rd behind Woodhead, Sennan immediately put pressure on to get past and slotted into 2nd position on the last corner of the 1st lap as Robertson, making the most of clear visibility, opened up a 1.8 second lead. With lap times between the two only separated by less than 0.01sec it was impossible to catch the leader. Sennan commented that he was happy with 2nd and being able to match Robertson’s lap time.

Race 2. Sennan started from P2 on Sunday in considerably better conditions. Following a clean start, Sennan exited the chicane only to be tapped from the back which spun him into on-coming traffic. Sennan rejoined the race in last place, with some brilliant overtaking he was able to get back to 8th position. Sennan commented that despite losing the lead for the Championship it is so close between the 3 top drivers he thinks it will go right down to the last round to decide who will be Champion.

For information on sponsoring Sennan Fielding, contact Dawn Fielding at dawnfielding@toktok.co.uk

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Doran calm at Mayhem

LIAM DORAN WON his own ‘Mayhem’ event at Lydden last Monday – the fourth of six rounds in this year’s British Rallycross Championship.

Lydden’s traditional August Bank Holiday weekend event was supplemented with drifting, BMX and FMX events and brought a good crowd through the gate.

Mayhem might well have been the theme, but chez Doran things were quiet and calm, unusually so in what has been a far from smooth year for Britain’s top rallycrossers.

On home ground, and ranged against a BRC field that also contained a couple of Belgian visitors, Doran had a clear run at the event.

The qualifying heats brought race wins and fastest times, Doran winning pretty much as he pleased in an outing that not only restored confidence but allowed him the chance to work on the Citroen DS3 away from the pressure of a European championship event.

Going into the final, Doran’s closest challenger was his father, Pat. Gearbox problems had slowed Doran Sr in the second heat and he ended up with a ‘pick-and-mix’ set of results in his Citroen DS3 for the third heat and final.

Rising to the challenge, ‘Dad Doran’ chased his son through the first three laps of the final and, it has to be said, kept the boy honest. When the older of the lead pair took the Joker, Doran Jr posted his fastest lap of the race and eased out his lead a little further so that when he took his Joker on the last lap he rejoined still ahead.

The race was as good as won, but with half a lap to run the right-front tyre of the lead car punctured. Doran Jr struggled through the Devil’s Elbow, the next two right-handers less of a problem. With the chequer in sight, however, the car could not be persuaded to turn left at the chicane and plunged off the track into the meadow, where Doran passed the finishing line quite some way off the usual trajectory.

Series leader Julian Godfrey had an uneventful run to third in his Fiesta, as Doran Sr cut two points off his advantage.

Steve Mandy’s Focus was fourth, the field having lost Steve Harris and Colin Anson to engine problems and Andy Grant to a transmission failure.

The Supernational A final was taken by Ash Simpson, who went around outside of fellow Lotus Exige driver Steve Cozens at Pits Bend before racing away for a clear win.

Cozens then nursed his misfiring car home fourth as Stuart Emery worked his Peugeot up to second, ahead of Paul Wakeling.

The Swift Sport Championship was not always very well behaved but delivered a largely clean final. Tristan Ovenden made the early running but was passed by Chris Mullen, who had been in the hunt for the win all weekend.

The pack had split in two at the first corner, four taking the Joker lap early. Best of this bunch was Graham Rodemark who, as the race unwound and more of the lead group used the Joker, rose up the order. On the last lap he had Mullen in his sights, but the leader exited the Joker fractionally ahead and held on to win.

Kevin Hansen led the Junior final until the last lap, when title holder Aidan Hills and then James Ross both squeezed by the disappointed Swede.

Tim Whittington.
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YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week

Is new track welcome in the Vale?
I’m sure the news of a new FIA-approved race circuit planned to begin construction in Ebbw Vale (August 23, p75) may sound like a brilliant prospect, but this is potentially problematic for Welsh motorsport. This so-called ‘Circuit of Wales’ is bad news for both Anglesey and Pembrey. The planned £250 million investment would’ve been put to better use to create possibly two FIA-approved race circuits in Wales by redeveloping the two existing venues. I believe that what will result from this new track will be three circuits not making enough money in a struggling economic climate.

Ben Richards, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire

I used to be against the Formula 1 summer break, but now feel it’s a great idea. Not only because the drivers and teams get some down-time with their loved ones, but all the F1 fans, including myself, get to do the same.

And with the teams coming back with their batteries charged, we should be in for an entertaining second half to the season.

It’s a no-brainer really.

_Duncan Sabiston_Didcot, Oxon

I can’t be the only person breathing a sustained sigh of relief that the Formula 1 season resumes this weekend! I’m all in favour of the drivers and teams enjoying a bit of R&R, but this has been a long five weeks!

My boss doesn’t allow me to have more than a fortnight off at a time, so the grand prix summer break does seem a tad excessive – after all, what’s the off-season for?

_Frances Stewart_London SE12

Many many thanks for the excellent issue focusing on Group C sportscars (August 23). It made fantastic reading, with excellent articles and photographs.

A refreshing change, very well produced.

_Dave Rooker_By email

I went to the WEC race at Silverstone on Sunday with my disabled mate, and we were very disappointed with the new pits.

It’s a long trek to get to the paddock area either from the old pit straight or Hangar Straight, and then the worst part is when you watch endurance racing it’s great to spend a few hours opposite the pits watching the driver changes – you can’t do this at Silverstone because of the poor design of the pitlane.

Can’t wait for Spa next year.

_Phil Smith_By email

WIN!

Road Angel Vantage
This week’s star letter will receive a Road Angel Vantage – a dedicated safety camera and black spot 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

Last week’s Sports Extra Brief news column incorrectly claimed a Milford Haven T50th anniversary celebration took place at Pembrey Park. Chris Biddenden’s spectacular roll pictured at that event was, of course, from Shelley Walsh.

It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us at autosport@haymarket.com.
THE LATEST GEAR
Desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

1:32 F1 WRIST RACERS
£24.99
autosport.com/shop

Well-known plastic and diecast model manufacturer Burago has come up with these novel 1:32-scale Race and Play wrist racers (with their own engine sounds) for young fans keen to begin their radio-controlled racing careers. Choose between a Ferrari or McLaren - no, get your dad to buy both so you can race him - then strap the steering wheel controller on your wrist and go for it.

ENCyclopedia OF F1
£25 (1978 0 8573 3098 71)
autosport.com/shop

Former AUTOSPORT editor Bruce Jones’s latest edition of his popular Complete Encyclopedia of Formula 1 tome brings the story up to date, with easy-to-follow narrative on the drivers, cars, teams, circuits and technology. It will appeal to fans just starting out on their thirst for knowledge and seasoned F1 devotees.

WORLD SPORTscar DVDs
£102.12 (12h45m)
dukevideo.com

We’re still wallowing in Group C retro and if you recall fondly the glorious era of Porsche v Jaguar v Lamborghini v Nissan v Toyota v Peugeot then relive those great races with this WSC DVD boxset. Each year (1983-1989) is available individually, at £34.99, and features classic footage and interviews.

GULF RUCKSACK
£55
gulf-continentalracing.com

This multi-compartment rucksack forms part of a new range of officially licensed Gulf gear. The iconic blue and orange colours of the oil giant now adorn luggage (holdalls, helmet bags and iPad covers), clothing (T-shirts and polo shirts) and accessories (keyrings, cufflinks and tie clips).

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: GERRY MARSHALL, SUPER SALOONS, OULTON PARK

SEARCH FOR: Gerry Marshall, Baby Bertha and team DTV (7:42)

Classic footage of the late, great Gerry Marshall stomping round Oulton Park in 1975 aboard the Bill Blydenstein-built V8 Vauxhall Frenza ‘Baby Bertha’ Super Saloon, complete with laconic commentary from the big man himself.
WHAT’S ON...
Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online

CADDWELL PARK (MSVR)
September 1-2
Admissions £13 per day
Tel: 01507 342348
Clubbie action in Lincolnshire from the Radical Clubmans Cup, Project 8 Racing Saloons, Production BMW, Monoposto, Golf GTi and VAG Trophy.

DONINGTON PARK (750MC)
September 1-2
Admissions £15 per day
Tel: 01332 810048
The 750 Motor Club brings the BMW Compact Cup, MR2s, Formula 4, Formula Vee, Sports Specials, Locost, RGB, Stock Hatch, Classic Stock Hatch, S2KMK, Bike-Sport, MR2 Super GT, SR and GT two driver race and 750 Formula to Donington.

OUTLON PARK (BRSCC)
September 1
Admissions £13
Tel: 01829 760001
Oulton Park hosts one day meeting for the Formula Ford 1600 Northern Championship, Alfa Romeo 500CC Formula 3, Formula Jedi and the BRSCC OSS Championship.

ROCKINGHAM (BARC)
September 1-2
Admissions £15 per day
Tel: 01146 500500
Pickups, InterSteps, Production Touring Cars, BMW Championship, Classic Formula Ford 1600 and 2000 and Crossle 9S Challenge.

SNETTERTON (BRSCC)
September 1-2
Admissions £13 (per day)
Tel: 01953 887303
A busy two day meeting includes plenty of Caterham action from the Superlight R300S, Roadports, Tracksports, Superkarts and Academy, plus more sportscars in the TVR Challenge. Saloon fun comes from Mighty Minis, Super Mighty Minis, Ford Fiestas and Ford Fiesta Juniors.

PRESCOTT (HILLCLIMB)
September 1-2
Admissions £12 (Saturday), £15 (Sunday)
top12runoff.co.uk
The British Hillclimb series moves to Gloucestershire, with Scott Morar in charge.

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
Rd 12/20
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 2
formulal1.com
F1 returns from its summer holidays with Fernando Alonso determined to cling onto his points lead. His Ferrari might not be the fastest car out there, but he’s been by far the most consistent. Michael Schumacher will start his 300th GP, while Kimi Raikkonen returns to the track where he’s won four times.

GP3
Rd 7/8
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 1-2
gp3series.com

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
Rd 10/11
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 2
porschesportscar.com

indyCar SERIES
Rd 14/15
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
September 2
indyCar.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
Rd 25/36
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
September 2
nascar.com

FIA WORLD GTI
Rd 7/9
Moscow Raceway, Russia
September 1-2
gtitalia.com

AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES
Rd 8/10
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
September 1
alms.com

Can Alonso retain his points lead as the F1 circus returns to Spa?
Television

THURSDAY AUGUST 30
1415-1545 ESPN
FR3-Silverstone repeat
1400-1445 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
F1: Spa Drivers’ Press Conference

FRIDAY AUGUST 31
0845-1050 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 1
0855-1035 BBC Red Button LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 1
1050-1130 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP2: Spa Free Practice
1245-1450 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 2
1255-1435 BBC Red Button LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 2
1450-1540 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP2: Spa Qualifying
2000-2100 Sky Sports F1
The F1 Show

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 1
0830-1000 ESPN LIVE
FIA GT1: Moscow Qualifying
0840-0920 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP3: Spa Qualifying
0945-1115 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 3
0955-1135 BBC Red Button LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Free Practice 3
1100-1200 British Eurosport
WEC: Silverstone highlights
1135-1340 Motors TV
NASCAR Nationwide: Bristol highlights
1200-1435 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Qualifying
1210-1300 BBC Red Button LIVE
Formula 1: Spa Qualifying

1435-1600 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP2: Spa Race 1
1500-1630 ITV4
BRC: Knockhill highlights
1615-1705 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP3: Spa Race 1
1630-1700 ITV4
DTM: Zandvoort highlights
1845-2120 Motors TV LIVE
ALMS: Baltimore

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 2
0820-0910 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP3: Spa Race 2
0925-1030 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
GP2: Spa Race 2
1045-1130 British Eurosport
Porsche Supercup: Spa Race
1100-1115 Sky Sports F1 LIVE
Formula 1: Belgian GP
1210-1515 BBC Red Button LIVE
Formula 1: Belgian GP
1600-1900 Motors TV
NASCAR Nationwide: Atlanta
1930-2200 Sky Sports Red Button
IndyCar Series: Baltimore
2330-0500 Premier Sports LIVE
NASCAR Sprint Cup: Atlanta Race
0100-0200 Sky Sports 2
IndyCar Series: Baltimore
0230-0300 ESPN
FIA World GT1: Moscow Race

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 3
1000-1200 Sky Sports 2
IndyCar Series: Baltimore
1300-1550 Motors TV
V8 Supercars: Eastern Creek
2100-2200 Sky Sports 4
NASCAR Cup: Atlanta highlights

Online

AUTOSPORT+

Coming up in our premium web content this week
With sun or black clouds, the Ardennes race never disappoints

F1 RETURNS: BELGIAN GP COVERAGE
After the summer break, the F1 season gets underway again at the fabulous Spa circuit. As ever, AUTOSPORT will be there to cover events as they unfold, as Mark Hughes, Jonathan Noble and Edd Straw follow the action.

ANDRETTI AND INDY’S FUTURE
Having been a successful driver and team boss, Michael Andretti speaks of his latest efforts to help IndyCar.

SOLBERG’S LATEST WRC NIGHTMARE
In his regular AUTOSPORT column, Petter Solberg looks back at Germany.

REVVED UP OVER WHAT’S ON THE BOX
We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week’s TV coverage

IT’S A NIGHTMARE scenario. You’re at a party with people you barely know. A man, it’s always a man, latches on to you. Despite of any shared history, he asks what car you drive. Regardless of the answer he follows up: “So what does that do to the gallon?” “Who cares!” is the only acceptable answer. I put £20’s worth in, and when I need some more, I put in another £20. And when was the last time petrol was sold in that quantity in the UK? [It was 1995 – ed]

Is there anything more tedious than talking about fuel consumption? Yes, it appears there is. Racing commentators talking about fuel consumption. With F1 on a break even French trade unionists would find excessive, I watched Motors’ exhaustive coverage of the WEC 6-hour race from Silverstone. What should have been an interesting battle between Toyota and Audi was rendered a snore by the commentary team droning on about the fuel consumption of the cars. Here’s a thing. Reading out lists of numbers doesn’t work without a visual graphic. Especially when simultaneously comparing stints lengths, fuel levels and consumption rates. Of course endurance racing is complicated, I get that. But complicated doesn’t have to mean dull. BBC4’s fabulous documentary jet: when Britain ruled the skies did a fine job of presenting technical, scientific material in a brilliantly engaging way, sewing together some amazing footage of planes in action.

“With F1 on a break even French trade unionists would find excessive, I watched the Silverstone 6 Hours”

Obviously when you’re dealt a hand that contains the Vulcan bomber and Lightning fighter it’s hard to go wrong. But as an exercise in breathing life into one of the most exciting times in the development of the jet plane, it was superb.

I can only hope in years to come this exciting era of hybrid racers is afforded the same respect.

Revved Up
THE WEEK IN PICTURES

Our lensmen pounding the beat, from Tennessee to Northamptonshire, via Holland and Scotland.

THE SUN GOES DOWN AND IT'S TIME TO RUMBLE
Bristol's bullring is unlike any other oval on the NASCAR schedule for atmosphere at its annual night-race spectacular.

NO TIME TO REFLECT ON THINGS FOR EDO
Edoardo Mortara scored his second DTM win of the year at Zandvoort.

THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS IN THE WALL
Some of Renault 3.5's top drivers crashed out in a Silverstone storm.

CLELAND ROLLS BACK THE YEARS
Vauxhall star John Cleland was reunited with his Cavalier at Knockhill as part of a brilliant on-track Super Tourer display.

NEXT WEEK BELGIAN GP REPORT
ALL THE ACTION FROM A TRUE CLASSIC ON THE CALENDAR
DON'T MISS IT!
FROM THE ARCHIVE

Michael Schumacher makes his Formula 1 debut for Jordan at Spa, 1991

Michael Schumacher will complete a neat statistical sequence when he competes in his 300th grand prix this weekend at Spa-Francorchamps, the circuit on which he made his Formula 1 debut with Jordan and at which he also scored his first GP win.

Despite failing to complete a lap of the race, his pace was such that by the next round he had moved to the Benetton squad. Within 18 F1 races he had won one, too.

Then-Jordan technical director Gary Anderson was among those at the team keen to hand Schumacher a chance, rather than take another like Stefan Johansson or Damon Hill. Avoiding the trap of historical revisionism, he cautions though that talk of the German being destined for greatness then was too premature – even if he was impressive from the outset.

"It is always difficult to get a really good judgement on a driver, particularly in Michael's case as he was with us for such a short window," Anderson reflects. "We only had a fleeting impression.

"You knew that he was good, of course. The one habit in particular which stood out was his ability through the chicane. He was able to pick his spot earlier than others, turn in earlier, be much tighter and therefore much faster.

"He pre-empted what would happen better than others, and this is one of the main things which stood out, straight from the off."

"You couldn't say his was a unique talent. But by lap four of qualifying, he was flat through Eau Rouge"

GARY ANDERSON

THIS WEEK IN...

AUGUST 24 1995

AUTOSPORT CELEBRATED ITS 65TH anniversary with a magazine special this week in 1995, with Damon Hill the centrepiece of celebrations following his superb victory in Hungary, where he lapped everyone but team-mate David Coulthard.

Across the pond Andre Ribeiro and Honda also had plenty to cheer as they shared a first IndyCar victory at New Hampshire.

Honda had already threatened a breakthrough at Indianapolis and Michigan, but it was Ribeiro who finally got it across the line in first. The Brazilian rookie had qualified on pole and led the most laps, but midway through had to fight back after losing the lead to Michael Andretti. Once through he was in a class of his own, pulling away relentlessly to eventually win by half a lap.
CHRISTIAN DANNER

Grand Prix de Pau • May 27, 1985 • March 85B-Cosworth • Maiden single-seater win sets up title success

I DON’T THINK I CAN SINGLE out a race of my life, it’s just so difficult to choose. But choosing one of my favourites? Well, one that stands out is my victory in the Pau Formula 3000 race, the very first single-seater race I won.

Frankly, my career until then was interesting, if we can say that. I had no clue about single-seater racing when I started with the works March team. I don’t want to call myself hopeless, as I scored points in my first year, but I wasn’t good enough. In my second year I improved a lot and was already good enough to be winning, and one of the races I should have won was Pau, but my engine blew and I was forced to retire.

In the next two years victory was impossible, basically because the Honda engines in the Raits and Spirits were so strong. We just couldn’t beat them, and it wasn’t until the start of year five [when F3 had been replaced by F3000] that I had a decent package again.

Pau was the fifth round of the season, and I already had a very special love affair with the track — it was the first street circuit I raced on and I was just blown away by it.

“Everyone said you cannot overtake at Pau, especially at the hairpin at the top of the park — it’s really narrow, first gear. I just decided to do things people said you couldn’t and I just overtook people”

I regarded it as so exceptionally difficult, and I thoroughly loved it. I still believe that all the street tracks I have raced on, Pau was the most difficult — and second only to the Nordschleife overall.

Bob Sparshott had our team, BIS Automotive, running superbly, and it was one of those wonderful times when you loved the car and the track, and it all came together... except it didn’t in qualifying, as I just couldn’t get a lap. There were two sessions and the second was wet, and I was the only driver to improve — which shows how bad first qualifying went.

I ended up 12th, so came race day I just said ‘f*ck it! Everyone tells me you cannot overtake at Pau, especially not at the hairpin at the top of the park — it’s really narrow, first gear. I just decided to do things people said you couldn’t. I gave it a go and just overtook people, most at the hairpin. It was wonderful. Everyone said you couldn’t overtake there... I could.

I was totally in control of the race even before I was in the lead, because I was lapping a lot quicker. In fact I was so much quicker that I just knew I was going to win — and it’s very rare in your career you get that feeling.

It was the start of my winning streak in F3000, and honestly you cannot believe the relief. It was a massive pleasure to hand Bob, a race mechanic with Jim Clark and Team Lotus, the victory. I also called Ralf Bellamy, the designer of the car, and for the first time in my life he was quiet! It was those moments that make it worthwhile calling at least one of the races of my life.

German Christian Danner was a relative rookie when he first raced in Formula 3 in 1981, but within six years he had graduated to F1, winning the ’85 F3000 title in a March along the way. He scored points with Osella in ’86 and Rial in ’89, finishing fourth in the US GP on the streets of Phoenix in what was his final year in F1. He went on to win in the DTM and at the Spa 24 Hours, as well as competing sporadically in Champ Cars. Now 54, he commentates on F1 for RTL.

Christian Danner was talking to Sam Tresayne

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