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McLaren's late
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POLE POSITION

McLaren makes the right choice to keep Button

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN IT SEEMED VERY LIKELY THAT Jenson Button would not be in Formula 1 next year. Ben Anderson explains in depth on page 10 why it took Ron Dennis and McLaren so long to make its final decision on the 2009 world champion. F1 will be a better place for Button's continued presence on the grid.

Thankfully, McLaren has also kept the faith with the very promising Kevin Magnussen, who had a good rookie season and merits a long F1 career.

Both Button (15th) and Magnussen (42nd) feature in our Top 50 drivers of the season. It's the 13th time AUTOSPORT has put together this list. The 2014 edition is the product of plenty of arguing, showcasing some of the drivers who have excelled this year. Remember, it's not the 50 best drivers in the world, it's the best performers of the season.

Button has been an ever-present in the list since it first started and, if he keeps operating at his current level, will surely retain his place next year.

This is good news for F1, for not only is Button a first-class driver, but also a fine ambassador for motor racing.



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COVER STORY



“The decision sits with me and I take the consequences of the results in 2015”

Ron Dennis, p15

FIND US ON



Cover images: Moy/XPB

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This week in F1

BRITON LANDS SIXTH SEASON AT McLAREN

McLAREN KEEPS BUTTON IN F1

McLaren will retain Jenson Button alongside Fernando Alonso in 2015, after finalising its driver line-up.

McLaren's autumn capture of Alonso for its new works engine partnership with Honda left 2014 drivers Button and Kevin Magnussen both facing uncertain futures.

Debate raged within McLaren over whether 2009 world champion

Button's greater experience should be preferred to rookie Magnussen's longer-term potential.

A decision on the final line-up was anticipated ahead of November's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, but an announcement was twice delayed as agreement failed to materialise at boardroom level.

Button, 34, was ultimately given the chance to prolong his career

into a 16th season.

The decision means Magnussen, 22, will be without a race seat in F1 next year, but the Woking team said the Dane would act as its reserve driver.

Button said: "Being a part of new-look McLaren-Honda is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, and I'm very pleased to have been invited to do my bit. In fact, I'm absolutely raring to go."

BUTTON AND ALONSO COMBINED F1 STATISTICS

15+13 = Seasons raced **28**

 Races **500**

 Titles **3**

 Wins **47**

 Poles **30**

 Podiums **147**

 Points **2965**

 Fastest laps **29**

4



“Being a part of new-look McLaren-Honda is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, and I'm very pleased to have been invited to do my bit. In fact, I'm absolutely raring to go.”

RE-SIGNED McLAREN DRIVER JENSON BUTTON ON 2015

ALONSO: SEASONS AT FERRARI WERE MY BEST

New McLaren signing Fernando Alonso believes his five years with Ferrari were the best of his career, despite failing to add to his collection of two world titles.



When asked to rate his time at Ferrari, Alonso replied: "From one to 10 I think in those five years I will put nine."

"I know it seems high, but I have enjoyed it so much - I grew up as a driver, as a person, and I raced with my heart. I raced at the best level of my career."

Alonso twice missed out on the world championship in the final race of the season while at Ferrari, in 2010 and 2012, finishing sixth this year.



“We gain the best driver in the world today”



McLaren racing director Eric Boullier celebrates the recruitment of Fernando Alonso

For all the breaking news, visit **AUTOSPORT.COM**



STALEY/LAT

HULK HAS NO WORRIES

Nico Hulkenberg is adamant he has not missed the boat in landing a drive with a top team.

The German renewed his deal with Force India for 2015, but also completed a deal to race at Le Mans with Porsche, as well as contesting the Spa 6 Hours for the marque.

"Every driver wants to be in a top car, but I am sure one day the opportunity will come," he said.

Gutierrez lands Maranello role

Esteban Gutierrez has joined Ferrari as test and reserve driver.

The Mexican, who has raced for Sauber for the past two seasons, is set to focus on simulator work for the team. It is not clear how much seat time in the 2015 car he will be given.

"I want to thank everybody for their belief in my potential," said Gutierrez. "This will bring a great opportunity for me to develop further and get to the top in the near future."



COATES/LAT

BIG NUMBER

23

Number of races since Esteban Gutierrez last scored a point thanks to Sauber struggling for pace during the 2014 season.

Ferrari should not fear change

Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne urged his Formula 1 personnel not to "fear change" as he emphasised his faith in new team boss Maurizio Arrivabene at the squad's annual Christmas event.

"I have full confidence in Maurizio," said Marchionne. "He has known this world for a long time and has the ability to steer the Scuderia in what is a difficult period for it and for Formula 1 in general."

"Do not fear change, be proactive and have the courage to come up with ideas. I know you can do it and that's what Ferrari needs."



REMEMBER WHEN

1993



GETTY

The year Ferrari last failed to win a race in Formula 1. The Scuderia struggled with active suspension on the F93A and scored just three podiums with Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger.

LOTUS: WE'VE GOT WILLIAMS IN OUR SIGHTS

Lotus is targeting fighting with Williams when it makes its own switch from Renault to Mercedes engines next season.

Williams finished ninth in the 2013 constructors' championship with

Renault power, but beat Ferrari to third with Mercedes engines this year.

Lotus slumped from fourth to eighth this year, but technical director Nick Chester believes a switch to Mercedes can transform his team's fortunes.

"I think we can make a massive step," Chester told AUTOSPORT.

"Williams have done a great job; it will be hard to catch them, but we'll be trying to get on the back of Williams if we can."



DUNBAR/LAT



TEAMS TO TEST LOOPHOLE IN ENGINE-FREEZE RULES

The FIA is facing a challenge over F1's engine freeze, as some teams believe there is a loophole in the 2015 sporting regulations that could hand them extra development time.

It is widely understood that 2015 power units have to be lodged with the FIA before the first race of next season, but some teams believe they can wait until later in the year to

homologate by using a 2014 engine in the early races.

Paragraph 2 of Appendix 4 of the regulations states: "A manufacturer may homologate no more than one specification of power unit."

The FIA argues the clause prevents the running of two types of engine in one season, making a late homologation impossible.

Nielsen heads to Williams

Williams has appointed ex-Toro Rosso sporting director Steve Nielsen as its new sporting manager.

Nielsen left his role at Toro Rosso on December 12, having been at the Italian squad for two years following a period at Caterham. Nielsen's career has also included stints as team manager at Tyrrell and Arrows, and as sporting director at Benetton/Renault.

Speaking about Nielsen's signing, Williams chief technical officer Pat Symonds said: "He has won world championships in the past and knows what needs to be done on a sporting level for Williams to do this again."



ROBERTSON/GETTY

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Jonathan Noble

F1's newshound

Spa might have been the pivotal point in the battle for the F1 drivers' title, but it was Bahrain that proved crucial for the future of the sport

There's little doubt that in terms of the dynamics of the Formula 1 title battle, it was the clash between Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton at the Belgian Grand Prix that proved to be the key moment of the campaign.

The way that Mercedes management came down hard on both drivers – and in particular how Rosberg was widely perceived as being the less-innocent party – took the bad blood out of their rivalry, which seemed to help Hamilton step up a gear. The Briton was dominant after that, winning six of the remaining seven races.

But if you want to pick a race that was even more important than Belgium in shaping what happened in F1 this year, then there should be doubt: Bahrain.

In fact, there is a view shared by some pretty senior figures in F1 that if Bahrain had delivered us a different type of evening, then the sport could be in very different shape right now. And not in a good way.

We could be heading to a 2015 season marking the return of V8 engines, and a sport facing the real possibility of manufacturers quitting.

Let's not forget that in the run-up to the race in Bahrain, F1's new turbo regulations was coming under a pretty sustained attack from Bernie Ecclestone and then-Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo.

News of a meeting between the pair in the days before Bahrain to discuss concerns about the new fuel-efficiency regulations had been leaked, and all



dissing social media and young fans instead...

But if Bahrain had been a procession of 'taxi-cab racing', with no overtaking and little to get excited about, then do not underestimate how politically that would have strengthened Ecclestone and di Montezemolo's hands. And they surely would have seized the moment.

Some senior team figures privately believe it may even have been enough to mobilise a push to get rid of the new V6 turbo engines and force through a move to agree on the return of V8 power units for 2015.

“If Bahrain had been a procession, some believe it could have forced the return of V8s for 2015”

focus was on a meeting they had planned with FIA president Jean Todt on race day.

Hours before that, Ecclestone had wandered into the media centre, well aware that he would be stopped by journalists and would be able to get his views out that fans found the new F1 'unacceptable'.

Similarly, di Montezemolo's theatrical entrance to the paddock ensured he too ramped up the pressure about how the new rules were not working, as he claimed that modern F1 stars were nothing more than taxi drivers.

In the end, the joint plan of attack failed. F1 delivered a thrilling spectacle as Rosberg and Hamilton were unleashed for one of their closest-fought battles of the campaign, proving that the new rules did work.

Di Montezemolo left before the chequered flag, and Ecclestone's complaints about the racing were never as loud again, even if he never accepted the sound of the engines. Over time his attention would shift to

Such a draconian change may have appeased Ferrari and pleased Ecclestone, but the consequences would have been far-reaching.

We would still have had our cost crisis, for Caterham and Marussia's woes were bad enough that they would not see out the season anyway. So it wouldn't have saved them.

And we'd now have a manufacturer crisis on top of that. Honda's return would have been thrown into doubt, because it was only interested in the benefits of new fuel-efficient hybrid technology.

And while Ferrari would have embraced the V8s, Renault's board may not have been too happy – and what would Mercedes have done? Would it have been enough for its bosses to say no thanks to F1?

So if ever there was a time when F1 had to deliver, it was Bahrain. The result might not ultimately have played a defining role in the world title battle, but its impact was far greater than that. ❧

This week in motorsport



WEBBER CRASH CATALYST REVEALED

Mark Webber's giant shunt in the closing stages of the World Endurance Championship finale at Interlagos is almost certain to have been caused by a clash with the AF Corse Ferrari driven by Matteo Cressoni.

Porsche's analysis has concluded that the rear of Webber's Porsche 919 Hybrid clipped the Ferrari 458 Italia in the flat-out Turn 14 and spun into the outside wall. The AF team also believes that there was contact.

Porsche LMP1 technical director Alex Hitzinger said: "We are pretty

sure that there was nothing wrong with the car, no technical failure or a puncture. It seems to have been caused by a very light contact, but at those speeds it doesn't have to be big."

AF team manager Batti Pregliasco explained that the likelihood was that

there was contact, but stressed that the Italian team believes that Cressoni was not at fault.

"We can see from the data that he did not change trajectory," he said. "He was sticking to his line, which is what the drivers are told to do."

MOY/APB

CARLIN BACK OUT IN FR3.5...

Formula 3 European Championship runner-up Tom Blomqvist and Indonesian Sean Gelael look increasingly likely to form Carlin's line-up on the team's return to Formula Renault 3.5 in 2015.

Blomqvist and Gelael drove in the

unofficial FR3.5 test at Estoril last Sunday as Carlin's cars returned to action, while Jagonya Ayam stablemate Antonio Giovinazzi tested with AVF.

Meanwhile, Brazilian Pietro Fantin (below) remains with International Draco Racing for a third season in FR3.5.



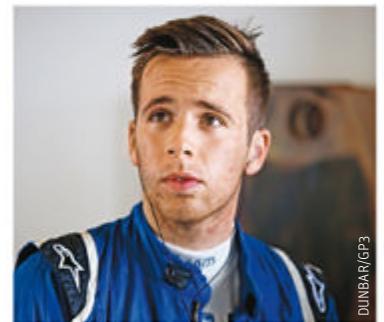
VAN DER LAAN/LAT

...as Jones joins Lights team

Formula 3 racer Ed Jones is the first recruit for Carlin's new Indy Lights team.

The 19-year-old Emirati was a podium finisher with Carlin in this season's F3 European Championship, although his season was hampered by a back injury.

Jones previously won the European F3 Open title in 2013.



DUNBAR/CP3

PADDON GAINS HYUNDAI SEAT

Hayden Paddon will remain with Hyundai for the World Rally Championship.

The New Zealander impressed on six rounds in an i20 this year and decided earlier this month to stay with Hyundai rather than switch to Citroen. He will contest nine rounds, starting with Sweden.

Citroen has added Stephane Lefebvre to its line-up for at least 10 rounds of the championship. The reigning Junior WRC champion will drive a DS 3 R5 on eight events and a DS 3 WRC on at least two events. The 22-year-old Frenchman is likely to miss the long-haul rallies.

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM

Hulkenberg gets first Porsche run

The announcement of Nico Hulkenberg's team-mates in the third Porsche 919 Hybrid for the Le Mans 24 Hours is unlikely to be made until the new year.

Plans to announce who would join the Force India F1 driver in the car at last Saturday's Night of Champions were shelved because the final evaluation test of Porsche GT drivers Frederic Makowiecki, Nick Tandy and Michael Christensen finished the preceding Thursday. Porsche LMP1 team principal Andreas Seidl said that the data from the test had yet to be fully analysed and that there was no hurry to make a decision.

Hulkenberg got his first taste of the 2014-spec 919 over the course of the three-day test at Motorland Aragon.



● The redesigned version of the 919 Hybrid that will carry Porsche's hopes in next year's WEC was given a shakedown at the German manufacturer's Weissach test facility last week. The test, which meant Porsche hit its target of running before Christmas, was undertaken by Marc Lieb.



Olympian Hoy goes ELMS

Olympian Sir Chris Hoy will graduate to prototype racing in 2015 with an LMP3 drive in the European Le Mans Series backed by Ginetta and Nissan.

The six-time Olympic cycling gold medallist, who drove a Nissan in British GT this year, will partner 17-year-old Charlie Robertson in the Team LNT-entered car. Hoy, who will also take part in the official Le Mans 24 Hours test day in May, said it was a step closer to competing in the famous French enduro.

Robertson, the Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion, was a McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist in 2013.

In brief

JANN THE MAN IN JAPAN

Nissan protege Jann Mardenborough joined last week's Super Formula test at Okayama – and set the second fastest time. The Welshman drove a Team Impul Dallara-Toyota, and was headed only by Kamui Kobayashi.

BENNANI SPLITS TO SLR

World Touring Car race winner Mehdi Bennani has become the first sign-up for Sebastian Loeb Racing's new squad. The Moroccan switches from Proteam Racing's Honda to drive an SLR Citroen C-Elysee.

KROHN FOR ELMS

Krohn Racing has firmed up plans to contest the European Le Mans Series with its new Ligier-Judd/BMW JSP2 next season. Krohn will also contest selected events in the North American Endurance Cup, including Daytona and Sebring, and will file an entry for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

IT'S DAYRAUT & PANIS

Jean-Philippe Dayraut took his second Andros Trophy win of the season in Andorra last Friday in his Mazda 3, before the Toyota Auris of Olivier Panis struck on Saturday.



Panis (right) got last laugh

9

Bamber secures factory deal

Porsche Supercup champion Earl Bamber has landed a factory drive with the German manufacturer next year.

The 24-year-old, who was one of the marque's scholarship drivers in 2014, sealed his promotion with a starring drive in October's Petit Le Mans enduro in one of the factory CORE-run 911 RSRs. He will contest the full United SportsCar Championship with the team alongside Jorg Bergmeister.

Porsche's continued participation in the WEC has been confirmed. Michael Christensen is moving the other way to Bergmeister and will drive alongside Richard Lietz in the Manthey-run team.



BIG NUMBER 1086

Total number of laps completed in Sunday's post-race Formula E test in Punta del Este. Stephane Sarrazin set the pace, with race winner Sebastien Buemi second.

Full race report on page 86.

Toyota rally D-day looms

AUTOSPORT sources in Japan have confirmed that a movement on Toyota's World Rally Championship plan is expected early next year.

Historically, Toyota announces its motorsport programme in Tokyo in the first three months of each year, and sources close to the firm say president Akio Toyoda is moving towards a commitment to the WRC for 2017.

A Toyota Motorsport spokesman said: "It's a wish and expectation to see a clear timetable. As far as we can judge it seems there's also a wish to go back [to WRC] from Japan. I think Akio Toyoda has communicated that quite clearly."



Russians take on Dallara in F3

Russian constructor ArtLine Engineering aims to take on Dallara in the Formula 3 European Championship from the 2015 season.

The ArtTech P315 represents what the Moscow company describes as 'an unconventional approach' to F3, featuring low-drag bodywork around a central exhaust system.

ArtLine plans to test the car from February, using a Neil Brown Engineering powerplant and the Renault-badged ORECA unit, at ADM Raceway in Moscow and Rustavi International Motorpark in Georgia.

The Frankfurt-based ArtLine team, which ran older-spec ArtTech cars in German F3, is lined up to race the car.

VALSECCHI'S INDY TRYOUT

GP2 veterans Davide Valsecchi and Stefano Coletti were both due to make their IndyCar test debuts this week.

Valsecchi, the 2012 GP2 champion, and multiple race winner Coletti were each set to drive with Schmidt Peterson Motorsports at Sebring on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Meanwhile, top team Chip Ganassi Racing has retained IndyCar champions Scott Dixon and Tony Kanaan plus race winner Charlie Kimball for 2015.



JONES/IMS

WHY McLAREN KEPT JENSON

Last week, McLaren finally signed up Jenson Button for 2015 and beyond. Why the delay?

BEN ANDERSON investigates, and hears why the team stands by its lengthy decision-making

The long wait is finally over for Jenson Button. And the moment it was, most of us were wondering what the hell took them so long.

As the dead of winter approached, the eyes of Formula 1 fans around the world were glued on McLaren, the only team still to announce its final driver line-up for 2015, as bigwigs in Woking wrestled with the dilemma of who should partner prodigal son Fernando Alonso next season – Jenson Button or Kevin Magnussen?

After repeated delays, that debate was finally resolved last week when McLaren opted to offer Button a fresh deal to remain in Woking as a race driver, while relegating Magnussen to “reserve, test and third-driver” status. Button put pen to paper late on December 10, and hours later the Brit was set alongside new team-mate Alonso, Magnussen, Honda motorsport boss Yasuhisa Arai and McLaren chairman Ron Dennis, as McLaren-Honda’s 2015 driver line-up was finally unveiled to the world.

For Button it has been an uncomfortable game of patience, but one he himself said had been “well worth it” in the end. “It’s been a long few weeks, but sometimes the best things in life are worth waiting for,” says the 2009 champion. “I did reflect on life outside of Formula 1, and it’s nowhere near as exciting as life in F1 from what I’ve seen. My heart has always been here – to race for McLaren, and to race with Honda.”

On paper, re-signing Button seemed like the obvious choice – a no-brainer. Not only did he (marginally) get the better of Magnussen in qualifying this year (Button finished the season 10-9 up in what many regard as one of his weaker suits), he utterly trounced the Dane when it came to the drivers’ championship. Button scored more than double his Danish team-mate’s number of points. If McLaren had two Magnussens in 2014 it would have embarrassingly finished behind Force India in the constructors’ championship...

Beyond the simple question of performance and maths, Button also has greater experience (vital for helping McLaren-Honda cope with the anticipated growing pains of its new V6 engine), plus world champion status, which is attractive to potential sponsors (McLaren’s search for a new title backer is on-going).

But, if the decision were that simple it wouldn’t have taken until almost the middle of December to come to a resolution. This sorry saga has been drawn out so far that if it were a piece of pastry it would have collapsed in the middle weeks ago.

Dennis made no apology for the repeated delay, claiming he wanted to avoid “destabilising” the team and some important aerodynamic testing during the championship run-in. He also argued that the on-going debate surrounding third cars in F1 (something McLaren is contractually obliged to provide should grid numbers fall below the minimum) had contributed.

This argument doesn’t really hold much water. After all, what’s to stop McLaren simply ‘promoting’ its third driver as and when third cars become a reality – *if* they become a reality? Claims by Dennis that he wanted the decision-making process to be “collaborative” within McLaren carry more weight. According to the team’s racing director Eric Boullier, debate raged back and forth within Woking because the correct longer-term option for McLaren-Honda was not as obvious as the straightforward ▶



...WAITING

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Ginetta Juno LMP3

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JB's slow second stop at a wet Suzuka ruined his chance of a podium

“JB was willing to jump through any hoops put in front of him”

► decision to retain Button for at least another year based on 2014 results.

“There was a lengthy debate [and] it’s true that we discuss all the minuses and the pluses for both drivers,” says Boullier. “Things changed over these [last] few weeks – some minuses became pluses and vice versa. Rationally, the decision was complicated.

“If you consider next year, it could be an easy choice. Then if you consider what we want to do in 2016 and further, it became less obvious. Some plus in your mind can be minus for me, and some plus for Ron can be minus for somebody else.

“To be honest, we had a very fair discussion. I

sat down with Ron, closed the door and said, ‘OK, I’m your lawyers, you’re mine; I defend your position and try to attack mine’. You can push for an argument and kill it. In the end, we left the room three times with it being fifty-fifty.

“It takes time and many, many considerations. Now the decision is done, so let’s move forward.”

Button seemed almost relieved to have finally been able to commit pen to paper. There’s certainly still some bafflement in the Button camp as to why it all took so long to resolve. Dennis spoke of “concerns” he held regarding Button, but it seems the Brit has shown enough willingness to jump through the hoops placed in

front of him – whatever they may be.

When challenged by AUTOSPORT to explain what had convinced McLaren to plump for Button, Dennis was evasive. “When we were discussing internally, we came up with a series of things that gave people cause for concern,” Dennis says. “I discussed these with Jenson and I gave Jenson some ideas on solutions and he just said “no problem” and that was it.

“We had addressed some of the concerns – gone. It was very easy. And then everybody aligned and then we had consensus. We settled all of the things between us that concerned me. What we have to do now is deliver against the promises we have made to each other.”

Promises that relate to Button’s willingness to raise his game in order to meet the colossal, Alonso-shaped force of nature that will now blow in to the other side of the McLaren garage. There were times this year, where some – Dennis certainly – felt Button wasn’t giving his all.

It certainly seemed as though Button got better as the season wore on. His performances in Japan and Brazil in particular, as the recalcitrant ►

WHAT NOW FOR KEVIN MAGNUSSEN?

So what now for the gooseberry in McLaren’s bush – the jilted junior Magnussen?

The Danish rookie ultimately hasn’t done enough to warrant a race seat next year – principally he still struggles to manage his tyres properly through a race without guidance from the team – but he still did a good job, and he’s only 22 years old. Alonso and Button are both more than 10 years his senior.

Both Dennis and Boullier reckon Magnussen still has the potential to become a top driver in Formula 1. That’s why he’s been retained as test and reserve driver. But, at the moment, it is *unrealised* potential in their eyes.

Dennis was keen to stress the parallels Magnussen’s new path would take with the likes of Alonso, and another former McLaren double

world champion: Mika Hakkinen.

“One year’s testing does not take away the opportunity to race in the future,” argues Dennis. “Fernando spent a year testing between Minardi and Renault; Mika did two years at Lotus, came here, did one year’s testing then raced for us. And both then subsequently went on to win world titles.”

By demoting Magnussen, but not rejecting him, McLaren feels it has squared the circle and looked after both its short and long-term interests. And with Stoffel Vandoorne, favourite for next year’s GP2 title, and Honda protege Takuya Izawa racing at the next level down, there is more than an eye on the future.

Magnussen has been aligned with the team since the early days of his career and realistically had no other options. If McLaren hadn’t kept Button racing, he would have walked away from F1, taking his



impressive scoring and vast experience with him.

Honda has already talked about a potential customer engine programme in 2016. If that comes to fruition, it’s reasonable to expect that Magnussen’s driving skills will come with the package. For now, all he can do is sit and wait.



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“Now he’s chosen, the pressure is really on Button to deliver”



▶ MP4-29 improved, were magnificent, as though he knew he was driving for his career. If that was the case, Dennis will naturally expect to see him deliver that kind of performance race-in race-out. He will need to if he wants to avoid getting ‘Kimi Raikkonened’ by Alonso next year.

“Jenson now has no reason not to get the job done,” Dennis adds. “There was a turning point for me, which was strangely the conversation that took place between Jenson and I after the [last] race. It was in contrast to the previous month. It re-energised in me the belief that Jenson did want to be in a Formula 1 car for all the right reasons. And I really believe that he can absolutely kick Fernando’s butt.

“If he can do that – great; if he’s going to get close to that – great. We want two drivers that are going to win races. These guys are seasoned veterans. They understand the media, they understand the chemistry inside the team, and they’ve both had enough experience of McLaren to know that we have one common objective – we have to win.”

Now he’s been ‘chosen’, the pressure is well and truly on Button to deliver alongside a driver who most feel is the very best in the world.

But none of this really explains why the decision took so long, and why it had to be deferred repeatedly. But then difficult choices often seem much simpler in hindsight. McLaren has made the right choice for now – something it hasn’t always done successfully on race weekends when it comes to strategy. You could certainly accuse it of grossly overthinking things, but it got there in the end, and now F1 fans can look forward to two world champions pitting their wits against each other in the same car.

“I know the media, fans, sponsors etc put on every bit of pressure they could for a decision,” says Dennis. “But that decision sits with me and I take the consequences of the results in 2015. So I can feel completely justified in taking my time, because while it was a little bit painful for the two drivers, the pain they had then is nothing in comparison to the pain that I will suffer if the decision proves to be wrong.”

In fairness, this is one call that McLaren got right – eventually. 🍷

ALONSO: MAKING AMENDS FOR 2007

It’s not often that Fernando Alonso finds himself overshadowed, but the furore surrounding Button’s future rendered his new Spanish team-mate’s first public engagement with McLaren something of a sideshow.

Alonso’s deal to return to McLaren has been an open secret for weeks. Finally able to talk freely about his defection from Ferrari, Alonso said he had returned to Woking to finish the job he started in 2007. He described that year, where he left the team in acrimonious circumstances after a single season, as the lowest point of his Formula 1 career so far.

“It was not the best feeling in 2007,” says Alonso. “I was happy with everything I have done apart from 2007. I didn’t achieve or deliver the best of myself.

“Years later you are more mature; you understand things you didn’t know at 25 years old. Now I arrive to finish the job I started. This

was the first and the main priority to come back.”

McLaren chairman Ron Dennis, who was at the centre of the storm with Alonso and then-rookie Lewis Hamilton in 2007, said the passing of time had relieved any tension. “In Formula 1 seven weeks is a lifetime – seven years is a huge amount of time,” says Dennis. “I know the media will be looking for any kind of fracture in any part of the team’s relationship, and especially Fernando and I, but I can tell you you’ll be wasting your time. It isn’t an issue.”

Dennis also believes Hamilton was a key player in the problems at McLaren escalating in 2007, rather than Alonso being solely to blame. “To go back to that period, you look at this young guy, understandably perceived by many as the chosen one,” he adds. “But [he was] also someone who had immaturity, and really, who struck the first blow? I would say Lewis had his role in starting this process, which escalated.”



Dennis (right) is convinced there will be no issues between himself and Alonso this time



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Gary Anderson

The Inside Line

McLaren made the right call to keep Jenson Button, and it'll be intriguing to see how the dynamic with Fernando Alonso plays out

McLaren's decision to keep on Jenson Button to partner Fernando Alonso next year is the right one. During my time on the Formula 1 pitwall, I usually found that young, hungry chargers such as Rubens Barrichello, Eddie Irvine, Ralf Schumacher and Giancarlo Fisichella came up with the goods. But, given McLaren's need to get the new Honda power unit working, it makes sense to keep on Button, who after all has a lot of experience working with the Japanese during his Honda days.

Jenson had a strong end to the year, getting regular top-five results in an improving McLaren. And at 34 he's not exactly over the hill. The key to getting the best out of the new engines (once you've made them run for more than a lap or two without going bang) is getting the software that makes the various parts of the power unit work well together. Jenson has plenty of experience of giving the kind of precise engine feedback McLaren and Honda will need. Remember how much trouble some engine manufacturers had at the start of the 2014 season with three or four teams to do the work? Honda has just one team, and must make that count.

But I'm pleased that McLaren has not cast aside Kevin Magnussen, who had a good first season. As you would expect, there were some errors and poor weekends among the high points, but he proved himself to be a driver worthy of a place in F1. McLaren claims he will be back on the grid in 2016, possibly with a Honda



him momentum and, if the front end does not turn in well, he can't keep the minimum speed up.

Alonso likes a car with a little understeer. One of the reasons he outperformed Kimi Raikkonen this year was that he overcame the lack of front-end grip of the Ferrari by how he approaches the corner on the brakes. By unsettling the rear, he is able to rotate the car and has that ability to keep the back of the car under control.

These are very different driving styles and there will need to be a difference in set-up between the two cars.

“My biggest concern is that Button and Alonso require very different car characteristics”

customer team, so he just has to be patient. It might also prove to be a good situation for him to be out of if Honda struggles in 2015. If McLaren has a bad season, it would have been very easy for a young driver such as Magnussen's career to be ruined by it.

In Alonso and Button, McLaren has one of the strongest driver line-ups on the grid. It's rare for two drivers with world championships on their CVs to be put together, and there are already questions about whether Button can live with Alonso. Those same questions were asked when Button joined Lewis Hamilton at McLaren in 2010, and that didn't turn out badly. But the balance of power between the two could depend on the car.

My biggest concern were I running the team would be that they require very different car characteristics to suit their driving styles. Button needs a car with a very good balance to allow him to carry good mid-corner speed. If the rear is in any way unstable on the way in, that costs

It should be possible to dial in what a driver prefers, but I'm pretty sure in the end that if McLaren can build a car that suits Button's style of driving, then Alonso will thrive with it – when I say he can drive a car with understeer where some others can't, that is probably because he has had to.

On a personal and engineering level, I'm sure that Alonso and Button will work reasonably well together. Jenson has always shown himself to be able to get on with doing his own thing whoever his team-mate is, while Alonso will be happy as long as he has the edge. It's certainly a strong line-up, one that should score plenty of points even if the McLaren is no more competitive than it was this year.

Whatever happens, it's going to be great to follow how McLaren, Honda, Alonso and Button get on next year. Expectations are high, and everyone keeps talking up the chances of wins. But I suspect it's not going to be that easy. ❧

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TOP 50 DRIVERS 2014

Who have been the standout drivers of 2014? We've once more put our heads together to come up with the traditional **AUTOSPORT** top 50 list. There's been a lot of movement from last year, but the eclectic mix remains, with five series represented in the top 10

50

Earl Bamber

Porsche Supercup champion
Asian Carrera Cup champion

NEW ENTRY



Q&A

You raced so much this year in Porsches. Was that really good for getting into the rhythm?
It was great because I got 20 to 25 weekends in the Cup car – I was just living inside the car, and that helped make the season very successful. We also had some success at the start of the season, winning the Bathurst 12 Hours in a Cup car as well, so that was great. Then doing some of the iconic races like Daytona, Sebring and Petit Le Mans.

You were leading the German series with Timo Bernhard's Team 75 up until August, after which there were some clashes...
There were three rounds that clashed with Asia but Timo wanted to keep the same driver in for the rest

of the season, or a consistent driver. So then it wasn't possible to return. But I think our results there were pretty good to be leading. It was also fantastic for his team – they are a very, very small team. We were just getting the most out of what we had and pulling some big results out against some of the big teams.

How satisfying was it to be leading the German Carrera Cup when many Germans think that series is even more competitive than Supercup?
Supercup is more difficult because you get such limited running. You get one practice, one qualifying and one race. In Germany you get free practice, two qualifying sessions and two races so there's more window of opportunity to make a difference.

BAMBER'S RECORD IN CARRERA CUP CARS IN 2014

13 COUNTRIES RACED IN	11 FASTEST LAPS
2 CHAMPIONSHIPS WON	
12 WINS	6 POLES
22 PODIUMS	30 RACES

20

49

Kris Meeke

7th in World Rally Championship

RE-ENTRY



Uninopohja is a hero-maker and a heartbreaker of a stage. It's proper Finland, all about flying and flat-out. Last year, Kris Meeke rolled out of what had been a stunning debut for the Citroen team on this stage. This time around, the stage was shortened and called Kakaristo, after the famous hairpin right in the middle of the test.

Once again, this stretch of road would be etched into the Meeke memory – but for all the right reasons. On

this year's Rally Finland, down this stage for the first time, Meeke and Paul Nagle passed Sebastien Ogier on pace for second place. That was part one of sealing their deal to stay in the DS3 next season. Part two came when Ogier got back past and Meeke kept his head, drove sensibly and shared the podium with the Polo boys a day later.

Finland nearly finished Meeke last year. But it made the man 12 months on.

48



Scott McLaughlin

5th in Australian V8 Supercars

NEW ENTRY

Scott McLaughlin arrived in Adelaide to start the 2014 season with a brand new Volvo S60, visiting engineers from Polestar HQ in Sweden to impress and a lot of Volvo jokes in the air.

He silenced the jokers almost immediately. In the second race of the season, he powered by Jamie Whincup for second place. In the final qualifying session in Sydney, he snatched P1 to equal Whincup for the most poles in the season, with 10. In between, there were four race wins, 10 podiums and a host of fastest laps. There could have been more if not for some new-car problems with items such as alternators and power-steering pumps.

He also won the Barry Sheene Medal, voted on by the V8 Supercar media corps, for the most likeable driver in the pitlane.

At 21, he looks to be the man capable of challenging Whincup on pure speed.

47

Nick Tandy

Porsche rising star

➡ NEW ENTRY

The Porsche factory GT driver won his class in the Daytona 24 Hours but had a luckless USC campaign thereafter. Impressive WEC performances highlighted his quality, as did Pirelli World Challenge and British GT victories.

TANDY ON...

Winning at Daytona...

"It was the first time I'd been there with a realistic shot at winning. It's difficult to expect anything with a new team but we were going for the win and it was as straightforward a 24-hour race at Daytona as you can expect!"

Finding the positives...

"It's almost certainly been the best year for me inside the car. We should have won the USC easily but had the majority of the bad luck.

"Austin was heartbreaking. We had a 40-second lead in the USC race and retired with a few laps to go and a 20-second lead in the WEC race before a problem in the final pitstop."

An LMP1 opportunity...

"To be recognised by the people you work for with the opportunity to do something else is great. The first test in the 919 Hybrid went very well. It's a bit of a nervous wait to find out what's happening."



46

Jules Bianchi

17th in F1 World Championship

➡ RE-ENTRY

At the time of writing, Bianchi remains in a critical condition following his sickening crash in the closing stages of the Japanese GP. Before then, he was having a strong season for Marussia. And it wasn't only his ninth place in Monaco that caught the eye.

After a difficult start, once Bianchi came to terms with the 2014 cars he was seriously fast. He passed Kamui Kobayashi brilliantly on his way to eighth on the road in Monaco, before a penalty was applied, proving his strength in battle.

This form continued even as the Marussia faded. Next year there's every chance he would have been racing a Sauber as a stepping stone to a potential Ferrari seat.

45

Petter Solberg

World Rallycross champion

➡ RE-ENTRY

Mexico, 2005. That was a long, long time ago. And, prior to this year, that was the last time Petter Solberg stood on the roof of a car and danced his dance. Granted, his last World Rally Championship win came the following September, but there were no celebrations following Michael 'Beef' Park's death. That was the event nobody wanted to win.

Between March 2005 and May this year, plenty of years and tears have passed. He'd come close, but never quite close enough to sharing a moment of glory with his beloved fans. His switch to rallycross still didn't deliver the dream last year. His Citroen broke too often.

This year, it was tougher. And so was he. This was the second coming of Petter Solberg.

From the third heat of the first World RX round, Solberg wouldn't be beaten. He was back jiggling on top of the car in Montalegre. Ten rounds and four wins later and he was back on top of the world.



44

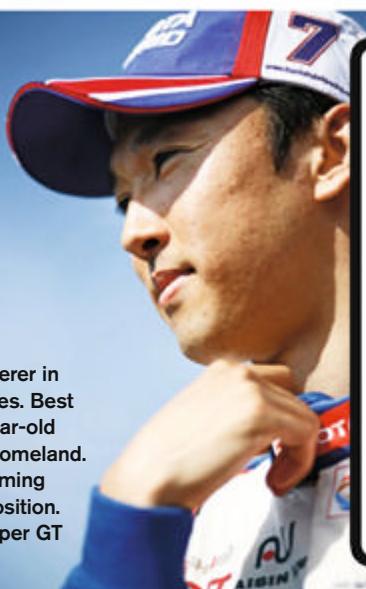
Kazuki Nakajima

Japanese Super Formula champion

RE-ENTRY

Nakajima outstripped even the versatile Andre Lotterer in 2014, winning races in three very different categories. Best known for his WEC activities with Toyota, the 29-year-old ex-grand prix driver was hugely successful in his homeland.

He won the Japanese Super Formula series, claiming victory in two out of nine races against strong opposition. On top of that, partnering James Rossiter in the Super GT rounds he was available for, Nakajima won twice.



BIG NUMBER

5.001
SECONDS

Nakajima's pole position time for the Super Formula finale at Suzuka was a 1m37.506s, just 5.001s off Nico Rosberg's Japanese GP pole time.

43

Dean Stoneman

2nd in GP3 Series

NEW ENTRY



Dean Stoneman is invariably talked about in the context of his fightback from cancer to return as a race-winning driver. But his backstory isn't a consideration when it comes to his ranking here. The bottom line is that he had a strong season, again showing his class on his way to second in the GP3 standings.

A very quick driver and a combative racer, it was following his switch from the struggling Manor squad to Finland's Koiranen GP team that he really starred. Taking over a car that had qualified at the back throughout the championship, he

immediately turned it into a winner at Sochi. His strong performances in the final two meetings rocketed him from eighth in the standings to the point where he was the only person who could deny Alex Lynn the title.

While three of his wins came with Manor, his two feature-race wins with Koiranen late on were the high points of his season. It was always a long shot and Lynn clinched the title in qualifying at the Abu Dhabi finale, but former F2 champion Stoneman had reminded everyone of his class.

42

Kevin Magnussen

11th in F1 world championship

DOWN 34

Kevin Magnussen enjoyed an accomplished rookie season that proves beyond doubt he deserves a long-term future in F1. While that won't be with McLaren in 2015, this is more down to circumstances than his own form.

After his podium debut, the Dane made good progress through the season. The only concern was that the very motivated Button did a better job of delivering results later on.

But as his experience builds, Magnussen will only continue to get better.



41

Thierry Neuville

6th in World Rally Championship

DOWN 1

Three seasons and three different factory World Rally Cars. And this year, his first win.

In the wake of Sebastien Ogier's departure from Citroen in 2011, Neuville was the coming man. The new Loeb. OK, he was from the far side of the Belgian border, but no matter. He was quick. But then came a handful of crashes, some tougher times and a move to M-Sport, where he flourished. This year he took a long-term deal to develop the Hyundai team and claimed the i20's maiden win.



TOP 50
DRIVERS
OF 2013



- 1 Sebastian Vettel
- 2 Sebastien Ogier
- 3 Jimmie Johnson
- 4 Fernando Alonso
- 5 Scott Dixon
- 6 Andre Lotterer
- 7 Lewis Hamilton
- 8 Kevin Magnussen
- 9 Loic Duval
- 10 Matt Kenseth
- 11 Nico Hulkenberg
- 12 Sebastien Loeb
- 13 Nico Rosberg
- 14 Frederic Makowiecki
- 15 Allan McNish
- 16 Kyle Busch
- 17 Mike Rockenfeller
- 18 Daniil Kvyat
- 19 Jamie Whincup
- 20 Sam Bird
- 21 Tom Kristensen
- 22 Augusto Farfus
- 23 Helio Castroneves
- 24 Romain Grosjean
- 25 Kimi Raikkonen
- 26 Raffaele Marciello
- 27 Yvan Muller
- 28 Simon Pagenaud
- 29 Mark Winterbottom
- 30 Anthony Davidson
- 31 Kevin Harvick
- 32 Mark Webber
- 33 Stoffel Vandoorne
- 34 Andrew Jordan
- 35 Felix Rosenqvist
- 36 Mike Conway
- 37 Fabio Leimer
- 38 Colin Turkington
- 39 Alexander Sims
- 40 Thierry Neuville
- 41 Gary Paffett
- 42 Rob Huff
- 43 Jenson Button
- 44 Justin Wilson
- 45 Valtteri Bottas
- 46 James Calado
- 47 Gianmaria Bruni
- 48 Alex Lynn
- 49 Oliver Turvey
- 50 Antonio Felix da Costa

40

Romain Grosjean

14th in F1 World Championship

DOWN 16



There were times when his frustration at driving an unpredictable dog of a car got to him, but despite dire machinery Grosjean's stunning turn of speed shone through in fits and starts.

Fifth on the grid in Spain was a fabulous high, while he coped well with the vastly different demands of the 2014 machinery.

"The car and the regulations haven't suited my driving style," says Grosjean. "I had to change it to get on top of it."

He remains one of the fastest drivers on the grid but needs machinery more worthy of his ability in 2015.



39

Tom Blomqvist

2nd in F3 European Championship

NEW ENTRY

In the second half of the F3 season, Blomqvist was very much on a par with champion Esteban Ocon and Max Verstappen, whom he beat to runner-up in the standings.

"Tom's major attribute was his qualifying pace," says Blomqvist's engineer Paul Wallace. "It was outstanding, even in a car he wasn't overly comfortable with. Pau springs to mind: he didn't have the car but he won a race."

"His understanding of what was needed to get the lap in led the whole team in the right direction."

38



Juan Pablo Montoya

4th in IndyCar Series

RE-ENTRY

Seven and a half years after walking away from single-seaters midway through the 2006 F1 season, many doubted whether Montoya had it in him to deliver on his return to open-wheelers in IndyCar. He silenced the critics with a consummately impressive comeback season, finishing fourth in the championship and winning at Pocono.

While he didn't set the world alight in many of the early races, by the second half of the season he was usually a threat for the podium. Particularly on road and street courses, his form was increasingly strong and proved that, while approaching his forties, he remains a formidable competitor.

TOP 50 IN STATS

14 F1 DRIVERS

214 WINS | 45 OLDEST DRIVER YVAN MULLER

28 AVERAGE AGE

CHAMPIONSHIPS 19

WEC DRIVERS 7

20 NATIONALITIES

- American
- Argentinian
- Australian
- Belgian
- Brazilian
- British
- Colombian
- Danish
- Dutch
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Italian
- Japanese
- New Zealand
- Norwegian
- Russian
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Swiss

17 YOUNGEST DRIVER MAX VERSTAPPEN

37

Colin Turkington

British Touring Car champion

↑ UP 1

The alliance of Colin Turkington and WSR claimed a second BTCC title in 2014. For all the complaints about the advantage of the rear-wheel-drive BMW 125i M Sport, few would argue that the Northern Irishman was not the class of the field.

Q&A

How good a season was 2014 for you?

It was a dream season but it doesn't happen by chance. We worked really hard this year; the team did a great job through the winter. There were no weak tracks and that only happens through hard work. It's a great reward for the whole team.

Is there a stand-out moment for you?

The defining moment for me was probably Knockhill. Coming from 22nd to fourth was probably better than any wins I've had. That's when the



momentum really swung. It could have gone with Jason [Plato] and it was important to fight back.

Was it tougher than it looked from the outside?

It's never easy or straightforward – it always goes to the last round. This year was no different. It was more difficult than ever. I have to say special thanks to my team WSR and Dick Bennetts. They've given me an incredible car. I want to be back with number 1 on the side of the car. I'm determined to be back and defend my crown.

eBay withdrawing its sponsorship of WSR presumably makes that tougher?

I'm synonymous with the BMW now and it fits me like a glove. But there's a very real chance that I won't be at WSR next year. I couldn't return when I won the title in 2009. I'm determined not to let that happen for a second time.



35

Pierre Gasly

2nd in Formula Renault 3.5

→ NEW ENTRY

Somehow Pierre Gasly didn't win a race en route to finishing runner-up in Formula Renault 3.5 this year, but that doesn't mean it was a season of underachievement.

While the reigning Formula Renault Eurocup champion didn't make the same splash that his FR2.0 rival Oliver Rowland did early on, his progression during 2014 was more gradual, and the improvements kept coming all the way to the end of the year. It was mainly down to individual days of brilliance from others in the field that he ended the year with eight podiums but no victories. By the end of the season, he was even starting to see the funny side (through gritted teeth) of narrowly missing out so many times.

"Even if we didn't get the win, the main thing was to always be in the top three," says the Frenchman. "I still have this feeling that I should have got a win, but I'm really happy with my year."

The 18-year-old, who made six GP2 starts with Caterham late in the year, signed off with a bang as he dominated post-season GP2 testing.



36

Yvan Muller

2nd in World Touring Car Championship

↓ DOWN 9



Touring car heavyweight Yvan Muller appeared unsettled by the immediate impact of Jose Maria 'Pechito' Lopez in this year's WTCC. The Citroen Racing team-mates were the only men in contention for the crown, but Muller's title defence got off to an uneven start in Morocco, where he became entangled in a start-line accident.

Muller served up a fightback, of sorts, in the first half of the season. In the opening seven rounds, he achieved four first-rate feature-race wins and three pole positions. But the four-time champion's previous WTCC experience counted for less thanks to the introduction of TC1 regulations in 2014. He expressed dissatisfaction at his incomplete understanding of the C-Elysee's aerodynamic capabilities, after years building an intuitive feel for the previous machines.

At the season end, Muller trailed new champion Lopez by 126 points. Readers may therefore be surprised to find Yvan in AUTOSPORT's Top 50 for

an eighth time in 13 years. He had, after all, made qualifying errors in Moscow and Marrakech, a questionable lunge on Hugo Valente at Suzuka and incurred a jump-start penalty in Slovakia. But four retirements through accidents, none of his making, and a puncture have been put into consideration.

"This year, I struggled a bit on the car," said Muller, "and I know I need to work on myself during the winter. We have some evolutions to the car for next year, and there is something that I can't talk about too much but relating to the front axle that should help me. We'll see."

"My experience didn't help so much with the new car and because of the Citroen simulator, which Seb [Loeb] and Jose have developed. It was Pechito's first time in Macau but if you include the laps in the simulator he has done more laps than I have. For me it's not realistic but for them it is. I hope we have the same result for Citroen next year, just a different order."

34

Mattias Ekstrom

2nd in DTM

RE-ENTRY



Ultimately, it was Mattias Ekstrom who rescued Audi from facing the embarrassment of its first winless season in the DTM since 2000.

With two wins at the season's death, and two other podiums along the way, the Swede also played a crucial part in the Ingolstadt crew winning the manufacturers' title (despite that risk of a winless season lasting until the penultimate round), and finished took in the drivers' standings.

In the end, it was his risk-taking approach that led to him closing out the season with two wins on the trot. It took until Zandvoort and Hockenheim for his ploy of being one of the

only frontrunners brave enough to start on the harder-compound Hankook rubber to pay off.

In another series, where races are more prone to safety cars, the concept of losing ground early and waiting for a caution to bunch the field up later on would have worked far more often. For example, just one safety-car period would have probably won Ekstrom the season opener at Hockenheim.

But it took until the final two rounds of the season for the safety car to play a part big enough to help Ekstrom make the most of his favoured strategic choice. Of course, when the sun did shine his way, Ekstrom was more than up to the task.

"To be a part of a team which is used to winning, and is not winning, it makes a strange atmosphere," said Ekstrom when quizzed about Audi's lack of wins in 2014 before his Zandvoort triumph. When a driver can take it upon himself to change a situation like that, in a period during which a whole eight-car squad feels down on its luck, it speaks volumes about that driver's quality.

Adding to Ekstrom's impressive 2014 season are his exploits in the World Rallycross Championship. He took the wheel of an Audi S1 run by his own EKS RX squad at just three rounds in 2014, but he won one of them.

33

Laurens Vanthoor

Blancpain Endurance champion; Blancpain GT champion

NEW ENTRY



The rise of the young Belgian continued in 2014. Vanthoor came of age in his second year of sportscar racing in 2013 on the way to victory in the FIA GT Series, but he took a further step forward through another championship-winning season in 2014 to emerge as the best driver on his side of the sportscar divide.

A year ago, AUTOSPORT ranked Vanthoor behind fellow Audi factory driver Rene Rast in its list of the top 10 GT drivers. Twelve months on, the 23-year-old has leapfrogged the German. His qualifying record in the Blancpain Sprint Series against his team-mate at the Belgian WRT squad – six-one in Vanthoor's favour – has something to do with it, but so too do a series of strong drives in both the BSS and

the Blancpain Endurance Series.

Vanthoor was every bit as good as Rast when they joined forces in WRT's superteam at the Spa 24 Hours, even if his co-driver stole the headlines by chasing down the ailing Marc VDS BMW to steal the victory at the end. That result in the double-points blue-riband enduro provided the bedrock of his successful bid for the BES crown, while an imperious performance on the way to a double victory on the streets of Baku in Azerbaijan in the BSS finale gave him overall Blancpain GT Series title to go with it.

Vanthoor underlined his status as one of the men to watch on Audi's roster of GT talent in 2014 and must surely have a future with the German manufacturer beyond GT3 racing.

32

Alex Lynn

GP3 champion

UP 16



Q&A

What was your best qualifying lap?

I really liked my lap at Budapest. It was such a difficult session and I messed up my first two sets of tyres. My lap was mega and I thought there was no way anyone could beat it, but Richie Stanaway pipped it by half a tenth.

And your best race?

The reversed-grid race at Spa. Me and Richie were on the front row together in the damp and I was nervous about the conditions. I knew I couldn't let him beat me. Mentally that was a big win.

And your best post-season test? Formula 1, DTM or GP2?

F1 [with Lotus] was very special – my boyhood dream. Especially when the floodlights came on with an hour to go as I drove down the pitlane. I thought, 'Yeah, this is what it's about!'

31



Brad Keselowski

5th in NASCAR Sprint Cup

RE-ENTRY

The esoteric points system in the NASCAR Sprint Cup meant that the controversial Keselowski was not one of the four drivers who shot for the title in the final race of the year. But his performances during the 2014 season, winning six times and taking five pole positions, earn him a place in this ranking.

Not only that, but the 30-year-old also won five races in the Nationwide Series in 11 starts, as well as winning at Bristol in the Truck Series. There were a few arguments along the way, but that served only to make him a bigger star in the USA.

30

Max Verstappen

3rd in F3 European Championship

NEW ENTRY

When Jos Verstappen stopped me in the Norisring paddock and asked which F1 team I thought might offer the best opportunities for his son, it was quickly apparent that we were talking about just Red Bull or Mercedes.

Jos reckoned there was too much talent in the queue at Red Bull. Neither of us at that time, late June, could have guessed Red Bull would leapfrog him over Carlos Sainz, Alex Lynn and Pierre Gasly. Just watch him go in 2015...

Marcus Simmons

29

Daniil Kvyat

15th in F1 World Championship

DOWN 11

At the age of 19, amid fears that the step would be too great from GP3/F3 level into F1, Daniil Kvyat was on a near-vertical learning curve heading into the season-opening Australian Grand Prix. Making Q3 was one thing, but his first proper racing start, grand prix distance and live pitstops in an F1 car would all be in the race itself.

Many drivers would have buckled under the pressure, but not Kvyat. He has a steely resolve, and finished ninth in his first grand prix.

Kvyat never looked back. He never looked out of place in F1 and his reward is a berth with Red Bull's senior team.



TOP 50 STALWARTS

Since the AUTOSPORT Top 50 started in 2002, only one driver has been ever-present. That honour falls to Jenson Button. He's on 13, and here are the other stalwarts – fading in boldness and diminishing in size – down to those on seven.

- Petter Solberg
- Felipe Massa
- Yvan Muller
- Jenson Button**
- Nico Hulkenberg
- Kimi Raikkonen
- Jamie Whincup
- Scott Dixon
- Mark Webber**
- Sebastian Vettel
- Gary Paffett
- Heikki Kovalainen
- Jimmie Johnson**
- Nick Heidfeld
- Giancarlo Fisichella
- Helio Castroneves
- Sebastien Bourdais
- Sebastien Loeb**
- Dario Franchitti
- Nico Rosberg
- Lewis Hamilton
- Jarno Trulli
- Rubens Barrichello
- Fernando Alonso**
- Juan Pablo Montoya

28

Esteban **Ocon**

European F3 champion

NEW ENTRY

This protege of the Gravity management stable – and therefore also the similarly owned Lotus F1 team – graduated from the Formula Renault Eurocup having finished third behind Pierre Gasly and Oliver Rowland. But there was a belief in some French motorsport circles that it was actually Ocon who was the realest of deals, that he had been driving equipment not quite on a par with that of his rivals.

Before the end of the FR2.0 season he had already undertaken his first test in an F3 car, with Prema Powerteam at Imola. Those who were there report that he was comfortably better than the other rookies who turned out (including GP3 star-to-be Marvin Kirchhofer) and even lapped faster than Raffaele Marciello, who was in the process of wrapping up the 2013 European F3 title.

"From when we had our first test at Imola we knew that this driver was something special," says Prema team manager Rene Rosin. "But winning in F3 is really difficult, and it had never happened that

a rookie had won a European F3 championship [actually since Riccardo Patrese in 1976!]."

Some, though, were convinced that this gangly 17-year-old Frenchman had it in him to do so. "Some people were sure that this driver could be something exceptional," continues Rosin. "At the first round at Silverstone it was clear – if he could keep his focus he could do it. He was incredibly fast, especially in qualifying, and he could have scored many more points at the start of the year but he wasn't 100 per cent synchronised with the starting system."

Such was Ocon's qualifying superiority – crucial in F3 – that he took 14 poles from the first 22 races. He then had a tricky mid-summer run with some on-track clashes.

"But this is part of the championship when you have 33 races," Rosin explains. "He managed to win, not as quickly as we wanted him to do it, but winning it was the most important thing."



27

Oliver **Rowland**

4th in Formula Renault 3.5

NEW ENTRY

Oliver Rowland's rookie campaign in Formula Renault 3.5 should have yielded more than fourth place, but some crippling reliability issues took their toll.

When things were going well Rowland was a force to be

reckoned with. He took to FR3.5 quicker than his 2013 Formula Renault Eurocup rival Pierre Gasly, winning on his second weekend, and he was a regular contender for poles and victories when the car was behaving itself.

He's opted for another year with Fortec in '15.

"I think coming back is the best for me," he says. "I thought I knew everything at the start of the year, but now I realise I'm a better driver than I was, and I'm happy about that."



26

Felipe **Massa**

7th in F1 World Championship

RE-ENTRY

The rejuvenated Brazilian had his best season since his run at the title in 2008. The move to Williams after being dropped by Ferrari worked well, even though his haul of three podiums should have been better.

There were some car problems, as well as a number of on-track incidents, all of which cost him better results. But there's no doubt Massa drove at a higher level this season than in his final years with Ferrari.

"It is a little bit frustrating," says Massa. "If you see how many points behind I am and how many points I lost in all these races [where things went wrong] I would have been fighting for the top four in the championship. It would have been a big fight between Valtteri [Bottas], [Sebastian] Vettel, [Fernando] Alonso and myself. But I was not there because I lost so many points."

As for the move to Williams, it proved inspired even though it was a risky tactic to join a team that had been languishing in the lower midfield for several seasons.

"When I first drove the car, I knew we could be fighting with Ferrari," says Massa.



25



Simon Pagenaud

5th in IndyCar Series

UP 3

That Penske, a team with no vacancies whose drivers had just finished first, second and fourth in the points, created a fourth entry for 2015 simply to secure Simon Pagenaud's services says everything you need to know about the Frenchman's 2014 season, and the impact he has made on IndyCar in recent years.

Since he first appeared in Champ Car with Walker Racing in 2007, Pagenaud has looked like a potential champion. Though that process was temporarily derailed by the championship merger diverting Pagenaud into sports cars, Sam Schmidt's wise decision to bring him back into IndyCar full-time has more than paid off.

The Schmidt Peterson team trails big guns Penske, Ganassi and Andretti in both experience and resources,

but you would never have known it from Pagenaud's speed. Wins on the Indianapolis road course and in Houston were the headlines and a charge from the back to fourth in Toronto was another highlight. But perhaps the most impressive aspect was how the underdog Pagenaud/Schmidt combination managed to be such consistent frontrunners in a championship whose sheer closeness and high-stakes qualifying format makes consistency elusive for most.

Going into the deciding rounds, Pagenaud was the only outsider keeping Penske duo Will Power and Helio Castroneves on their toes in the championship battle – something that Ganassi's and Andretti's illustrious quartets couldn't manage.

His ultimate fifth place in the standings was cruel given that until the double-points Fontana finale – where he limped around many laps down in a car never back on the pace after a testing crash – he had sat third. But it still kept up Pagenaud's remarkable run of finishing in the top five in the championship in all three of his complete seasons.

Pagenaud has yet to thrive on ovals, something Penske machinery should give him chance to achieve, while Power gets a team-mate who can rival him for explosive pace on road and street courses. Not every underdog hero lives up to expectations when they get their big chance, but there seems little chance of Pagenaud disappointing next season.

28

24

Sebastian Vettel

5th in F1 World Championship

DOWN 23

For the first time since his maiden half-season in 2007, Sebastian Vettel failed to win a race. He was outperformed by Red Bull team-mate Daniel Ricciardo over the season, earning his lowest ranking in AUTOSPORT's Top 50 since he first appeared in 2007.

Struggles to adapt to the post-exhaust-blowing era of F1 were at the heart of his troubles but, while the story of the season was underperformance, he did drive well enough to get some good results.

"There are other people that haven't won for a long time," says Vettel. "I had races where if things had gone a little bit differently this year, I could have won, but that's normal.

"Performance-wise, we got very close to winning in Canada; if I'd pitted a lap later it would be a different story. In terms of pace, we were very strong in Singapore as well and in Hungary, but the safety car didn't favour me. We had some races where we were close but others where I struggled more than Daniel. It's been an up-and-down season."



23



Gianmaria Bruni

1st in GT in World Endurance Championship

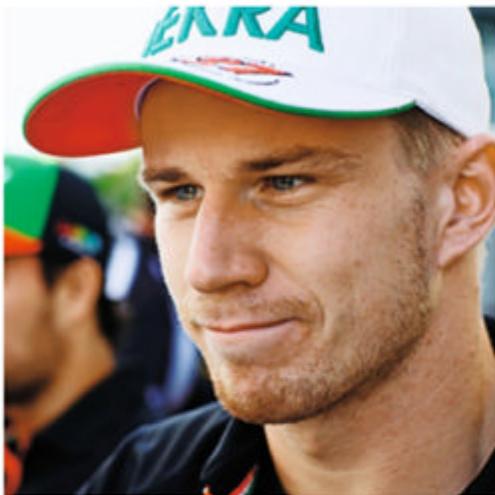
UP 24

It felt like Bruni drove every lap of every race like a qualifying run in 2014. And that's not so far from the truth – the World Endurance Championship's GTE Pro class was that competitive this year.

Bruni and AF Corse Ferrari team-mate Toni Vilander, who claimed the world title with a round to spare, will tell you that they didn't have any choice in the face of the clear superiority of the rival Aston Martin Vantage GTE. That's neither a debate for these pages nor entirely accurate, but it is an undeniable truth that they had to drive to the limit all the time and the AF team had to be perfect in the pits.

It might sound strange to claim that Bruni drove better than ever in 2014 (especially when we said it last year), but he was inch-perfect throughout the year – and his reward was the double of a Le Mans 24 Hours class win and the World Endurance Cup for GT Drivers.





22

Nico Hulkenberg

9th in F1 World Championship

↓ DOWN 11

To purloin a football cliché, it was a season of two halves for both Hulkenberg and the Force India team. Early on, the duo scored relatively heavily. But as the season progressed, a combination of bigger teams developing quickly and Force India struggling to make its updates work made results harder to come by.

Hulkenberg, too, didn't always seem able to reach the heights we've come to expect. But overall he still had a strong season. While team-mate Sergio Perez got the attention-grabbing podium in Bahrain, this was down to his edge on tyre management. Hulkenberg was comfortably the more consistent of the two. And his tyre management certainly improved.

"Only really in Bahrain," says Hulkenberg of races where he was outmanaged by Perez. "In Austria I was compromised with big issues with some parts on the car. Likewise in Montreal there was a good opportunity when I decided to start on the opposite strategy, but the safety car screwed it up. There were a few instances where we were quite unlucky."

A quartet of fifth places was the highlight as Hulkenberg's class shone through.



21

Jamie Whincup

Australian V8 Supercar champion

↓ DOWN 2

Whincup claimed a dominant sixth V8 Supercars title, strengthening his claim not only to being one of Australia's greatest racers, but also one of the finest tin-top exponents in the world.

2014 WINS 15	CAREER WINS 90
2014 PODIUMS 22	CAREER PODIUMS 163
2014 POLE POSITIONS 10	CAREER POLES 61
2014 FASTEST LAPS 9	FRONT-ROW STARTS 106
2014 TOTAL POINTS 3364	CAREER FASTEST LAPS 46
2014 LAPS LED 389	RACES LED 135
YEARS IN V8S 2002-2014	CAREER LAPS LED 2908
V8 TITLES 6	BATHURST 1000 WINS 4

20

Helio Castroneves

2nd in IndyCar Series

↑ UP 3

The Brazilian is one of those drivers who it's all too easy to overlook, so familiar is the sight of him doing well in Penske machinery in IndyCar. This was his 15th season driving for the legendary team, showing he must be doing something right, even though it was a year of second places for him.

Second in the championship to Penske team-mate Will Power despite a patchy end to the season, he also missed out on his fourth Indianapolis 500 win by just six hundredths of a second. With a bit more fortune on his side, he could easily have won both the title and the biggest race of the season, cementing his position in the pantheon of Indy legends.

Always quick, Castroneves was a consistent force and with three races remaining was right in the title hunt with Power. But his run-in was dreadful. Handling problems at Milwaukee left him down in 11th, at Sonoma he was caught in a lap-one accident, and then at Fontana, where he was still in contention for the title, he was penalised for an improper entry to the pits. That took the wind out of his sails and left him a distant second to Power.

Now 39, Castroneves proved that he still has it in him to have a run for the championship. So while he often seems hidden in plain sight, he remains one of the top performers in IndyCar.

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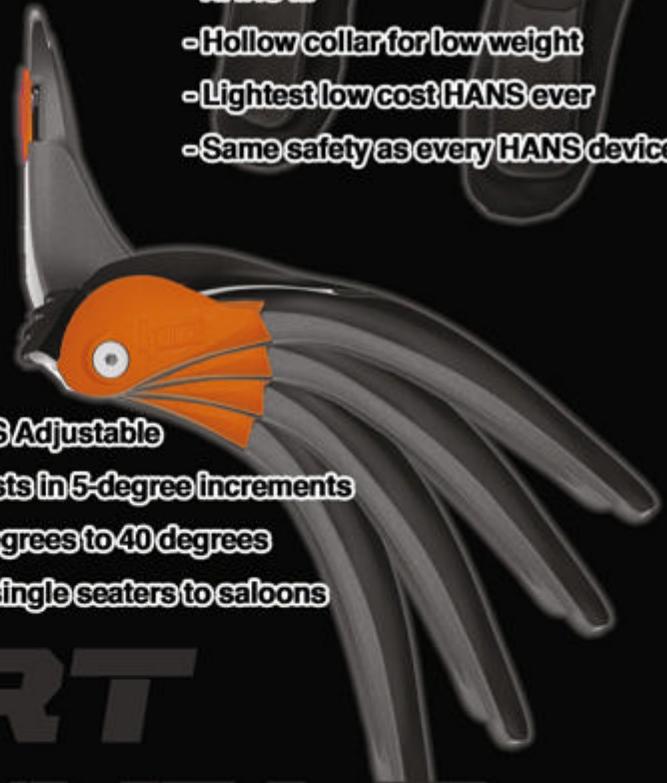
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19

Jari-Matti Latvala

2nd in World Rally Championship

RE-ENTRY

Two Sundays, three weeks apart. The contrast in those two summer days was unbelievable. The emotions were all Jari-Matti Latvala's.

The Finn started the month on the crest of a wave at home. He took the most confident, self-assured and brilliant win of his career, overcoming the mental blow of a brake problem that slashed his lead over Sebastien Ogier to just three seconds with one day to run.

On that first Sunday, he was unbeatable. Unstoppable. A world champion in the making.

Three Sundays down the line, he was distraught. He'd had Rally Germany in the palm of his hand. It would have been his first asphalt win. But then he went off, clattering his Polo through the vines and out of the event. Dream. Nightmare.

One thing is sure, though. Latvala's getting closer and closer and next year's world championship will be even harder fought between him and Ogier.



18

Jose Maria Lopez

World Touring Car champion

NEW ENTRY

Former TC2000 star Jose Maria Lopez became a hero to his countrymen in Argentina thanks to a series of sensational drives in this year's World Touring Car Championship. 'Pechito' made the most of a formidable Citroen C-Elysee to break WTCC records for the most wins and points in a season. "Of course I had the best car on the grid," he said, "but I also had three team-mates and this raises the value of what I have done. There were eight tracks that I didn't know. To have never been to Macau before and to win is just amazing – but things have been like that all year."



17

Jolyon Palmer

GP2 champion

NEW ENTRY

Were F1 as healthy as it should be financially, Palmer's dominant GP2 title campaign would have guaranteed him a place on the grid.

He has matured as a driver over his four years in GP2 to become a rounded performer, strong in both qualifying and race situations. That meant that neither fellow category veteran Felipe Nasr, nor eventual runner-up Stoffel Vandoorne, were able to get close to him.

Wrapping up the title with three races to spare underlines how comfortable he was.



ALL-TIME TOP 20

Awarding points to those appearing in the AUTOSPORT Top 50s since 2002 produces an unsurprising winner in Fernando Alonso. But the rest of the top 20 does contain a few shocks. Points are awarded to the top 10 each year based on the F1 scoring system of 25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1.

- 1 Fernando Alonso
- 2 Lewis Hamilton
- 3 Sebastien Loeb
- 4 Sebastian Vettel
- 5 Kimi Raikkonen
- 6 Michael Schumacher
- 7 Jenson Button
- 8 Jimmie Johnson
- 9 Marcus Gronholm
- 10 Juan Pablo Montoya
- 11 Petter Solberg
- 12 Dario Franchitti
- 13 Scott Dixon
- 14 Robert Kubica
- 15 Sebastien Ogier
- 16 Mark Webber
- 17 Daniel Ricciardo
- 18 Will Power
- 19 Giancarlo Fisichella
- 20 Andre Lotterer



NUMBER 1s 2002-2014

- 2002 Michael Schumacher
- 2003 Michael Schumacher
- 2004 Michael Schumacher
- 2005 Sebastien Loeb
- 2006 Fernando Alonso
- 2007 Kimi Raikkonen
- 2008 Robert Kubica
- 2009 Lewis Hamilton
- 2010 Sebastian Vettel
- 2011 Sebastian Vettel
- 2012 Fernando Alonso
- 2013 Sebastian Vettel
- 2014 Daniel Ricciardo

226

DRIVERS HAVE APPEARED IN THE TOP 10

101

DRIVERS HAVE ONLY MADE ONE APPEARANCE

4 HIGHEST-PLACING FOR ONE-HIT WONDERS

Marco Wittmann (2014)

16

Carlos Sainz Jr

Formula Renault 3.5 champion

NEW ENTRY

A record number of Formula Renault 3.5 wins in a season propelled Carlos Sainz Jr to the honour of being the first Red Bull junior to win that championship, and landed him a Formula 1 drive with Toro Rosso. But his dream appeared in tatters when the team's first vacancy went to car-racing rookie Max Verstappen.



Jean-Paul Driot, DAMS boss

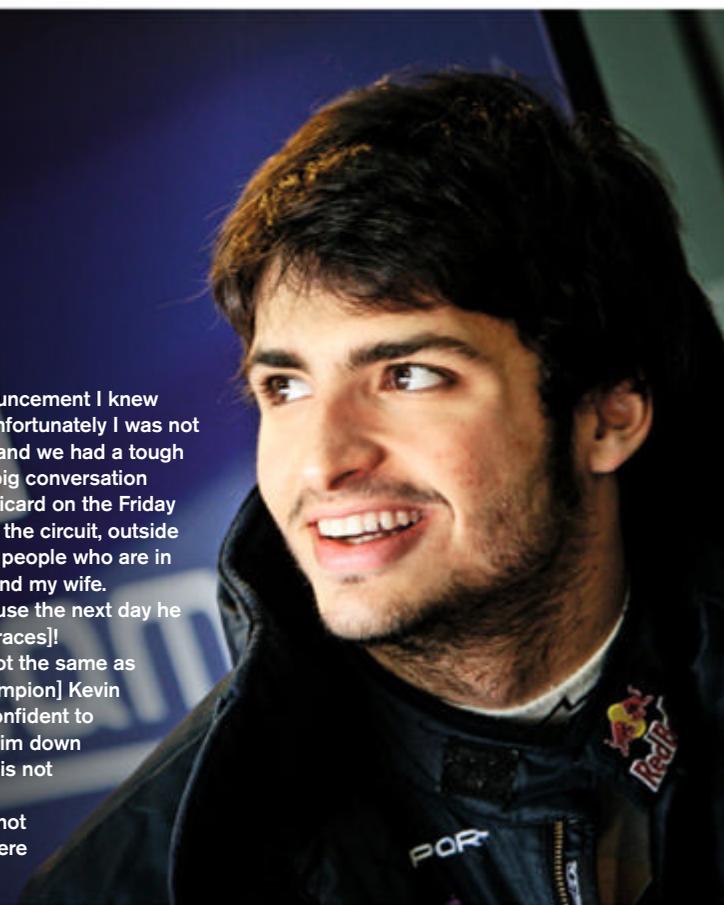
"This year Carlos demonstrated that when something strong happens against him, like Verstappen going to Toro Rosso, that he can react accordingly. To think you have lost your chance at F1 is quite a strong thing when you are 20 and you are hoping to get the seat. He proved he knew how to react, and that he can remain concentrated. Even if he was a little bit down during the summer.

"After the Verstappen announcement I knew what was going to happen. Unfortunately I was not at the next race in Budapest, and we had a tough weekend. But we had a very big conversation before the next race at Paul Ricard on the Friday night. I took Carlos outside of the circuit, outside of the team, outside of all the people who are in motor racing. It was just me and my wife.

"Apparently it worked because the next day he was quite good [winning two races]!

"Dealing with Carlos was not the same as working with [2013 FR3.5 champion] Kevin Magnussen. Kevin was overconfident to begin with, so I had to bring him down and explain to him that talent is not enough. And Kevin learned.

"Carlos had to mature and not get overexcited as soon as there is a little bit of pressure."



32



15

Jenson Button

8th in F1 World Championship

UP 28

After the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, there was every chance that Formula 1 had witnessed Jenson Button's final grand prix appearance. Still only 34, he faced question marks over his McLaren future and the man himself seemed resigned to his fate. It was only last week that McLaren finally confirmed he would be continuing alongside Fernando Alonso at the team next year.

The decision really was a no-brainer. Not only do the challenges of making the new Honda power unit work well play into Button's hands as a driver strong on engine feedback, but his performances, particularly late in the season, did not justify dropping him.

Perhaps it was the pressure of knowing he was fighting for his future but, after being given a hard time by rookie team-mate Kevin Magnussen in the first half of the season, Button did great things in the closing stages of the year. Even his old trait of struggling with a car with an unstable rear end, especially in qualifying, seemed less of a problem late on as he delivered a series of first-rate performances, finishing in the top five in four of the last five races of the season.

What didn't change is that Button oozed class on track during the whole year. In battle, he is one of the toughest drivers to race against because he is generally completely in control even in wheel-to-wheel

situations. That allows him to turn the tables on aggressors, and overcome his prey, more often than not. His outright speed has always been better than many make out, and even in qualifying he had marginally the better of the highly rated Magnussen, beating him 10-9.

As to how he will fare against Alonso next year, don't worry about it. There were doubts about going up against Lewis Hamilton at McLaren, yet his qualifying deficit was small over those three years and he actually outscored his team-mate. Button will surely show well against Alonso and prove that he has far more than just one or two more years at the top level in front of him.

14



Anthony Davidson

World Endurance champion

↑ UP 16

Q&A

Do you think you drove better than before this year?

Definitely. I really felt that I took another step as a sportscar driver. I believe I got on top of the new fuel-saving regulations.

What was your best drive?

It was a really clean year for me. I wasn't happy with my second stint at Interlagos, but the final two stints were the best drives of my life. Fuji was the event with which I was most happy in terms of the weekend.

Where did you and team-mate Sebastien Buemi have the edge over the drivers of the sister Toyota?

It was a mental thing. When you are leading a championship, it elevates you to a new level. Not fighting for the championship takes its toll.



13

Stoffel Vandoorne

2nd in GP2 Series

↑ UP 20

McLaren junior Vandoorne was placed in GP2 in 2014 and the move looked to have paid off handsomely when he won the opening feature race in Bahrain. But that result masked the rookie challenges he would inevitably endure.

Despite a rapid comeback that included four consecutive pole positions in a very strong season run-in, passing Felipe Nasr for runner-up spot, the title was out of reach. Vandoorne admits he struggled to adapt to the Pirelli tyres – he's not the first to face this challenge in GP2.

"They are very different compared with the Michelins I was driving last year [in Formula Renault 3.5]," he explains. "It's quite hard to get the tyres ready for that first lap.

"Even now, we discover new things each weekend. The mistakes are getting smaller and step by step we are getting there."



12

Neel Jani

3rd in World Endurance Championship

→ RE-ENTRY

The long-awaited and much-deserved opportunity to race for a factory was grasped in both hands by Jani in 2014. The Swiss emerged from this season as the best of a stellar cast of Porsche LMP1 drivers — not bad when you consider his team-mates included a grand prix winner straight out of Formula 1 and two former victors at the Le Mans 24 Hours. But if you were surprised by that, you clearly hadn't been paying attention.

Jani's talents were there to see from the moment he moved into sportscars with Rebellion Racing in 2009. Being paired with Formula 1 refugee Nick Heidfeld in 2012-13 provided a validation of his speed and consistency. A factory drive aboard Porsche's 919 Hybrid finally offered the chance to race at the sharp end of the grid.

The #14 Porsche more often than not had the upper hand over its sister car, and Jani was very much at the forefront of a campaign that took the Swiss driver and team-mates Romain Dumas and Marc Lieb to third place in the WEC points.



11

Kevin Harvick

NASCAR Sprint Cup champion

↑ UP 20

Thanks to the eliminator-style system adopted by NASCAR's Sprint Cup in 2014, there was always the danger that the winner would be someone who muddled their way through to the final-round decider then fluked a win. But Harvick, who did prevail in the shootout with Ryan Newman, Denny Hamlin and Joey Logano, was widely regarded as the worthy champion.

Based on full-season points, Jeff Gordon would have won; using the

previous chase format, it was Logano; but Harvick put in consistently high-class performances throughout 2014. His five victories (bolstered by four wins in 15 starts in the Nationwide Series) mean he is rightly ranked as the top NASCAR driver in the Top 50.

On top of those wins, he finished in the top five in 20 out of the 36 races, confirming that he was a consistent threat at the sharp end. He also held his nerve brilliantly in the Homestead finale, a race in which all four of the contenders battled at the front and he had to win to be sure of the crown.





10

Valtteri Bottas

4th in F1 World Championship

↑ UP 35

Q&A

How do you feel you have progressed as a driver this year?

I have definitely improved since last year and over the winter. The first races of this season I was definitely a better driver than I was last year. But during the season I have been really able to learn a lot just to get a lot more confidence in general in the car and get a better feel of everything. Just getting more experience always helps, but still there is lots to do to get better.

Did you learn a lot from Felipe Massa?

Well, there have been some interesting bits in driving style, there are differences between Pastor and Felipe. Little things like what you do with the steering, things like that. But other than that there is nothing major. Of course, it has been really good to have the experience of him because there have been some situations with the car set-up and he just gets this idea from the past and what has been done, and sometimes those things have worked. That's the advantage of experience. But nothing game-changing.

In the first few races of the season you appeared to be driving very aggressively but then maybe dialled it back a bit?

I think especially Melbourne was a good wake-up call for me just to calm down a bit. When I touched the wall there, I learned a lot from that weekend.

In many races after that when I have been in situations like that, when things are going really well, you get this good feeling and you want to push more. But I remember that race and back off a bit because you need to finish. How aggressive you are is a really fine line.

You had two shots at a possible pole with a maximum-attack final lap in Austria and Sochi.

Are you disappointed one of them didn't come off?

Yeah, it has been close. I know in Austria that I could have been on pole but some things prevented

it that were not my fault. And in Russia I did a really good lap until the last sector but even if it had been perfect, Mercedes would have been quicker. There is always next year!

What are the performances that stand out?

All of the podium races; they were really good ones for us as a team and me personally.

Do you see Austria as a potential win that got away?

I don't know. It still feels like a really positive weekend because it was my first podium. Looking back, it was the closest race we were to Mercedes so maybe, maybe not.



9

Sebastien Buemi

World Endurance champion

NEW ENTRY



Toyota will tell you that Buemi's talents as a sportscar driver were there to see as long ago as 2012 during a quadruple stint at the Le Mans 24 Hours on his only start for the Japanese marque that season. His sportscar prowess became more evident through a full World Endurance Championship campaign in 2013, but it was only this year that he was able to prove to the outside world that he really is one of the best sportscar drivers around on the way to winning the World Endurance Championship drivers' title with Anthony Davidson.

A seat in the best LMP1 car in the field, the Toyota TS040 HYBRID, gave him the opportunity to fully showcase his talents, of course, as did the decision

to allow him to take the start in six of the eight races – there is glory to be grabbed and headlines to be made when the lights go out. But the Swiss, Davidson and (initially) Nicolas Lapierre got the most out of the impressive tool that was given to them in a way that their team-mates aboard the sister car didn't.

Perhaps more importantly, Buemi sprinkled his season with some of those career-defining performances that ultimately separate the good from the great. His drive at Austin (35 seconds up on team-mate Alex Wurz in 20 laps and then a spirited chase of the second-placed Audi at the finish) and his opening stint at Shanghai (up to second place and within sight of the leader after having to drive through

the field following an early, strategic fuel stop) marked the boy down as a bit special. And then there was the Le Mans comeback drive for the #8 Toyota TS040 HYBRID, during which Buemi, Davidson and Lapierre were all superb in a car that wasn't exactly spot-on after its early shunt.

Buemi is an aggressive driver in traffic, and he did make mistakes at both Austin and Interlagos. Such prowess among the slower cars was one of the talents that helped make three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Allan McNish one of the best sportscar drivers of his generation. There was plenty of evidence in 2014 to suggest that Buemi could go on to achieve similar greatness.

8

Will Power

IndyCar champion

RE-ENTRY

In an era even more competitive than CART's 1990s halcyon, Will Power has been the fastest person in an IndyCar pretty much since Penske signed him. But that reputation for sheer speed was undermined by a reputation as a choker, someone who would blitz most of a season then find a way to lose the championship at the last gasp – probably on an oval.

There was little reason to suspect anything other than more of the same in 2014. Yet this year the three-time runner-up held it together and defeated mighty opposition from Penske team-mates Helio Castroneves and Juan Pablo Montoya, four-strong armies from both Andretti and Ganassi, plus the ultra-rapid Simon Pagenaud to become champion.

For a man whose previous near-misses had been largely due to mistakes, Power might've been expected to be more circumspect this time. He did the opposite.

He felt his 2010-12 last-gasp defeats and his generally disappointing '13 had been caused by trying to stifle his natural urges. When he convinced himself he had to play it safe, that style proved alien and led to more errors. The best answer, Power felt, was just to go for it. Take the fifty-fifty chances.

It worked. It also led to a lot of penalties early on, mostly for driving-standards misdemeanours, and one

particular collision in the Long Beach race left his long-time friend (and both past and future team-mate) Pagenaud enraged. But the 'just-be-yourself' philosophy was the right one, as Power was plenty quick enough to make up for every time things did go wrong, and was hardly a thug on track anyway. He also proved that he could keep his nose clean when required, and there were several times when Power settled for getting points in the bank.

There was one final hint that he might blow it when he spun in the penultimate round at Sonoma, a race he had looked set to control. It didn't matter, partly since Castroneves's day was even worse, and partly because Power didn't let the Sonoma error freak him out for the Fontana decider. Nor was he troubled by qualifying on the back row in an oversteering car as Castroneves took pole. There was a long race in which he could charge to the front, taking no prisoners along the way, and that's what he did.

Where the ovals had so often been Power's undoing, in 2014 they secured his title. A commanding drive on the quirky Milwaukee Mile three rounds from the end was pivotal, and bravery in traffic at Fontana ensured he held on to ninth as his handling faded. Demons conquered, ovals mastered, championship won.

7

Andre Lotterer

Le Mans 24 Hours winner

↓ DOWN 1



He might have only won two rounds of the World Endurance Championship in 2014, but the Audi driver came out of this season with his reputation as one of the world's top sportscar drivers fully intact, and perhaps even enhanced. His part in the comeback drive that took Audi to victory number 13 at the Le Mans 24 Hours was arguably his greatest ever at La Sarthe, and his performances over the rest of the season were always of the highest level, even when it became clear that the R18 e-tron quattro wasn't a competitive proposition on your average Tilke-drome.

Lotterer, once again, had a consistency of performance that set him apart from his team-mates at Audi, both in his car and the second R18. Time after time the #2 Audi would come alive when the German clambered aboard and immediately register its fastest lap of the race.

He had only two peers in the WEC this season in Sebastien Buemi and Neel Jani, and Lotterer beats them both in this list courtesy of his exploits in Super Formula in Japan, where he won races and finished third in the points with TOM'S, and what he achieved at Spa in the summer. And we're not just talking about his exploits in an Formula 1 car.

Lotterer proved at Spa by outqualifying Caterham team-mate Marcus Ericsson by almost a second what many of us have always known — that he is one of the great talents 'lost' to F1. That he did it without so much as having driven the Caterham-Renault CT05 prior to free practice makes it an even more impressive feat, though a decade ago he had a year in a slow green car as Jaguar's test driver. The team clearly thought it was no fluke, because he was invited back even when old friend Colin Kolles was no longer at the helm after

Caterham was placed in administration. Having scratched his F1 itch, he sensibly declined the invitation to jump in the perennial also-ran again.

One month earlier he had proved his versatility at the wheel of an Audi R8 LMS ultra GT3 car by running competitively at the Spa 24 Hours. The outing, in a car shared with WEC team-mates Marcel Fassler and Benoit Treluyer, didn't yield the result their pace deserved, but it showed that Lotterer can be fast in anything and underlined his enthusiasm for the sport.

The racer's spirit was there for all to see in 2014, perhaps because of the difficult circumstance in which Audi found itself after Le Mans. Nowhere was that more apparent than on the first lap at Fuji when Lotterer vaulted into the lead from fifth on the grid, overriding the fuel cut, before dramatically slowing at the final corner when the electronics got their way.

36

6

Nico Rosberg

2nd in F1 World Championship

↑ UP 7

When Rosberg was asked about the significance of winning the new-for-2014 pole position trophy after topping qualifying in Brazil, he predictably played it down. After all, he was in it for the big one, the world championship, and trinkets like a gong for qualifying proved largely meaningless.

"It's a nice thing, but it doesn't really have any weight at the moment. In 10 years I'll look back and say, 'OK, among other things, I got the pole

trophy'. But now the focus is on the championship."

The championship didn't come to him, but he still has the pole trophy. On reflection, it's important to note just how significant an achievement this was. He outqualified Hamilton 12 times to seven over the season — occupying pole position 11 times — a statistic that would have seemed impossible heading into the season.

Yes, he had showed well compared with Hamilton in qualifying the previous year, but his team-mate is regarded as the best qualifier in F1. Such was Rosberg's speed on Saturdays that there were several occasions, such as Canada and Austria, where he forced errors out of Hamilton in Q3. That is an achievement worth celebrating.

Remarkably, it was in the races, perceived as Rosberg's real strength, that things went wrong. Too many times he put himself into a potential winning position but failed to close it out. In Bahrain, Italy, Japan, Russia and the USA, he had shots at victory and was well-placed to deliver, only to lose out. Hamilton was the stronger performer on Sundays.

The inability to beat Hamilton in a straight fight was the problem. Of Rosberg's five wins, those in

Australia and Germany were a consequence of Hamilton's problems. So it was only in Monaco (where his off in qualifying ensured pole position), Austria and Brazil that he did so. As Rosberg admitted after the season-ending Abu Dhabi GP, he has some work to do on race pace.

But the thing that really impresses about Rosberg is his ability to improve. Time and again he looked beaten, but raised his game to take the fight to Hamilton. After Hamilton's four-race run of victories early in the season, Rosberg fought back with that infamous win in Monaco. Whether by fortune or Machiavellian intent, that turned the tables on Hamilton and put Rosberg into the ascendancy mid-season.

Even when Hamilton went on another run late in the year, Rosberg pulled victory out of the bag at Interlagos to ensure that he had a decent shot at the title in the Abu Dhabi finale. This was not the season of a number two driver, but one operating at a high level and able to give his more highly regarded team-mate the hurry-up.

His pole position trophy will always be testament to that.





5

Sebastien **Ogier**

World Rally champion

↓ DOWN 3

Ogier's path to a second World Rally Championship title was a little tougher than his first, with a strong challenge from Volkswagen team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala. But the Frenchman's class won out, with eight victories in 13 events allowing him to take the title with a round to spare.

Q&A

Which was the best win of the year?

Emotionally, Monte was a good one – it's my home rally and it's one of the most iconic events. It was important. But Spain, in terms of performance, I was really happy with that one. I really expected to struggle on that first day in gravel, so I really prepared for it and it was fantastic. That first day in Spain was one of my best. This result was special to take the second title like this.

What was the worst moment of the year?

I think you know the answer to this one! Rally Germany was a very bad one – two crashes in less than 12 hours. And the second crash was a huge one, probably the biggest one. I think it's fair to say that I was quite lucky at that moment that nothing more serious happened.



Which was your favourite stage this year?

I would have to say the Myhinpaa stage in Finland. We were fighting a lot with Jari-Matti [Latvala]. There was less than four seconds between us starting the final day and we managed to take 1.3 seconds from him in there. Both of us were completely flat-out all of the time and just flying through the stage. We were quite a bit faster than the rest of the guys and, at that time, there was a lot of adrenaline in the car and a lot of pleasure!

Which rally was your favourite?

Monte is something special. It's a huge challenge.

You were going to say Wales, I think...

Ah, I could say Wales. It was a great fight on the first day, but the two last days were not so much of a fight – but it's still a challenge to stay on the road.

4

Marco Wittmann

DTM champion

NEW ENTRY

It would be incredibly easy to assume that Marco Wittmann has been placed far too high on this list, given that what he won in 2014 is, essentially, a domestic touring car championship.

But that assumption is an oversimplification of what Wittmann achieved this season. He didn't just win the DTM title. He dominated. And in the DTM, that isn't an easy thing to do.

Make no mistake; the DTM is remarkably competitive. In 2014, only one driver failed to score a single point. It was Vitaly Petrov, the same guy who finished third in the 2011 Australian Grand Prix. When an F1 podium finisher is dead last, you know you have a quality field on your hands.

And that is why Wittmann is so high on this list. There are few, if any, series in the world that can boast a level of overall driver ability as high as the DTM, so to



finish 50 points clear at the top is a big deal.

What was incredibly refreshing about Wittmann's 2014 title run was that he actually went out and won the championship, rather than just collecting it through consistency. After three rounds he was in a position where he could have spent the rest of season settling for spots just inside the top 10, and relying on the inconsistent nature of DTM results to help him limp across the line to the title.

But instead he went on and won two more races, giving him a total of four for the season. And in the end he led every single major statistic. His 50-point lead after 10 rounds was, quite simply, a fair reflection of his dominance. Sure, he was consistent, and that consistency played a part in him winning the title, but it was his raw pace that made the big difference.

The final point that underlines Wittmann's superb

performance this season is the fact that he was so often the lone BMW driver at the front of the field. That was most evident at the Nurburgring – which was Wittmann's drive of the season – where he won the race even though BMW was generally having an off weekend (the next best M4 was Maxime Martin's down in seventh).

Only once did he get any real help from his team-mates, and that was his Red Bull Ring win, where he was given a trouble-free run past Timo Glock and Augusto Farfus late in the race to take a rather unlikely win. But even if he had finished third or fourth in that race, he still would have won the title comfortably.

Wittmann looked as if he was born to drive the M4 throughout the entire 2014 season. And he made quality opposition look average. That's why he deserves to be this far up the list.

3

Fernando Alonso

6th in F1 World Championship

UP 1

Much of the talk about Alonso during 2014 was consumed by off-track matters. Would he walk away from Ferrari? Where would he go? Was Ferrari falling apart around him? But in racing terms, the real story was that Alonso was, for the most part, still delivering exceptional race drives that made the Ferrari look perhaps more respectable than it deserved.

Compared with Kimi Raikkonen in the second Ferrari, Alonso's statistics were breathtaking. He outqualified the Finn 16-3, was only beaten by him once in the races that both finished and outscored the 2007 world champion 161-55. That led Ferrari to fourth in the constructors' championship, but with two Raikkonens in the car it would have added up only to enough points for sixth in the standings, behind McLaren and Force India.

There were moments when Alonso seemed to slip into a frustrated mood and didn't deliver his



THE DROPOUTS

Fortunes can wax and wane very quickly in motorsport. That inevitably means there is a high turnover rate of drivers from year to year in the top 50, and 2014 is no exception, with a total of 27 drivers who made the list in 2013 dropping out this year.

Some were on the cusp of making it in, others had too limited programmes, and others simply did not live up to expectations. Here's how they fared, along with their positions in 2013.



- 3 Jimmie Johnson - 11th in NASCAR Sprint Cup
- 5 Scott Dixon - 3rd in IndyCar
- 9 Loic Duval - 7th in WEC
- 10 Matt Kenseth - 7th in NASCAR Sprint Cup
- 12 Sebastien Loeb - 3rd in WTCC
- 14 Frederic Makowiecki - 2nd in WEC GT
- 15 Allan McNish - retired
- 16 Kyle Busch - 10th in NASCAR Sprint Cup
- 17 Mike Rockenfeller - 3rd in DTM
- 20 Sam Bird - 1 win in Formula E
- 21 Tom Kristensen - 4th in WEC
- 22 Augusto Farfus - 13th in DTM
- 25 Kimi Raikkonen - 12th in F1
- 26 Raffaele Marciello - 8th in GP2
- 29 Mark Winterbottom - 3rd in Australian V8 Supercars
- 32 Mark Webber - 9th in WEC
- 34 Andrew Jordan - 5th in BTCC
- 35 Felix Rosenqvist - 8th in European F3
- 36 Mike Conway - 2 wins in IndyCar
- 37 Fabio Leimer - 17th in WEC
- 39 Alexander Sims - 2 wins in British GT
- 41 Gary Paffett - 22nd in DTM
- 42 Rob Huff - 10th in WTCC
- 44 Justin Wilson - 15th in IndyCar
- 46 James Calado - 7th in WEC GT
- 49 Oliver Turvey - Le Mans LMP2 winner
- 50 Antonio Felix da Costa - 21st in DTM



usual standards behind the wheel in races (his final stint in the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, for example), but the good far outweighed the bad.

Hungary was a case in point. Put into a position where he could fight for victory by the timing of the safety car, Alonso got agonisingly close to stealing victory, only losing the lead to the charging Daniel Ricciardo at the death. Even with a superb drive, and the all-conquering Mercedes drivers out of the way, he wasn't able to capitalise. That says everything about the quality of the Ferrari and nothing about what Alonso did behind the wheel.

That was one of only two podium finishes. The rest of the time, Alonso could but skulk around the middle to bottom end of the top 10. In Bahrain he made his feelings very clear about the car with a 'celebratory' fist shake as he crossed the line a desultory ninth. That encapsulates the frustration Alonso was feeling, and regularly referred to obliquely when outside the car.

His proactive style behind the wheel was often a stunning sight. The Ferrari was not the most responsive of cars on turn-in, which made life extremely difficult for Raikkonen, but Alonso had an ability to provoke it in a way that got the car turned in, and hustle it through the turn without seriously compromising momentum. Raikkonen, by contrast, could hustle the car, but struggled to keep the speed up. A reminder that Alonso really is an extraordinary driver, even though an astonishing eight seasons have passed since he was last crowned world champion.

Next year, he faces a new challenge with a switch to McLaren-Honda. While he had his eye on a move to Mercedes that was never on, what once would have seemed an impossible return to McLaren again puts him in a team that might not be in a position to fight for wins in 2015. Time is running out for the third title he covets, so there's a lot riding on this partnership for the Spaniard.

2

Lewis Hamilton

F1 World champion

↑ UP 5

The foundations for Lewis Hamilton's sensational season were laid in September 2012. The bold decision he made then, to walk away from a McLaren team that produced a car that was capable of winning multiple races to one that had won just once in the preceding three seasons, was viewed with incredulity in some quarters. There was always the likelihood that Mercedes would produce the best car/engine package, but the decision was about more than that and allowed a driver always regarded as one of the fastest – perhaps *the* fastest – in grand prix racing to fully realise his prodigious ability.

Hamilton matured to become a better driver than ever before in 2014. There were doubts about how he would deal with the challenges of the 2014 power units, but he cast them aside, driving more efficiently than Rosberg and – particularly in the second half of the year – regularly outpacing his team-mate in race conditions. Given that Alain Prost-like ability, it simply didn't matter that he lost out in qualifying more often

than not. Six years on from his first title in 2008, the Hamilton that won 11 races this year and was a worthy champion is a far more complete driver.

"I had an amazing season," he said at the AUTOSPORT Awards earlier this month. "I was very fortunate to have the best team and the best car and we did an amazing job together.

"A lot of people doubted the decision I made to move to this team, but it was a team that, when I sat with Niki [Lauda] and Ross [Brawn], I knew straight away that they had the right plans in place. But when I joined, I never imagined we'd been dominating as soon as we had."

During the middle stages of the season, it seemed it might all slip away. After winning four races on the bounce following his retirement from the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, things started to go wrong in Monaco when Nico Rosberg controversially triggered a yellow flag in qualifying.

That precipitated a series of qualifying sessions in

which Hamilton made errors, followed by a spin on cold brakes on the first lap in Hungary. Combined with the mechanical problems Hamilton was suffering, Rosberg seized control. Then came the collision at Spa. Initially, it seemed another moment when things had gone against Hamilton. But what followed was a series of grands prix in which he was imperious on the Sunday afternoons, scooping the world championship relatively comfortably.

"This one [championship] definitely feels sweeter than the first," he said at the FIA prize-giving gala. "But that's probably just because I'm older and because of what I've gone through to get to this one and the decisions I've taken."

Last time Hamilton won the championship, a major rule change derailed his McLaren team and left him fighting even to win races. But in 2015, expectations are that Mercedes will again have the strongest car in the field. If the late-season Hamilton is in it from the start, even Rosberg might not see him for dust.



MOUHARROPOULOS/GETTY; THOMPSON/GETTY

1

Daniel Ricciardo

3rd in F1 World Championship

RE-ENTRY

Daniel Ricciardo's combination of effortless speed, canny racecraft and off-track character established him as a bona fide grand prix superstar in 2014. At the start of the season he had so much to prove, but come the end of it he had comprehensively outperformed Sebastian Vettel, won three grands prix, and earned the respect of the top drivers in grand prix racing.

RICCIARDO ON...

The maiden podium (that wasn't) in Australia...

"That felt like a victory. It all just felt so surreal then, whereas now it feels somewhat normal, which is nice because it means I'm getting used to it. But Melbourne seems a blur. When I was standing on that podium, if I would have said I'm going to have eight more of those and a few victories, I'd have thanked you all day! I remember sitting on the grid for Melbourne like it was yesterday. It seems so clear in my mind. The season goes very quick."

The memorable races...

"The whole Bahrain GP weekend. That was probably the first one when not only did I qualify strongly, but I also raced hard. It was probably the first weekend where people saw that maybe this kid can overtake after all! After that, Monaco was cool as the team could see I was willing to push the car and handle it. Obviously, the victories were good, but third at Austin was a complete weekend where I delivered pretty much everything I could."

Learning to win...

"When I took the lead in Canada, I was well aware I was there. You feel the heart rate going up, so you have to control your emotions and keep doing the basics right. Those last few laps, a lot is going through your head and you make sure that your hands still work to change gears, that you don't freeze! When my body was functioning under that sort of pressure, I realised I had what it took."

The standout victory...

"I would say Spa was more difficult. From very early on, the lead was mine to lose, whereas Canada and Hungary that was not the case. So in terms of pressure, that was the one. The car did start to slide a bit. Even through Eau Rouge, every time through you feel your tyres getting more and more worn, but I wanted not to get complacent so every lap I did Eau Rouge flat, even the last one."

Overtaking...

"Overtaking comes with confidence. This year I've felt that from the first race. There was a monkey on my back in the past years about not being attacking enough and I wanted to change it."



BIG NUMBER

12

Number of times Ricciardo outqualified team-mate Sebastian Vettel in 19 races.

mons54 - Nov 14
ged 7 drivers were heroes, cars gorgeous
ave bank account bit.ly/115nwAk

Fake Charlie Whiting @charlie_whiting - Nov 14
Bernie Ecclestone is the greatest troll of all time.
And he's never set foot on the Internet. Amazing. #F1

Chris Medland @ChrisMedlandF1 - Nov 14
To be fair to Bernie, I don't think he's just singling out young fans. He's
singling out anyone who can't afford a Rolex. #muchbetter

We Play @WePlayCo - Nov 27
"I'm not interested in tweeting, Facebook and whatever this nonsense
is." - The out-of-touch sentiments Formula 1 Chief, Bernie Ecclestone.

We Play @WePlayCo - Nov 27
However, the #AbuDhabiGP proved to be the climax of the season,
both on, and off the circuit, with exciting content from teams and
drivers.

We Play @WePlayCo - Nov 27
Here is how F1 is embracing Twitter, and created an immersive event
for all fans: weplay.co/abu-dhabi-cli... #smsports
pic.twitter.com/CSVhvxjF2

AUTOSPORT @autosport - Jul 2
Toto Wolff had "quite a long row" with Bernie Ecclestone over #F1's
neglect of social media like Twitter
autosport.com/news/report.php/id/114755

Richard Williams @rwilliams1947 - Nov 21
The more I think about it, the more amazed I am that Bernie Ecclestone
is still in a job after giving this interview: <http://bit.ly/1qHGSLP>

Jonathan Legard @legardj - Nov 14
Bernie Ecclestone spells out
#F1 future goo.gl/jkOtyT
via @NobleF1 #generationgap

Prof Simon Chadwick @Prof_Chadwick - Nov 19
Whether Bernie Ecclestone understands it
or not, social media will affect change in
F1. theguardian.com/sport/2014/nov...

Literal F1 @LiteralF1 - Nov 14
Bernie: F1 doesn't need young viewers.
Next week: F1 doesn't need viewers.
Week after: #F1 doesn't need drivers
autosport.com/news/report.php/id/116761

Tiff Needell @tiff_tv - Nov 14
Been reading Bernie's latest rant! So how
many of his 70 year olds buy Red Bull??

Johnny herbert @johnnyherbertf1 - Aug 28
Once your helmet is on and your are left in the car on the grid,
you are racing for.....yourself!

Ed Barton @e2theb - Nov 14
Bernie is refreshingly
direct on social media
audiences and F1

Peter Leung @peterleung - Nov 21
 Irony. @TwitterSports on how to follow #F1 Finale on Twitter but Bernie Ecclestone doesn't get social media. blog.twitter.com/2014/f1-set-fo...

Chris Hill @chrishill1407 - Aug 21
 It seems Bernie Ecclestone doesn't think #F1 needs social media. Further proof he's from another planet? @autosport autosport.com/news/report.php/id/115442

Martin Brundle @MBrundleF1 - Nov 15
 Love the Tube and walking around London. So many passionate F1 fans to speak to. Even young F1 fans who are especially welcome.

McLaren @McLarenF1 - Nov 14
 Just in case you were wondering... we love social media at McLaren & we love young #F1 fans too! #McLarenNextGen pic.twitter.com/KCOqaUuzNI



Lotus F1 @Lotus_F1Team - Nov 14
 Confirmation: We like all our fans, no matter what their age or timepiece. #F1 pic.twitter.com/vOnOF04iBT

Mark Grimes @markanthgrimes - Nov 19
 With all due respects, move over Bernie, "not needing" social media and young audiences? jamesallenonf1.com/2014/11/does-b...

Marcus Simmons @MarcusSimmons54 - Nov 14
 Dear Bernie, I got into #F1 aged 7 - drivers were heroes, cars gorgeous and circuits mega. Now I have bank account bit.ly/115nwAk

Sorry Bernie, Twitter

43

is in #F1 to stay

Formula 1 is not known for its social-media prowess, but that is beginning to change. @SCOTTMITCHELL89 explains what makes Twitter an important part of the sport's future and how it can get the most from it

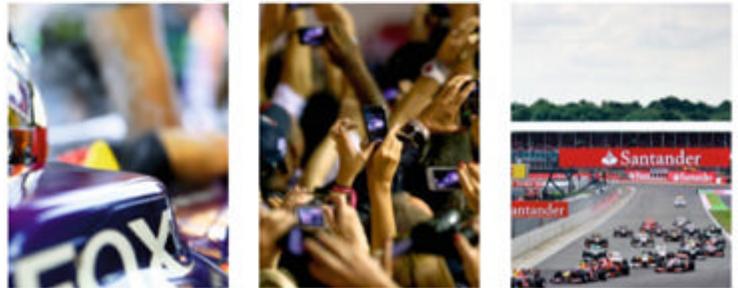
Alan Baldwin @alanbaldwinf1 - Nov 14
 And then, of course there is always Mr E. He's not going to be on Twitter any time soon. reut.rs/1zoxpos



Jon Noble @NobleF1 - Nov 14
 Bernie Ecclestone claims F1 shouldn't chase young fans - rich pensioners are a better target. autosport.com/news/report.php/id/116761 pic.twitter.com/mrBi4ZCjw9

Matthew Walthert @MatthewWalthert - Nov 16
 Is Bernie Ecclestone as out-of-touch as he seems when it comes to social media? bleacherreport.com/articles/22691... via @BleacherReport @br_uk #F1

Ryan Martin @RyanMsoccer - Nov 14
 Just read Bernie Ecclestone's recent comments about social media, fans, etc. Again reminded that he is out of touch. planetf1.com/news/3213/9563...



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Superstar selfie:
Ricciardo, Hamilton,
Wolff and Rosberg

Twitter is a divisive subject in motorsport. It is easily misunderstood, with Bernie Ecclestone a prime example, but if used correctly can be a powerful tool that engages fans and has commercial benefits for the teams.

It's easy to dismiss social media as a technological fad, but it's not about hashtags or trends, it's the audience they represent. The best use of Twitter isn't to patronise the #bestfans, nor is it for a driver just to let the world know that their breakfast that day was particularly satisfying. The real benefit lies somewhere in the middle, with different parts of the sport taking on different roles.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Formula 1 has a global fanbase, but is largely inaccessible to its audience. Far more can sit at home than can sit in a grandstand, thus the ways for teams to showcase what happens off-track are wide-ranging. After a quite dormant existence the F1 Twitter account fired into life mid-season, transforming itself from something that existed for the sake of it to an active, informative tool. By the end of November, @F1 had more than one million followers on the popular micro-blogging site – an increase of 50 per cent over the season.

But follower count isn't everything on Twitter. In fact, it's becoming less and less relevant.

Engagement, how much your followers interact with you and how much your content is shared, is the true test of social-media prowess. Quality trumps quantity.

FOM's role in F1's social strategy need not be a direct one. Its improvements to the official F1 account are along the right lines, so the main focus needs to be helping the evolution and growth of the teams' individual accounts. They are the places the fans will go for interaction and they are the places the sport will benefit from a proper social media strategy.



Vettel's Austin street-blast video made it on to Red Bull's timeline

ISTITENE/GETTY

'Pushing social media will only help bring the sport's previously off-limits moments into the spotlight'

What teams have done is attempt to break down the barrier between the fans and the paddock, and Twitter affords that opportunity. Formula 1 doesn't stop once the television cameras have been turned off on Sunday evening, so why limit its reach? Especially when, with teams in control of the accounts, the sport can tailor its messaging to suit.

Pushing social media will only help bring the sport's previously off-limits moments into the spotlight. That has been embraced more earnestly by teams in the second half of this year, with Red Bull embedding video of Sebastian Vettel driving through the streets of Austin directly into its feed and McLaren inviting 15 "super fans" to its Woking headquarters.

Teams have more to showcase, and a dynamic approach works best. Mercedes is the most interactive with its followers – the result of a deliberate strategy to build its audience on social-media platforms this year – and engenders high levels of engagement as a result.

Conversely, while the popularity of Ferrari is without question, its style on social media reads as a newsletter – here is the announcement, click to read it on our website. That has a negative impact on its effectiveness online. If you take the social-media equivalent of TV coverage – often referred to as the "share of voice" – then according to leading social media analyst Repucom Mercedes dominated the Twittersphere in 2014, comfortably ahead ▶

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► of its rivals and with a larger social media share of voice than a share of TV coverage

POTENTIAL NOT WITHOUT PITFALLS

“I chose Twitter from the beginning because I thought it was the most simple way of doing it and communicating with the fans,” explains double world champion Fernando Alonso, who has over two million followers, regularly posts in Spanish and English and intends to ramp up his activity now his time at Ferrari is over.

“It’s fun, it’s good to share a little bit of our unknown life to our fans. From now on, I think I will be on Twitter a bit more, like in the past, because this year has been a little bit restricted.”

Twitter is the key to unlock to F1’s personality prison. But it’s not without its problems. Conspiracy theorists in particular jumping in all guns blazing whenever there’s a whiff of controversy – Sebastian Vettel “passing” Jean-Eric Vergne under yellow flags on his way to defeating Alonso in the 2012 title fight and the storm that raged following Jules Bianchi’s horror crash in the Japanese Grand Prix this year concerning whether the marshals had done their jobs properly. It’s unfounded and detracts from more serious issues.

Using the same topic, Bianchi’s fight for survival, Twitter has brought together fans and

HOW OTHER SERIES DO IT

Plenty of championships have adopted social media as an essential promotional tool, though Formula E’s arrival turned it into a weapon for success as much as anything else.

The all-electric series’ FanBoost idea meant Twitter and Facebook became channels for teams to drum up support for their drivers in order to win a 67kw (90bhp) power boost during the race.

Unsurprisingly that proved divisive. Some fans liked having some kind of influence, while purists saw it as a gimmick and little more. In a social-media context it falls short of the aim of generating engagement, too; the common tactic has been to simply encourage fans to vote instead of giving them a reason to.

Other, more traditional, series have also invested in Twitter, and for reasons that extend deeper than attempting to drum up an artificial conversation.

NASCAR chief marketing officer Steve Phelps said in 2012 that it had been an important part of its drive to “further engage our fanbase and help grow the sport”. The seeds laid in previous years have continued to bear fruit, with America’s premier motorsport category enjoying unparalleled support online, with 1.6m followers compared with national rival IndyCar’s 140,000.



Despite a strong core of drivers, some of whom enjoy good levels of support personally like Juan Pablo Montoya and Tony Kanaan, IndyCar has toiled in social-media terms.

With a new headline sponsor in telecommunications giant Verizon, IndyCar’s much-desired follower count increased by 50 per cent, the more telling statistic is the dozens of NASCAR/F1 posts that received thousands of shares, compared to the select few IndyCar tweets that crept into three figures. It may seem a pedantic point, but shares are essentially (though not always) public endorsements.

A conservative strategy from teams and drivers might be a by-product of the series’ strict social-media policy, which Helio Castroneves fell foul of earlier this year, ending up on probation after a derogatory tweet about an official’s decision at Long Beach was posted on his account by his sister.

The British Touring Car Championship is heavily invested in social media. Its most successful offerings are competition-based, which help validate existing fans and potentially bring potential new ones into the fold. Social support is a big asset here as it is more likely to translate into numbers on the gate.



► drivers with the adoption of the #ForzaJules trend, something that also occurred following Michael Schumacher's skiing accident (#KeepFightingMichael).

F1's PR side can also muddy the waters. Hamilton brought his issues here on himself following telemetry-gate at Spa in 2012, when he posted a picture of his and then-McLaren team-mate Jenson Button's telemetry from qualifying. The fallout didn't quite bring down the Iron Curtain, but a more controlled social-media strategy followed. But eyebrows were raised when a post was made to one of Hamilton's accounts 'from my iPhone', when Mercedes had sponsorship from Blackberry.

Like anything else, socialising has its pitfalls.



“There are obviously things you can develop that you could expect people to pay for but we need to embrace racing fans, not monetise everything we do” Claire Williams

Romain Grosjean set up an automatic Tweet announcing his re-signing at Lotus earlier this year, only for the official confirmation to be delayed. This is one of the more amusing anecdotes – “My phone went crazy with it being tweeted and I went ‘no, no, no!’” he remembers.

“You will never see a picture of my son,” the Frenchman continues, “because I believe that this is 100 per cent private. But it's nice to be as close as you can to people.”

MONEY TO BE MADE

Mercedes claims it has a following of 10 million across the leading social-media platforms Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. That audience is the result of a deliberate strategy.

With more fans invested in it, F1/FOM's social-media market becomes stronger.

Making money out of Twitter is a tricky topic, but what Ecclestone is relying on his new working group to ascertain is whether it is

possible and the best way to achieve it. But the short answer is that there is money to be made.

Understanding how to use social media is a boost to F1's commercial appeal – and a highly-regarded asset in terms of sponsorship proposals – but the future lies in making money from the audience it helps generate and grow.

Claire Williams, who will chair the new Popularity Working Group, has been one of the

MOTORSPORT'S TOP TWEETERS



Lotus F1 Team

@Lotus_F1team

Most things in this world are a matter of personal opinion but it's tough to find someone who wouldn't find something from Lotus' Twitter feed amusing this year. Plenty of effort and it reaps the reward.



Mercedes AMG F1

@MercedesAMGF1

Probably the most active account among the Formula 1 teams. A few cringes aside, it's the model for how to build a large following and keep it engaged. Life in F1 is very well displayed.



Fernando Alonso

@alo_oficial

Mastering the ways of the samurai is as crucial to Alonso as a third world title. Tweets, sometimes cryptically, in Spanish and English. An entertaining follow.



Anthony Davidson

@antdavidson

Britain's newest world champion is good example of how Twitter can be used to give fans the inside line. Toyota stable-mate and GPDA chairman Alex Wurz (@Alex_Wurz) is also a worthy follow.



Sebastien Ogier

@SebOgier

Personal when in control himself but savvy enough to leave it to the professionals when it comes to rally updates – the double WRC champion is a fine addition to your Twittersphere.

Lotus F1 Team
@Lotus_F1Team · Nov 23

We'd like to acknowledge our proud partner, @burn

5.2K 3.4K

Mercedes AMG F1
MercedesAMGF1 · Jun 8

Best... #photobomb... EVER!!!
@LewisHamilton @nicorosberg #F1 #TheMontREALdeal

4.9K 4.2K

Fernando Alonso
@alo_oficial · Sep 24

Ey @AussieGrit ! Ready for Hollywood..?

9.4K 4.7K

Anthony Davidson
@antdavidson · Dec 1

Looking a bit cramped there @sebastien_buemi. Try taking my seat insert out before you jump in next time?

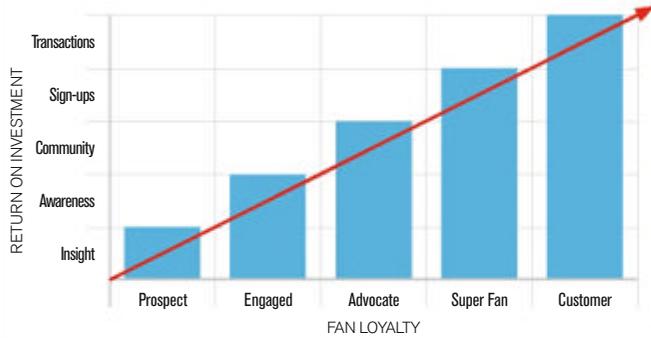
28 78

Sebastien Ogier
@SebOgier · Mar 29

Already amazing atmosphere this morning during recce of #FateRallySprint Show time this afternoon!!!

118 89

MONETISING SOCIAL MEDIA



Prospect The casual fan who is aware of a team without following it
Engaged This is a fan who likes or follows a brand and is aware of more specific activities
Advocate When a fan actively recommends a team or sport to a new audience
Super Fan This fan could be a newsletter subscriber or signed up to the team in a different way
Customer When a fan purchases something from the team

most vocal F1 figures on this subject. F1's future probably lies in the direction of a combined social-media strategy, with the teams working together to build up a paddock-wide brand rather than just looking after individual interest.

"We haven't drilled down into that level of detail in that meeting, but it is something we will look at and hopefully do as a group," Williams said recently in Abu Dhabi. "At the moment we do all our social media as individual teams – but I think if we did something collectively it could be really powerful."

That, in turn, can take the dialogue with fans to the next level, and turn it into a revenue stream – something social-media expert WePlay calls the Fan Adoption Journey, which is outlined above. While this is arguably where

F1's social-media future lies, Williams is keen to proceed with caution.

"I said a while ago that for me in the short-term, monetising social media is not where I personally see it," she added. "If we want to make F1 accessible to fans they don't expect to pay for the basic stuff. There are obviously things you can develop that you could expect people to pay for but we need to embrace racing fans, not monetise everything we do."

Opinions are divided on how to achieve that next step, but patience should be the order of the day. Twitter can have financial benefits but it's primary purpose is to engage and entertain, which makes it an opportunity for F1 to improve its image. If greed turns it into a fan-fed cash cow, it could achieve the opposite. ❌



AUTOSPORT
 @autosport

TWEETS 26.4K FOLLOWING 128 FOLLOWERS 181K LISTED 4642

AUTOSPORT'S TWEETERS

- Edd Straw** @eddstrawF1
- Glenn Freeman** @glenn_autosport
- Marcus Simmons** @marcussimmons54
- Jonathan Noble** @NobleF1
- Ben Anderson** @BenAndersonAuto
- Matt Beer** @Mattofautosport
- Stuart Codling** @coddersf1
- David Evans** @davidevansrally
- Scott Mitchell** @ScottMitchell89
- Gary Watkins** @gazzasportscars
- Mark Glendenning** @m_glendenning
- Andrew van Leeuwen** @avimelbourne
- Pablo Elizalde** @EIIGP
- Henry Hope-Frost** @henryhopefrost



Brad Keselowski

@keselowski

Given the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup champion isn't afraid to get raucous in real life, he's not going to shy away when behind a keyboard. Says what he thinks and engages fully with his fanbase.



Juan Pablo Montoya

@jpmontoya

The Colombian once tweeted a picture of his workshop while he was building a huge model plane. It's not always that random, but there are few personalities whose lives off the track are as interesting.



Jason Plato

@jasonplato

The two-time British Touring Car champion is even more frank and personal online than he is in real life. That makes him an entertaining addition to your timeline whether it's a BTCC weekend or not.



Taki Inoue

@takiinoue

The reinvented Japanese is one of Twitter's most entertaining characters. Sometimes you think sportspeople need to take themselves less seriously – Inoue is already there.



LAT Photographic

@latphotographic

The best motorsport photography straight to your timeline. On-track and behind-the-scenes images from Formula 1, the World Endurance Championship and more.

Brad Keselowski @keselowski - Nov 2

We had fresher tires, With a win & the championship on the line. You either take the gap, or regret it forever...

13 2.6K ...

Juan Pablo Montoya @jpmontoya - Nov 13

Well one good thing about not sleeping is that I nearly got my F4U corsair nearly finished.

@Horizon_Hobby @PGHorizon

10 77 ...

Jason Plato @jasonplato - Sep 28

Front brake discs are a bit scorchio!

32 94 ...

Taki Inoue @takiinoue - Sep 4

Now even shit driver like Taki Inoue can go flat out through Parabolica easily !!

pic.twitter.com/YpNuEnEgaw

153 119 ...

LAT Lat photographic @latphotographic - Oct 18

Ludovico Scarfiotti's birthday today. Seems a good excuse for a 1966 Targa Florio shot of his Ferrari Dino 206S!

51 67 ...



RANKING THE F1 SEASON

So, which were the best and worst grands prix of 2014? **BEN ANDERSON** was at all 19 and attempts to separate the wheat from the chaff

1 HUNGARY

Of all the races in 2014, this one had the mix of ingredients that every Formula 1 fan loves to see in a grand prix: bad weather, strategic gambles, fast cars out of position, dramatic displays of car control – and the lack of it – and daring overtaking moves. F1 is all about obsessively eliminating variables, so when you introduce some jeopardy things get interesting.

Rain on race day rendered Friday's practice running meaningless and created an unpredictable race, with the result in doubt until the closing moments. Would

Fernando Alonso hold on? Could Daniel Ricciardo come through?

Would Lewis Hamilton complete an amazing burn from the stern after Saturday's dramatic qualifying fire? Or would Nico Rosberg recover from the unfortunate timing of an early safety car to trump them all? No one knew the answers to these questions until the

final stages. The best race of the season, and arguably the best

Hungarian Grand Prix ever.



2 CANADA

Similar to Hungary, but without the rain. The Mercedes in trouble, Williams messing up its pitstops, Massa and Perez clashing (above), and Daniel Ricciardo stealing through to claim a maiden win with a mega pass on the outside of Perez with two wheels on the grass.

3 BAHRAIN

This was the race that slammed a door in the face of the critics of 'taxi-cab racing' (Bernie Ecclestone and Luca di Montezemolo – we mean you) and ensured F1's V6 engines were not hurriedly replaced by the old V8s. Brilliant lead battling by Hamilton and Rosberg drowned out complaints about the (lack of) noise...

4 BELGIUM

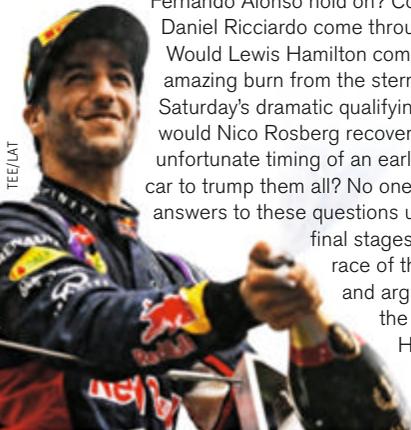
Ricciardo the 'honey badger' hung on brilliantly after Rosberg did the dirty on Hamilton. Everyone loves Spa – even more so when the race is so controversial, and the faster car is chasing a slower one.

5 AUSTRIA

The template for every grand prix event to follow in an age of corporate soullessness. A festival atmosphere akin to Le Mans with just as much beer, and the only race where we woke every day to the sound of thumping European electro music.

6 MONACO

A little wobble of the steering wheel, plus a trip down an escape road, made for intra-team rancour (below), and a Sunday spectacle that no fan wanted to miss.





10

THOMPSON/GETTY



13

DUNBAR/LAT



3

CHARAUX/XBP



14

DUNBAR/LAT



8

STALEY/LAT



5

WALTERS/GETTY

7 USA



Lewis Hamilton proved he was the fastest gunslinger in the West, while the also-rans whooped, hollered, cheered, and then knocked seven bells out of each other. Who needs Indianapolis?

8 GERMANY



Apparently the Germans don't care for F1 now Michael Schumacher has retired, but Ricciardo, Alonso and Vettel dicing three-abreast showed why they should.

9 ABU DHABI



Not quite the 'duel in the desert' we all hoped for, but a decent title decider that double points didn't spoil, and which featured an almost-fairytale ending for Felipe Massa.



10 ITALY



Not the classic slipstreamer that would befit this historic cathedral of speed, but the battle at the front was tense until Rosberg locked up (not for the first or last time this year), took the wrong road and let Hamilton through. Hard racing by Bottas, Magnussen and Ricciardo further back saved the day.

11 GREAT BRITAIN



Rosberg's gearbox problem (right) robbed fans of a fight with home hero Hamilton for victory, but Alonso and Vettel made up for it with their war of words and track etiquette over fifth place.



15 SPAIN



Similar template to Brazil but with less overtaking.

16 CHINA



A hazy and forgettable procession.

17 MALAYSIA



Like China but with higher humidity.

18 RUSSIA



Another white elephant to add to Tilke's growing collection of zoological curiosities.

19 JAPAN



A decent wet-weather race, augmented by delicious driver-market intrigue off the circuit – but all rendered irrelevant by the terrible accident that befell Jules Bianchi and placed F1 2014 under a dark cloud.



TEE/LAT

13 SINGAPORE



A promising battle for the win fizzled out quickly once the mysterious 'contaminating agent' had done for Rosberg's wiring, but a great overtaking cameo by Jean-Eric Vergne enlivened the closing stages.

14 BRAZIL



Tense battle at the front but not much overtaking.

F1'S ONE-HIT WONDERS

After years of waiting, many people's F1 careers are over almost as soon as they've begun.

STUART CODLING reveals why history records these drivers as Formula 1's one-hit wonders

Most racing drivers grow up dreaming about Formula 1. Very few reach it, and of those, some fail to find a foothold and are gone almost as soon as they appeared.

Some of the shortest Formula 1 careers haven't stretched beyond the opening lap. But, like other mileage-challenged soloists Josef Peters (1952 German Grand Prix, one lap), Bob Said (1959 US GP, half a lap) and Graham

McRae (1973 British GP, half a lap), Marco Apicella enjoyed success in other fields, racing among the frontrunners in Super Formula and Super GT.

Apicella had already left the European Formula 3000 scene after five seasons and begun a race-winning relationship with Dome in Japan when he got an offer to drive for Jordan in the 1993 Italian Grand Prix. Ivan Capelli and Thierry Boutsen had already vacated that seat,

preferring retirement, but Eddie Jordan wasn't asking for much money. Apicella had half a day's testing at Imola then headed to Monza, where he qualified 23rd after hitting a rivulet at the Lesmos and spinning off.

"I remember this experience very well, unfortunately!" he says. "I was so excited. A lot of the other guys on the grid I'd raced against in F3000, and somehow it was as if they were waiting for me. It was a great day.

MARCO APICELLA

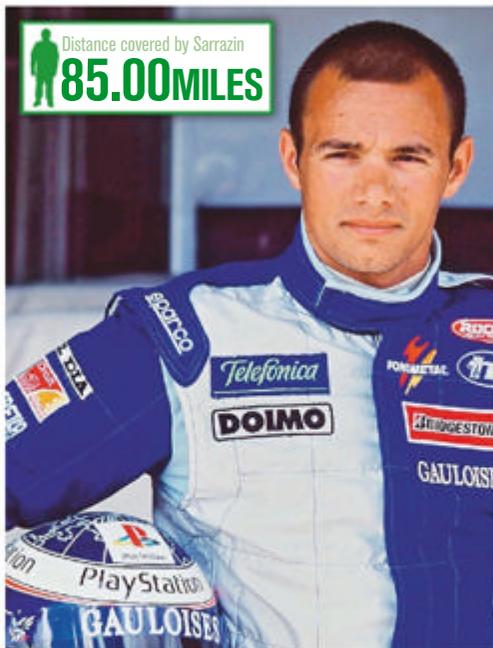
1993 Italian Grand Prix, Monza





"But I knew I was just going to do this one race so there was a big pressure. Still, it was all good for me, except for the result! I did maybe 200 metres before somebody hit me and it broke the steering, so I had to stop, even before the first corner.

"I still don't know who hit me, I don't want to watch the video – it's really painful to think about, even though in many other ways I was very lucky in my career and had good results."



STEPHANE SARRAZIN

1999 Brazilian Grand Prix

Formula 3000 frontrunner Sarrazin was testing Prost GP's F1 car at Barcelona when he got the call-up to replace Minardi's injured Luca Badoer for the Brazilian GP.

"I remember it like yesterday," he says. "When I arrived the spare car had Marc Gene's name on it. Free practice was wet and I was about 14th. Then they changed the name to Sarrazin, I was very happy about the feeling.

"I was going well in the race. I was in front of Panis, and he finished sixth. I was in front of a Benetton and I felt I was doing a very good job.

"Then the front wing broke and I didn't realise. When I arrived at Turn 14 I had no downforce and went straight in the wall. It was a big one. They had a problem with the wings at that time, they had many failures."

Believing he was safe for the drive with Prost in 2000, Sarrazin turned down Minardi's offer to stay on. This proved to be a mistake, since Prost took Nick Heidfeld in F1 and Sarrazin had to scabble for another F3000 drive.

"It was my choice," he says. "I was very young – 22, 23 – and I had no manager. I should have stayed in F1 and got a lawyer!"



HANS HEYER

1977 German Grand Prix, Hockenheim

Touring car racer and one-off F1 entrant Hans Heyer hadn't even qualified for the German Grand Prix in 1977, but he parked his ATS-Penske at the pitlane exit come Sunday so as to be ready in case another entrant failed to make it to the grid. As first reserve he was entitled to do this; then, when Clay Regazzoni and Alan Jones collided at the first corner, Heyer took it as his cue to join the fray anyway.

The crowd were delighted, the race stewards less so. When Heyer's gear selector linkage came apart after nine laps it neatly solved their quandary over what to do about him; they duly scrubbed him from the record.



TIFF NEEDELL

1980 Belgian Grand Prix, Zolder

Then a jobbing racing driver with a good Formula 3 pedigree, now a popular and accomplished broadcaster, Tiff Needell talked his way into the Ensign drive that had been vacated by Clay Regazzoni after his life-changing accident at Long Beach. After a brief test at Donington he made his debut at Zolder, qualifying in the penultimate grid slot ahead of Emerson Fittipaldi.

"I remember sitting on the grid humming the Grand Prix theme tune," he says. "And I had a dice with Emerson, my schoolboy hero."

Needell's engine blew after 12 laps and he failed to make the grid for the next race, Monaco, after crashing in qualifying. Jan Lammers took over the car from then on, though he also struggled to qualify it.



JONATHAN WILLIAMS

1967 Mexican Grand Prix, Mexico City

Taking a drive at Ferrari is occasionally akin to accepting a poisoned chalice, but by any measure the reaction of Jonathan Williams, who passed away earlier this year, to his summons to the 1967 Mexican Grand Prix was somewhat extreme: "I was dragged there kicking and screaming," he said.

Ferrari had run a single entry for much of the season after Lorenzo Bandini's fatal accident in Monaco. Months later 24-year-old Williams, who had contested a number of F2 and sportscar races for the Scuderia, was informed that he should make haste to Mexico City and bring some overalls "just in case". Upon arrival he kicked his heels on the sidelines throughout Friday practice. Then, on Saturday, for reasons that go unrecorded, Williams was told to suit up and get going.

"I'd never even sat in the car," he said. "I had maybe 15 to 20 laps before the race."

He still qualified 16th out of 19 runners, albeit 7.24s away from Jim Clark's pole time, and he came home eighth, though three of the cars classified



behind him were walking wounded.

"I was terribly ashamed after Mexico and was walking around in dark glasses hiding from people," he said.

Williams never raced in F1 again but he achieved modest success in F2 and sportscars before hanging up his helmet in 1972.

MARKUS WINKELHOCK

2007 European Grand Prix, Nürburgring

Uniquely among Formula 1 soloists, Markus Winkelhock led the one grand prix he started. The 27-year old was called up by Spyker to contest the 2007 European Grand Prix at the Nürburgring in place of Christijan Albers (who had been dropped when his sponsorship ran out).

Thanks to a pitwall gamble, Winkelhock was the only driver on full wets when torrential rain drenched the circuit on the opening lap, and he found himself

leading as others scurried to the pits for intermediates or flew off the road before getting there. He briefly led after the restart, but his hydraulics failed after 15 laps and he never raced an F1 car again; Sakon Yamamoto arrived with wallet in tow and took the seat for the remainder of the year.

"To lead a Formula 1 race is something nobody can take away from you," says Winkelhock. "You have it for your whole life."

Distance covered by Winkelhock
47.97 MILES



ALL PICS: LAT

GERARD LARROUSSE

1974 Belgian Grand Prix, Nivelles

"I think I wanted to say that I'd done one grand prix in my life," said Gerard Larrousse in an interview with Motor Sport 10 years ago. Thus the rally driver turned sportscar ace, obtained a ride in the Swiss-run Team Bertscher Brabham BT42 for the 1974 Belgian Grand Prix at the unloved Nivelles circuit. He had only driven in four single-seater races before.

"The first time I saw it was when it turned up at Nivelles on the back of an open trailer pulled by a little truck," he says. "There were just two mechanics."

Larrousse qualified 28th and made it to lap 53 before his tyres gave out – and the team had no more to fit.

"I've always suspected that Leo [Mehl, Goodyear supremo] gave me qualifying tyres," says Larrousse.



Distance covered by Larrousse
122.64 MILES

MIGUEL ANGEL GUERRA

1981 San Marino Grand Prix, Imola

Argentine Formula 2 graduate Guerra arrived at Long Beach for the first race of 1981 with no F1 cockpit time apart from a day of straight-line testing at an airfield. Osella's FA1B was woefully off the ground-effect pace and Guerra was one of five drivers not to make the cut.

Guerra had raced in F2 at Imola and there, at the fourth race of the season, he finally qualified. But what would prove to be his only GP start didn't last long: as the field rounded Tamborello for the first time, with the track still wet, Eliseo Salazar clipped the right-rear of Guerra's car and sent him almost head-on into the wall. He sustained a double fracture to his left ankle in the impact, which also trapped him in the car.

"That's life," he says. "I didn't manage to find another F1 chance. At the beginning of 1982 there was a big currency devaluation in Argentina and suddenly it was no longer possible to find the sort of sponsorship required."



Distance covered by Guerra
550 YARDS

ANDRE LOTTERER

2014 Belgian Grand Prix, Spa-Francorchamps

As a Le Mans 24 Hours winner and serial frontrunner in Japanese Super Formula, Andre Lotterer has little left to prove at the top level of motor racing. But, having spent a formative year of his career (2002) on the sidelines as Jaguar's F1 test driver, he couldn't resist an offer to drive for Caterham in the 2014 Belgian GP.

Driving a backmarking F1 car proved

a disappointment in terms of cornering ability compared with his LMP1 Audi, but he rapidly outpaced team-mate Marcus Ericsson in practice, and outqualified him. Lotterer's race lasted just one full lap before his engine lost power and he halted at Blanchimont.

"It's a shame I didn't finish the race," he says, "but I can go home happy, even though it didn't end the way I'd have liked it to."



Distance covered by Lotterer
8.33 MILES



JEAN-LOUIS SCHLESSER

1988 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

Making his world championship F1 debut the day before his 40th birthday, Schlesser had been called up by Williams to stand in for Nigel Mansell, who was suffering from chicken pox. "I was not surprised to get the call," he says. "I'd already done a lot of testing. I hadn't driven the car for a year, though."

It had been a dire season for Judd-powered Williams, one not greatly improved by reverting the FW12 to passive suspension. Schlesser was lucky to qualify after crashing during Saturday's second session.

With just one full lap of the race to go he was running in 11th as the leader, Ayrton Senna, came up to put him two laps down... the rest is history. Schlesser ran out of asphalt as Senna swept by at the Rettifilo and turned in, nudging the McLaren into retirement and allowing Gerhard Berger and Michele Alboreto through for a Ferrari one-two. It would be the only race of 1988 not won by McLaren.

"I was surprised he tried to pass me where he did," says Schlesser. "I was braking, braking, braking and thinking, 'Why has he not passed me yet?' So I had to turn when I did and 'ping!' He hit me.

"Ayrton was quite nice with me about it after the race, though. He said, 'It's OK, don't worry. It's a racing incident.' Everything was all right – no problems."



Distance covered by Schlesser
176.59 MILES

ERNST LOOF

1953 German Grand Prix, Nürburgring

A pre-war motorcycle champion and BMW engineer, Ernst Loof co-founded the Veritas marque after hostilities had been concluded. Finances were always tight, but in a workshop near the Nürburgring, Loof built a decently competitive Formula 2 chassis named the Meteor. It was in one of these that, at the age of 46, he qualified 31st (out of 34 entries) for the 1953 German GP, while the world champions were running to F2 rules.

Juan Manuel Fangio seized the lead in his Maserati at the start, tearing past polesitter Alberto Ascari's Ferrari; and, once the field had departed, one car remained. Loof's fuel pump had broken, stranding him on the grid.



Distance covered by Loof
2 YARDS

CLEMENTE BIONDETTI

1950 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

Biondetti had raced for Maserati in pre-war grands prix and won the Mille Miglia four times, but surely his most curious adventure was to enter a Jaguar-engined Ferrari at the 1950 Italian GP.

"His stubbornness and persistence, characteristic of the old Viareggio stock, emerged on road races more than on the track," wrote Enzo Ferrari in his book *Piloti, che gente*. Perhaps this is why Biondetti could not obtain a Ferrari F1 car, even though he had won both

the Mille Miglia and the Targa Florio in Enzo's machinery.

Neither could he persuade Jaguar to build an F1 car or even supply him with a new engine, though he was on Jaguar's books as a works sportscar driver in 1950. Instead, he took a used XK120 engine – one that had thrown a conrod on the Targa Florio – and fitted it, along with the drivetrain, into what is claimed to have been the body of a Ferrari 166 (the subsequent history of the original Ferrari chassis has muddied the waters

somewhat). It's believed, but impossible to say definitively, that the majority of the chassis was Maserati.

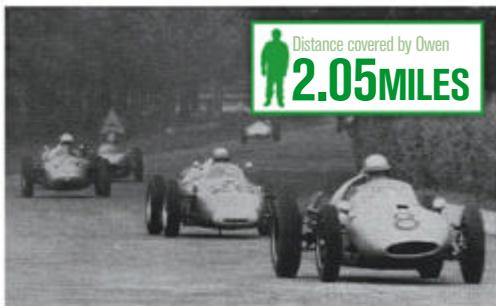
Biondetti qualified his bitsa car 25th out of 27 starters, albeit 32s off Fangio's pole position time of 1m58.6s, and he rose as high as 18th before his engine failed on the 17th lap.

Ill health forced Biondetti to quit motor racing in 1954 and the following February he succumbed to cancer, aged 56.

Distance covered by Biondetti
66.55 MILES



Distance covered by Owen
2.05 MILES



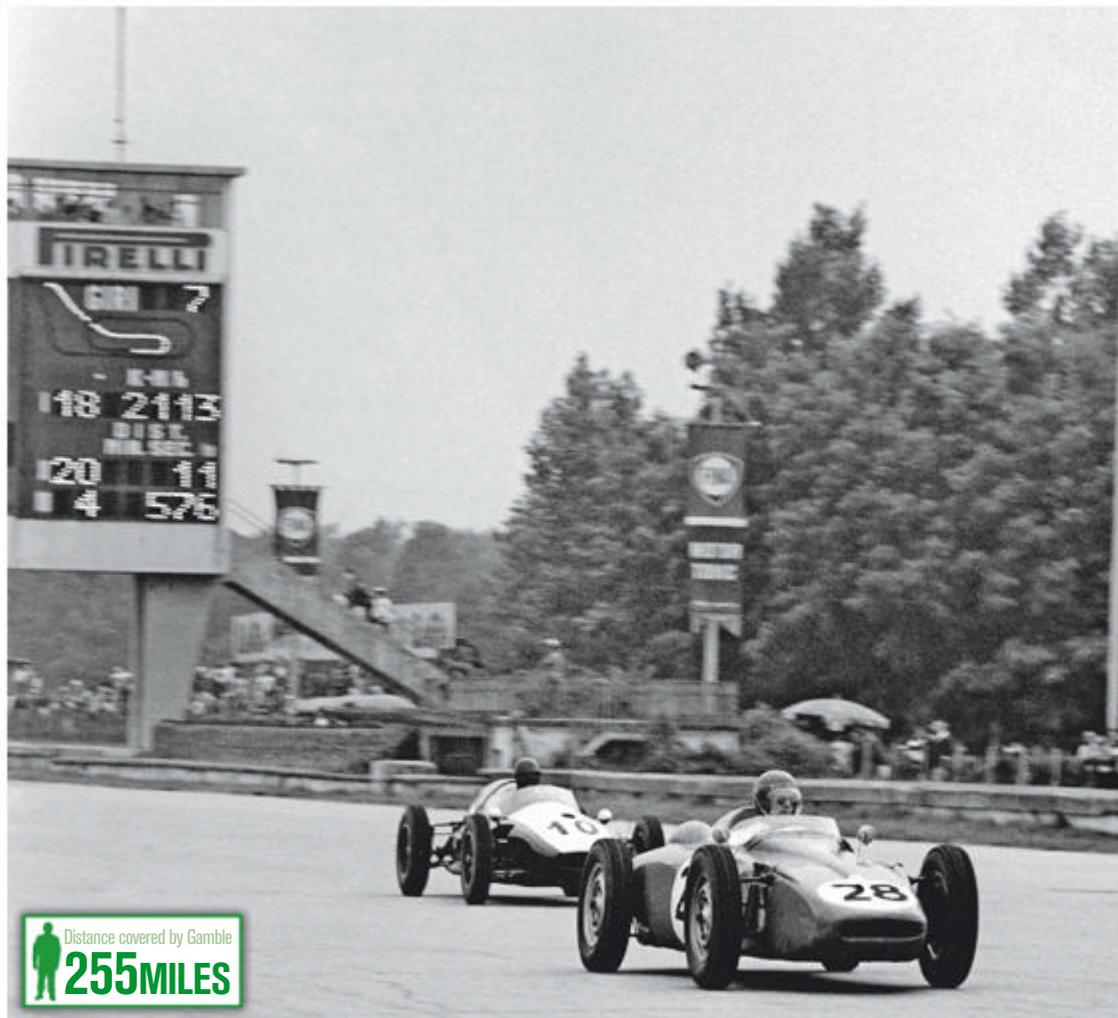
ARTHUR OWEN

1960 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

"Jerseyman Arthur Owen couldn't care less about being sent to Coventry," wrote Gregor Grant in his *AUTOSPORT* report from the 1960 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Those Brits who broke the boycott of the race (Lotus, Cooper and BRM refused to take part on safety grounds because of the use of the banking) had apparently been threatened with an "angry silence" when they returned home, but for Owen – an experienced hillclimber – the opportunity was too good to miss. Only 17 cars were entered and just 16 started, since Jack Fairman – due to race Horace Gould's Maserati 250F – decided at the last minute to observe the boycott.

Owen qualified his two-year-old Cooper-Climax T45 11th, slowest of the nine F1 cars on the grid, and behind F2 cars driven by Wolfgang Von Trips (Ferrari) and Hans Herrmann (Porsche). He managed to get ahead of Herrmann but dropped out of the race before having to tackle the banked section, suffering a locked brake at the Parabolica and taking to the grass, terminally damaging his car's suspension.

Owen returned to hillclimbing and won the British championship in 1962.



Distance covered by Gamble
255 MILES

LANCE REVENTLOW

1960 Belgian Grand Prix, Spa-Francorchamps

Son of Woolworths heiress Barbara Hutton and a revolving door of stepfathers including Cary Grant (Hutton married seven times), Reventlow brought a touch of Hollywood glamour to the F1 paddock during his ultimately doomed attempts to race his US-developed Scarab F1 cars. After enjoying success in sportscars he was perhaps two years too late to F1, fielding a pair of handsome but ponderous front-engined cars for himself and Chuck Daigh just as that configuration was being blown away on-track.

Reventlow failed to qualify at Monaco, withdrew his cars from the Dutch GP after the organisers announced they would only pay starting money to the top 15 qualifiers, but scraped on to the grid at Spa-Francorchamps, 19.7s off Jack Brabham's pole time.

He managed just one full lap before the engine lunched itself as Reventlow accelerated up the hill after taking Eau Rouge for the second time. It was time to think again about the marque's technical strategy. Scarab did develop a rear-engined single-seater, but never returned to F1, and with age Reventlow mellowed and lost interest in racing.



Distance covered by Reventlow
9.01 MILES

FRED GAMBLE

1960 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

American amateur racer Fred Gamble had served as a radio operator in the Korean war and worked as a journalist before hooking up with the entrepreneur Lloyd "Lucky" Casner at an SCCA meeting. The unlikely result was a new team, bankrolled by Casner with Gamble acting as both publicist and occasional driver, along with a roster of others. Their gift of the gab enabled the team, Camoradi International, to obtain – among other things – the Formula 2 Porsche Jean Behra had built before his untimely death.

To these circumstances, add a shortfall of entrants to the 1960 Italian Grand Prix after the organisers insisted on using the full 10km layout.

The Automobile Club of Milan reportedly offered even minnows such as Camoradi the equivalent of \$1000 to start the race, an offer Casner could not refuse. "Scraping the barrel" was how AUTOSPORT editor Gregor Grant described the 17-car entry.

Gamble qualified 14th and ran as high as eighth before having to pit for an oil top-up. Later he ran out of fuel and had to sprint back to the pits on foot to obtain more. That enabled him to restart and finish 10th, albeit nine laps behind race-winner Phil Hill.

Gamble went on to spearhead Goodyear's involvement in top-level racing, including F1.

CHRIS CRAFT

1971 US GP, Watkins Glen

Even when it was possible to "do" Formula 1 on a budget there were limits, as accomplished sportscar racer Chris Craft found when he tackled a handful of events at the end of 1971 in a second-hand Brabham bought by Alain de Cadanet.

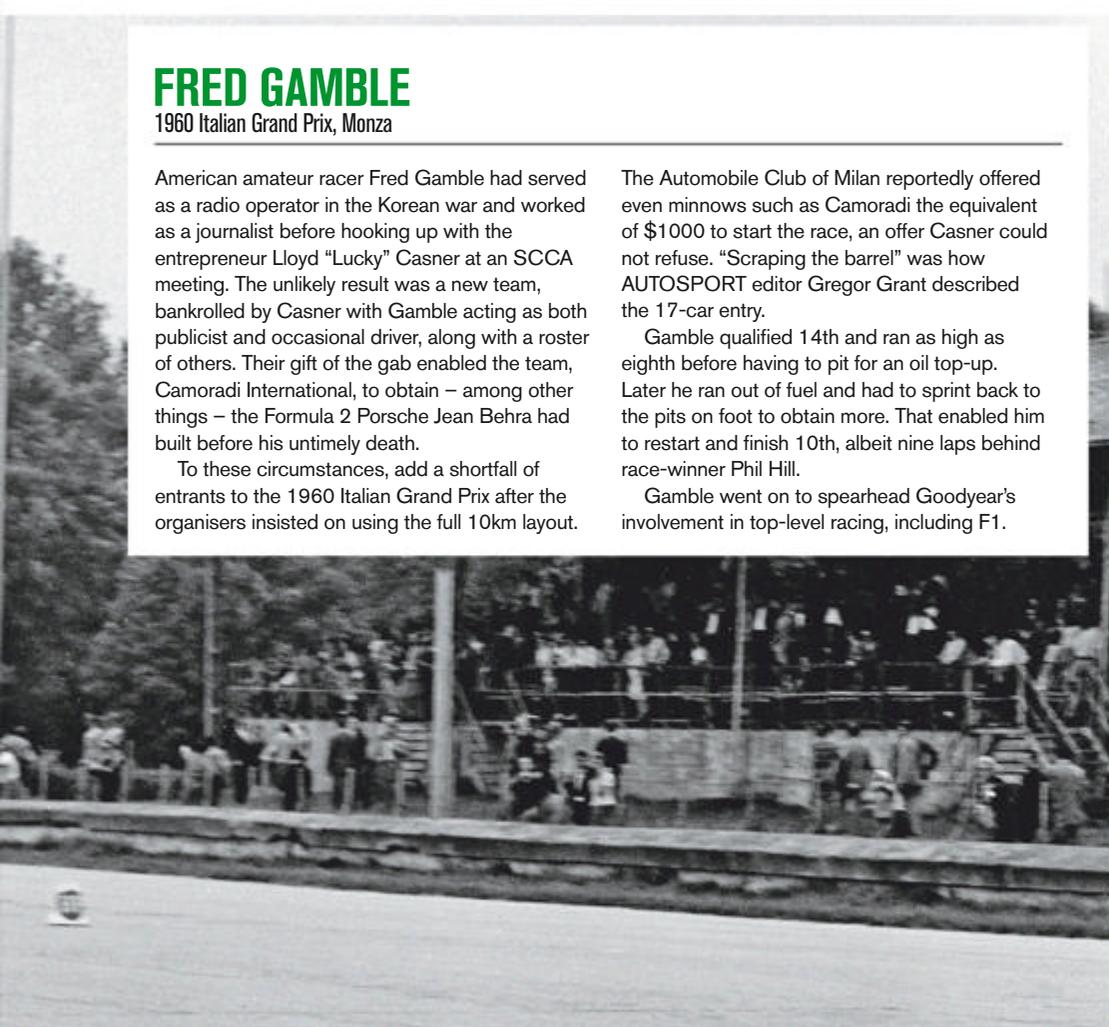
"I didn't realise the budget would be so tight that we'd only have one set of brake pads," he says. "Alain bought Jack Brabham's 1970 BT33 from Ron Tauranac. It still had a dented front wishbone from when Jack had gone off on the last lap at Monaco."

Craft finished fifth at the Oulton Park Gold Cup and qualified at the tail of the Canadian Grand Prix grid, only for the engine to fail on the formation lap. At the final GP of the year he put the car 27th on the grid at Watkins Glen, but the rear suspension collapsed after 30 of the 59 laps, a consequence of Craft ignoring a vibration from the tyres.

That was it for Craft and F1 but he would race the car again, or at least parts of it. De Cadanet cannibalised the BT33 to create his eponymous Le Mans sports-prototype.



Distance covered by Craft
101.31 MILES



A RAGS TO RICHES

58



The conversation is broken. Malcolm Wilson pauses momentarily, almost subconsciously. There's thunder outside. Proper thunder. The-four-litre-V8-with-a-couple-of-turbos-thrown-in kind of thunder.

Even on idle, as the Bentley Continental GT3 is shunted around for the picture that opened this story, it sounds beautiful. Walking to the window, it seems Cumbria has been good to us today, revealing all her early-autumn loveliness. But nature can't compete with what's sitting outside Dovenby Hall's front door. ▶



Wilson casts his mind back to 1979 to start his story

The M-Sport Bentley
GT3 takes pride of
place at team HQ

TALE

Thirty-six years ago, Malcolm Wilson was embarking on a British Rally Championship bid. Today, his M-Sport operation is a motorsport powerhouse. DAVID EVANS hears how it happened



59

MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

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Main attractions: the Fiesta RS WRC and Bentley Continental GT3



MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

► It's the two faces of M-Sport: the two-time World Rally Championship winner's Ford Fiesta RS WRC and the latest addition to the list of endurance racing's movers and shakers.

Wilson smiles benevolently at the two cars being arranged neatly. But then it's back to business. That's very much the Wilson way. There's not much resting on laurels around here – a point hammered home by the plans that sit on a table across the room. This is a computer-generated vision of the firm's future, complete with a private test track and 105,000-square-foot "evaluation centre" that can cope with the research, development and construction of any kind of race or rally car from the ground up.

It's a long way from the back of the Wilson family tyre business, a handful of miles southwest of Cockermonth in Branthwaite. That's where all of this began.

It's 1979. A 23-year-old Malcolm Wilson has landed support from Ford and Total for an assault on the British Rally Championship.

"I'd been running my own cars before that," says



Wilson Sr and Jr with the plans for the future

MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

Wilson, "but I saw this as the chance to do it properly with the support I was getting. I also saw the chance to set up a business selling parts."

Malcolm Wilson Motorsport was born.

Much as Wilson was driven by the desire to succeed in a car, he was all over the commercial opportunities and had been for some time.

"We used to get stickers and things sent in for the tyre business," says Wilson, "so I used to take them into school and sell them. I've always been

"I've always been interested in business. It's more rewarding than driving" MALCOLM WILSON

interested in the business side of things and, to be honest, I've found it more rewarding than the driving. Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of fantastic aspects to driving, but I've achieved more with this team."

Back in '79, the focus was on the driving, so childhood friend John Steele was brought in to help out on the business side. Thirty-six years on, Steele remains steadfastly by Wilson's side.

"He's part of the backbone of this place," says Wilson. "He's the reliable eyes and ears around this place. He's happy to stay here while the rest of the team is away around the world; John knows exactly how I work."

After working his way up to the forefront of British rallying in an Escort, Wilson switched to an Audi Quattro in time for 1982 and then turned in a series of solid results, culminating in a stunning start to 1985, when he won three of the first four rounds of the British Championship. And, don't forget, that was a time when entries for the British series rivalled and often out-classed quality and quantity on some world championship rounds.

Ford had seen enough and signed Wilson to develop its RS200. He gave the Blue Oval's Group ►



New M-Sport facility will include a private, on-site test track



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MALCOLM GRIFFITHS



Wilson shares some of his best memories with our man Evans

► B supercar its maiden win on the Lindisfarne Rally in September 1985, but a month later had switched allegiance to the Austin Rover Group.

“I had an offer from both Ford and ARG for 1986,” says Wilson, “in the end I went with the 6R4. I had everything planned out: a three-year plan which involved learning the rallies in the first year, the pushing on in the second season. Just the kind of thing I work on with the young drivers these days.

“And then Henri had his accident.”

The Toivonen Corsica shunt changed everything. Group B was done. Dusted.

Austin Rover would be gone by the end of the year.

“That put a lot of pressure on the rest of the season,” says Wilson. “Suddenly, every event counted and we were having to push hard to try to get one of the few seats for 1987”

And things were definitely starting to happen. Earlier in the year, unbeknown to Jean Todt, Wilson was within earshot of the then-Peugeot boss when he heard his name mentioned in glowing terms. The French firm did, of course, can its campaign months later.

Ironically, it was a Peugeot that Wilson drove early in 1987. But the 1600cc GTi was two driven wheels and a lot of horses short of what he had in mind. A Vauxhall-Opel contract came along and offered employment for the next two years.

By then, Boreham was readying itself for a serious return to rallying with the Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4. Wilson was back, testing and then competing. And, from then on, he’s never deviated from Ford again. The highlight of Wilson’s career came in 1993, with third place on the RAC Rally, but he could see the end was coming for him as a driver. His 38th birthday was coming, with a self-imposed deadline not far behind.

He says: “Even when I was in my late 20s, I said that I would stop driving at 40, irrespective of whether I’d achieved my goals or not. I always felt if I didn’t achieve it at 40, I wouldn’t manage it after that. I had a plan with the business and the cut-off was there. I don’t think I even made it to 40.”

He was three months short of 40 when he went off the road in Pundershaw on day two of the 1995



With Ford boss Peter Ashcroft after returning to develop the Sierra 4x4



Wilson ended his ARG career with a troubled run on the 1986 RAC Rally...

MCKEIN

“Even when I was in my late 20s, I said that I would stop driving at 40, irrespective of whether I’d achieved my goals or not” MALCOLM WILSON



...but he went on to score a podium finish on his home event in 1993

MCKEIN

RAC Rally – an event that would go down in British motorsport history. While Colin McRae celebrated stepping up to the top of the world, Wilson slipped away quietly to prepare himself to take on the same world from outside the car.

Malcolm Wilson Motorsport had seriously taken off by now and his own British title-winning Michelin Pilot-backed Escort Cosworth was run by the Cumbrian firm, which had established itself beside the family home near Cockermouth.

At the time, Ford was struggling to know what to do with its programme and had experimented with satellite teams, but with little return – despite the Ford Escort Cosworth being the best-packaged and quickest car of its Group A era.

Watching Toyotas coming out of TTE in Cologne, Subaru from Prodrive in Banbury and Mitsubishi from Ralliart in Rugby, Wilson was desperate for a chance to show what he could do with works Escorts from Cumbria.

“I’d dreamed about the Ford deal, but never thought it would happen,” he says, even though he talked about it with Martin Whitaker, Ford’s then new head of European Motorsport. “I never thought or imagined that I would ever get that opportunity. We had a good business, with an

expanding customer base and I focused on that.”

The 1000 Lakes Rally in 1996 focused Ford’s mind, however, as Jarmo Kytölehto took a podium finish in a Wilson-run Escort, while the factory’s best effort was 11th with Bruno Thiry. The sister factory Ford of Carlos Sainz failed to make it past the end of the first day before it broke.

Things moved quickly.

“I was approached and asked if I would run the team from Boreham,” Wilson says. “I thought long and hard about it and I can tell you I did agree terms. I thought I would keep my own business going up here and work the week down at Boreham.

“Then, one Sunday night Elaine [Wilson’s wife] and I were talking and I said to her: “Much as I want this job, I’m going to turn it down.” And that’s one of only two things I’ve reneged on in my life. I told them my decision and thought, ‘Right, Malcolm, that’s that – you’ve burned your bridges there. Time to move on! I really thought that was it. But after the Finland result, I was invited back down and told we could do it from Cumbria. I still didn’t dare believe it until I had the press release in my hand!’”

Reality bit hard in November 1996, when ►

► Wilson took over Ford's WRC effort and the full force of what he'd undertaken hit him. There was a World Rally Car to be created, as well as a workforce to assemble in just a couple of months.

"We went from 18 people that November to 106 on the Monte Carlo Rally," he says.

And John Millington was the only man to make the journey from Essex to Cumbria. He remains with the team today, still working as co-ordinator.

"The work really started then," says Wilson, "and the work was incredible. It wasn't an easy transition – you could understand the people at Boreham's feelings. There wasn't much of a Christmas that year, but we got to Monte Carlo and we were second and sixth. We were second as well in Sweden and came very close to winning the championship in our first year. If Carlos' cam belt hadn't gone in Australia..."

At this point, Ford's WRC effort was still being run from the Wilson family home. At the time, the focus was firmly on two official cars, so the premises were big enough, but Wilson was thinking bigger. He toured Cumbria, exhausting planning officer after planning officer in the search for his ideal place. It didn't exist. Until the former mental-health facility at Dovenby Hall came on the market.

"I knew nothing about the place," said Wilson. "But as soon as we drove in through the gates, I knew it was perfect."

Derelict. But perfect.

So, in 1998, work began on turning a former mental home into the headquarters of Ford's



"The works cars for Elfyn Evans and Ott Tanak will be our shop window again next year" MALCOLM WILSON

World Rally Championship programme. And, just as that was ramping up, work was really kicking in on the other project that the recently re-named M-Sport was involved in... the small matter of the Ford Focus World Rally Car – the most technologically advanced rally car ever to wear the Blue Oval.

With no development base, a couple of units were taken on at Millbrook, just the 275 miles south of Cockermouth.

"That time was a mammoth challenge," says Wilson. "As well as the Focus and Dovenby, we were also running the programme through the year, which meant 14 rallies and lots of testing. We couldn't have even considered running customer cars at that time."

Crucially, Wilson was also negotiating the driver switch of the generation as he lifted Colin McRae away from Subaru in a two-year deal which cost £6m.

After some teething troubles, the McRae-Ford partnership came on song and came within an ace of the world title in 2001. Three years later and McRae was gone and, Wilson landed in Japan to discover Ford was about to follow the Scot out of the series.

"I was handed a press release pretty much as soon as I stepped off the plane," says Wilson. "It was a Ford withdrawal. I asked when the release was going out and was told: 'Tomorrow morning.' I got the first plane back to Europe and asked for a meeting before the release went out."

Wilson got his meeting and, in the coming weeks, a new deal was hammered out with reduced Ford financial commitment in return for the opportunity for M-Sport to expand its customer operation.

Wilson seized the opportunity with both hands.

"It was music to my ears," he says. "Don't forget, I had started my career in a 1300cc Escort and had used the same shell all the way up to fitting a two-litre BDA engine in it. Now we had the chance to create that kind of ladder within Ford again."

So, Ford stayed and M-Sport developed a new Focus in time for the 2006 season. And this one was a real beauty, coming from the pen of the firm's own design genius Christian Loriaux. With Marcus Gronholm at the wheel, the world was beaten. Twice. Back-to-back manufacturer titles were delivered for Ford before Gronholm retired at the end of 2007.

Younger Finns Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala stepped up to the plate, but neither could muster the same kind of success their lanky countryman managed.

And this time, when the bombshell was dropped for the second time, there was no coming back.

The day after Wilson, Ford and M-Sport celebrated a dominant Rally GB victory in 2012, he was told Ford was out.



Ford's and M-Sport's title hopes went awry when McRae flew off the road early on in 2001 Rally GB

WILSON JR IN M-SPORT ROLE-REVERSAL

The arrival of the Bentley marque at M-Sport offered one employee a particularly high-profile career change.

Malcolm's son Matthew was a full-time World Rally Championship driver from 2006 until 2011, but the loss of a sponsor allied to a broken ankle put paid to his 2012 season. The family firm was calling louder and louder, but Wilson Jr wasn't sure. It meant a return to rallying on the wrong side of the drivers' door.

Try as he might to avoid it, there was a desk with his name on it.

"The playboy lifestyle might have been nice," he says, "but I'd have soon had that knocked out of me! I was given a bit of a kick up the arse and told to get down there and find a new project."

Wilson has become Bentley's race team manager. He's the link between Cockermouth and Crewe. And he's absolutely loving it.

"The timing," he says, "was perfect with the

Bentley deal. If this had been a rally project, I would have looked at the driver getting into the car and thought: "I could be doing that..." But with this, I knew I hadn't done any racing since 2003 and I had no natural desire to get in and drive. That allowed me to do this new job to the best of my ability."

As you've read, Wilson Sr is sure victory as a team principal outweighs anything you can do as a driver. Prior to this season, that was something which Matthew had always struggled to fathom.

"When dad used to talk about the buzz of winning with the team, I could never understand that," he says. "How could anything compare with the buzz of driving a car. But it does. That feeling when we won for the first time at Silverstone was just amazing and every bit as good as the feeling from driving the car. As was the feeling when I called dad – he was on Rally Argentina – and told him we'd got our first podium in only our second race."



Wilson has traded the WRC cockpit for a seat in an office



Bentley's GT3 racer is fettled in M-Sport's immaculate workshops

MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

"It was certainly one of the darkest days of business life," says Wilson. "To be honest, I didn't expect it. We had another year on the contract, but there was a clause that Ford could stop sooner if they informed us before the end of September."

Bang.

The biggest worry for Wilson was his staff. The firm had grown and grown and with that came a responsibility to the community in which Wilson had been born and bred.

"It flattened me," he adds quietly.

Fortunately, the news came after M-Sport had started work on an all-new category of Fiesta, the R5. This cost-effective class was looming large and looking popular.

The easy way out would have been to knock it on the head. Wilson went in the other direction and hurled himself headlong into it, driving down prices for transmission pieces by ramping up the

orders into the hundreds. Millions of pounds were invested in parts as M-Sport set itself the target of being the first company to run an R5 car. It worked. The Fiesta R5 has been wildly popular, with celebrations to mark the 100th sale being planned.

The customer side of M-Sport's operation is vast and way bigger than anything any other team in the world could consider. And it's the economic model of winning on Sunday and selling on Monday that makes the team economically viable in the absence of manufacturer support or a title sponsor.

"The two works cars for Elfyn [Evans] and Ott [Tanak] next year will be our shop window again," says Wilson. "Getting those cars right gives people the confidence to come and buy from us."

There was, however, another significant ray of light to brighten those dark September 2012 days. And it came from a most unexpected source.



First GT3 win came in Blancpain round at home at Silverstone

65

"I was on the factory floor," says Wilson, "when I got the message to say Brian Gush had called from Bentley to talk about a possible GT3 programme."

Wilson was slightly perplexed.

"I'll be honest," he says, "I had to Google GT3..."

That done. He returned the call from Crewe. Gush wanted to have a look around M-Sport.

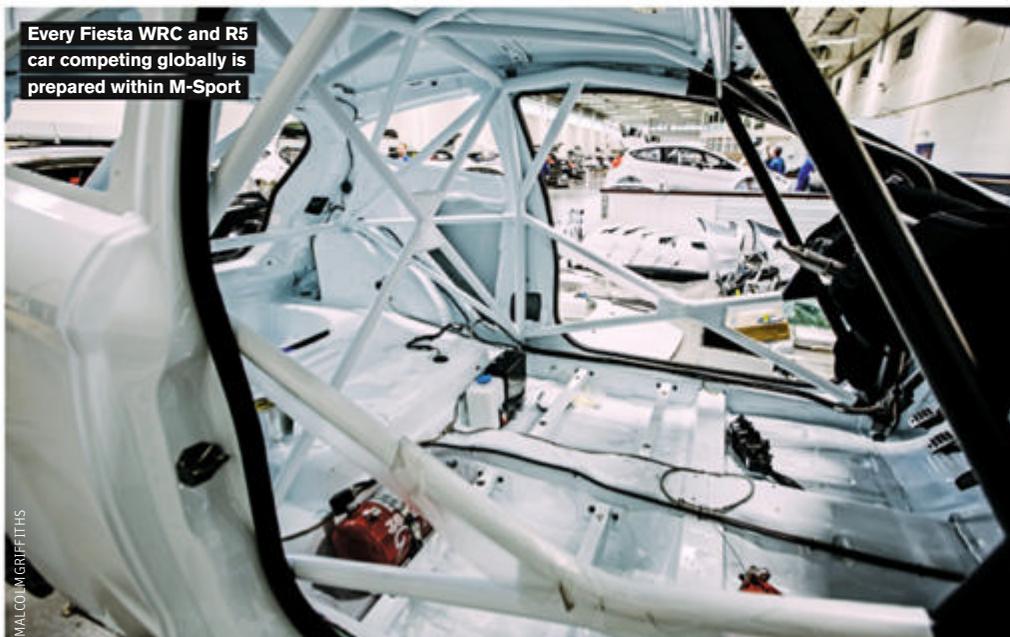
"Brian came up, had a look around and said he wanted to come back with some board members," says Wilson. "He said it might take a while to get the head of marketing and the chairman together on the same day, so I asked if it would help if I sent the helicopter to pick them up. I did that and a week later we sat in the Oak Room in Dovenby and talked things through over lunch. It was an absolutely beautiful day and the fit for Bentley and us was just perfect.

"I'll never forget Wolfgang Schreiber, chairman and chief executive of Bentley at the time, stood up and said: 'Malcolm, thank you very much. We really like what we have seen here and, as you know, while we are a big company, at Bentley we still like to act like a smaller, more traditional one and by shaking your hand I will confirm that you have the deal.'"

September seriously looked up that afternoon.

"I couldn't believe it," says Wilson. "In such a short space of time, we were now helping to build and develop Bentley's GT3 programme. It was unbelievable."

And not bad for the fella who started out building Escorts over the hill in Branthwaite. ❧



Every Fiesta WRC and R5 car competing globally is prepared within M-Sport

MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

Our photographers captured some stunning images during 2014. Here are the best of the best from around the world over the past 12 months



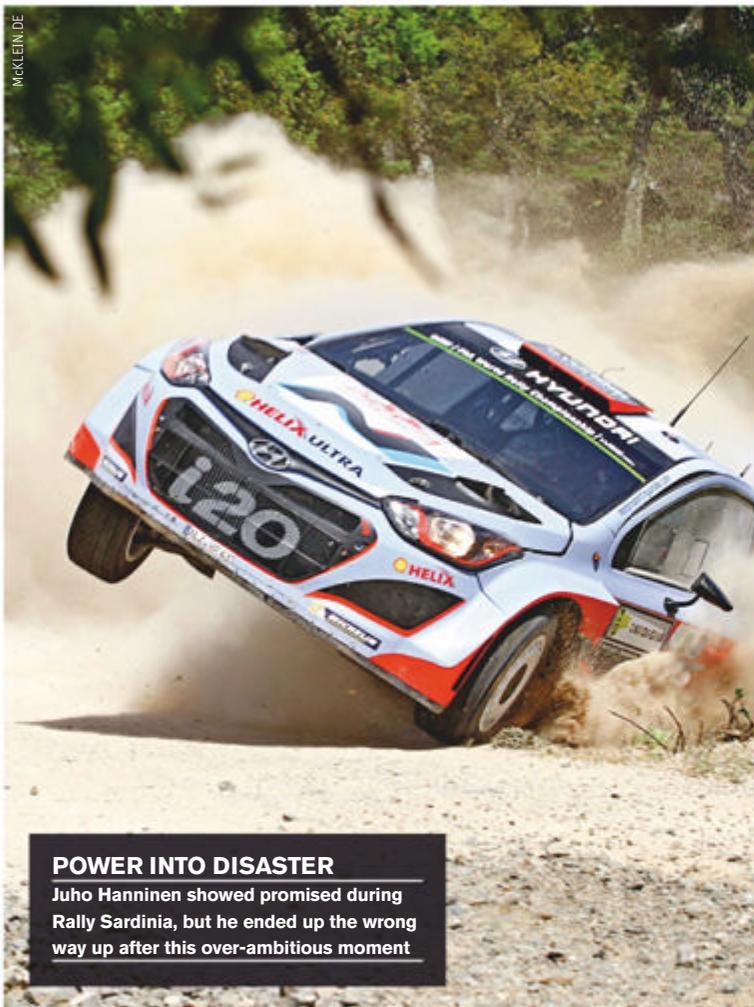


LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE
Jason Bright's Holden is launched into the air during the Clipsal 500 in Adelaide. The car wasn't in great shape, but fortunately Bright was able to walk away from this

NEWSPIX/REX



WINE LEADS TO TEARS
Inconsolable Jari-Matti Latvala after ploughing through a vineyard and crashing while leading in Germany



POWER INTO DISASTER
Juho Hanninen showed promise during Rally Sardinia, but he ended up the wrong way up after this over-ambitious moment



FAIRGROUND ATTRACTION
Iconic view of Porsche curves down to final Ford chicane from the Le Mans ferris wheel



GERMAN SOMERSAULT
As Kevin Magnussen makes contact, Felipe Massa prepares to be flipped



DAKAR SPLASH AND DASH

Not a pitstop, but a genuine first-stage splash for Argentinian fans as Ayrat Mardeev charges through stage one



NOWHERE TO GO AT GP2 MONACO

Leader Jolyon Palmer needs assistance to make his way past Andre Negro's machine

VANDER LAAN/LAT



TRUEX FORCED TO BACK UP

Martin Truex Jr had to switch to his back up car for the Daytona 500 after becoming embroiled in a nine-car crash in his Duel

SMITH/GETTY



BUETTNER/PA



LEELOCH/RAID

TEN IS HIS MAGIC NUMBER

Stage 10 action on way to victory; Nani Roma's dramatic Dakar win came 10 years after he won the motorcycle title

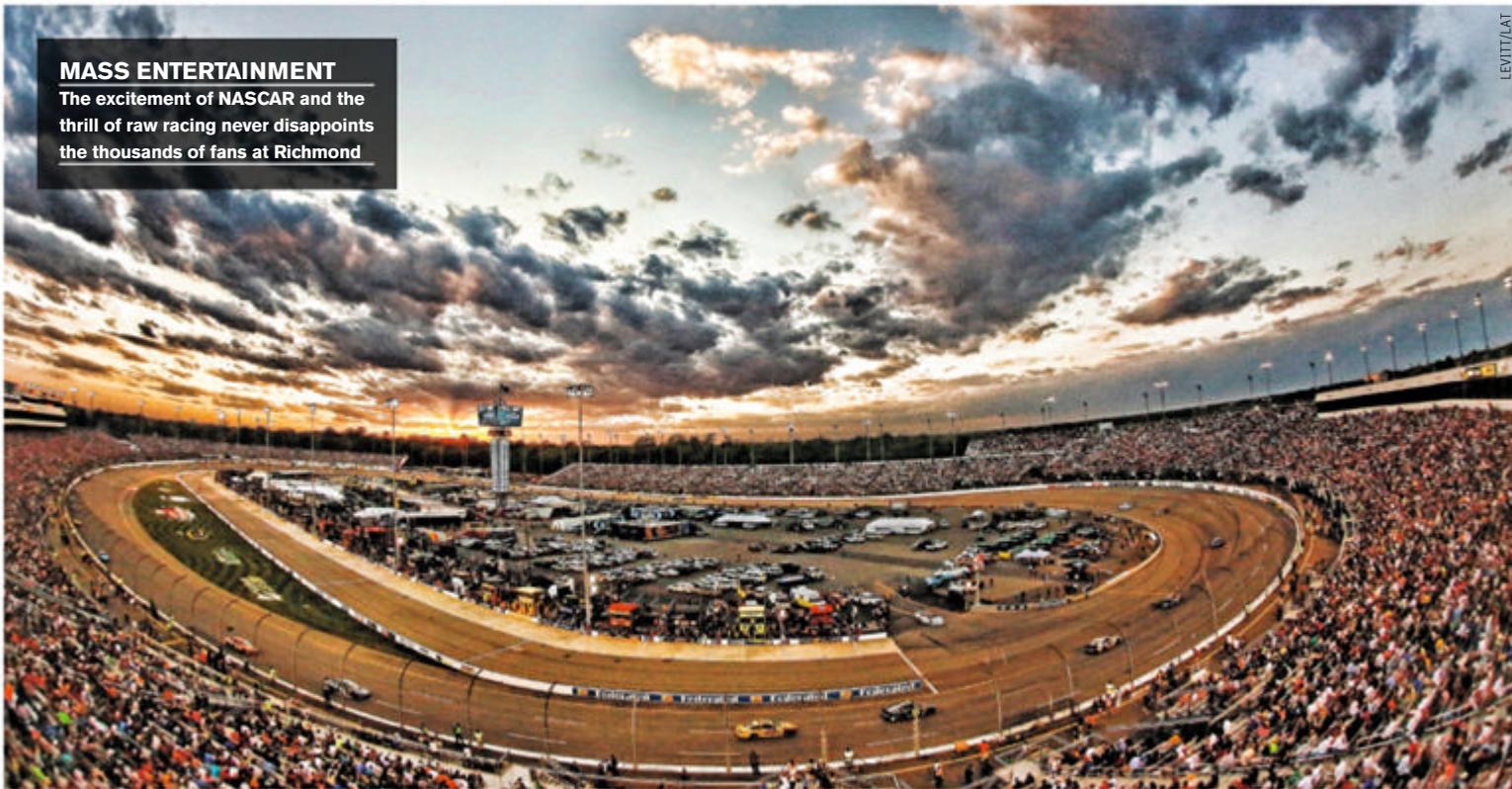


SPANISH LEAP OF FAITH
Alexander Toril is launched over the top of Mitch Gilbert during the Formula 3 European round at Pau

GOODEV/DPP

MASS ENTERTAINMENT

The excitement of NASCAR and the thrill of raw racing never disappoints the thousands of fans at Richmond



LEVITT/LAT



PRICE/XPB

AMERICA'S NEW ROCK TRIO

Massa, Gutierrez and Perez find time for musical banter at the US fan forum



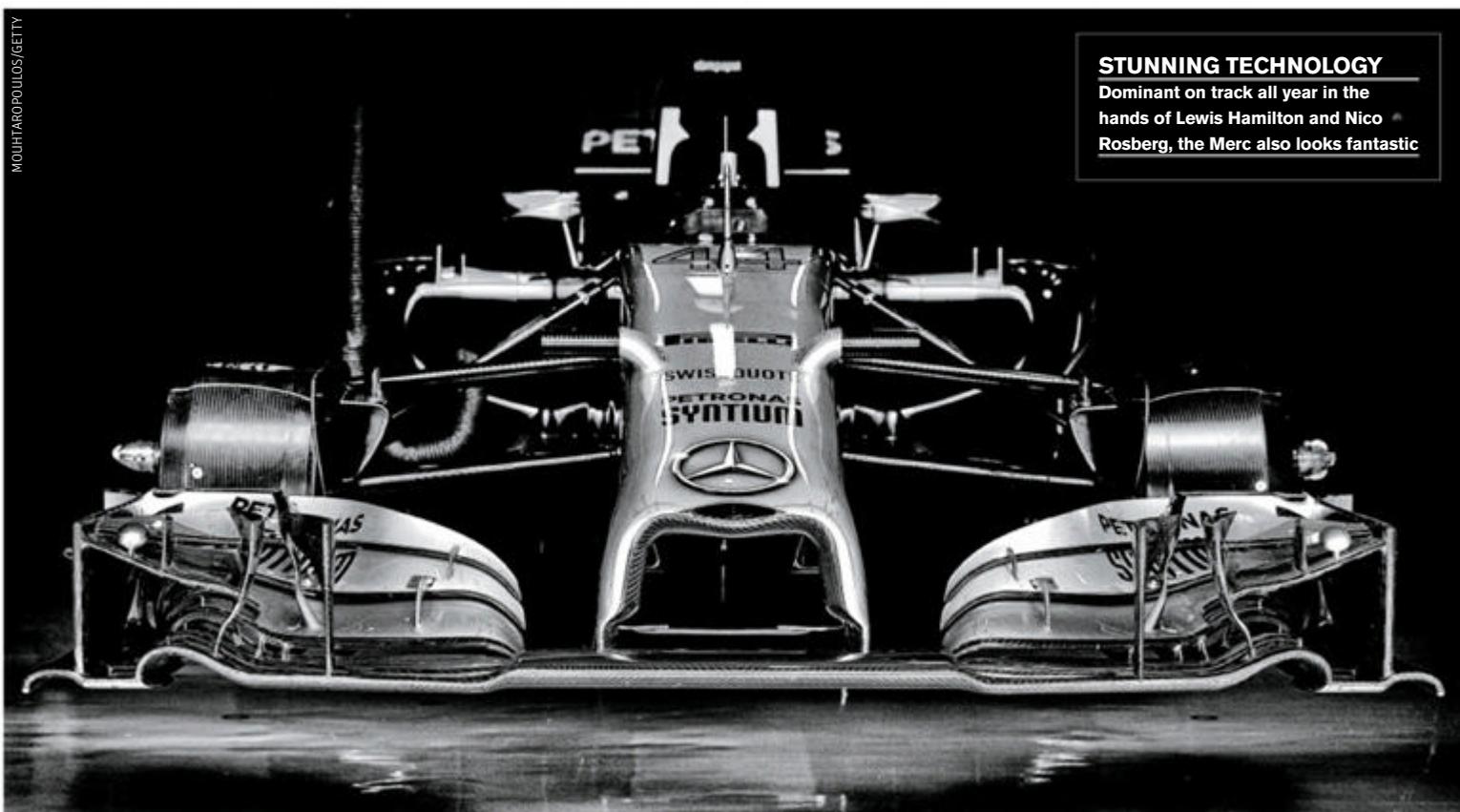
MATHIS/WP12

PASTOR OUT ON A BANG

Maldonado's sorry year at Lotus ended with an engine blow up at Abu Dhabi

STUNNING TECHNOLOGY

Dominant on track all year in the hands of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, the Merc also looks fantastic



MOUHTARPOULIOS/GETTY

V **S** **R** **ACING**
INCENZO OSPIRI



SQUADRA CORSE

Following over a decade of running Championship in 2015 Vincenzo Sospiri will join the LAMBORGHINI BLANC. VINCENZO SOSPIRI RACING will also run the LAMBORGHINI in Formula 4. The drivers for the programme will be in the process which will be overseen by Lamborgh



winning single-seater teams for Euronova Racing, BLANCPAIN SUPER TROFEO with two new Huracán ST cars. LAMBORGHINI SQUADRA CORSE FORMULA JUNIOR TEAM will be announced in March following a selection process. The teams will be announced in March following a selection process by Automobili Squadra Corse and Vincenzo Sospiri.

RACING WARHORSES

Some racing cars just go on and on and have extraordinarily long careers. **GARY WATKINS** picks out some of his favourite stories involving competition chassis that stood the test of time

REYNARD/IRM 02S #01

This car had four different names and as many engines during a seven-year career. What started out as the Reynard 02S raced as an IRM, a DBA4 and, most famously, a Creation.

The LMP675 design was rescued from the ashes of Reynard by a group called International Racing Management. Sportscar legend John Nielsen's RN team gave the Zytek-engined IRM a debut at Petit Le Mans in 2002 before the Dane's team — based at the ex-nuclear bomber base at Newbury — took over the project and dubbed it the DBA4 in deference to sponsor Den Bla Avis.

The fledgling Creation team was the next owner of the car, and with Nicolas Minassian and Jamie Campbell-Walter was a thorn in the side of the Audis during the 2004, '05 and '06 seasons — with a different engine each year. The Zytek powerplant was replaced by a Judd V8 for '05, before the car was turned into an LMP1 machine — courtesy of a five-litre Judd GV5 V10 and a longer wheelbase — when the regulations changed for '06.

It was in this specification that Frenchman Minassian famously outqualified the factory Audi R10 TDI turbodiesels at Petit Le Mans. That's the best memory of the car for Ian Smith, who engineered it during his time at both RN and Creation.

"We were working out of cardboard boxes in a tent," admits Smith. "We held Nic back, sent him out and then, bang, pole," he adds. "[Audi boss] Wolfgang Ullrich appeared and you could see him looking at all our boxes, and the words 'how the fuck have they done that?' were written all over his face."

Creation subsequently sold the car to the US Autocon team, which fitted a four-litre Judd, and raced intermittently in the American Le Mans Series in 2007 and '08.



Minassian outqualified the works Audis at Petit Le Mans in 2006

DOLE/LAT



Car appeared as DBA4 in RN team's hands

TINGLE/LAT



US Autocon squad ran the car in ALMS

MULLER/LAT

THE RULES

This story is about individual chassis and their contemporary racing careers, which means that historic racers cannot be included. Cars that have been rebuilt around a new chassis are also excluded, which is why there is no touring car in this list.

Matt Neal's British Touring Car Championship-winning Honda Integra Type-R of 2005, which twice came close to the independents' crown with Mike Jordan and then notched up some decent results as late as 2010 with Paul O'Neill driving, was set to be included.

It had to be ruled out because it became clear that it was reshelled and went from being Integra TD01 to TD06. A similar fate befell several other touring cars after investigation of their histories.



Lotus 72 #R6 first appeared in 1971 German GP with Wisell

LAT

LOTUS 72 #R6

Ronnie Peterson had a new chassis built for him when he joined Lotus at the start of 1973. The funny thing is that he preferred an older, updated car, type 72 #R6. The car that first raced at the end of 1971 would take him to four grand prix victories that year.

The sixth Lotus 72 first raced in the hands of Reine Wisell at the 1971 German Grand Prix and was Dave Walker's regular mount for the following season. Peterson crashed it twice in '73, first at the Silverstone International Trophy and then at Zolder, before a sequence of seven points-scoring finishes from 10 races took him to third in the world championship.

The car was sold to Team Gunston for use in the South African F1 series for 1974. Ian Scheckter added another four wins to its CV before #R6 was retired after a year with Eddie Keizan driving in '75.

VITAL STATISTICS

50 RACE STARTS

26 GP STARTS

RACE WINS 9

GP WINS 4

75

Q&A



NICOLAS MINASSIAN SPORTSCAR RACER

How did you end up at Creation?

I'd seen the car at Oscherleben when I'd been doing a race for Pescarolo in FIA Sportscars. I could see that it was in a different league to us and thought that I could kick some ass in that car. When Creation bought it, I rang [team owner] Mike Jankowski. They needed money, but I said just give me 10 laps, please. I got those laps at Valencia and they signed me.

What was it like to drive?

I could do whatever I liked in that car; the downforce was good and so was the mechanical grip. You could drive it like a single-seater, but you had to push it hard.

How important was that car in your sportscar career?

It more or less made me. I showed what I could do and eventually signed for Peugeot.



Peterson won at Monza in 1973

LAT



Scheckter took 13th at Kyalami in '74

LAT

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PORSCHE 935 #009 00030

This Porsche chassis has a pretty substantial claim to fame as the car in which Hollywood legend Paul Newman took a remarkable second place in the 1979 Le Mans 24 Hours. Yet its high-profile race debut was only one peak in an amazing career that included victories in both the US endurance classics at Daytona and Sebring and taking Bob Garretson to the first World Endurance Championship title.

Dick Barbour and Garretson, who ran his team, built up the car around a new 935 chassis purchased from the factory. "If you look at the back of the car, it says 'Made in Mountain View,'" says Garretson. "It was a kind of resurrection. We put it together around the pieces of car that I had crashed at Le Mans the previous year."

Baker won '83 IMSA GTO title in the 934-convert



The Barbour/Newman/Stommelen 935 took P2 at Le Mans in 1979

The car came within a jammed wheel of victory at Le Mans in 1979 with Newman, Barbour and Rolf Stommelen and finished second at the Watkins Glen 6 Hours and finished second at the month later before it was sold to Ray Hasbach, a friend of Garretson's. Converted to 935K3/80 Kremer specification, it was run under the Barbour banner in the colours of Apple Computers in the '80 IMSA series.

Garretson continued to race the car after Barbour withdrew and pulled off a victory in the 1981 Daytona 24 Hours sharing with Bobby Rahal and Brian Redman. That result, together with a sixth at Le Mans and third at Watkins Glen, was enough for him to seal the inaugural WEC drivers' title with second place in the Brands Hatch finale.

After Garretson ran out of money at the end of

1982, the car was sold to Wayne Baker, who converted it to single-turbo 934-spec for an attack on the IMSA GTO title in 1983. "I thought that was a cost-effective way to do it," says Baker. "The 935 was beginning to fade a bit and I only paid something like \$60,000 for it, and I had a fast and reliable car."

Fast enough, it turned out, to take a shock victory in the Sebring 12 Hours together with Kees Nierop and Jim Mullen. And reliable enough to finish every race on the way to winning the GTO title.

Baker turned the car back into a 935 for customers to drive in 1984, before its next owner, Chester Vincentz, reconverted it to a 934 and raced it in IMSA under the Electrodyne Performance banner as late as '86.

LOLA-CHEVROLET T330 #HU2

Privateer Horst Kroll didn't have any inkling that he was about to buy a new car when he headed off to the Road America round of the US Formula 5000 series in 1976. But an accident in practice aboard his own Lola T300 resulted in the purchase of a later T330 on the eve of the race. And he ended up running the same car deep into the 1980s.

"I'd crashed my car and really wanted to participate in that race," says Kroll today. "I had been told that the Theodore team had a spare car. I got them in the bar when they were half-drunk and they agreed to sell me their car."

And so began the final, extended chapter in the extraordinary racing life of T330 #HU2.

The car had been purchased by Jackie

Epstein for Dane Tom Belso to race in the European Formula 5000 Championship in 1973, scoring one win – at Snetterton in '74 – in three seasons. Theodore Racing took over tenure of the T330 for '76, Alan Jones winning at Brands Hatch in April, before the car was transferred Stateside for its US campaign.

Kroll only contested three US rounds prior to the demise of the series, but the car was back in action in Can-Am with all-enveloping bodywork for 1978. Kroll fielded the car for tardy Canadian Howard Kelly that year before taking back the wheel himself for the following year. "He just couldn't get it going; maybe it was a problem with his right foot," says Kroll. The car owner was a largely undistinguished regular in the Can-Am



...before conversion to Can-Am for Horst Kroll

field until he converted the car to Frissbee KR3 specification for 1983.

With the updated car and the quality of the entry waning, Kroll finished fifth in the points in 1983, third in '84, second in '85 and then won the final year of the Can-Am series in '86 at the age of 50. The car continued to race on in the one-off CAT series of '87, a kind of Can-Am relaunch in which modified CART chassis dominated, after which Kroll parked it.

Kroll can confirm that the car was never retubbed, though it was continually modified. "I had a local guy call Roy Hayman strengthen the chassis when I started to get serious," he says. "I had the Frissbee bodywork made and it ended up with inboard front suspension."

Maybe that explains the longevity of a car that competed in more than 100 races.

Belso raced #HU2 in F5000 in mid-1970s...



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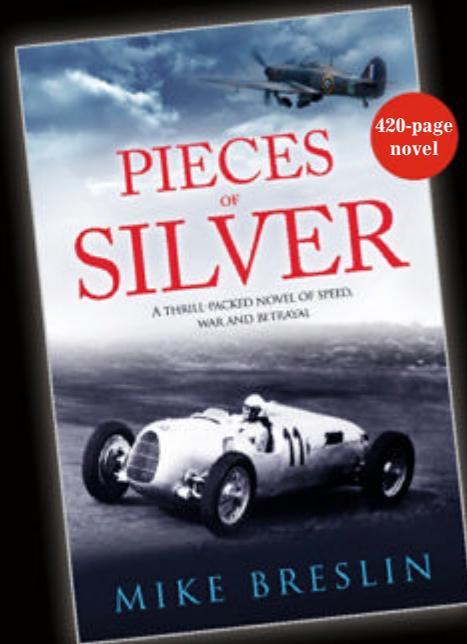
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ARROWS A23 #01, #02 & #03

It's no secret that the fleet of Arrows A23s of 2002 vintage were pressed into service as the basis of the Super Aguri SA05s and SA06s in 2006, with one becoming the unraced Minardi PS04 along the way. Which A23 became which Super Aguri isn't clear, but it can be taken as read that at least one of the monocoques raced as all three models. And there's a decent chance that it tested as a Minardi as well.

Had team owner Paul Stoddart got his way, the Arrows would have raced as a Minardi. He had bought the A23s, which had run with Cosworth V10 engines before Arrows went bust halfway through 2002, with the intention

to run them as Minardis and tested the car at Mugello as the PS04 in September 2003. Stoddart had a problem, however.

Greg Wheeler, Jos Verstappen's engineer that season, says that the team owner would have had a mutiny on his hands had he tried to run the Arrows. So much so that when the car tested, he had to bring over the mechanics who ran Stoddart's two-seater F1 cars.

"The Italians didn't want anything to do with it," he explains. "The car was only briefly in the factory and the mechanics threatened to walk out if it stayed."

The idea for the Arrows to become the Super



Aguri was borne of desperation. The fledgling Honda B-team originally planned to use designs supplied by its paymasters before that plan was kiboshed by the FIA. Plan B was suggested by Mark Preston, technical director at Super Aguri and formerly head of R&D at Arrows.

"It was Mark's idea," says former Aguri sporting director Graham Taylor. "It made sense because a lot of us were ex-Arrows and had a working knowledge of that car."

The original plan was for Aguri to get both the Honda V8 engine and its gearbox. That was changed six weeks before the first pre-season test at Barcelona, which meant pressing the Arrows 'box back into service and, remembers Taylor, "raising the engine by an inch and half" to marry it up to a transmission designed for the crank height of a V10.

Super Aguri got the Honda 'boxes at the same time as an aerodynamic upgrade that turned the car into the SA06 from the German GP. The chassis, though, were still most definitely Arrows A23s.



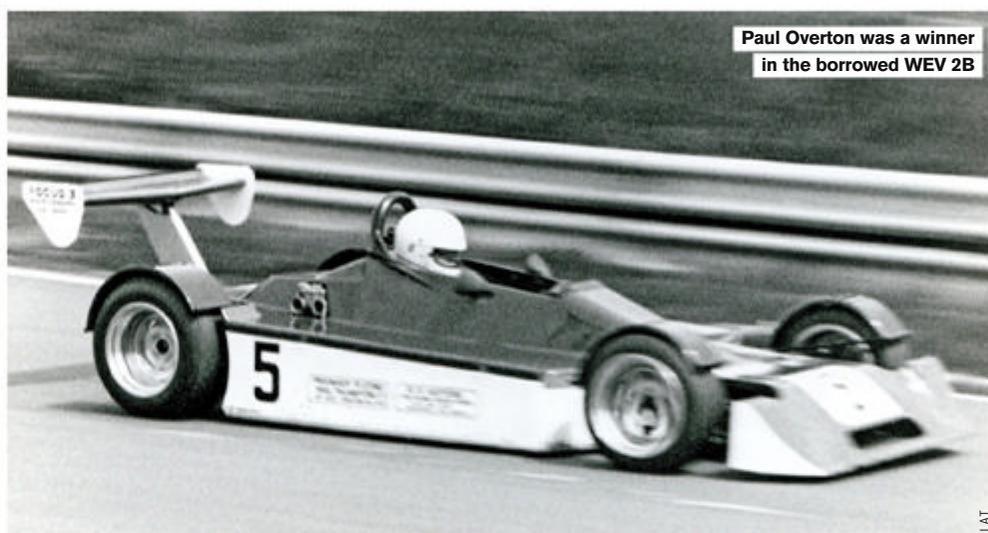
WEV 2B

Few club-racing cars have been quite so successful over such a sustained period as the WEV Formula 1300 car designed and built by Graham Gant. Its creator claimed a first title in 1982 and Mike Fry triumphed 17 years later in the final season of a category that can be traced back to 1953 and the earliest days of the 750 Motor Club. In between times the Ford-engined car claimed a further six titles and is reckoned to have won more than 100 races.

The rear-engined car was built in 1979 before a major update for '81 — "I chopped the front end off and made big changes to the front suspension," says Gant — turned the car into a winner. It was third in this B-spec in the '81 F1300 standings before taking the title in '82.

"It took about two years to get the handling sorted, after which it was beautiful to drive — it was limpet-like in the corners," recalls Gant. "Its big advantages were that it was a rear-engined car up against the front-engined Mallocks and that it was 60 or 70kg lighter."

That probably explains the car's longevity. Gant lent the car to Paul Overton, who won the title in 1983, before it was sold to Martin Walford who made it four in a row in 1984-85. He subsequently narrowed the bodywork and



took off the mudguards, before racing it in Formula 4 with some success in '86. The WEV subsequently passed to Keith Atkins and then Chris Emery, who fitted a Hewland gearbox and took it to another title hat-trick in 1993-95.

Mike Fry won a final title in 1999 in what was by then known as Club Sports and then went on to compete in Classic Clubmans before the car ended up on the hills, where there is a replica competing today.

If you bought that car and reckoned yourself halfway decent, the pressure was on to win the championship

Martin Walford

Oriol Servia raced #HU22 for Sigma Autosport in '01

ABBOTT/LAT



LOLA-COSWORTH BO1/00 #HU22

This might just be the chassis that has covered the most miles in the history of CART and Champ Car. The 2001 car, which was upgraded from B01/00 to B02/00 specification for '02, completed no fewer than 62 races in the hands of 10 drivers.

The Lola was ordered by the short-lived Sigma Autosport team for 2001 and driven by Oriol Servia. Max Papis drove it at the start of '02, notching up its best results with third places at Long Beach and Milwaukee before the team closed its doors.

The car was back in action that September after its purchase by Dale Coyne. Darren Manning raced and led in it under the Team St George banner at Rockingham. Andre Lotterer, who made a CART cameo at Mexico City in 2002, Joel Camathias, Geoff Boss, Tarso Marques, Gaston Mazzacane and Ricardo Sperafico all drove it before Jan Heylen got his hands on the car and led two races in '06.

I had no idea that chassis was so well used. It was a competitive car though. I was fifth at Cleveland, which up to that point was one of Dale Coyne Racing's best results
Jan Heylen



MILLER/LAT



MILLER/LAT

Heylen was a frontrunner in '06 aboard ageing Lola

DALLARA F308 #016

Carlin made a habit of winning the British Formula 3 Championship and remarkably achieved four consecutive wins with the same chassis. It wasn't premeditated, at least until the final year, but it showed the strength of the Red Bull Young Driver scheme.

Jaime Alguersuari claimed the 2008 title at the start of a new F3 rules cycle with Mercedes power and it just so happened that the next Red Bull youngsters – Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Eric Vergne – to be placed with Carlin were good enough to emulate his success after a switch to Volkswagen engines. At the end of each season, it made sense for them to take over the previous incumbent's car.

"It was good for the photos during winter testing," says team boss Trevor Carlin. "And then he'd just stay in that car."

For 2011 Felipe Nasr's manager, Steve Robertson, requested that his Brazilian charge have the multi-title-winning chassis.

"Steve wanted all Jean-Eric's kit for Felipe," recalls Carlin. "I told him that the engine didn't matter, but he could have the chassis. There was never any difference between our cars; it just worked out that that particular car won four titles in a row."

And that explains why Dallara F308 #016 has pride of place in the reception area of the Carlin factory today.

Redman/Siffert took 908 to 1970 Targa win



Chassis #008 won 'Ring 1000km in 1971...





Dallara F308 #016 took its first title in 2008 with Alguersuari...

EBREY/LAT



...and its fourth in a row with Nasr in 2011

EBREY/LAT

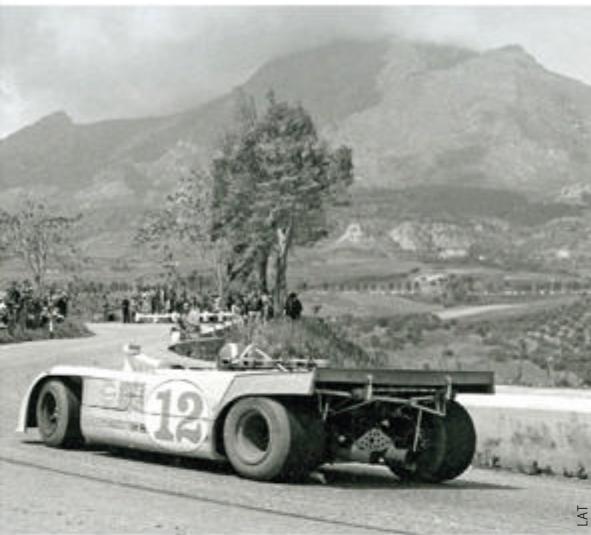
VITAL STATISTICS

58 POLES
27 PODIUMS

31 WINS

FASTEST LAPS 30

TITLES 4



LAT

PORSCHE 908/3 #008

There is surely no sportscar that had an international career that stretched for longer than this Porsche 908/3. Chassis #008 won on its competition debut at the Targa Florio in 1970, claimed a last world championship victory at Brands Hatch in '79 and made its final appearance as late as '83.

The works JW Automotive team gave the car its winning debut at the Targa Florio with Jo Siffert and Brian Redman driving before the car claimed another world championship victory in 1971 in Martini colours at the Nurburgring. Yet it was the owner of the car after it left the factory who turned it into a legend.

Reinhold Joest bought the #008 ahead of the 1972 season and raced it every year up until its

retirement in the early '80s in a variety of series. It was, he says, the perfect car for him.

"I could enter it at the Le Mans 24 Hours, in the world championship, in the DRM in Germany, the Interserie, so many different races," he says. "That was very important for me, because I didn't have the money to buy a second car – I only needed one with the 908."

The Porsche evolved over its lifetime. It was given a turbocharged engine – a single turbo in 1975 and a twin-turbo from '78 – and its aerodynamics changed with a series of configurations inspired by Porsche's 936. Crucially, though, it was never crashed heavily, which is why the car in Joest's private collection today still bears chassis plate #008.



...and Brands World Sportscar race eight years later

LAT

LAT

DID YOU KNOW?

JOEST ONE MORE RACE FOR #008

Joest had effectively retired #008 at the end of the 1982 season, but it made one fleeting appearance at the AVUS round of the DRM in '83. Technical problems for one of his rivals meant the grid was in danger of falling under the 10-car minimum required for points to be scored, so Joest miracled the 908/3 out of his truck and sent Jurgen Barth out to take the start in borrowed racing kit.



FASTEST LAPS OF

2014

Our annual look at who set the quickest time in a car race on all the circuits in the British Isles during 2014 – with a few of the best laps under the spotlight. Compiled by **MARCUS SIMMONS**

SILVERSTONE GP

Lewis Hamilton set the UK's fastest lap of the year when he was hunting down Nico Rosberg for the lead of the British Grand Prix. The world champion famously messed up qualifying and had also suffered a small time delay at his first pitstop. But, on his first flying lap on the softer option tyre, Hamilton set the fastest lap. A few laps later he was in front thanks to Rosberg's gearbox problem.

THRUXTON

Slipstream is everything at Thruxton, and Matt Rao's best lap from the British F3 round is a case in point. Rao seemed to have a small speed advantage that weekend anyway over Fortec team-mate Martin Cao, but didn't put a winning drive together until the third race. After losing the lead he closed back in, and took fastest lap as he hooked into Cao's tow, from 1.215s back at the start of the lap to 0.711s at the end.



Rao finally beat Cao

MALLORY PARK

The great thing is that Mallory is here in the first place. And appropriately for a circuit that originally opened in the 1950s, the fastest lap at the solo car meeting held at the track in 2014 was set by an F3 car powered by a motorcycle engine. A bit quicker than a Cooper-Norton though, for Graham Read whistled his Suzuki-engined Dallara around in the 44s in the lead of the Monoposto race before dropping out.



Read's bike-engined F3 car set pace

	TRACK, DRIVER AND CAR	TIME	SPEED	DATE
	SILVERSTONE GRAND PRIX Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes F1 W05 Hybrid)	1m37.176s	135.607mph	July 6
	ROCKINGHAM OVAL Paul Tompkins (SHP Ford Pickup)	40.478s	131.53mph	May 18
	THRUXTON Matt Rao (Dallara-Mercedes F312)	1m08.725s	123.41mph	Aug 17
	SILVERSTONE HISTORIC GP Bob Berridge (Mercedes C11)	1m50.735s	118.33mph	July 26
	SILVERSTONE NATIONAL Graham Cole (Jade-Millington Trackstar)	53.148s	111.11mph	Aug 9
	DONINGTON PARK NATIONAL Duncan Williams (Juno-Honda)	1m05.094s	109.45mph	July 12
	BRANDS HATCH GRAND PRIX Santino Ferrucci (Dallara-Mercedes F312)	1m20.343s	109.03mph	Aug 30
	GOODWOOD Jay Esterer (Chinook-Chevrolet Mk2)	1m19.369s	108.85mph	Sept 13
	MALLORY PARK Graham Read (Dallara-Suzuki Hayabusa F301)	44.912s	108.21mph	July 20
	DONINGTON PARK GRAND PRIX Matt Rao (Dallara-Mercedes F312)	1m24.390s	106.10mph	Sept 13
	CASTLE COMBE Simon Tilling (Ligier-Honda JS49T)	1m03.684s	104.57mph	Oct 4
	SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL Mike Millard (Rapier-Nissan SR2 LMPX)	1m03.927s	104.23mph	April 12
	SNETTERTON 300 Sam MacLeod (Dallara-Mercedes F312)	1m42.718s	104.05mph	June 22
	OULTON PARK Alex Mortimer (Radical-RPE SR8)	1m33.473s	103.68mph	June 14
	SNETTERTON 200 Andrew Dunn (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6)	1m10.462s	101.36mph	July 12



Tim Gray and his Spire set the Cadwell standard

CASTLE COMBE

Andover-based Scouser Simon Tilling has made the Combe spot his own in recent years, but this year there was a difference. The rapid Radical pilot wheeled out a Ligier, powered by a turbocharged Honda powerplant. Although it wasn't quite as quick as his Radical times, his Ligier mark was still the best of 2014, coming on the second flying lap of the season finale before problems slowed him – he still won though.



Tilling lit up in Ligier

CADWELL PARK

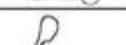
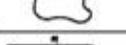
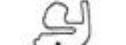
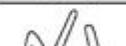
Such was Tim Gray's domination of the 750MC's Bikesports races that winning often wasn't in doubt. His Spire GT3 was 38 seconds to the good after eight laps at Cadwell when he unleashed a time that shaded Enrique Mansilla's Formula 3 lap record of 1982 by just under a tenth! Mission accomplished, he eased the pace for another victory.

KNOCKHILL

Ashley Sutton had just cleared Max Marshall in the fight for second place when he set Scotland's fastest lap of the year in his bid to catch Jayde Kruger for the lead of the second British Formula Ford race of the TOCA weekend. Sutton soon caught the South African, and on the final lap was in Kruger's slipstream when his brake pedal went long into the hairpin. After a monster shunt, it was amazing that car (and driver!) were repaired for the day's finale.



Sutton didn't always make it round hairpin

TRACK, DRIVER AND CAR	TIME	SPEED	DATE
 KIRKISTOWN Eamon Matheson (E5-Suzuki Hayabusa)	54.389s	100.076mph	April 26
 BRANDS HATCH INDY James Maclachlan (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6)	44.926s	96.79mph	June 14
 CROFT Jayde Kruger (Mygale-Ford/EcoBoost M12 SJ)	1m19.754s	95.92mph	June 28
 CADWELL PARK Tim Gray (Spire-Suzuki Hayabusa GT-3)	1m22.89s	94.98mph	Sept 13
 BISHOPSCOURT Fergus Faherty (Tatuus-Renault RC00)	1m09.390s	94.630mph	May 11
 OULTON PARK FOSTERS David McArthur (Van Diemen-Ford/Kent LA10)	1m03.428s	93.87mph	April 12
 KNOCKHILL Ashley Sutton (Mygale-Ford/EcoBoost M12 SJ)	48.595s	93.85mph	Aug 24
 OULTON PARK ISLAND Paul Rose (Saker-Subaru RapX)	1m25.822s	93.37mph	Aug 16
 ROCKINGHAM INTERNATIONAL LONG Sam MacLeod (Dallara-Mercedes F312)	1m19.490s	92.84mph	May 4
 ROCKINGHAM INTERNATIONAL Toby Sowery (Dallara-Volkswagen F305)	1m16.825s	90.90mph	May 25
 PEMBREY Tom Stoten (Gunn-Ford/Duratec TS8B)	57.775s	90.72mph	Aug 2
 ANGLESEY INTERNATIONAL Garry Watson (Westfield-Ford/Zetec SEIW)	1m30.338s	83.68mph	April 27
 ANGLESEY COASTAL Paul Rose (Saker-Subaru RapX)	1m08.551s	81.39mph	July 20
 LYDDEN HILL Ian Conibear (Caterham-Ford/Duratec S3)	43.498s	81.21mph	June 22
 MONDELLO PARK LONG Paul Dagg (Dallara-Toyota F304)	1m39.650s	78.635mph	Sept 20
 ROCKINGHAM NATIONAL Jeremy Webb (Caterham-Ford/Sigma)	1m18.083s	78.35mph	Aug 9
 MONDELLO PARK SHORT Cian Carey (Tatuus-Renault RC00)	54.483s	75.956mph	Oct 12

FESTIVE FEVER 2014

Win tickets for the 2015 British Grand Prix at Silverstone in **HENRY HOPE-FROST'S** Christmas quiz

A 2014 and all that

How much can you tell us about the season past?

- How many teams ran more than two drivers during the GP2 season?
- Other than Takuma Sato, who else raced for AJ Foyt's team in IndyCar?
- How many European drivers scored points in the top class of Japanese Super GT?
- Name all the World Touring Car Championship polesitters who didn't win a race.
- Which World Rally Championship event had the highest number of different leaders?
- What was Briton Gary Paffett's highest position in a DTM race?
- Who was the highest-scoring British driver in the World Endurance Championship's GTE Am-class points table?
- Among the NASCAR Sprint Cup scorers, who racked up the fewest points?
- How many times did a Nissan driver start a V8 Supercar race from pole?
- What was the combined final points tally of the seven former champions racing in the British Touring Car Championship?

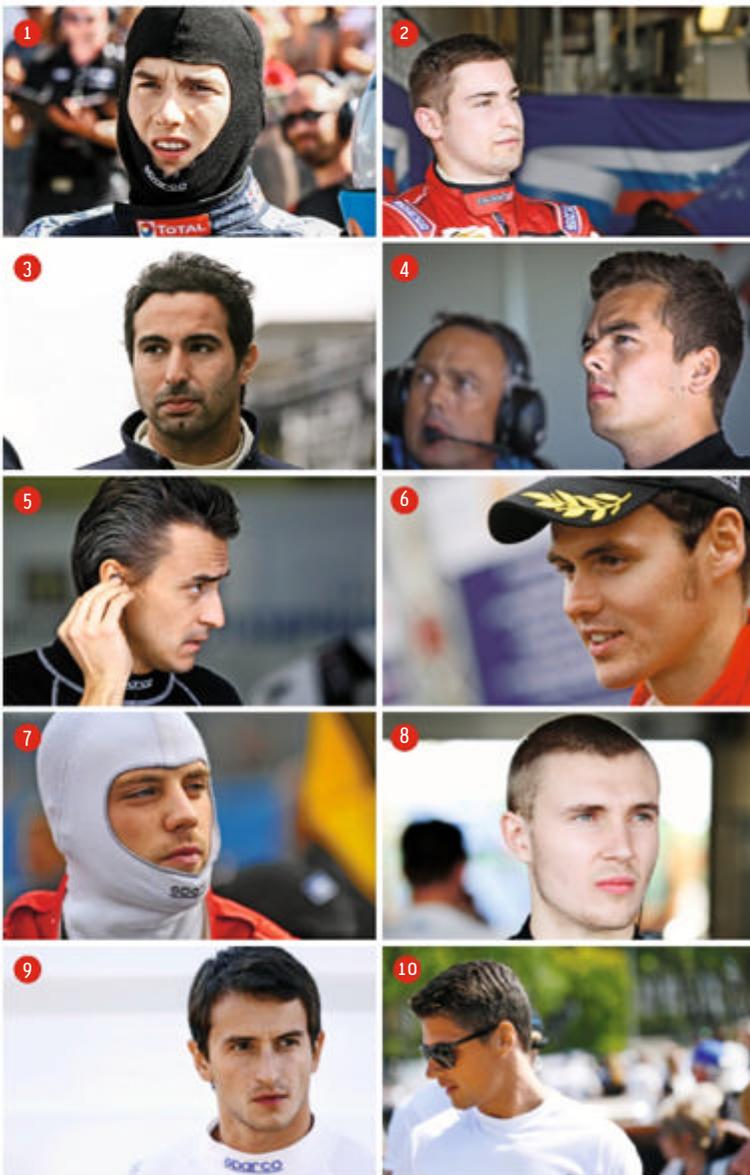
B Missing link

Spot a theme from motorsport history and fill in the blanks.

- Brooks, Laffite, Patrese, Rindt, -----, Surtees, Villeneuve.
- Aho, Anttila, -----, Kivimaki, Lehtinen, Lindstrom, Mannisenmaki, Markkula, Pietilainen, Piironen, Rautiainen, Repo, Tiukkanen.
- Chilton, Cocker, Davidson, Drayson, Franchitti, -----, Jarvis, Kane, McNish, Rossiter, Smith, Soper, Wallace, Weaver.
- 23, 22, 20, 4, -----, 11, 1, 3, 7, 7, 1, 17, 36, 7, 7, 26.
- Burt, Harvey, Huff, -----, Soper, Walkinshaw.
- R Petty, Pearson, Gordon, Allison, Waltrip, Yarborough, Earnhardt, -----, Wallace, L Petty.
- Schree, Lola, Spyder, Prophet, CAC, -----, March, VDS, Ensign, Porsche.
- De Ferran, Fittipaldi, Gugelmin, Junqueira, Marques, Moreno, Pizzonia, Rosset, Ricardo Sperafico, -----, Zonta.
- Andersson, Pons, Ketomaa, Hanninen, Sandell, -----, Prokop, Sousa, Tanak, Breen, Paddon.
- Chinetti, Selsdon, Gonzalez, Trintignant, Gendebien, Hill, Frere, Bandini, -----, Guichet, Vaccarella, Gregory, Rindt.

D Winners' gallery

Who are these 2014 event winners and/or champions?



C Where in the world?

Identify these international venues, some current, some defunct.





Courtesy of Silverstone Circuit, our **winner** will receive two three-day passes to the 2015 British GP. For more info log on to www.silverstone.co.uk or phone 0844 3750 740.

SILVERSTONE

Experience is everything

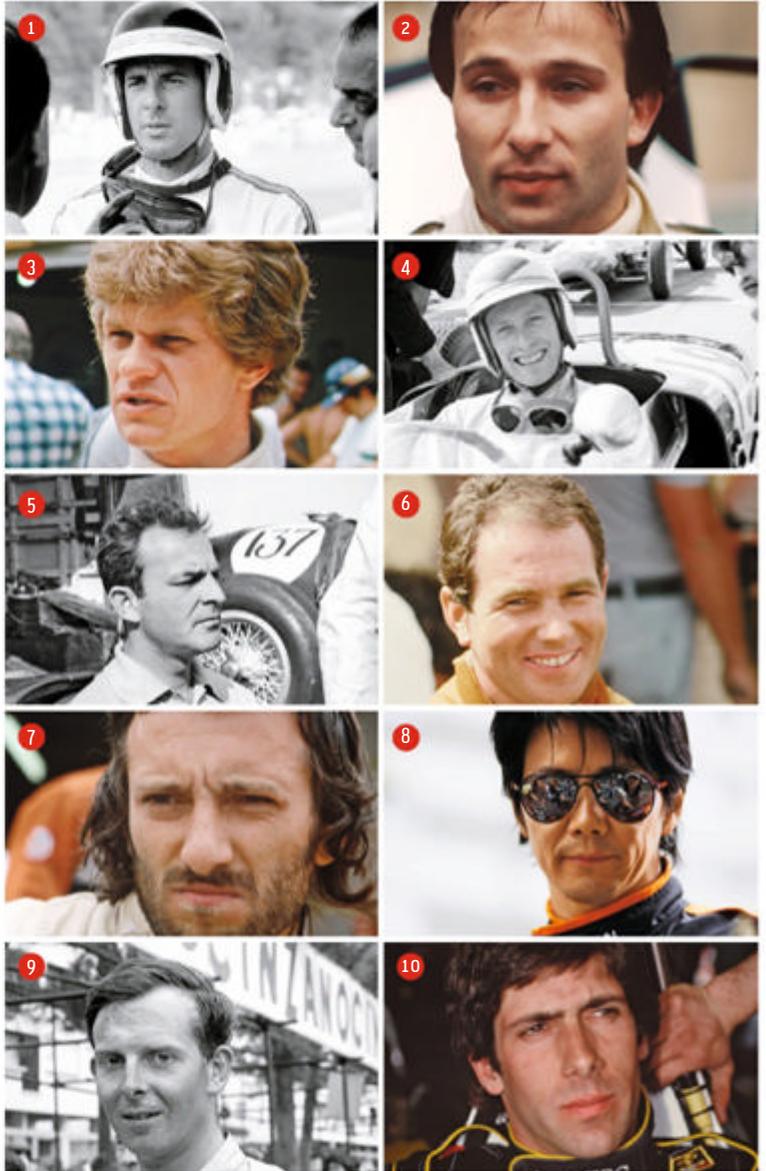
Five runners-up will receive copies of the official 2014 Le Mans, BTCC and WRC review DVDs courtesy of Duke. For more info check out www.dukevideo.co.uk



E Who, what, where, when? We want drivers, cars, series, venues, dates



F Forgotten F1 folk Recognise these ex-Formula 1 drivers?



HOW TO ENTER

Send your answers to the 60 questions on a separate sheet of paper & crossword (photocopies are fine) to the address on the right by **Friday January 9, 2015**

Remember: in the event of a tie-break an answer sheet deemed to be the most detailed will be adjudged the winner.

Your details – must be completed

(Block capitals please)

Mr/Mrs/Miss: _____ First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

If you would like to receive emails from us containing news, special offers and service information please include your email address below

Email: _____

Please return to:

**Henry Hope-Frost
AUTOSPORT (Christmas Quiz)
Teddington Studios
Broom Road, Teddington
Middlesex TW11 9BE**

Terms and conditions: No entries will be accepted from employees of Haymarket Media Group or their families, or any other companies associated with this competition. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no alternative cash prize and the prize is non-transferable.

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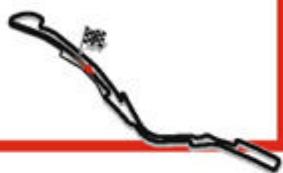
Please tick box if you don't want to receive this information

Formula E

Punta del Este (ROU)

December 13

Round 3/10



RESULTS

31 LAPS, 54.089 MILES

1	SEBASTIEN BUEMI (CH)	49m08.990s
	Team e.dams Renault; Grid: 4th-1m15.842s	
2	NELSON PIQUET JR (BR)	+0.732s
	China Racing (Campos); Grid: 2nd-1m15.530s	
3	LUCAS DI GRASSI (BR)	+2.635s
	Audi Sport Abt; Grid: 6th-1m16.108s	
4	JARNO TRULLI (I)	+4.163s
	Trulli (Super Nova); Grid: 7th-1m16.144s	
5	JAIME ALGUERSUARI (E)	+4.698s
	Virgin Racing; Grid: 5th-1m16.053s	
6	BRUNO SENNA (BR)	+5.197s
	Mahindra Racing (Carlin); Grid: 20th-no time*	
7	NICOLAS PROST (F)	+6.514s
	Team e.dams Renault; Grid: 3rd-1m15.722s	
8	JEROME D'AMBROSIO (B)	+7.567s
	Dragon Racing; Grid: 17th-no time**	
9	ORIO SERVA (E)	+8.646s
	Dragon Racing; Grid: 11th-1m16.811s	
10	NICK HEIDFELD (D)	+10.563s
	Venturi (Signature); Grid: 8th-1m16.225s	
11	ANTONIO GARCIA (E)	+10.594s
	China Racing (Campos); Grid: 14th-1m17.653s	
12	MICHELA CERRUTI (I)	+19.617s
	Trulli (Super Nova); Grid: 16th-1m20.206s	
13	KARUN CHANDHOK (IND)	+54.175s
	Mahindra Racing (Carlin); Grid: 10th-1m16.416s	
14	JEAN-ERIC VERGNE (F)	29 laps-suspension
	Andretti Autosport; Grid: 1st-1m15.408s	
15	DANIEL ABT (D)	-3 laps
	Audi Sport Abt; Grid: 9th-1m16.374s	
16	SALVADOR DURAN (MEX)	-4 laps
	Amclin Aguri; Grid: 15th-1m17.810s	
R	MATTHEW BRABHAM (USA)	26 laps-accident
	Andretti Autosport; Grid: 19th-no time**	
R	STEPHANE SARRAZIN (F)	15 laps-accident
	Venturi (Signature); Grid: 13th-1m17.025s	
R	ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA (P)	6 laps-loose wheel
	Amclin Aguri; Grid: 12th-1m16.865s	
R	SAM BIRD (GB)	3 laps-accident
	Virgin Racing; Grid: 18th-no time**	

Winner's average speed: 66.030mph. Fastest lap: Abt, 1m18.451s, 80.067mph.
 All drivers in Spark-Renault SRT_01E. *sent to the back of the grid due to wheels not being fitted at pre-allocated time before qualifying - had qualified 8th-1m16.211s.
 **crashed in qualifying and did not record a laptime

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	DI GRASSI	58	6	PROST	21
2	BUEMI	40	7	MONTAGNY	18
3	BIRD	40	8	CHANDHOK	18
4	PIQUET	22	9	SERVA	17
5	D'AMBROSIO	22	10	ALGUERSUARI	14

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	AUDI SPORT ABT	62	4	DRAGON RACING	39
2	E.DAMS-RENAULT	61	5	ANDRETTI AUTOSPORT	33
3	VIRGIN RACING	54	6	MAHINDRA RACING	26

POINTS SYSTEM EXPLAINED

25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1 to top 10 finishers. Three points for pole position. Two points for fastest lap.

Beautiful place, but sand on track did cause issues



FOR IN-DEPTH RESULTS
forix.autosport.com

Buemi wins bullfight



Electric racing between ex-Toro Rosso boys Buemi and Vergne

TWO FORMER RED BULL JUNIOR F1 DRIVERS

fought out victory for the third round of Formula E at Punta del Este by the Atlantic Ocean in Uruguay. One, Sebastien Buemi, is a recently crowned World Endurance champion. The other, Jean-Eric Vergne, is the recently ousted Toro Rosso pilot who is looking for a new career path. Buemi triumphed; Vergne was struck down with a car failure just as he seemed poised to pounce.

Despite Buemi's win, his first in the series, Vergne was the true star of the show. He brushed the wall at Turn 1, but Andretti Autosport's new signing grabbed pole position over Nelson Piquet Jr by 0.122s. But this advantage was reversed as Vergne wheelspun away from the startline, and Piquet led the way for China Racing. Behind them, Buemi outdragged DAMS team-mate Nicolas Prost for third, while Lucas di Grassi found himself elbowed towards the Turn 1 wall by Jaime Alguersuari, and his evasive action cost him another place to Nick Heidfeld.

The proximity of the circuit to the beach – literally adjacent – meant that sand on the track surface was a problem all day. It contributed to a raft of spins, shunts and safety cars, the first required when Sam Bird flew into the wall at Turn 1 (having also gone off at Turn 17 on his first qualifying lap) on lap four. A second safety car was to cover the removal of Antonio Felix da Costa's stranded car.

In between breaks, Vergne was heaping pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with bent suspension after clattering the kerbs too hard at the chicane early on. Vergne's attacks were repelled until lap 13, when he dived up Piquet's inside at the hairpin and immediately pulled away (even though his 'fanboost' wasn't working).

Vergne had used a good deal of his battery life with his attacks, and so he pitted a lap earlier than his rivals. This cost him when the safety car was required for a third time, as Stephane Sarrazin smashed his suspension on the kerbs at the fast chicane and then spun into the wall.

The majority of the field pitted for their car swaps at the end of lap 16, and Heidfeld emerged in the lead! He had earlier passed Alguersuari into Turn 1 thanks to being able to bring his fanboost

power advantage into play, but to leap from fourth to first was too good to be true. "When I realised I was first I thought, 'We must've done something wrong,'" he sighed. "I'd like to know what exactly happened." A drivethrough for too quick a pitstop followed, which promoted Buemi to the lead, with Vergne now running second, ahead of Piquet.

Although Vergne fell away at the restart, and was 2s behind with 10 laps remaining, he redoubled his efforts and got back on terms with Buemi as the race approached its climax. A fourth safety car, after Matthew Brabham's fantastic charge from 19th to sixth ended in the chicane wall, provided a grandstand finish.

Vergne went for his fanboost at the restart, and got right on Buemi's tail as they exited the first corner. Buemi then locked up at the second chicane and, crucially, was forced to straightline it. It looked a matter of time before Vergne would pass, but suddenly his car was touring, its front-right suspension having broken.

"If I'd finished the race behind him, I'm pretty sure he would've got a penalty," said Vergne of Buemi missing the chicane. "He gained a big advantage and I think he would have had to let me overtake him. I think the fact I didn't finish really helped him there."

Buemi didn't see it that way: "To keep the door shut I'd braked on the sand and had a really big lock-up. I think I would have been able to keep him behind me, and after that I slowed down in Turn 8 to make sure he caught up, so I wouldn't have got a penalty." In the end, it didn't matter.



Piquet leads Vergne and field at start

IN THE PADDOCK

CHARLES BRADLEY
SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR

@Ex_Autosport_Ed



APART FROM THE LATE GONZALO Rodriguez, Uruguay hadn't really registered on the world's motorsport radar before Saturday's Formula E round at Punta del Este. The Atlantic seaside resort is in a beautiful location, and the track's position adjacent to the beach gave rise to some stunning helicopter TV shots. While its claim to be the 'Monte Carlo of South America' was pushing it a bit far, it reminded me of what Spain's Costa del Sol would have looked like before package holidaymakers ruined it.

"I'll go along with Alejandro Agag's belief that the venue can become a "future classic" – and its layout was the fastest Formula E track so far, with some fast sweeping bends and one really quick chicane. Oriol Servia likened it to Surfers Paradise. But while the Aussies seem to have perfected their kerb set-up, the 'red sausage' and 'yellow banana' kerbs here threatened to overshadow the weekend, especially when Matty Brabham's car was almost wrecked by stray bolts that tore through his floor (below) and into the tub.

All in all, not a bad place to come to write my last report for AUTOSPORT; a bit different from my first assignment at Oulton Park 25 years ago. The weather was the same though, as I got sunburnt at both!



Stray kerb bolts 1, Brabham's floor 0

REMEMBER WHEN

September 18
2011



Jean-Eric Vergne's last pole position came at Paul Ricard in Formula Renault 3.5, when he beat Alex Rossi and Daniel Ricciardo by over eight tenths.

New manufacturers to revolutionise season two

FORMULA E IS POISED FOR AN influx of manufacturers for its second season in 2015-16, with series founder Alejandro Agag expecting "a number from six to eight" to sign up in the near future, and revealing that they will bring a diversification of electric powertrains.

"There was an application process by the FIA for future manufacturers for this championship," explained Agag. "That finished on October 31, and 12 applications were presented. They are a mix of car manufacturers and others are technology companies – which is a really different option for us, so ones that produce batteries, electric motors or even a full powertrain – and we will find out who has been successful in the next week. The number of selected manufacturers is likely to be between six and eight.

"We will then have meetings to define their roadmap of the technology level of the championship. It's very important to develop a five-year roadmap to define the clear direction that this championship is going to go. We need to decide what



Agag (left) and Formula E track's Julius Baer welcomed by Uruguay and

areas can be developed and what cannot – but the focus must remain on the electric powertrain."

Although the final decision will rest with the FIA as the series' regulator, Agag wants to keep the current SPARK chassis for "a number of years" to focus on developments of the powertrains, especially their economy.

"The good news is that we will have quite

a number of different powertrains next year; we will have some big names delivering those," he added. "We have a great idea of the direction that we're going to go, and we'll of course work closely with the FIA on the regulations and with the selected manufacturers. We will have the competition that we've always wanted to have that will improve the technology."

Vergne confident about future

OUSTED TORO ROSSO F1 RACER Jean-Eric Vergne says he will reveal his 2015 plans "quite soon" after his stunning Formula E debut.

Vergne scored pole position and challenged for victory with Andretti Autosport, but is unsure if he will continue in the series.

"I don't know yet, we will see," he said. "I will choose what's best for my career. It was nice to start on pole

position – it's been a long time, because it's mission impossible in F1 unless you're in a Mercedes or a top team. To keep racing has been good."

When asked if he was interested in joining Andretti's IndyCar Series squad, he replied: "Yeah, yeah, I'm exploring all the opportunities next year to find the best ones. I'm sure I'm going to come up with something really good next year, quite soon."



Vergne: "exploring all opportunities"

Double-header for Battersea

THE FORMULA E FINALE AT

London's Battersea Park next June will be a double-header format, bringing the number of races in the first season to 10.

Series chief Alejandro Agag said: "A race in that location is such a great opportunity, to set up all that infrastructure once we are there, why not have two races to complete this championship? Yes, the intention is to do a double-header in London."

Agag was delighted with the decision of Wandsworth Borough Council to approve plans for the June 27 event.

"I think now we can say the races are happening, but we have to be completely respectful of the planning process," he added. "I myself have met the residents around the park and their associations. They were interesting: they started with them booing me and ended with them clapping!"

BRABHAM RETURNS

Matthew Brabham was recalled to the Andretti Autosport squad at the last minute to replace Franck Montagny for unexplained health reasons. In other moves, Antonio Garcia made his series debut for China Racing as Ho-Pin Tung was racing in the Gulf 12 Hours, while Salvador Duran replaced Katherine Legge at Amlin Aguri as she had a clashing United SportsCar test.

SENNA FURIOUS

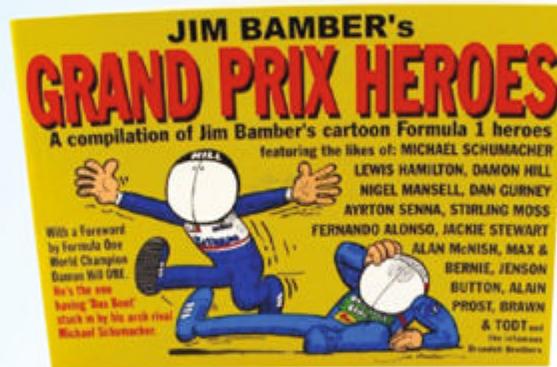
Bruno Senna was left seething after he was thrown to the back of the grid for a parc ferme infringement when his wheels were attached too late: "The car has to be ready five minutes before qualifying starts; it's an odd rule. If you work on the car, fine, but just adding the wheels? That's harsh."

BIRD SHUNTS TWICE

Putrajaya dominator Sam Bird suffered a horrendous weekend in Uruguay, crashing his Virgin car both in qualifying and early in the race. "Something got stuck under the car [in qualifying] and sent me straight into the wall. Then in the race I locked up and hit the kerb, which acted like a take-off ramp. I hope those kerbs (below) go because I think they're dangerous."



JIM BAMBER'S GRAND PRIX HEROES



Jim Bamber, who passed away this June, was our resident cartoonist for many years. *Bamber's View* was a popular feature, controversial at times but always amusing. As Sir Jackie Stewart put it, "Jim was well-known in the motorsport community for the wit and wisdom of his cartoons. Few of us escaped his attention over the years"

Jim's unique take on all sorts of F1 stories can be seen in his *Grand Prix Heroes* book, a compilation of his favourites he put together.

In addition to his drawings, Jim designed a collection of limited edition cartoon models in tribute to his personal 'Heroes', each of which supports a motorsport charity through a royalty on every sale. They are a great reminder of his work.

Following agreement with his family, the range will continue and the latest releases are tributes to Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss, who are each featured in a Maserati 250F. They are limited to 600 pieces and priced at £54.

Jim was very pleased with the production masters and would have been flattered by the reaction of Sir Stirling, who said of it, "Jim's model is great fun and I am delighted that it supports the Grand Prix Mechanics Charitable Trust. It is a small tribute to all those who keep us drivers going and, I hope, a tribute to Jim."



Full details can be found online at www.thejimbambercollection.com

RACE OF CHAMPIONS BUSHY PARK (BDS), DECEMBER 13-14

Coulthard collects in the Caribbean

IN A BATTLE BETWEEN YOUTH AND experience, it was experience – in the form of 13-times grand prix winner David Coulthard – that prevailed. The 43-year-old was on imperious form, winning all seven of his head-to-head races and defeating 20-year-old DTM ace and Mercedes Formula 1 reserve Pascal Wehrlein in the final.

Coulthard drove with remarkable precision throughout the event, held at Bushy Park in Barbados. In Saturday's two-driver Nations Cup, he linked up with Susie Wolff and only narrowly lost out to the Nordic team of veterans Tom Kristensen and Petter Solberg. He went into the main event among the favourites, and lived up to expectations in the group stage with wins over V8 Supercars champ Jamie Whincup, 2012 RoC winner Romain Grosjean and motorcycle legend Mick Doohan. But his path through the knockout stages wasn't so easy.

Coulthard took on World Rallycross champion Solberg in the quarter-finals behind the wheel of the VW Polo RX that should have favoured the Norwegian, and looked to have control of their race before running wide and off the track at the first corner. Fortunately for Coulthard, Solberg had a half-spin moments later and kissed the barrier, allowing the Scot to recover to win.

Coulthard then pipped Whincup by just under two tenths in the semi-final driving the Audi R8 LMS.



Coulthard did the business in KTM

With Wehrlein – who drove stunningly well in the spectacular Super Trucks used for several races – beating the versatile Robby Gordon and then Formula 3 European champion Esteban Ocon in the knockout stages to earn the right to take on Coulthard, the best-of-three final was expected to be close.

But Coulthard needed only two races, first defeating Wehrlein by 1.4486s behind the wheel of the

nimble KTM X-Bow, then by 2.7s in the Ariel Atom, to take his first Race of Champions crown.

Several of the fancied runners failed even to escape the group stage. Grosjean managed only one win in three races, while Kristensen, twice Race of Champions runner-up, spectacularly launched his truck over the Turn 1 barrier during his final head-to-head with former IndyCar champion Ryan Hunter-Reay after

accidentally selecting first gear and locking the rear wheels.

RESULTS

1 David Coulthard; 2 Pascal Wehrlein. Eliminated in semi-finals: Jamie Whincup; Esteban Ocon. Eliminated in quarter-finals: Petter Solberg; Kurt Busch; Robby Gordon; Ryan Hunter-Reay. Eliminated in group stage: Romain Grosjean; Mick Doohan; Susie Wolff; Rhett Watson; Jose Maria Lopez; Doug Gore; Tom Kristensen; Jolyon Palmer. **Nations Cup** Team Nordic (Kristensen/Solberg).

GULF 12 HOURS YAS MARINA (UAE), DECEMBER 13

Ferrari beats Merc to win

AFTER VICTORIES IN THE FIRST AND second runnings of the Gulf 12 Hours in Abu Dhabi, Italian Ferrari team AF Corse also won the fourth edition of the race at the Yas Marina circuit.

With a total of 24 cars (16 GT3 cars, four Porsche Cup entries and four CN2 prototypes), the entry was somewhat smaller than promoter Andrea Ficarelli had hoped for. "Many more teams had committed, but there were several last-minute withdrawals and then it was too late to find replacements," the Italian said.

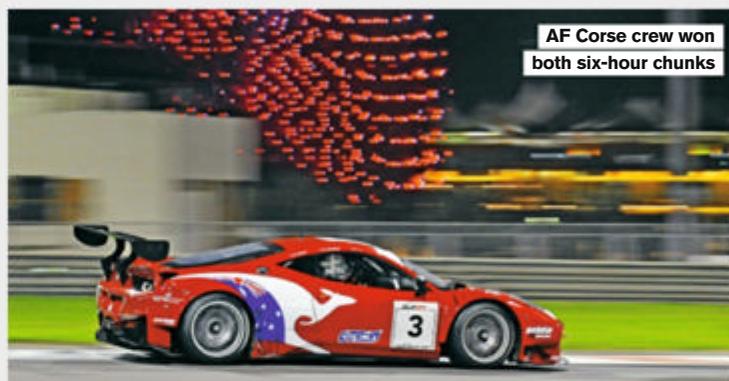


Mercs and McLaren challenged winner

Following the debut of the Bentley Continental GT3 last year, the new McLaren 650S GT3 had its maiden race in Abu Dhabi this year. For McLaren, it was the first works effort since the Spa 24 Hours in 2012, with support from Dave Ryan's Von Ryan team. In qualifying, with the average of the fastest times by each driver used to determine the grid positions, Alvaro Parente, Kevin Estre and Rob Bell put the McLaren on pole.

In the race – split into two halves of six hours with a three-hour repair break in between – the McLaren, the Black Falcon Mercedes with last year's winners Bernd Schneider, Jeroen Bleekemolen and local hero Khaled Al Qubaisi, and the AF Corse Ferrari with Italians Michele Rugolo and Davide Rigon and Australian Steve Wyatt soon emerged as the main contenders for the outright win.

The Ferrari was first across the line at the end of the first half, followed by the Mercedes and the McLaren. In the second half, the Mercedes led for



AF Corse crew won both six-hour chunks

most of the time, but Rugolo overtook Schneider in the final hour.

A late safety-car intervention following a crash by MotoGP star Jorge Lorenzo in the Kessel Racing Ferrari led to a 30-minute sprint to the chequered flag. Schneider was unable to mount a challenge for Rugolo, so the Italian brought the Ferrari home to take victory from the Mercedes and the McLaren.

The second Black Falcon Mercedes took Pro-Am class honours in fourth place overall with Abdulaziz Al Faisal, Hubert Haupt and Richard Muscat, while German team MRS won the

Porsche Cup class and Avalon Wolf drivers Pizzuti, Stoller and Emanuela took the spoils in CN2. ● Rene de Boer

RESULTS

1 Davide Rigon/Michele Rugolo/Steve Wyatt (Ferrari 458 Italia GT3), 315 laps; 2 Jeroen Bleekemolen/Bernd Schneider/Khaled Al Qubaisi (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), +3.058s; 3 Alvaro Parente/Kevin Estre/Rob Bell (McLaren 650S GT3); 4 Hubert Haupt/Richard Muscat/Abdulaziz Al Faisal (Mercedes); 5 Marco Cioci/Piergiuseppe Perazzini/Filipe Barreiros (Ferrari); 6 Jordan Grogor/Sean Walkinshaw/Mohammed Jawa (Ferrari).

2014
REVIEW

Harvick took one of his
five wins at Darlington



THACKER/LAT

96

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Harvick spares NASCAR Chase blushes

ANY WAY YOU MEASURE IT, NASCAR must be happy with the return on investment of its new Chase system. It's hard to imagine that any other major series would gamble on a play-off-style elimination system to decide its champion. More pragmatically, no other championship has a long enough schedule to make the isolation of 10 races viable in the first place.

NASCAR wanted excitement and drama from its new system and, if it were injected with a truth serum, it would also have admitted that it would like a new champion. It got all three. True, that 'new champion' was very nearly Ryan Newman, whose winless season might have undermined a format specifically

engineered to reward victories, but those blushes were spared by a heroic final stint by Kevin Harvick at the Homestead finale.

Harvick's championship credentials are impeccable: he won five races during the year, putting him second only to Brad Keselowski. He was equal third in top-fives and top-10s, and led more laps over the course of the year than any other driver. His brilliant final stint at Homestead, where he climbed from 12th to first, was as emphatic an exclamation point as you could ask for.

Newman was right on Harvick's bumper as he took the checkered flag, and three weeks later NASCAR fandom continues to debate the

question of a winless driver beating/cheating (depending upon your perspective) the system. From a fan-popularity viewpoint, it didn't help Newman's cause that he secured his place in the final shootout for the title at Jeff Gordon's expense. Gordon finished second at Phoenix and briefly thought he had done enough to progress to the next round but, behind him, Newman drove rising star Kyle Larson into the wall to claim 12th and secure the extra point he needed to bump Gordon out.

It was also unfortunate that Keselowski was not in the running. The Team Penske driver was in superb form all season, and won twice during the opening two phases of the Chase. A mechanical problem at Martinsville put him into a hole, and two podiums at the next two races were not enough to dig him out of it. There was some consolation for Penske in the fact that Joey Logano made it to the final four in Keselowski's absence; a feat that speaks of the team's growing prowess as a top-tier NASCAR operation as opposed to the team that previously struggled to get both its entries firing at once.

The 'excitement' part of the equation came into play as early as the

Daytona 500, when the series' most famous race was won by its most popular driver, Dale Earnhardt Jr. But the real drama was reserved for the Chase itself and, finale aside, most of the big moments involved Keselowski.

It was he who won the second Talladega race through sheer force of will, he who found himself clamped in a headlock by the normally sedate Matt Kenseth after a fracas at Charlotte, he who was in the middle of a wild brawl with Gordon's crew in Texas. The last incident resulted in several Hendrick crew members being penalised for 'actions detrimental to the sport'... but they weren't detrimental enough to stop NASCAR from uploading video of the skirmish onto its own website. If NASCAR is about treading the line between motorsport and entertainment, the 2014 season was classic showtime.

● Mark Glendenning

POINTS

- 1 Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet SS), 5043; 2 Ryan Newman (Chevy), 5042; 3 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry), 5037; 4 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion), 5028; 5 Brad Keselowski (Ford), 2361; 6 Jeff Gordon (Chevy), 2348; 7 Matt Kenseth (Toyota), 2334; 8 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy), 2301; 9 Carl Edwards (Ford), 2288; 10 Kyle Busch (Toyota), 2285.



There'd be plenty of celebrating for KH

LE PAGE/LAT



Chaves leads Brabham at St Petersburg

INDY LIGHTS

Chaves denies late-charging Harvey

THE FINAL SEASON WITH THE antiquated Dallara IPS/Infiniti V8 Indy Lights technical package was all about quality over quantity: only eight drivers contested every race, yet the championship still went down to a three-way fight.

Ultimately, that fight was settled in favour of Colombian-American Gabby Chaves over British rookie Jack Harvey, but it had to be decided on a countback of second places after the pair finished equal on points and tied on the number of wins. It doesn't get much closer than that.

In many respects, Harvey did well to be in the hunt at all. Chaves and Zach Veach started the season as joint title favourites on the basis that they were the only two frontrunners

with prior experience in the series. And indeed, the pair won all of the opening four races while the rookies around them settled in.

But the 2014 rookie intake was unusually strong, with a roster that included last year's runaway Pro Mazda champion Matthew Brabham, long-time GP2 racer Luiz Razia, and 2012 British Formula 3 champion/GP3 graduate Harvey. Brabham and Razia were the first rookie winners, sharing victories on the Indy road course, but it was Harvey who started to do it consistently. A sweep of the Mid-Ohio weekend launched him into title contention, and another domination of the Sonoma finale was a solid consolation to end the year.

● Mark Glendenning

POINTS

- 1 Gabby Chaves (Belardi Auto Racing), 547;
- 2 Jack Harvey (Schmidt Peterson Motorsports), 547;
- 3 Zach Veach (Andretti Autosport), 520;
- 4 Matthew Brabham (Andretti), 424;
- 5 Luiz Razia (SPM), 403;
- 6 Juan Pablo Garcia (SPM), 372;
- 7 Juan Piedrahita (SPM), 337;
- 8 Scott Anderson (Fan Force United), 309;
- 9 Zack Meyer (Team Moore Racing), 274;
- 10 Alex Baron (Belardi), 261.



Chaves pipped Harvey to title

AUTO GP

Sato out of rivals' reach

KIMIYA SATO FOUND TIME ALONGSIDE his primary commitments in GP2 to take this year's Auto GP crown.

The Kobe racer had narrowly missed out on last year's title, and returned for another attack with Euronova Racing. Six victories allowed Sato to claim the crown with a round to spare and duck out of the season finale at Estoril.

Tamas Pal Kiss was runner-up ahead of Markus Pommer. The Hungarian ended a year-long victory drought for Zele Racing at Paul Ricard before switching to Virtuosi UK, where he was also a winner.

Pommer joined Sato in contesting dual campaigns. That Pommer emerged on top in this year's German F3 series provided a useful additional indication of performance levels at the sharp end in Auto GP. Michela Cerruti won at Imola in the sister Super Nova entry.

Rapid former GP2 driver Kevin Giovesi claimed pole position first



Sato leads the field at the Red Bull Ring

time out for new entrant Eurotech Engineering at Marrakech. Eurotech was replaced by FMS at Imola, but not before Giovesi picked up two wins at Paul Ricard and Monza.

Giovesi's absence from the final round allowed the consistent Andrea Roda to work his way up to fourth in the classification.

Talented MRF graduates Sam Dejonghe and Shinya Michimi showed well, Michimi standing on the top step of the podium at Estoril in just his sixth start, while Antonio

Pizzonia produced flashes of his old speed in a one-off outing at Estoril.

● Peter Mills

POINTS

- 1 Kimiya Sato (Euronova Racing), 221;
- 2 Tamas Pal Kiss (Zele Racing/Virtuosi UK), 207;
- 3 Markus Pommer (Super Nova International), 180;
- 4 Andrea Roda (Virtuosi), 166;
- 5 Kevin Giovesi (Eurotech Engineering/FMS Racing), 155;
- 6 Michela Cerruti (Super Nova), 113;
- 7 Michele la Rosa (MLR 71 by Euronova), 73;
- 8 Shinya Michimi (Euronova), 55;
- 9 Vittorio Ghirelli (Super Nova/FMS), 44;
- 10 Sam Dejonghe (Virtuosi), 41.



F ACCELERATION 1

Champion: Nigel Melker



BRITISH FORMULA 3

Champion: Martin Cao



GERMAN FORMULA 3

Champion: Markus Pommer



EUROFORMULA OPEN

Champion: Sandy Stuvik



JAPANESE FORMULA 3

Champion: Nobuharu Matsushita



BRAZILIAN FORMULA 3

Champion: Pedro Piquet



PRO MAZDA

Champion: Spencer Pigot

De Vries does what McLaren demanded

McLAREN GAVE NYCK DE VRIES ONE instruction in 2014, and it was not up for negotiation. The Dutchman had to win the Formula Renault Eurocup at the third attempt, and he did so in dominant fashion.

De Vries had found some form in the latter part of the 2013 campaign. Remaining with Koiranen GP, he carried that momentum into 2014.

Four poles in the first six races showed he was clearly the fastest driver in the field, but the fact that he only converted one of those into a victory was a cause for concern. He rounded out the year with three wins from the final four races, and proved a point by taking his final win thanks to a "very satisfying" mid-race pass for the lead at Jerez.

It was hard to judge exactly how much de Vries stepped it up this year though, as his opposition was so inconsistent through the season. While his average grid position was 2.7, the next best in the field were 7.6 and 9.2. Challengers came and went: Bruno Bonifacio used consistency to pose an early threat, while Prema team-mate and eventual runner-up Dennis Olsen stood out on his best days but was too far down the order on others. The same could be said for Andrea Pizzitola, and towards the end



of the year Alexander Albon got things together to vault up to third in the standings.

However, it's not de Vries's fault that his opposition didn't do a good enough job on a consistent basis, and his success earned him

a Formula Renault 3.5 drive with DAMS for 2015.

● Glenn Freeman

POINTS

1 Nyck de Vries (Koiranen GP), 254; 2 Dennis Olsen (Prema Powerteam), 124; 3 Alexander

Albon (KTR), 117; 4 Andrea Pizzitola (Manor MP Motorsport), 108; 5 Bruno Bonifacio (Prema), 88; 6 Kevin Jorg (Josef Kaufmann Racing), 87; 7 Jack Aitken (Fortec Motorsport), 86; 8 Egor Orudzhev (Tech 1 Racing), 83; 9 Aurelien Panis (ART Junior Team), 82; 10 Ignazio d'Agosto (Koiranen), 73.



FORMULA RENAULT ALPS

Another title for Dutchman

THERE WAS NEVER MUCH DOUBT THAT Nyck de Vries would win the Formula Renault ALPS series.

De Vries was the class act in winning nine of the 14 races, with the most-talented of his opposition being newcomers to the category.

Monegasque karting graduate Charles Leclerc was the runner-up, with two mid-summer wins at Monza helping him overhaul rapid Russian Matevos Isaakyan.

Both Isaakyan and George Russell missed a round apiece: Russell sat out one weekend with chicken pox, while

Isaakyan couldn't contest the opening round as he wasn't yet 16, so wasn't old enough to compete! Alessio Rovera also showed good speed.

● Marcus Simmons

POINTS

1 Nyck de Vries (Koiranen GP), 300; 2 Charles Leclerc (Fortec Motorsport), 199; 3 Matevos Isaakyan (JD Motorsport), 180; 4 George Russell (Koiranen), 123; 5 Simon Gachet (Arta Engineering), 78; 6 Alessio Rovera (Cram Motorsport), 65; 7 Dario Capitanio (BVM Racing), 55; 8 Denis Korneev (JD), 46; 9 Pietro Fittipaldi (MGR Motorsport), 43; 10 Stefan Riener (Cram), 37.

FORMULA RENAULT NORTHERN EUROPEAN CUP

Barnicoat takes big steps

DERBYSHIRE'S BEN BARNICOAT did a fine job to win an ultra-close title fight in his rookie season of car racing at the season finale.

Barnicoat and Fortec team-mate Seb Morris were both double winners in a year that saw 10 drivers take victory in 13 races.

The main title rivals for the Racing Steps-backed Barnicoat were Louis Deletraz and Steijn Schothorst. Bizarrely, Deletraz was one of three different Swiss to win the first three races, while Dutchman Schothorst really should have scored more than one

victory with his experience.

A number of other Brits competed, with Jake Hughes and Raoul Owens both in the top 10.

● Marcus Simmons

POINTS

1 Ben Barnicoat (Fortec Motorsport), 258; 2 Louis Deletraz (Josef Kaufmann Racing), 242; 3 Seb Morris (Fortec), 224; 4 Steijn Schothorst (Manor MP Motorsport), 224; 5 Gustav Malja (JKR), 193; 6 Ukyo Sasahara (Euronova Racing), 191; 7 Callan O'Keeffe (ART Junior Team/KTR), 187; 8 Jake Hughes (Mark Burdett Motorsport/ART), 152; 9 Ryan Tveter (JKR), 150; 10 Raoul Owens (MBM), 125.



WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Solberg flies to inaugural world crown

AFTER A COMPETITIVE BUT winless move to rallycross last season, Petter Solberg raised his already high game even further for 2014 to claim victory not only in the first-ever World Rallycross round, but in the inaugural championship itself.

Consistently fast through the first half of the year, Solberg wasn't without his troubles early on: after his kick-off success at Montalegre he spun in the final at Lydden, where fellow Norwegian Andreas Bakkerud took the spoils, and he was beaten in a straight fight on home ground at Hell by 18-year-old Reinis Nitiss. Solberg's Citroen then missed the final at Kouvola after a semi-final accident.

With six different winners from the first six races (Toomas Heikkinen, Tanner Foust and Mattias Ekstrom had also scored), it was one of the most fiercely contested rallycross seasons in years. Then came Solberg's assault; after wins at Trois-Rivieres and Loheac, he beat double DTM champion Ekstrom by five thousandths of a second at Estering. Third place at Franciacorta was enough to claim the crown with two rounds still remaining.

Finn Heikkinen won at Mettet in Belgium and finished second in the overall points after a consistent



Champ spectacular in Citroen DS3

MCKLEIN/LAT

year with the Marklund Motorsport VW, while Nitiss wound up third.

Thanks to the efforts of Nitiss and Bakkerud, Ford team OlsbergsMSE sealed the first World Rallycross Teams title at the last round in Argentina, beating rivals Marklund and Team Peugeot-Hansen, which was led by Timmy Hansen.

● Hal Ridge

POINTS

- 1 Petter Solberg (Citroen DS3), 267;
- 2 Toomas Heikkinen (Volkswagen Polo), 221;
- 3 Reinis Nitiss (Ford Fiesta ST), 210;
- 4 Timmy Hansen (Peugeot 208), 199;
- 5 Andreas Bakkerud (Ford), 193;
- 6 Anton Marklund (VW), 173;
- 7 Timur Timerzyanov (Peugeot), 152;
- 8 Pontus Tidemand (Audi S1), 84;
- 9 Robin Larsson (Audi), 76;
- 10 Mattias Ekstrom (Audi), 55.



Lappi failed to finish on Skoda home ground in Zlin

LEFLOCH/PPPI

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Happy Lappi is fast and steady for Skoda

ESAPEKKA LAPPI MADE IT A HAT-TRICK of ERC titles for the factory Skoda team, but the 23-year-old Finn was by no means 2014's standout performer.

Granted, he was the only driver to win more than once, while his capture of 25 stage wins was a measure of his pace. But crashes in Ypres and Zlin showed a weakness and he was often too quick to point to the power deficit of his normally aspirated Fabia Super 2000 compared to the turbocharged Regional Rally Cars and R5 machines that won seven times.

Even so, the second of Lappi's three wins, on April's Circuit of Ireland, was sublime and demonstrated his

versatility following his success on the Latvian snow of round two.

Dutchman Kevin Abbring finished the campaign 90 points down on Lappi but could so easily have been champion had reliability issues not plagued Peugeot's all-new 208T16 for much of the season. The ex-WRC regular led five of the seven rounds he contested but he would finish only twice. His team-mate, Irishman Craig Breen, was similarly out of luck. After giving the Peugeot a debut ERC win in Greece, he retired five times in a row but just did enough to beat Kajetan Kajetanowicz to third place in the final table behind Lappi's Skoda

team-mate Sepp Wiegand.

Robert Kubica and Stephane Sarrazin were notable winners on one-off outings, on the Janner and Corsica rallies respectively.

● Graham Lister

POINTS

- 1 Esapekka Lappi (Skoda Fabia S2000), 162;
- 2 Sepp Wiegand (Skoda), 128;
- 3 Craig Breen (Peugeot 207 S2000/208 T16), 104;
- 4 Kajetan Kajetanowicz (Ford Fiesta R5), 100;
- 5 Vaclav Pech (Mini JCW S2000), 63;
- 6 Kevin Abbring (208 T16), 63;
- 7 Bryan Bouffier (Citroen DS3 RRC/Ford Fiesta RRC), 61;
- 8 Bruno Magalhaes (207 S2000/208 T16), 54;
- 9 Vasily Gryazin (Ford Fiesta S2000), 53;
- 10 Robert Consani (207 S2000), 50.



ADAC GT MASTERS

Champions: Rene Rast/Kelvin van der Linde



INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

Champions: Daniel Zampieri/Roman Mavlanov



FRENCH GT

Champions: Nicolas Armindo/Raymond Narac



ITALIAN GT

Champions: Raffaele Giammaria/Lorenzo Case



WORLD CHALLENGE (US)

Champion: Johnny O'Connell



ASIAN LE MANS SERIES

Champions: Ho-Pin Tung/David Cheng



GLOBAL RALLYCROSS

Champion: Joni Wiman

Bamber's final-round clincher



AFTER 2013 WAS OVERSHADOWED by the Sean Edwards tragedy, the Porsche Supercup needed a decent title race to get everyone's minds back on the racing in 2014. The duel between Earl Bamber and Kuba Giermaziak certainly delivered.

The opening rounds set the trend, with Kiwi Bamber winning the opener at Barcelona as Giermaziak struggled. But the Pole then turned the tables in Monaco, where he took the first of two consecutive wins as Bamber toiled.

Giermaziak clung to the championship lead until late July in Hungary, where he scored his third win of the season, but Bamber

grabbed it away with a great victory next time out at Spa, where his rival suffered a second poor weekend.

They went into the season finale at Austin just a handful of points apart, and the climax came when they collided as Bamber tried to pass an overly defensive Giermaziak on the back straight. Giermaziak spun himself out of the top 10, as Bamber survived and then sealed the title a day later with ease. Bamber also added the Asian crown, and was leading the German series when he halted his campaign due to clashing dates just after the halfway point!

Other winners included Clemens Schmid with a surprise victory at

Silverstone, reigning champion Nicki Thiim prevailing twice on his sporadic appearances and Porsche junior Sven Muller at Monza (a relief after he spun out of the lead at the Red Bull Ring), while Michael Ammermuller broke his Supercup duck in the final round. Britain's Ben Barker had a strong second campaign in the series, finishing sixth.

Philipp Eng was also a frontrunner, but the Austrian failed to convert his pace into a Supercup success and was forced to settle for winning the strong and very close-fought German Carrera Cup by a couple of points from Ammermuller.

● Charles Bradley

POINTS

- 1 Earl Bamber (Fach Auto Tech), 155;
- 2 Kuba Giermaziak (Lechner Racing Team), 132;
- 3 Michael Ammermuller (Lechner), 114; 4 Klaus Bachler (Konrad Motorsport), 112; 5 Philipp Eng (Team Project 1), 98; 6 Ben Barker (Lechner), 96;
- 7 Sven Muller (Project 1), 95; 8 Nicki Thiim (Lechner), 91; 9 Christian Engelhart (Konrad), 75;
- 10 Clemens Schmid (Lechner), 69.



Eng claimed German title

V8 SUPERCARS

Whincup's six from seven

ON PAPER, THE CHAMPIONSHIP was all about one man. Jamie Whincup won his sixth title in seven years, sealing his crown with four races up his sleeve.

But in reality it wasn't quite so clear-cut. At one point he trailed Ford driver Mark Winterbottom by nearly a round's worth of

points, and over the mid-season clearly struggled. But the Triple Eight team gelled (as it nearly always does) and, in the end, Whincup prevailed.

Winterbottom looked to be his biggest challenger, but as the endurance races came around Shane van Gisbergen came alive. The New Zealander has always had the speed but, under the watch of team manager Steve Hallam (ex-McLaren and Waltrip), he blossomed. Only a stalled engine stopped 'The Giz' from winning at Bathurst and the single-car Tekno Autosport team punched above its weight.

Winterbottom was third after an up-and-down season, and the same could be said for Whincup's team-mate Craig Lowndes.

Two youngsters emerged as stars



Whincup attacks Mount Panorama

CIAN FLORNE/GETTY

POINTS

- 1 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore VF), 3364; 2 Shane van Gisbergen (Holden), 2781; 3 Mark Winterbottom (Ford Falcon FG), 2768; 4 Craig Lowndes (Holden), 2659;
- 5 Scott McLaughlin (Volvo S60), 2509;
- 6 James Courtney (Holden), 2489;
- 7 Chaz Mostert (Ford), 2451; 8 Fabian Coulthard (Holden), 2443; 9 Garth Tander (Holden), 2289; 10 Michael Caruso (Nissan Altima), 1939.



Whincup wins cup (groan, sorry)

SUPERFORMULA

Nakajima prevails after battle of class

KAZUKI NAKAJIMA PREVAILED AFTER A dramatic season in which the title could have gone any one of four ways.

It was the second Super Formula title for the ex-Formula 1 driver, who formed a very strong challenge from the TOM'S team alongside versatile German Andre Lotterer.

Nakajima went into the final race level on points with Joao Paulo de Oliveira, and a stylish win in the rain at Suzuka meant a repeat of his 2012 championship title.

De Oliveira won three races – more than anyone else – in his Team Impul car but lost ground in the penultimate round at Sugo, when a tangle with Lotterer preceded a spectacular accident also involving GP2 racer Takuya Izawa that eliminated all three

from the race.

Lotterer lost further points when he skipped the Motegi round in order to make his Formula 1 debut in a Caterham – a car that in Marcus Ericsson's hands went around Suzuka only one second faster than Lotterer's Super Formula Dallara!

The other potential champion was Team Le Mans ace Loic Duval. The Frenchman was on hand to win the opening round when race leader Nakajima lost out due to the appearance of a safety car just after he'd passed the pit entry. Duval was still atop the points when he suffered his monumental Le Mans 24 Hours practice shunt, causing him to miss the following round at Fuji.

Toyota-engined cars dominated

the first year with new Dallara chassis and two-litre turbo engines, taking the top eight positions in the points. Honda's results were abysmal until a couple of late-season poles for reigning champion Naoki Yamamoto and a rather isolated win at Sugo for Tomoki Nojiri.

POINTS

1 Kazuki Nakajima (TOM'S/Toyota), 46; **2 Joao Paulo de Oliveira (Team Impul/Toyota)**, 39.5; **3 Andre Lotterer (TOM'S)**, 34.5; **4 Loic Duval (Team Le Mans/Toyota)**, 29.5; **5 Hiroaki Ishiura (Cerumo-Inging/Toyota)**, 26; **6 James Rossiter (Kondo Racing/Toyota)**, 22; **7 Yuji Kunimoto (Cerumo-Inging)**, 19.5; **8 Ryo Hirakawa (Le Mans)**, 16.5; **9 Naoki Yamamoto (Team Mugen/Honda)**, 14.5; **10 Tomoki Nojiri (Dandelion Racing/Honda)**, 10.



Nakajima presses on at Fuji Speedway

SUPER GT

It's sunny for the Nissans

RONNIE QUINTARELLI PROBABLY isn't going to get stopped by autograph hunters when he goes to the supermarket in his home city of Verona, but he's had a lot more success in motorsport than many better-known Italian drivers.

Quintarelli has just completed his 12th season in Japan, one that netted his third Super GT title in the past four seasons with the factory NISMO Nissan team and the highly able Tsugio Matsuda as co-driver.

The duo took a while to feature in the points table, with electrical

problems costing them victory at Fuji, but then a win at Autopolis propelled them into the hunt.

As the season wore on it became a fight between the NISMO boys and the TOM'S Lexus entries. Some great strategy had carried James Rossiter and Kazuki Nakajima to two wins in a row – virtually unheard of in a series with savage levels of success ballast – although only Rossiter was in the title hunt as Nakajima missed some races on WEC duty. Rossiter therefore led team-mates Andrea Caldarelli/



Joy for Matsuda and Quintarelli

Daisuke Ito in the points going into the Motegi finale, with Quintarelli/Matsuda third. While the NISMO car started on pole and won, Rossiter was harpooned by another Nissan, that of Joao Paulo de Oliveira, ruining his title hopes.

Naoki Yamamoto was Honda's top driver, taking one win in his Mugen car with Frederic Makowiecki.

POINTS

1 Ronnie Quintarelli/Tsugio Matsuda (Nissan GT-R), 81; **2 Andrea Caldarelli/Daisuke Ito (Lexus RC F)**, 79; **3 James Rossiter (Lexus)**, 68; **4 Naoki Yamamoto (Honda NSX Concept-GT)**, 64; **5 Kazuki Nakajima (Lexus)**, 60; **6 Joao Paulo de Oliveira/Hironobu Yasuda (Nissan)**, 60; **7 Kazuya Oshima/Yuji Kunimoto (Lexus)**, 44; **8 Yuji Tachikawa/Kohei Hirate (Lexus)**, 43; **9 Frederic Makowiecki (Honda)**, 42; **10 Michael Krumm/Daiki Sasaki (Nissan)**, 35.



NISMO emerged atop Super GT table



V8 STOCK CARS
Champion: Rubens Barrichello



SCANDINAVIAN TOURING
Champion: Thed Bjork



SUPER TC2000
Champion: Nestor Girolami



EUROPEAN TOURING
Champion: Nikolay Karamyshev



EURO V8
Champion: Francesco Sini



EURO NASCAR
Champion: Anthony Kumphen



BRAZILIAN TOURING
Champion: Ricardo Mauricio

AUTOSPORT AWARDS

Voting form (Oct 23)
Awards night (Dec 11)

AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL

Show preview, part 1 (Jan 2)
Show preview, part 2 (Jan 9)
Show review (Jan 16)

BLANCPAIN GT SERIES

Season preview (Apr 10-GW)
Monza Endurance (Apr 17-GW)
Nogaro Sprint (Apr 24)
Brands Hatch Sprint (May 22-GW)
Silverstone Endurance (May 29-GW)
Paul Ricard Endurance (Jul 3-JNI)
Zandvoort Sprint (Jul 10-GW)
Slovakia Ring Sprint (Aug 28-GW)
Algarve Sprint (Sep 11-JNI)
Spa 24 Hours Endurance (Jul 31-GW)
Nurburgring Endurance (Sep 25-JNI)
Zolder Sprint (Oct 23-GW)
Baku Sprint (Nov 6-SC)
Season review (Nov 20-GW)

BRITISH TOURING CARS

Marc Hynes interview (Jan 23-KT)
Alain Menu back in the BTCC (Feb 6-MS)
Fabrizio Giovanardi back in the BTCC (Feb 6-BA)
Honda's estate-car gamble (Feb 27-KT)
Season preview (Mar 27-KT/TW)
1. Brands Hatch (Apr 3-KT)
2. Donington Park (Apr 24-KT)
3. Thruxton (May 8-KT)
Tom Ingram: rising star (May 29-KT)
4. Oulton Park (Jun 12-KT)
5. Croft (Jul 3-KT)
6. Snetterton (Aug 7-KT)
7. Knockhill (Aug 28-KT)
8. Rockingham (Sep 11-MS)
9. Silverstone (Oct 2-KT)
10. Brands Hatch (Oct 16-KT)
Season review (Oct 30-KT/CB)

CLUB AUTOSPORT

What was new in 2013 (Jan 2)
Dan Cammish interview/Golden Helmet results (Jan 9-SM)
Racing in the BRSCC Porsche Championship (Jan 16-BA)
Club racing the hard way (Jan 23)
Bradley Smith at Daytona (Feb 6-SM)
Peter Baldwin interview (Feb 13-SM)
Radical RXC (Feb 20-BA)
GT Cup in profile (Feb 27-SM)
Porsche Carrera Cup GB rebirth (Mar 13-SM)
TOCA support preview (Mar 20-SM)
The rise of the CSCC (Apr 10-SM)
British GT season preview (Apr 17-SM)
BRDC F4 season preview (Apr 24-SM)
Jack Sears interview (Jun 5-MP)
Inside Line: Simon Clark (Jul 3)
Ginetta club series (Jul 10-SM)
Inside Line: Matthew Parry (Jul 24)
How good is British GT? (Aug 14-KT/SM)
Inside Line: Lawrence Tomlinson (Aug 28)
Inside Line: Richard Dutton (Sep 4)
British GT review (Nov 13-SM)

TOCA support series reviews (Nov 20-SM/RH)
BRDC F4 season review (Nov 27-SM)
Frenault BARC season review (Nov 27-MO)
British Rallycross season review (Nov 27-HR)
British Hillclimb season review (Nov 27-EW)
2014 Champions' round-up (Dec 4)
Favourite moments of 2014 (Dec 18-25-MP)
Top 10 club drivers of 2014 (Dec 18-25)
Top 10 club rivalries of 2014 (Dec 18-25)
Club pictures of the year (Dec 18-25)

DTM

(Andrew van Leeuwen)
BMW's M4 DTM (Mar 20)
Season preview (May 1)
1. Hockenheim (May 8)
2. Oschersleben (May 22)
3. Hungaroring (Jun 5)
4. Norisring (Jul 3)
5. Moscow (Jul 17)
6. Red Bull Ring (Aug 7)
7. Nurburgring (Aug 21)
8. Lausitzring (Sep 18)
Marco Wittmann interview (Sep 25)
9. Zandvoort (Oct 2)
10. Hockenheim (Oct 23)
Season review (Nov 6)

EUROPEAN F3

Jordan King interview (Jan 23-MS)
Tom Blomqvist (Feb 13-MS)
West-Tec moves up (Apr 17-MS)
1. Silverstone (Apr 24-MS)
2. Hockenheim (May 8-MS)
3. Pau (May 15-MS)
4. Hungaroring (Jun 5-AVL)
5. Spa (Jun 26-MS)
6. Norisring (Jul 3-MS)
7. Moscow (Jul 17-MS)
Esteban Ocon interview (Jul 17-MS)
8. Red Bull Ring (Aug 7-MS)
9. Nurburgring (Aug 21-RA)
10. Imola (Oct 16-MS)
11. Hockenheim (Oct 23-MS)
Season review (Nov 6-MS)

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

1. Silverstone (Apr 24-GW)
2. Imola (May 22-MB)
3. Red Bull Ring (Jul 24-GW)
4. Paul Ricard (Sep 18-SSM)
5. Estoril (Oct 23-SSM)
Season review (Nov 20-GW)

F1 LAUNCHES

Red Bull, Force India, Sauber, Williams, Mercedes, McLaren, Ferrari, Toro Rosso, Caterham (Jan 30)
Marussia (Feb 6)
Lotus (Feb 27)

FIFTEEN QUESTIONS

Kenny Brack (Jan 23)
Martin Brundle (Jan 30)
Petter Solberg (Feb 6)
Jos Verstappen (Feb 27)
David Richards (May 22)
Jean-Eric Vergne (Jul 31)
Mike Jordan (Sep 18)
Perry McCarthy (Oct 16)
Malcolm Wilson (Nov 13)

FORMULA E

Season preview (Sep 11-MS)
1. Beijing (Sep 18-GW)
2. Putrajaya (Nov 27-AVL)

3. Punta del Este (Dec 18-25-CB)

FORMULA RENAULT 3.5

(Glenn Freeman)
Season preview (Apr 10)
1. Monza (Apr 17)
2. Aragon (May 1)
3. Monaco (May 29)
4. Spa (Jun 5)
Carlos Sainz Jr interview (Jun 5)
5. Moscow (Jul 3)
6. Nurburgring (Jul 17)
7. Hungaroring (Sep 18)
8. Paul Ricard (Oct 2)
9. Jerez (Oct 23)
Season review (Nov 6)

GP2

What next for Sam Bird (Jan 23-GF)
Season preview (Apr 3-CB)
1. Sakir (Apr 10-CB)
2. Barcelona (May 15-CB)
3. Monaco (May 29-CB)
4. Red Bull Ring (Jun 26-CB)
5. Silverstone (Jul 10-CB)
6. Hockenheim (Jul 24-CB)
Jolyon Palmer interview (Jul 31-CB)
7. Hungaroring (Jul 31-CB)
8. Spa (Aug 28-CB)
9. Monza (Sep 11-CB)
10. Sochi (Oct 16-CB)
11. Yas Marina (Nov 27-MB)
Season review (Dec 4-CB)

GP3

Season preview (May 8-MS)
1. Barcelona (May 15-CB)
2. Red Bull Ring (Jun 6-CB)
3. Silverstone (Jul 10-CB)
4. Hockenheim (Jul 24-CB)
5. Hungaroring (Jul 31-CB)
6. Spa (Aug 28-CB)
7. Monza (Sep 11-CB)
8. Sochi (Oct 16-CB)
9. Yas Marina (Nov 27-MS)
Season review (Dec 4-CB)

GRAND PRIX FEATURES

Massa on life at Ferrari (Jan 2-ES)
Magnussen ready for McLaren (Jan 2-JN)
F1 2014 revealed (Jan 9-GA/CS/ES)
Red Bull in crisis (Feb 6-JN/GA/ES)
Jerez test analysis (Feb 6-GA)
Robin Frijns at Caterham (Feb 6-KT)
Ferrari Special (Feb 13):
Raikkonen's return (ES)
F14 T technical appraisal (GA)
Windtunnel update (JN)
Lotus Special (Feb 20):
Team overview (ES)
Pastor Maldonado interview (JN)
Romain Grosjean interview (ES)
Technical innovations for 2014 (Feb 20-CS)
Turbo engines: second coming (Feb 20-AC)
Bahrain test round-up (Feb 27-ES)
Marcus Ericsson interview (Feb 27-BA)
Formula 1 2014 season preview (Mar 6)
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How Ricciardo is beating Vettel

(May 8-ES)
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5. Spain (May 8)
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7. Canada (Jun 5)
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16. Russia (Oct 9)
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2013 (Jan 23-HR)
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 Jo Ramirez, Australian GP 1993 (Mar 13-HHF)
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 Pat Doran, Bergerac Rallycross 1992 (Apr 17-HR)
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 Pierluigi Martini, Portuguese GP 1991 (May 15-AP)
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 *Pete Aron, Monaco GP 1966 (Jul 24)
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 *previously published

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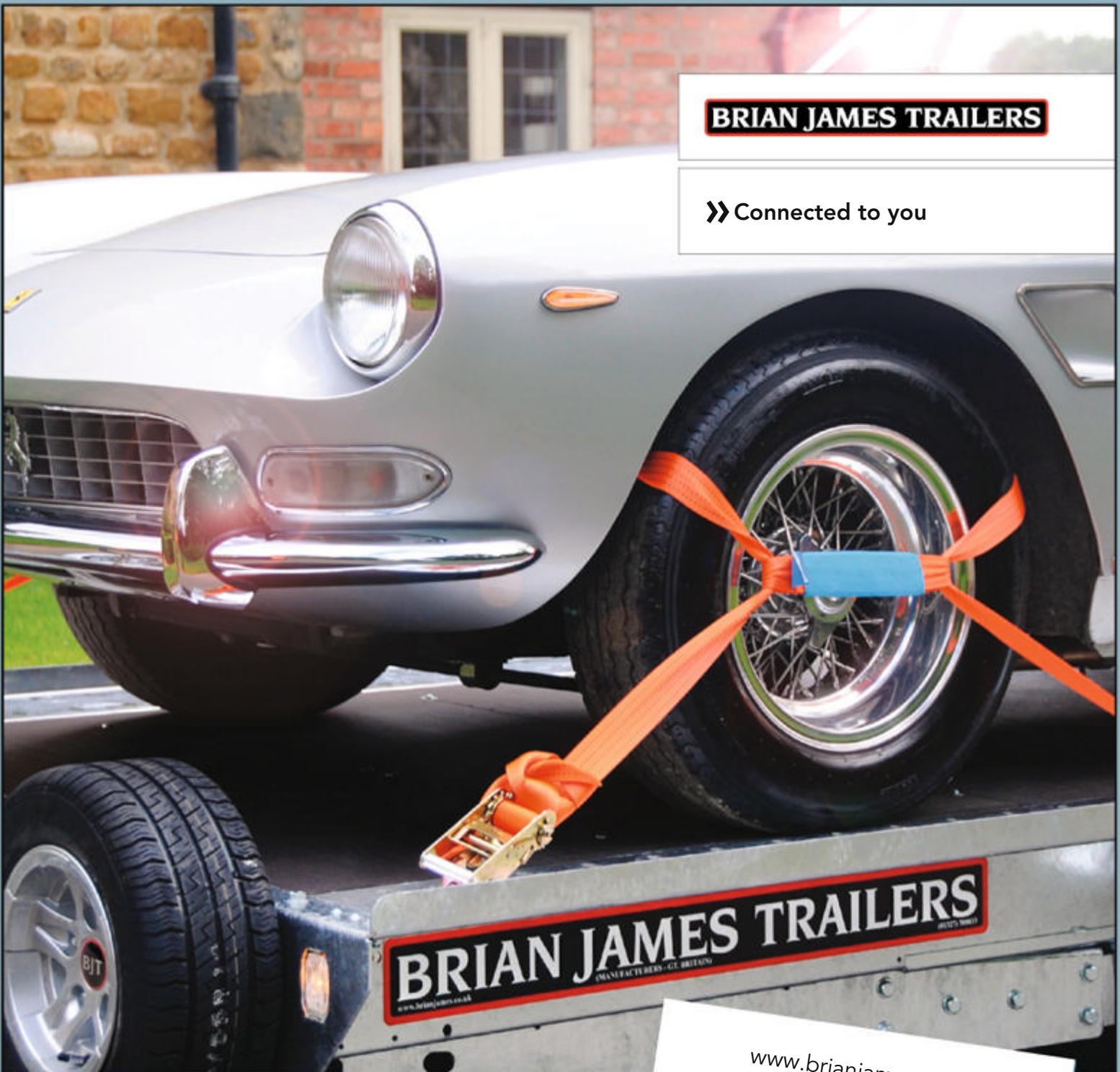
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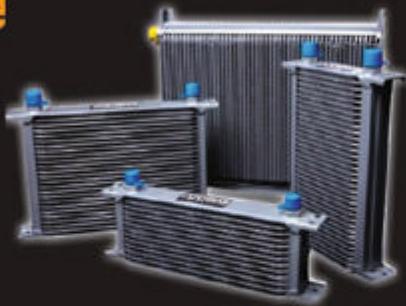
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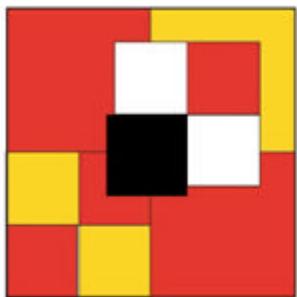
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Mallory's time in the wilderness could finally be over



WALKER

Revitalised Mallory on the up

Friendly Circuit's resurgence continues with seven-race 2015 calendar

MALLORY PARK WILL HOST seven car race meetings in 2015 after completing a provisional calendar.

The Leicestershire circuit, which has been under the ownership of Real Motorsport Limited for less than a year, has booked in six weekends for next season with events from the UK's leading organizing clubs.

Real saved the venue from closure when it took charge last December, ending a long-running noise row that took the previous operating company into liquidation.

Its 2014 programme largely comprised bike meetings and trackdays, with a few car test days as well, but car racing returned in July courtesy of a one-day Classic Sports Car Club-run meeting. Those meetings have kept the circuit afloat and enabled Real to pursue

a completed calendar for next year.

"It's been 24-7 since February really," said Real co-owner Eddie Roberts. "I'm absolutely burned out. It's been a lot of hard work.

"It's like anything in business, once it's been down it takes a while to come back up again. It's looking a lot better now."

CIRCUIT 'TURNED THE CORNER'

Mallory's traditional Plum Pudding event will return on Boxing Day with four car and four bike races run by Club Mallory, ahead of next year's much-expanded calendar.

Roberts, who had initially hoped for 10 meetings next year, believes the circuit is almost back on its feet again.

"It seems now we've turned the corner we needed," he added. "People are believing in Mallory again. I'm so happy we've got so many people coming back. It's very encouraging."

Mallory's previous issues forced then-leaseholder British Automobile Racing Club to turn its back on the circuit, but the BARC is one of the seven clubs that will run race meetings next year.

General manager of the BARC Ian Watson said it had always been the

club's intention to get some of its championship back to Mallory when the circuit was running properly.

"I think it's very important to visit all of the venues in the UK and Mallory Park is a cracking circuit," he said. "We ought to be using it, I've always wanted to run there again.

"We've been working hard pretty much since the last time we ran a race there. The circuit's making a fresh start and I'd like to draw a line under what happened in the past."

750MC EYES MORE EVENTS

The Club Mallory operation – formed earlier this year and based at the circuit – will also put on an event next year, as will the 750 Motor Club, which will run a one-day meeting in September.

750MC competition manager Giles Groombridge said a positive meeting next year would be a catalyst for bigger meetings in the future.

"It's great that it's back open," he said. "It used to be one of the 750MC core venues for many years. It will be very good to be back.

"Hopefully we'll get a good entry and if the meeting goes well, we'll be looking at more for 2016."

SCOTT MITCHELL
ASSISTANT
EDITOR

scott.mitchell@
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THE HOLIDAYS ARE A TIME

for celebration and what a feel-good story we have to round out 2014.

It was this time last year that the seeds of Mallory Park's salvation were sown by Real Motorsport Limited. The work put in by Eddie Roberts and his business partner Stuart Hicken cannot be overestimated; without their tireless efforts one of Britain's best-loved tracks could be in a very different state indeed.

In just over 12 months the Friendly Circuit has gone from being on the precipice of oblivion to a strong calendar of events for 2015.

Getting a Classic Sports Car Club meeting this year was a coup for Real, with club boss Hugo Holder and his team rightfully deserving praise for their efforts. There was a very real threat that car racing would not return, so the surprise summer meeting rightly features as one of Marcus Pye's highlights of 2014. You can read about that on page 120.

Other end-of-year reflections include a look at the club drivers and national rivalries that thrilled throughout the season (page 124), our intrepid photographers' best shots of 2014 (page 126) and a review of Renault's 40 years in UK motorsport (page 130).

In addition to celebrating the great variety and quality Britain's national scene offers, the end of the season also offers the opportunity to reflect on the terribly saddening loss of several drivers to fatal on-track accidents. At the very least, let us hope the appropriate lessons are learned to avoid repeats in the future, wherever possible.

Looking ahead to 2015, there are plenty of reasons to be more upbeat. In the meantime, we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

P130



Soper will succeed Pirro in Capri at Goodwood



Goodwood Members' Meeting

Huff and Soper in Goodwood Capri battle

TOURING CAR STARS STEVE Soper and Rob Huff will make their Goodwood Members' Meeting debuts in 2015, competing against each other in Ford Capris.

Soper will race a Gordon Spice Racing/Autocar-liveried Capri III 3.0S shared with entrant John Young, with whom he co-drove a Group 2 Cologne Capri in this

year's Silverstone Classic and Donington Park Historic Festival. The former Japanese Touring Car champion, who drove factory Eggenberger Ford Sierra Cosworths RS500s in 1987-88, said: "I wanted to do this meeting last year, but couldn't because I had a prior arrangement. I've driven with John before and I know the car's owner,

so it all came together nicely.

"I want to pick and choose the races I do, and this is definitely one I want to do because I love Goodwood. It looks like it's a competitive car and it will be good to race a Ford again."

Huff, the 2012 World Touring Car champion, will drive Richard Meins' Bastos-liveried Capri.

The 34-year-old will also take part in the Graham Hill Trophy in the same Jaguar E-type that he shared with Meins in the RAC TT race at the Revival this year.

Existing Goodwood house captains Emanuele Pirro, Anthony Reid, Jochen Mass and Nicolas Minassian will also contest the race, but their cars are yet to be confirmed.

MSA Formula

World kart champion Norris to Carlin for single-seaters

WORLD KARTING CHAMPION Lando Norris has joined top British team Carlin for his debut single-seater season in MSA Formula.

Norris clinched the CIK-FIA World KF crown in France earlier this year after stepping up to karting's senior class at just 14 years old.

The now 15-year-old also made his car racing debut in the Ginetta Junior Championship this season, finishing third with four wins.

"I'm looking forward to the partnership with Carlin," said Norris, who has also been testing in Formula Renault 2.0 with a variety of teams.

"I do have a little advantage over some other drivers next year, in that I've had the car racing experience

from Ginetta. That has really helped me learn car control and racecraft.

"But nobody has driven the new MSA Formula car yet, so I'll be getting down to hard work when the car is delivered."

MSA Formula teams are expected to take the first delivery of their Mygale-Fords before the New Year.



BRDC Formula 4

Donnelly's son eyes BRDC F4 after joining Virtuosi test



LOTUS ELISE TROPHY RACER

Stefan Donnelly, the son of ex-Formula 1 racer Martin, is eyeing a switch to single-seaters after taking part in Auto GP team Virtuosi's BRDC Formula 4 evaluation test last week.

Donnelly joined karters Harry Webb, Lars Lamborelle and Alexandra Marinescu, plus existing BRDC F4 racer Tom Jackson, at the free test at Brands Hatch, put on by Virtuosi as it evaluates a likely two-car effort in the series next year.

"F4 is the championship to be in at the minute," said Donnelly. "It's the place to be to show how good you are and I very much want to be a part of that for 2015."

"Hopefully we can go onwards and upwards and get some sponsorship behind me to get on the grid in April."

Chris Dittmann Racing tested Omar Ismail at Brands, while race-winning team Hillspeed completed an extensive testing programme in Spain with South African racer Sebastian Lanzetti.

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WEC Revival

Shake-up as Martini series gets WEC Revival makeover

THE HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

Martini Trophy has been rebranded the WEC Revival for 2015, with the series becoming open to Sports Racing, GT and Touring cars.

The initiative, a second joint venture between the HSCC and Flavien and Vanessa Marcais' Automobiles Historiques, makes a variety of cars that populated World Endurance Championship events and other

internationals up to 1980 eligible.

Its two-litre focus, around which the Martini Trophy has been built since 2011, continues in pre-'72 and pre-'79 timeframes, with a pre-'85 Sports 2000 class as well.

"We are building on what we've done so far, to bring out cars which have not previously had a high-profile series," said HSCC chief Grahame White.

The WEC Revival will run as part of the HSCC's International Trophy at Silverstone (May 16-17), the Brands Hatch Superprix (July 11-12), Zandvoort's Historic Grand Prix (August 28-30) and the Motors TV Cup at Dijon-Prenois (October 2-4).

Flavien Marcais said: "The WEC Revival will run on the most evocative circuits, combining historical context and modern facilities. With additional cars lined-up, it looks very promising."



Martini grid will grow in 2015

WALKER

Formula Ford 1600

Knockhill and Combe join National FF1600 calendar

THE BRITISH RACING AND SPORTS

Car Club's Formula Ford 1600 National Championship will visit Knockhill in 2015 as part of a revamped calendar that makes the series truly nationwide for the first time in the modern era.

In recent years the National schedule has been largely based around the thriving Northern championship, plus limited 'away' rounds. The 2015 calendar of eight double-header events includes a Knockhill round alongside the Scottish series on September 13, as well as including Castle Combe for the first time in many years, with the National championship joining the local grid on July 18-19.

The May visits to the Donington Park Grand Prix layout and Oulton Park, plus the Anglesey finale in September, still

accompany Northern rounds.

Two events at Silverstone (one each on the National and International tracks) and a Brands Hatch date complete a National schedule that will answer leading teams' requests for a fully-fledged UK series to complement FF1600's recent resurgence.



Calendar will have greater variety

JONES

750 Motor Club

750MC trio in Nankang deal

THREE ONE-MAKE 750 MOTOR

Club classes will switch to control Nankang rubber next season.

Nankang, in addition to Toyo and Dunlop, tendered for the contract to replace the Italian Marangoni tyres on

which the BMW Compact Cup has raced for two seasons, while the Civic Cup and 5Club Racing MX-5 Cup will also adopt the Taiwanese manufacturer's rubber.

Back-to-back tests at Donington with leading drivers from this year's Compact Cup proved conclusive, and the series will use Nankang's harder-compound tyre, with the Civics on the softer alternative.

Tyre use will be policed with retro-fitted coded chips, which will record the history of each competitor's allocation; competitors will receive four sets for £999.

"It's about the package, and Nankang's deal stood out for us," said Compact Cup promoter Paul McErlean, whose Scottish BMW series will follow suit.



Compact Cup will swap tyre suppliers

WALKER

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing



Pye is full of praise for Solberg and World Rallycross

MCKEIN/LAT

Old MAWP's Almanac: a personal view of 2014

My 17th Old MAWP's Almanac – or 'Not the AUTOSPORT Awards' – presents a subjective reflection on a season of extraordinary highs and traumatic lows in different motor sporting disciplines. This year's compilation may contain surprises to jog memories, provoke debate and hopefully inspire you to try something different in 2015.

Hatch meeting. The spectacle of the sharp-looking, high-revving Japanese tin-tops there was superb, and there is no shortage of VTEC cars or tuning parts. While it is one-make, joy of joys it's multi-model so they don't all look the same – a huge selling point. Championship status for '15 gives another lift.

SUBLIME MOMENT OF 2014

A year after historic racing fans left Thruxton's Easter Revival with frostbite, Lord March drummed-up shirtsleeve weather for Goodwood's 72nd Members' Meeting. Almost 38 years after the 71st, the BARC was still in charge and post-'66 Touring Car races and a select audience contrasted with the Revival.

HISTORIC EVENT OF THE SEASON

All three 'Goodwoods' were awesome, the Silverstone Classic is now a monster, Zandvoort's third annual Historic Grand Prix deservedly drew 50,000 spectators and the Algarve Classic Festival season-closer hit new heights. For me, though, the Spa Six Hours remains peerless. Pure seat-of-the-pants racing on the ultimate circuit. If you've not been, go!

BEST CHAMPIONSHIP

I've looked beyond racing; the inaugural World Rallycross Championship was special. Contested by a variety of superstars, it took the sport to new audiences with exciting TV. Eleven years after he won the World Rally title, Norway's Petter Solberg emerged a worthy winner. Catch up with it at Lydden on May 22-24.

ONES TO WATCH IN 2015

1000cc Formula 3 screamers at Goodwood's 73rd Members Meeting on March 21-22, 50 years of the Clubmans Formula and speed eventing's return to Chateau Impney (last used in 1967) on July 11-12. Given a fair wind I'd also love to get to Bo'ness in Scotland – where the British Hillclimb Championship debuted in 1947 – and Jersey's Bouley Bay, which has never left the calendar.

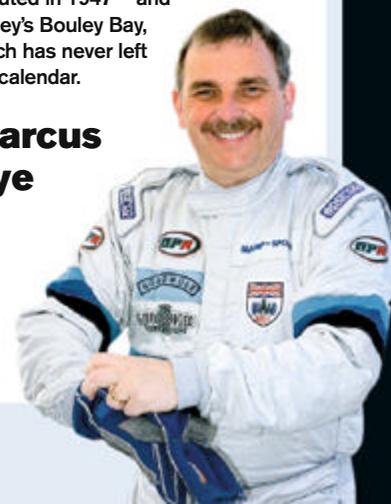
GREATEST DRIVES

Classic Clubmans champion Mark Charteris annihilating F5000 and F2 opposition in a wet HSCC Derek Bell Trophy race at Thruxton was mega. Over the season young Josh Webster beating Porsche Carrera Cup GB king Michael Meadows was a remarkable achievement.

Marcus Pye

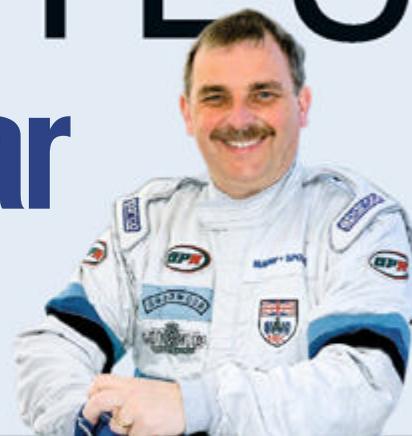
TOP VALUE

The Tegiwa Civic Cup first blipped my radar at April's 750MC Brands



MARCUS PYE'S

Highlights of the year



From Goodwood to Monaco and Castle Combe to Algarve, MARCUS PYE got to see a great deal of fabulous competition in 2014, so who better to pick some of the year's highlights?

My 2014 season was one of mixed emotions: triumph and tragedy. The deaths of friends Al Fleming and Denis Welch (at Hockenheim and the Silverstone Classic respectively) and Allan Miles and Mick Hill (due to illness) – plus sight of the Silverstone incident that cost rising VSCC star Garry Whyte his life – overshadowed what, in many ways, was a sensational year.

The sheer breadth of events, kicked off by Goodwood's magnificent successor to the BARC Members' Meetings of yore, kept me so busy reporting, commentating and doing peripheral work that I didn't get to compete, or even drive a racing car. That strengthened my resolve to return to the tracks occasionally in 2015. Having been so tantalisingly close over 30 weekends this term, I'm missing something I started in 1981.

GOODWOOD 72ND MEMBERS' MEETING

Continuing a sequence that stopped abruptly in 1966, when the motor circuit closed its doors to contemporary racing, the 72nd Members' Meeting strengthened the Goodwood Road Racing Club's quality programme and used the remaining two

'noisy' days of its annual planning permission. How Lord March's daffodil-festooned late-March initiative was greeted with T-shirt weather defied belief!

As a season opener it could not have been better. The MSA's decision to license the 2.4-mile track to embrace races for iconic Touring Cars of the 1970s-'80s, plus high-speed F1 and Le Mans car demos, imbued the event with a distinctly different flavour to September's sell-out Revival.

The racing was brilliant, even if random inter-house points-paying contests remain unfathomable to most, but a fraction of the Revival's attendance gave preparation teams room to work. Less pressure made the Members' Meeting a big favourite with them too and it's back next March. I hope it doesn't snow!

TEGIWA CIVIC CUP

The big surprise of the club season for me was the Tegiwa Civic Cup. A single-make, multi-model promotion showcasing high-revving, performance-matched Hondas, it provided fast, close racing – and plenty of overtaking – without breaking the bank.

It was new to the 750MC family and I discovered

it at Brands Hatch in April, where the natural amphitheatre of the Indy Circuit came alive as the colourful field was let loose. More cars had joined the fray when I witnessed it next, at Castle Combe, and by the end of the year it had really taken off.

That it has caught competitors' imagination is reflected in the number of cars in build, with strong take-up reported from Stock Hatch converts for whom the 'Citroen Saxopoly' has lost its shine. MSA championship status will bring the series to a new level in 2015.

MONACO GP HISTORIQUE

The Automobile Club de Monaco's Grand Prix Historique, run in alternate years, is the amateur weekend warrior's only chance to race on the streets of Monte Carlo. Securing a coveted invitation blurs the eye-watering entry fee, easily doubled by the cost of lugging your steed there and hanging out in the Principality – and that's if you do everything yourself! Having been twice, though, I can understand its aspirational lure even if it's way beyond my pocket.

Seventy-five years after the inaugural Monaco GP and 25 since my first visit, I didn't make the pilgrimage in May, but enjoyed an extraordinary weekend commentating 'live' for Motors TV, with John Hindhaugh and Goodwood colleague Bruce Jones. Although many viewers did not realise it – certainly not, once our voices were synched with the action for highlight shows – there were no luxury yacht, casinos or Stars 'N' Bars for us. We were ensconced in Hindhaugh Towers in Northamptonshire, having a ball. Do we want to be trackside in 2016? You bet...

AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS

Fifty years after the last contemporary AUTOSPORT 3 Hours for Sports-Racing and GT cars at Snetterton, the HSCC's seventh retrospective – equalling the period number – satisfied on several levels. Having sold club supremo Grahame White on joining forces with Flavien and Vanessa Marcais's GT & Sports Car Cup group, an unprecedented entry provided an excellent race in extremely challenging conditions.

My highlight, though, came beforehand. Local ace Jack Sears's fascinating recollections of winning the foggy 1964 race, on the debut of John Willment's AC Cobra Coupe, illuminated AUTOSPORT's preview, painting a vivid picture

The Civic Cup was a star addition to the 750MC bill



JONES



Excellent Gerry Marshall Trophy races headlined returning Goodwood event

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“As a season opener the daffodil-festooned Members’ Meeting could not have been better”

of the contrast between top-class racing then and now. Following a stand-off with circuit manager Oliver Sear over start money (remember that?), only the intervention of enthusiast Bill Bunbury guaranteed the victorious combo's appearance.

'Gentleman Jack', who has supported the modern classic and presented the prizes most years since the HSCC revived the concept in 2008, was particularly proud that daughter Suzanne competed in the special anniversary event in an MGB.

FESTIVAL OF SPEED

I've attended every Goodwood Festival of Speed since Lord March's first in 1993 and, having been the commentary team's startline emissary for eons, was initially underwhelmed at the idea of returning to the main box.

Working on the hillclimb's launchpad had its moments. A CanAm Lola disappearing deep into the trees (pre-massive straw-bale walls) in the tyre-warming area and a Fuel Altered dragster launching

in reverse certainly caught my attention. I'd built a strong rapport with the marshals and timekeepers, though, and enjoyed taking my mic on track to interview such luminaries as Sir Stirling Moss when a gap needed filling.

A change of scenery often proves beneficial, however. The double-header with Henry Hope-Frost in the main box, now directly overlooking the notorious Molecomb Corner – which I'd only seen competitors tackle on TV screens previously ▶



Biennial Monaco classic is superb

SAWYER



Buncombe hops to 3 Hours glory

STYLES



History meets hillclimb at the Festival of Speed

LAT

► — made for lively banter. As ever, the aces were awesome, carrying speed through the left-hander's apex then hard back on the gas. I must admit, though, Sir Chris Hoy burying a Nissan GT-R in the scenery, which I called 'off air' a couple of seconds before it happened, did shake me a tad...

RETURN OF MALLORY PARK

That thousands of enthusiasts from the motorcycle and car-racing fraternities, and legions of supportive locals, flocked to Mallory Park for its relaunch in March augured well for the Leicester venue. Its future had looked bleak following the BARC's departure amid much discontent.

Now in the hands of Real Motorsport, headed by two-wheeled nuts Stuart Hicken and Eddie Roberts, this was a huge thumbs-up and overwhelming show of affection for the 'Friendly Circuit', which has hosted cars and bikes since 1956, as well as an important bridge-builder with neighbours.

I've loved Mallory's lap of the lake since the

1970s, and won a race there in Paul Howarth's Chevron 'B10' at the '82 finale, after which Leeds property developer/racer Chris Meek rescued it from oblivion. This time round, most car-racing promoters had fixed their calendars expecting it to be gone (or at least off the radar), but the Classic Sports Car Club committed to the summer's only pure car meeting, at which I was proud to be commentator. Several clubs, including the VSCC and 750MC, are returning in 2015, but August's CSCC event will uphold traditional club-racing values over a full weekend.

BLACK MAGIC AT ZANDVOORT

Zandvoort's inaugural Historic Grand Prix event in 2011 captured the imagination of the town, the wider Dutch public and all who took part. It continues to grow to the joy of circuit boss Erik Weijers and commercial backers, behind it in ever-increasing numbers. Pushing the spectator attendance through the 50,000

landmark in August was a huge achievement.

The racing programme — from a 500cc Formula 3 posse to three-litre F1 cars, plus all manner of touring, GT and sports-racing machinery — was the strongest yet on the rollercoaster through the dunes. But a pair of JPS Lotus 79s, representing world champion-elect Mario Andretti's and Ronnie Peterson's one-two at the '78 Grand Prix made the hairs on my neck stand to attention.

Local hero Arie Luyendyk, a double Indianapolis 500 winner, played Andretti to Andrew Beaumont's Peterson as the beautiful black wing cars circled together. The distinctive soundtrack of synchronised Cosworth DFV engines — broadcast through twinned exhausts exiting centrally through the rear decks, as they traversed Tarzan hairpin, the Hugenholtzbocht, Hunserug and Scheivlak, then howled past the pits — transported many onlookers back 36 years at a stroke.

'50s SPORTSCARS AT SPA

The Spa Six Hours has been a 'must-do' since I first went, to compete and report, in 1997. I've not missed one since, but this year the weather during the Saturday afternoon/evening feature — thunder, lightning and torrential rain after a fine start — was the worst in the Pre-'66 race's history. Survival was key and Martin Stretton/Diogo Ferrao enhanced the Ford GT40's record with a hard-earned win.

The race of Roadbook's relentless showpiece was actually for Royal Automobile Club Woodcote Trophy honours within Motor Racing Legends' one-hour '50s Sportscars contest. While Gary Pearson juggled Jaguar D-types owned by Carlos Monteverde and Christian Glasel, Patrick Blakeney-Edwards gave the Coventry cats the slip



500cc Formula 3 returned to Combe for the first time in almost half a century



READ

“The first race for 500cc F3 at Combe in 49 years was totemic. It is set to become a regular finale”

in Fred Wakeman’s similarly-powered Cooper T38, aided by an efficient pitstop and Andrew Hall’s splendid start, to notch a sensational 2.2s victory.

CASTLE COMBE’S AUTUMN GOLD

Built over three years, the Castle Combe Autumn Classic – brainchild of long-time venue marketeer Rodney Gooch and outgoing CCRC chairman Adrian Fawdington – is established on the west country circuit’s calendar and continues to grow.

Having sown the seeds of 500cc Formula 3’s return to Combe (the movement started locally, within the Bristol Aeroplane Company, an engineering centre of excellence post-war), I was relieved that the first race for the motorcycle-engined cars in 49 years was totemic. The fixture is set to become a regular seasonal finale for 500OA members.

Fine Austin-Healey, Aston Martin, Jaguar, VSCC, FiSCar and Formula Junior races, interspersed with parades, made an attractive programme. The one-day format – following the modern CCRC

championship finals, although they will be on successive Saturdays in 2015 – also enabled folk to mingle, party and enjoy great hostelries nearby.

ALGARVE CLASSIC FESTIVAL

Portugal remains an enigma in European motorsport. While the financial realities of a relatively poor country can’t sustain many able young competitors’ dreams beyond karting, it boasts one of the finest circuits anywhere in the Autodromo Internacional Algarve, situated in the hills outside Portimao.

For five years its season-ending Classic Festival has ticked along, but this October local series promoter – and September’s Spa Six Hours winner – Diogo Ferrao teamed up with AIA chief Paulo Pinheiro and injected a real slug of passion into it. To spectacular effect!

Underpinned by Peter Auto’s photogenic Classic Endurance Racing pack and Automobiles Historiques’ GT&SCC field arriving in strength, with the FIA Lurani Trophy Historic Formula

Junior Championship finale and returnees from British-based MRL and HGPCA, the entry trebled and more spectators pitched up. Now the message is out it should thrive, because it’s a fabulous place to race when the autumn sun is shining.

MICK HILL CELEBRATION

The turnout at Mick Hill’s funeral earlier this month spoke volumes for the Super Saloon pioneer, famed for his V8-engined Ford Capri, VW Beetle, Skoda and BMW M1 clones. It also underlined the popularity of the ‘wacky racers’ of the 1970s and ’80s, and the dearth of big personalities in today’s club classes.

There are so many well-sorted road burners today – most front-wheel drive with powerful, reliable engines, and plentiful after-market components to boost performance – that aspiring racers need look no further than whichever marque series matches their budget. No need, then, to spend a winter hiding grumpy American engines, redundant transaxles and obsolete racecar suspension (all cheap and plentiful in the ’70s) under caricature bodyshells for a monster buzz.

Watching intrepid ‘Superloon’ kings Hill, Jonathan Buncombe, Colin Hawker, Tony Hazlewood, Doug Niven, Alec Poole, Ian Richardson, Tony Strawson, John Turner, the late Gerry Marshall and others slugging it out in hybrids that could (and did) bite defined an era of tin-top racing now impractical – not to say financially suicidal – to emulate.

The CSCC’s Special Saloon and Modsports revivals are enjoyable windows on the past, however, where you can still wonder at golden oldies and admire a few superb modern follies from dedicated competitors who dare to be different. ❧



Algarve’s stock rose in 2014

SAWYER



Modsports keep the spirit of pioneers like Mick Hill alive

JONES

TOP 10

Club drivers of the year

Our pick of this year's rising stars, hidden heroes and weekend warriors racing in club-level series in 2014



HAWKINS

10 **Pete Morris** Porsche Club Class 1 champion

The Porsche Club grid was not the biggest, but beating Tom Bradshaw is evidence of a fine season. Five victories helped Morris's cause, but it was his consistent scoring that landed the title.



WALKER

9 **James Dodd** HSCC Super Touring Car champion

Dodd showed at the Silverstone Classic that good club drivers are good full stop when he fought wheel-to-wheel with former WTCC champion Rob Huff for the victory. The inaugural title duly followed.



STYLES

8 **Matthew Palmer** Toyota MR2 champion

The dominant force in a packed grid of Toyota MR2s. Palmer wants to move up to a national-level championship in 2014. His form this season would mark him out as one to watch if he does so.



7 **Aaron Head** Caterham R300 Superlight champion

The Essex ace took the R300 crown in his second season in Caterham's flagship series, clinching the title in the final round ahead of Tracksport and Supersport champion David Robinson.



READ

6 **Adam Gore** Lotus Elise Trophy champion

Seven victories clinched Gore the inaugural Lotus Elise Trophy title, while four class wins in the Lotus Cup UK earned him the Production class crown. His switch from MX-5 racing is complete!



READ

5 **Chris Knox** Mini Challenge champion

Scotsman Knox became the first person in the Mini Challenge's 14-year history to claim a second title, adding this year's crown to his 2011 triumph with 11 wins from 21 races.



4 **Simon Hadfield** FIA Masters Historic Sports Car champion

Another fine season for Hadfield, who won 11 races in 2014 in six different cars, further exemplifying his remarkable racing dexterity, and clinched two FIA Masters titles alongside Leo Voyazides.



MOIR

3 **Ciaran Haggerty** Scottish Formula Ford 1600

A record-breaking season for the young Scot, a protege of IndyCar legend Dario Franchitti. Fully deserved the Scottish FF1600 title after completing the second half of the season unbeaten.



STYLES

2 **Dean Brace** Legends UK champion

Brace's maiden Legends UK title last season was a huge confidence boost, and he won more races than any other UK-based driver this season as he made it back-to-back championship successes.



JONES

1 **James Blake-Baldwin** BRSCC Mazda MX-5 champion

Blake-Baldwin gave MX-5 benchmark Tom Roche a run for his money in 2013 and stepped up to title favourite in the Welshman's absence. A run of seven consecutive victories mid-season – ironically ended by a Roche one-off – proved the tipping point in the title battle, and a total haul of 14 was superb in the country's biggest MX-5 grid. A worthy champion.

TOP 10

Rivalries of the year

The battles of the national and club scenes that have provided the entertainment and intrigue during 2014



10 Bryant v van der Garde Goodwood Revival Tourist Trophy

Oliver Bryant and Formula 1 test driver Giedo van der Garde engaged in a terrific Cobra-on-Cobra contest, a battle which petered out through mechanical failure just as it was about to erupt.



9 BRDC F4 v FIA F4 Junior single-seaters

Britain's version of FIA F4 was finally confirmed, selling 32 Mygales for the new MSA Formula. BRDC F4 announced its own FIA F4 chassis plans with Tatuus, selling 26. Let battle commence in 2015.



8 Finn v McBennett Mondello GTs

The rivalry between Connaire Finn and Pat McBennett is arguably the biggest in Irish circuit racing. Finn called in back-up to take points off his rival in the finale but the Lotus driver edged it in the end.



7 Dempsey v Kevin Mills Racing Walter Hayes Trophy

Controversy reigned at Formula Ford 1600's showpiece event. Peter Dempsey wiped out semi-final winners Michael Moyers and Scott Malvern, leading to a post-final war of words.



6 Albone v Cowley 750 Formula

Former karting team-mates Bills Albone (Batten 3) and Cowley (Cowley MkIV, #6) duked it out at the front in cars originated four decades apart. Albone's win tally (10) was enough to beat his rival.



5 Mittell v Spires 750MC RGB

Scott Mittell ended three and a half years of Spire GT3 dominance in the 750 Motor Club's RGB category with a hard-fought win at Cadwell Park in his self-built machine.



4 Hayes v Avery v Lawrence BRSCC Porsche Championship

Went down to the wire thanks to a thrilling season-long contest in which Jonathan Greensmith trailed Ed Hayes and Richard Avery but edged his rivals to the crown on dropped scores.



3 Lanan v HHC BRDC Formula 4

George Russell (Lanan) and Raoul Hyman (HHC) non-finished twice after crashing while fighting for the title, with the top six spots often exclusively Lanan and HHC drivers. Fiercely competitive to the end.



2 Cryer v Roddison MaX 5 Racing

A sensational scrap between Jonathan Cryer and Paul Roddison was settled at the final round in favour of Cryer. Roddison's mid-season surge set up the showdown but Cryer won by four points.



1 Kruger v Scott British Formula Ford

The British Formula Ford title protagonists made contact at the first round and had close on-track fights thereafter. A clash at Silverstone in the penultimate encounter spun Scott to the back, but it was the shunt at the Brands finale, which forced Scott to DNF and handed Kruger the title (not to mention leading to judicial proceedings), that this fight will be remembered for.

NATIONAL PICS OF THE YEAR

AUTOSPORT's band of photographers are an intrepid bunch, shooting the breadth and depth of Britain's diverse and vibrant club scene. Here's a selection of their best shots of the season



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HAWKINS



SMYTH'S GRAVELLY END
Neville Smyth's Ray GRS10 shed its wheel while challenging for the lead in the Formula Ford Festival semi-final

JONES



SPLASH AND DASH
The Roadsports field is unleashed at Thruxton on Easter Sunday as part of the HSCC's Revival weekend



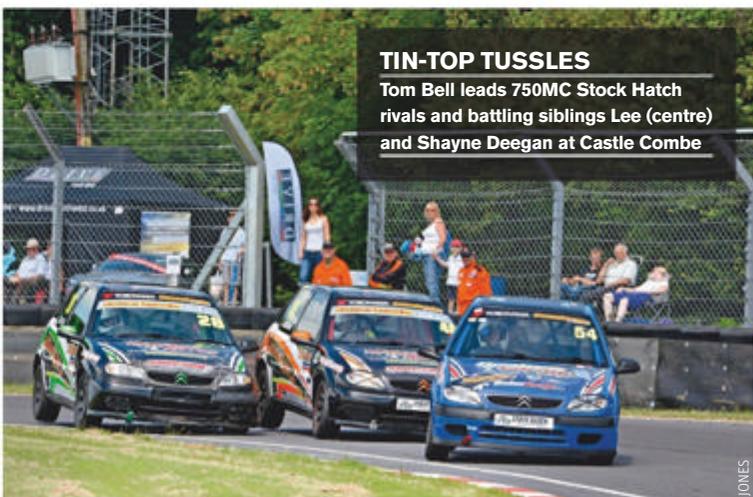
WALKER

WILDFIRE IN THE PARK
Mike Wilds' and Steve Guglielmi's rorty BMW CSL spits flames during the Masters All Series race at Oulton Park



VOIR

KNOCKING ON THE RECORD
Phil Dryburgh attacks Knockhill in his Aston Martin V12 Vantage, just falling short of the circuit record



TIN-TOP TUSSELS
Tom Bell leads 750MC Stock Hatch rivals and battling siblings Lee (centre) and Shayne Deegan at Castle Combe

JONES

GOING FOR GUARDS GLORY

Hugh/Mark Colman's Chevron B8 (72) battles the similar Charles Allison/Peter Thompson car at Oulton Park



WALKER

AMERICAN FLAIR

The Euro NASCAR leaders blast down the main straight during the Brands Hatch Speedfest meeting



HAWKINS



QUICKEST BY A HARE

The Lotus Elan of Chris Drake/Mark Elliott races a hare at Snetterton during the AUTOSPORT 3 Hours

STYLES



A FINE REFLECTION

Clive Brandon's Lotus Europa and its shining reflection splashes round a soaking Kirkistown in August

DEMPSTER

COMING THROUGH!

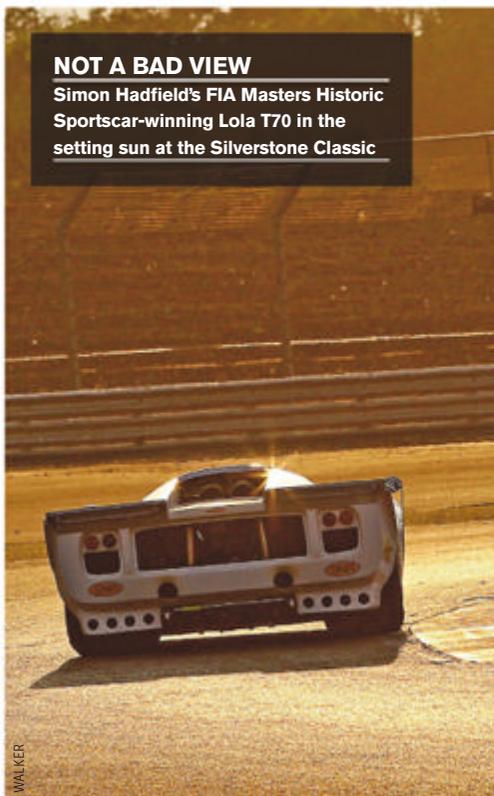
Scott Mittel and his family-built Mittell MC-52B give RGB rival John Cutmore (Spire GT3) a whack at Snetterton



JONES

NOT A BAD VIEW

Simon Hadfield's FIA Masters Historic Sportscar-winning Lola T70 in the setting sun at the Silverstone Classic



WALKER

FISCAR RUNS WILDS

A massive FISCAR grid charges off the line at Castle Combe's season-closing Autumn Classic meeting



READ

RENAULT UK MOTORSPORT

★
1974

★
2014



40 NOT OUT



The French marque has been ever-present in British racing over the past four decades. NICK PHILLIPS looks back

130

For 40 years, Renaults of one type or another have had a constant presence in UK motorsport – from the perky, heeled-over Renault 5 TLs that started it all (Maggie Anderson won the first race and Neil McGrath took the first three championship titles) to the current hectic BTCC-supporting Clios. That’s impressive by any standards, but the Renault series have consistently punched above their weight.

Three men were central to the success of the French manufacturer in motorsport here, and two of them got together recently to reminisce. It’s no surprise that the anecdotes were soon flowing. Dennis Carter, clerk of the course, race director, former head of the BARC, and Tim Jackson, longtime Renault head of PR and the firm’s *de facto* motorsport boss, swapped tales of a cloak-and-dagger attempt to buy black-market Russian dolls in a dusky forest rendezvous with a wagon that only ran in reverse gear, and encounters with Moscow ‘executives’ whose promises to “run your security” were more threat than offer.

They were discussing the Moscow Superprix, planned for 1992. In some ways it was an excellent example of the work the pair did: imaginative, ambitious, viable and fun. But it lacked the hallmark of their work – that the job got done and in style. The Superprix was way ahead of its time but failed when the volatile Russian politics of the era unnerved the American backers and funding was pulled.

Renault is all about cars and they play a big part in this story – from the first 5s through the early Formula Renault heroes from Van Diemen and Swift to Spiders, Clios, the super-successful carbon-chassis, Tatuus-built FR of which more than 1000 were sold, Laguna touring cars and championship-winning rally Meganes. But when it comes down to it, the people are all; Jackson’s reply to a question about what has been the best bit

Jason Plato made his name as Spider champ

of the adventure is telling: “It’s been great to see all those drivers coming through and developing.”

Among ‘all those drivers’ are a handful that have made it to the very top. Of the world champions in whose careers Renault UK has played a major part, Kimi Raikkonen and Lewis Hamilton were Formula Renault champions, Jenson Button drove for the Renault Formula 3 team (pictured on opposite page), while Andy Priaulx was both a Renault Spider champion and a member of the F3 squad. A handful of others made it to F1 – Pedro de la Rosa, Antonio Pizzonia, Paul di Resta and Heikki Kovalainen (pictured opposite). And if you drop down a rung or two on the motorsport

ladder the list grows – think of Le Mans winner Guy Smith, Indycar star Mike Conway and BTCC champion Jason Plato (who raced Formula Renault, was the first Spider champion and graduated to employment as a BTCC Laguna driver).

And it’s not just as racing drivers that those who developed in the





Renault family have shone. Christian Horner, who was a Renault kart scholar and Formula Renault race winner, now runs the most successful Formula 1 team of recent years, Red Bull. John Booth, team principal at Marussia, ran a clutch of talented Formula Renault racers such as Plato, Smith and James Matthews, as well as Horner and many others, as he first established himself as a team boss. Then there's Chris Goodwin, who was runner-up in the super-competitive 1990 Formula Renault championship, when the series really took off, and is now McLaren Automotive's chief test driver.

Behind the scenes over those 40 years there has been a lot of hard work, not a few dramas, a great deal of fun and inevitably some sadness. Jackson and Carter are quick to give credit to the missing face at the table: that of the late Robert Fearnall, another great force in the development of Renault's UK racing series in the early years, who died in 2012.

The early years of Formula Renault in this country provide a good example of Fearnall's role. Carter recalls that the decision to bring the series (which had already thrived for many years in

France) over here for the 1989 season was taken relatively late. That meant there was little official or financial backing that Jackson and Renault UK could bring. "Basically Robert and I funded it," says Carter. Jackson provided moral support and technical back-up from John Millett — another ever-present member of the tight-knit team that made the Renault series so successful. Carter remembers his first meeting with Millett in his tiny office below the smart Radbourne Racing premises in Wimbledon: "It was roughly the size of a matchbox with the matches still in it. I had severe doubts that this operation was ever going to work. But as usual they came up trumps and were efficient throughout, although I notice that John still blinks when he's in daylight."

The faith Carter and Fearnall had in that sparsely populated first series — won by Neil Riddiford — proved sound. In 1990 Renault

backed it fully, more than 70 drivers raced at one round or another, qualification races were needed at some circuits and the formula became an important rung on the career ladder of ambitious drivers for more than 20 years.

Not that everything always went entirely smoothly. To launch the series in 1990 Jackson organised daytime fireworks — a great success, apart from the parachuting flare that dropped through the open sunroof of a brand new Jaguar and set fire to the passenger seat. Then there was the qualification race at Kirkistown — Carter and

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RENAULT AT 40 THE SERIES

ROAD-CAR BASED

Renault 5 TL	1974-1976
Renault 5 TS	1977-1985
Renault 5 GT Turbo	1985-1990
Renault Clio	1991-1995
Renault Spider	1996-1999
Renault Clio	2000-present



FORMULA RENAULT

Multi-chassis	1989-1999
Single chassis	2000 to 2011

(Tatuus 2000-2009, Barazi Epsilon 2010 and 2011)



Formula Renault launched many careers

Fearnall were in race control for the eight-lapper and, when they'd counted 11 laps and cars were starting to run out of petrol, asked legendary clerk of the course Des McAuley what was going on. He explained: "It's a lovely day and they look like they're having fun out there, so I thought I'd give them a few more laps."

Many others played their parts, not least the managing directors of Renault UK – most

Tapio Laukkanen, and also hosted another world champion, Derek Ringer, who'd already taken that title with Colin McRae when he sat beside Robbie Head in the Megane.

The rally programme began in 1995 and unsurprisingly it's the '90s that provide the



R5 Turbo racer Rowan Atkinson with Jackson

ever quite landing the title – from 1996. It also coincided with a UK sales boom for Renault.

So what's the Renault long-life secret? Jackson points to his close-knit team of effective operators: Carter, Fearnall, Millett, long-time championship manager and PR Simon North, scrutineer Roy Fewkes and many more. They took it through the great times, such as that 1990 FR season and the early years of the 21st century with the Tatuus FR chassis, which included Raikkonen's title in 2000 and Hamilton's in 2003. Of course it wasn't always smooth and easy. The transitions between iterations of the championships have sometimes been hard work – for example when the entire fleet of Spiders had to be fitted with new roll cages after a problem was highlighted by a pre-season testing crash – but the team's ability to overcome such potential disasters means the good times have massively outweighed the bad.

Now year 41 is drawing to a close, and there'd be few who'd bet against the Renault streak continuing for many more beyond. ☘

"I had severe doubts that this was ever going to work, but as usual they came up trumps" DENNIS CARTER

prominent among them in a motorsport context was Michel Gigou, an intensely competitive man who loved the sport. He was in the fortunate position to make remarks such as: "I think this year, we'll go rallying," and have people like Jackson to hand who could make that happen and successfully. The team took the British championship twice, with Martin Rowe and

fondest memories for Jackson. Renault had a BTCC programme that started in 1993 (with the unloved 19) and included his favourite Renault racer, the Laguna, which began its race career before it went on sale in the UK and went on to win the BTCC with Alain Menu. Rallying joined in from 1995 and Formula 3 – in which it was a very serious championship contender without



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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • BEST PICS • LATEST GEAR • ON TRACK & SCREEN • ONLINE

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Done deal: Ron Dennis and Jenson Button shake on it

Ron was right to take his time

As a British F1 enthusiast I am very pleased to hear of Jenson Button's confirmation as a McLaren driver, at least for 2015, and I wish him every success.

However, I quickly grew tired of the media coverage around McLaren's protracted deliberations. Racing drivers are simply employees, as are the vast majority of the planet's workforce.

In my opinion it is absolutely correct that Ron Dennis took his time in making a complex decision, as he will do what is best for the McLaren organisation, regardless of any external influence.

F1 has always been a brutal business, and the fact that Button is an extremely experienced former world champion is a moot point.

Paul Roberts, Caerphilly

Noble and Straw both miss a big hunk of F1 DNA in their contribution to the 2014 review (December 11).

Noble misses that F1 is about technological marvels. Doubtless at any NASCAR race, the depth of field of incredible drivers and relentless racing far exceeds any F1 race. But they are racing glorified taxi-cabs.

At China 2014, I was captivated by the complex machines flung around corners at unbelievable pace using one-third less fuel; and capturing the energy made by the slowing process to enter a corner, storing it to use to rocket out of the corner.

Noble misses that F1 is about absurdly paid drivers in absurdly fast and complex cars racing in huge architectural monuments to the absurdity of the whole circus. A driver's championship? About 20 per cent a driver's championship. It's cars, technology, venue, concept,

financing, teams... all the best together in one glorious dish.

As to Straw, he should have focused on the show, not the scraps. A major part of F1 DNA is its ruthless free-market capitalism. F1 is about spending all you can to produce the most outrageous show possible, so hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday and sellers of goods and services will pay heaps to sponsor the circus.

Marussia and whoever else is eaten by the ruthless competition is hardly a sign of distress or failure of F1, but proof of its vitality. Shine or die is F1.

Johnnie Crean
Waikoloa, Hawaii, USA

I'm tired of hearing the VW rally lot moaning.

Team principal Jost Capito was moaning a few weeks ago about the dropping of his (and the WRC promoter's)

bonkers idea of changing the WRC rules so that the winner was decided by some mathematical co-efficient, and is now moaning about Sebastien Loeb's return on the Monte Carlo Rally.

Sebastien Ogier was complaining recently about the running order for the rallies. I liked Loeb's response to this problem, which was a gallic shrug of the shoulders and a comment along the lines of 'it is what it is' – and then he'd go and beat everyone anyway!

Capito says Loeb's return will undermine the sport. I think he may well be concerned at Loeb beating his dominant VW team in a somewhat lesser developed car...

I'm delighted to see Loeb's return and hope that he blows them all away on the Monte.
Andy Maclean
Churchill, Oxon

In pictures

Images around the globe, from Japan to Australia via the garden of England



STADIUM TRUCKS WOW RoC
Race of Champions regular Robby Gordon's spectacular Stadium Super Trucks proved a crowd favourite at Bushy Park, Barbados, at the weekend

BESIDE THE E SIDE
The Punta del Este resort could have offered one too many distractions for the Formula E visitors. We hope this (show car?) was rescued



NORDICS IN CARIBBEAN VIBE
Were these questionable dreadlocks key to Team Nordic drivers Tom Kristensen and Petter Solberg's RoC Nations Cup success?



KUBICA TAKES BETTEGA WIN
Robert Kubica signed off his season with a win at last weekend's Bettega Memorial Rally Sprint. The Pole's motorsport future could be revealed this week



In the shops

Desirable new releases

SCALEXTRIC AUDI QUATTRO

£39.99 – scalextric.com

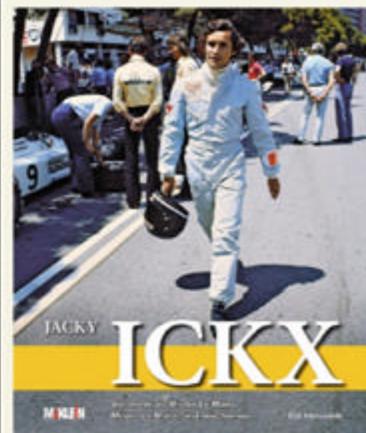
Rally-loving slot racers will rejoice in the arrival of another Group B monster from Scalextric: this time a replica of Michele Mouton's Audi Sport Quattro S1 from the 1985 Ulster Rally. It has working lights and magnatraction, but sadly won't whistle and spit flames when you lift off.



JACKY ICKX BIOGRAPHY

€49.90 – mckleinstore.com

There are very few books about superstar all-rounder Ickx, the Belgian well known for his reticence about his past. Still, Ed Heuvink's German/English language tome is packed with epic McKlein pics and great nuggets about a man who won in F1, sportscars, rallying and touring cars.



RIVAUX WATCHES/GLASSES

£59 (sunglasses); £395 (watches)
rivauxwatches.com

Racing-inspired firm Rivaux implements cues from motorsport into its line of watches – pistons, gear ratios and a racing car's fuel cap can all be spotted when you look closely at the designs. It also boasts a range of sunglasses, which an increasing number of drivers have worn during 2014.



WARNER/LAT

WHAT'S ON

ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD

ANDROS TROPHY

Rd 3/7
Alpe d'Huez
December 19-20
tropheeandros.com

PLUM PUDDING

Mallory Park
December 26
Malloryparkcircuit.com



AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL

8-11 January 2015, NEC

ONE OF THE STARS OF AUTOSPORT International on January 8-11 next year will be the Classic & Sports Car and Silverstone Classic exhibit featuring some great racing machinery.

Among the classic race and road cars on display will be an ex-Bruce McLaren Cooper T53, the 1989 Mercedes C11, as raced by a certain Michael Schumacher,



and an ex-Nigel Mansell Lotus 87. There will also be a 1999 Honda Accord Super Tourer, a 1965 Corvette Stingray and a Lola T70 Spyder, making it simply

something you can't miss.

There will be a total of 14 cars to look at, with a combined value estimated to be well in excess of £15 million.

MY FAVOURITE DRIVER

David Llewellyn

Watching this 6R4 being threaded between trees on the 1986 Welsh Rally made **DAVID EVANS** a devoted follower of one of Britain's finest

The passing of time, the rise and shocking demise of an iconic and heroic figure such as Colin McRae would have made it easy for me to write this story about Britain's first World Rally Champion. McRae always was the hero's hero.

But to fill this column with words of worship for the McRae man would be an injustice to the driver I followed before Cocco even stepped aboard his Sunbeam.

That man was David Llewellyn. Spectating on the 1986 Welsh Rally I found my hero. I'll be honest, I didn't know much about Llewellyn before that season. But he'd won his first ever British round one event earlier, and a Circuit of Ireland win certainly created headlines.

And now here he was howling up the side of Dyfi, putting one over Hannu Mikkola's short Quattro and Stig Blomqvist in an RS200.

Incredible.



Llewellyn, a true rallying hero

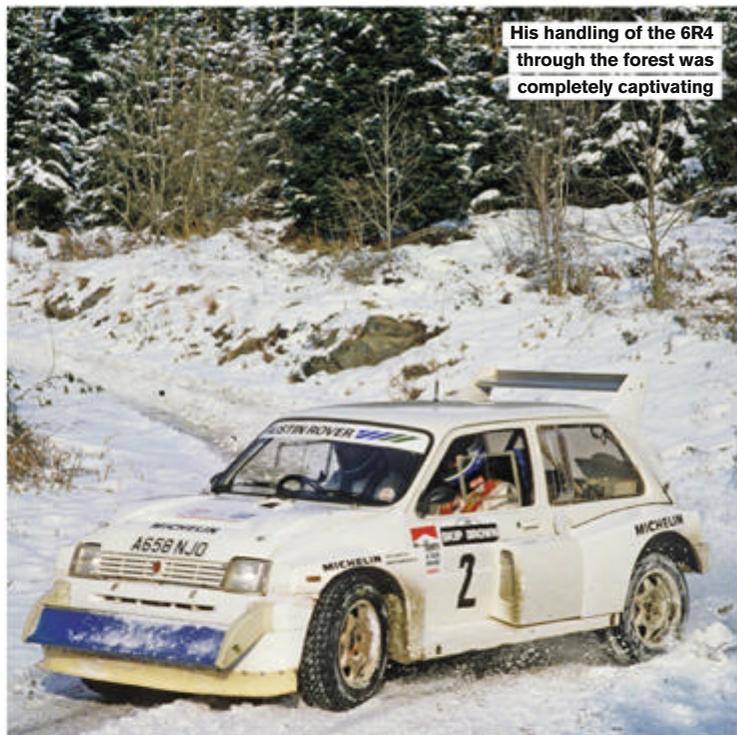
I was transfixed. Llewellyn led the event twice, but couldn't keep it together to the finish. He dropped it in spectacular fashion, overshooting a hairpin and essentially launching the thing off the side of a mountain.

Having recorded Grandstand, I watched in wonder at the am-cam footage of the cartwheeling white Metro. And then listened intently as my new favourite Welshman stood aside his trashed 6R4 and talked about: "Taking it home. In a box..."

The demise of Group B meant a move to Audi's lukewarm Coupe Quattro for 1987, before the onset of the horribly unwieldy 200 Quattro for the following year. Watching Llewellyn manhandle this thing which looked bigger than a bus between the trees was a sight to behold. And the noise wasn't bad either. Much better than the hairdryer he'd been pedaling the previous season.

Finally, he found himself in the right place at the right time in 1989. Toyota GB would be running a Celica and, when Jimmy McRae favoured a stay at Ford, Llewellyn's name was stenciled onto the side of the Securicor-backed, Phil Collins-run GT-4.

"My hero slaughtered McRae through mid-Wales"



His handling of the 6R4 through the forest was completely captivating

Llewellyn and co-driver Phil Short won from the off, dominating the Cartel International. A duff clutch forced them out of the Circuit, but then came a historic home win in Wales.

By that point, I was corresponding with Llewellyn regularly. Not quite stalking the poor chap, but certainly keeping him informed with where I'd been watching and what I thought of his progress. It was all good. In return, he kept my bedroom wall plastered with signed photographs.

Two British titles were taken in the Toyota and an eighth place on the 1990 RAC helped cement his place in the world championship with Nissan.

The switch to a Sunny GTi-R didn't

work. Llewellyn was dropped. Unfathomably as far as I could see, from behind my economics homework in the upper sixth.

Fortunately, before he was cast mercilessly from the top of world rallying's tree, there was time for one more moment; victory on the Audi Sport Rally in 1991 in an all-white Sunny which was, undoubtedly, the coolest thing in the world – along with the purple coats with fur around the collars which the team wore.

My hero slaughtered Russell Brookes and Colin McRae through mid-Wales.

Fifteen years on, I was back in Dyfi and as impatient as ever to see Llewellyn. My favourite.

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world – plus TV and online

ON TELEVISION

THURSDAY DECEMBER 18

1930-0030 Sky Sports F1
Belgian Grand Prix 2014 Replay
2000-2100 British Eurosport 1
Le Mans 24 Hours 2014 Highlights

FRIDAY DECEMBER 19

1930-2330 Sky Sports F1
Japanese Grand Prix 2014 Replay

SATURDAY DECEMBER 20

1730-2215 Sky Sports F1
Brazilian Grand Prix 2014 Replay
1750-1855 Motors TV
FIA World Endurance Championship Season Review
1855-2305 Motors TV
V8 Supercars Season Review – Part 1

SUNDAY DECEMBER 21

1855-2305 Motors TV
V8 Supercars Season Review – Part 2
1900-2350 Sky Sports F1
Malaysian Grand Prix 2014 Replay
2245-2345 British Eurosport 2
FIA WTCC 2014 Season Highlights

MONDAY DECEMBER 22

1300-1400 ITV 4
Goodwood Festival of Speed 2014 Highlights
2145-0000 Sky Sports F1
F1 Classic: USA 1981



F1 season review

GILHAM/GETTY

TUESDAY DECEMBER 23

2145-2230 Sky Sports F1
Classic F1: Austria 1987

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 24

2130-2215 Sky Sports F1
Classic F1: Europe 1993

THURSDAY DECEMBER 25

0800-1900 Sky Sports F1
Lewis Hamilton wins 2014
1415-1750 Motors TV
Goodwood Revival Replay

FRIDAY DECEMBER 26

2100-0010 Motors TV
FIA WRC Season Review
2115-2155 Sky Sports F1
Classic F1: Italy 1993

SATURDAY DECEMBER 27

1300-1410 BBC 1
2014 F1 Season review

SUNDAY DECEMBER 28

1800-2300 Sky Sports F1
Singapore Grand Prix 2014 Replay

MONDAY DECEMBER 29

2300-2345 Sky Sports F1
Classic F1: Belgium 1985

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30

1945-0100 Sky Sports F1
Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2014 Replay

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 31

1800-1900 Sky Sports F1
Lewis Hamilton: Pain and Glory

ONLINE

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube **HAMILTON ACCEPTS AWARD FROM TINIE TEMPAH**



SEARCH FOR: Lewis Hamilton International Racing Driver of the Year 2014 (7:47)
Lewis Hamilton receives his AUTOSPORT Award for International Racing Driver of the Year from a very special surprise guest – and entertains the illustrious assembly of motorsport personalities at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

AUTOSPORT+

Exclusive content coming up in our premium website this week

AUTOSPORT's comprehensive review of 2014's highlights continues online through the festive period with Gary Anderson's review of the F1 year, more from our anonymous insider the Secret Mechanic, plus a fiendish Christmas Day quiz to test your recall of an epic season.

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Revved up over what's on the box

The BBC Sports Personality of the Year always offers an effective barometer of how the great unwashed perceive Formula 1. Lewis Hamilton went into Sunday's show as second favourite to golfer Rory McIlroy, but ended up taking a dominant win.

Perhaps it was his bold gambit to take Roscoe onto the SPOTY red carpet that won it for him, or the fact he came over warmly in his interview. Either way, he claimed 33.8 per cent of the vote – 209,920 people – compared with McIlroy's 19.9 per cent (123,745). A resounding endorsement for the on-track show in 2014? Or a recognition of how engaged racing fans were with the show? In the finest tradition of

such a public vote, you decide...

Hamilton certainly had the snazziest VT in recognition of his achievements. Suited and booted, he wandered around renderings of the key moments of the



season, including the clash with Rosberg at Spa. While picking up on the technology, it stressed the importance of the driver. As Hamilton's voiceover had it, "it's a complicated business... but simple."

His victory was greeted with plenty of criticism, notably on Twitter. Impartial expert witness Ian Poulter was unhappy that McIlroy didn't win, declaring SPOTY "a complete joke" and complaining that Hamilton "had one person to beat all year". That would be Ian Poulter, the golfer...

McIlroy himself was magnanimous in defeat, just as Hamilton was in victory. The Mercedes driver seemed genuinely overwhelmed to have won the award, which he missed out on last time he won the world championship. But he

still found time to throw in a quick plug for Nicole Scherzinger's *Cats* (the musical, not actual felines).

Given that motorsport outside of F1 is often given short-shrift, it was good to see both Jolyon Palmer and Alex Lynn feted in the 'fearless' section, in which the poetic voiceover that has been de rigueur at BBC Sport for the past few years also gave a quick reminder of drivers who find themselves in dire straits.

"Fearless with an engine," said the voiceover. "Jolyon Palmer in GP2, Alex Lynn in GP3 and Marc Marquez, again, in MotoGP. For Michael Schumacher and Jules Bianchi, the fight goes on..."

A sombre moment in a great evening. **Revved Up**

Gary Anderson

“The moment I realised we were in F1 and racing, not just competing”

■ Mexican Grand Prix ■ June 16 1991 ■ Jordan-Ford 191 ■ Andrea de Cesaris takes fourth place



De Cesaris leads
Benetton duo
Piquet and Moreno

THERE WERE MANY RACES

I enjoyed during my career on the pitwall, but the 1991 Mexican Grand Prix was the first race when I really felt as if the Jordan team belonged in Formula 1.

We had scored our first points with fourth and fifth place in Canada a race earlier, but this is the one that really sticks in the memory.

In the first half of the season, we had to prequalify early on Friday morning as a new team, with the top four getting through. We were running Goodyear tyres, but the Pirelli runners had the advantage because they could have their qualifying tyres cleaned up between runs. We just had to be brave and wait until the end of the prequalifying session before doing one run.

It wasn't easy in Mexico, or ever in prequalifying, as the track was so dirty and the Goodyears were not as good in those conditions as the Pirellis. Andrea de Cesaris got stuck in gear so had to switch to the spare car and he got through in third.

Bertrand Gachot was fifth so missed out, but was let back in when Nicola Larini's Lamborghini was excluded for its rear wing being too high.

Andrea qualified 11th and Bertrand, after crashing at Peraltada and giving us a lot of work to do overnight in first qualifying, was 20th. He had a good race until he spun off after missing a gear. Before that point, we were on course to have

both cars in the points again as he was in fifth place behind Andrea.

It was the early stages of the race that I really remember. On the pitwall I saw the Williams, Ferrari and McLarens leading out of the fast, banked Peraltada. Then came Andrea in the little green Jordan hanging onto their tails! I remember thinking, 'Yeah, this is good.'

It was the moment that I realised

we were actually in F1 and racing rather than just competing. What we had achieved really hit home.

Andrea finished fourth. At the end of the race he was the last car on the lead lap, but a problem with the throttle meant that he stopped 150 metres short of the finish line. We were on the pitwall cheering him on as he did it. It turned out that he didn't need to do it and, in fact, pushing the car over the line wasn't legal. So for about an hour after the race there were arguments with the stewards. At first they ruled Andrea was disqualified, but a few minutes later he was back in.

It was a great result for the team and for Andrea, a driver I was sceptical about when Eddie Jordan signed him but who was so important in getting the team up to speed in the first season.

We went on to finish fifth in the constructors' championship in 1991. Not bad for a small team nobody gave much of a chance to when we first announced our F1 plans! ❁

PROFILE



GRIFFITHS/LAT

IRISHMAN GARY ANDERSON

came to England in 1972, working at Motor Racing Stables at Brands Hatch. He then joined the Brabham team, the start of an illustrious career including stints at McLaren and Ensign as well as in the US and with his own Anson cars. He was the founding technical director of Jordan in 1991, going on to produce race-winning cars both for that team and Stewart.

NEXT ISSUE THE REAL FLYING FINN
Why 2015 will be a big year for Valtteri Bottas **On sale January 1**



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