

F1 DRIVING STYLES
SPECIAL ISSUE

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THE ARTIST



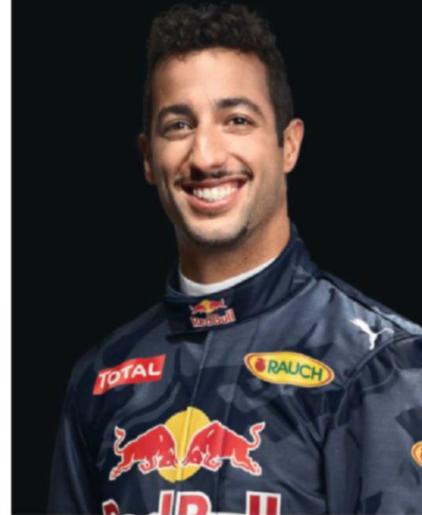
THE THROTTLE JOCKEY



THE HUSTLER



THE DRIFT KING



DRIVING SECRETS OF THE F1 STARS

THE PRODIGY



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The current stars do have individual styles

ONE OF MODERN MOTORSPORT'S PROBLEMS IS THAT it can be difficult to see the drivers at work. High cockpit sides and cars with downforce make it far harder to decipher the styles of Formula 1's top drivers than in the days of treaded tyres and lots of sideways action. But that doesn't mean they aren't doing remarkable things behind the wheel.

That is one of the key reasons for delving into the styles of the current crop of grand prix stars. It's a tricky task, but by pooling the views of experts and engineers, Ben Anderson has discovered some key differences between Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso, Kimi Raikkonen and the other chief protagonists. They provide key insights into the approaches of modern drivers and illustrate that there is more than one way of achieving success, even in this technological era.

The way Sebastien Ogier goes about dominating the World Rally Championship is perhaps more obvious thanks to the nature of the cars, but what's not clear is who he will drive for next year. Volkswagen's withdrawal from the WRC came as something of a shock last week, and leaves Ogier looking for a seat in 2017. He's not short of options (see page 22), but we rather like the idea of him joining Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport operation.

That way we'll really get to know how good the Fiesta RS WRC is while also seeing the sport's best driver fight against the might of better-funded factory opposition. Go on Seb, prove a point...



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 Ferrari; McLaren;
 Mercedes; Red Bull;
 Moy/XPB Images

COVER STORY

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**THE
DRIVING
SECRETS
OF F1'S
STARS**



THE METHOD BEHIND THE MASTERY

Every grand prix ace has their own distinctive way of making the car work for them, a default style of driving that makes them unique. Autosport reveals how F1's top guns do the seemingly impossible

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

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Just how do they do it? This is the question burning in the minds of all Formula 1 fans enthralled by the wondrous feats performed by grand prix racing's heroes throughout history.

Although F1 is, at heart, a technological sport, marching to the relentless beat of scientific progress, all that impressive machinery is rendered meaningless without the flesh and blood working magic behind the wheel.

The human element of grand prix racing remains its most fascinating aspect. We long to know how the brightest stars of single-seater racing operate, to know what they know, to feel what they feel, to understand how they manipulate the world's fastest circuit racing cars with such magnificent skill.

It is impossible to know these things precisely. Even the drivers aren't always able to fully understand their power. This is part of what makes F1 so captivating – that for all the scrutiny and forensic, data-driven analysis that surrounds it, it remains a world of black arts and hidden treasures.

But, by looking closely, it is possible to glimpse

THE PANEL



KARUN
CHANDHOK



ROB
WILSON



BEN
ANDERSON

certain traits and peculiarities that identify with certain drivers, the idiosyncrasies that make them who they are. There will be overlap, because all driving conforms to the laws of physics, but it's a fluid thing. It seems F1 is always progressing to a point of conformity, yet we still see different guys doing different things behind the wheel.

That is part of my job at every Formula 1 event – to wander trackside and observe how each driver operates the machinery at their disposal, interpreting the body language on display as best I can.

As a world-renowned driver coach, Rob Wilson has sat alongside most of the racers on the current F1 grid, and seen first-hand how they operate. He knows better than most the techniques required to drive racing cars properly.

Channel 4's F1 analyst Karun Chandhok understands F1 drivers like few people can, because he has been there and done it himself – competing in 11 grands prix and winning races in GP2. He has competed against many of the drivers now plying their trade at the pinnacle of single-seater racing.

Here we run the rule over F1's biggest names, attempting to explain how and why they do what they do, and understand the individual characteristics that power their extraordinary talents.

THE ARTIST

LEWIS HAMILTON

“Watching Lewis on one of his good laps is sheer artistry at work”

There is nowhere better to start an analysis of the drivers on the grid than with Formula 1's reigning triple world champion, the most successful British driver in grand prix history. Since the earliest days of his career, Hamilton has been a study in blistering speed, spectacular racecraft, and an unshakable self-belief that he is the best in the business.

“His true gift is the octopus-like relationship he has with the surface of the track – able to find grip and ‘suction’ where others cannot,” reckons Wilson. “He is one of these geniuses at rates of weight transfer. He tells the car what’s coming in subtle, supple and elegant ways.

“He’ll have a minuscule weight transfer through the steering to begin with, he’ll do the same with his braking; and when he gets things a bit wrong – such as locked brakes going into a corner – he recovers very, very well with his decrease of brake pressure, combined with his steering input.

“You just know when he’s not done a great qualifying lap and he’s got one more run to go that he very seldom then oversteps the mark and makes a further mistake.

“Watching Lewis on one of his good laps is sheer artistry at work.”

For a great example of this artistry watch the onboard video of his pole position lap for the inaugural Russian Grand Prix at Sochi in 2014. The way he dances the Mercedes through the final sequence of 90-degree turns, always on the limit of adhesion, is akin to poetry in motion.

“He has beautiful rates of input at the controls of his car, and he understands very well that having the world’s highest minimum speed in the middle of a corner is not really where it’s at,” Wilson adds.

“That’s why he’s often not that comfortable at Spa. Neither was Jim Clark, despite winning there four times! The longer corners don’t really suit Hamilton. He has the car control, the bravery and the skill to deal with it regardless, but it’s not his ideal world.

“It’s in the slightly sharper change-of-direction corners – that are not necessarily about high minimum speed – where he does his damage.”

This is perhaps why Hamilton sometimes does not excel at circuits such as Austria’s Red Bull Ring, or Suzuka, which have a more classical flow and feature corners of longer duration. He is still very fast at these places, but perhaps not in the standout way seen at other circuits, such as the Hungaroring.

“Even though Austria has some short-ish corners, they’re not ‘rotational’ corners – the Turn 3 hairpin just goes on for miles!” Wilson

explains. “Turn 2 is uphill and over a crest, so getting too much rotation in a car doesn’t help.

“You’re line-locked at Austria, so therefore there will be certain aspects where you can’t pull out too much of an advantage. It’s more that these circuits bring Hamilton back towards everyone else, rather than highlighting any particular weakness he has.”

We have become accustomed to seeing still shots and slow-motion replays of Hamilton locking wheels under braking, but still able to keep those wheels slowly rotating and thus achieve the traction needed to avoid overshooting corners.

Hamilton often talks about feeling that he has an edge over all rivals under braking, and it’s this aspect of his driving that stands out most to Chandhok.

“Anthony Hamilton said to me way back in 2007 that ever since Lewis was a kid in karts he focused on being the best on the brakes,” says Chandhok, who feels Hamilton is now a driver devoid of weaknesses.

“And he is just tremendous on the brakes. He’s got great feel – he hits the brake pedal bloody hard, but doesn’t [often] lock up, which is why he’s able to make overtaking manoeuvres stick.

“The feel comes from having the ability to know when you need to bleed off the pedal and balancing that with the steering. This was particularly tricky when F1 switched from Bridgestone to Pirelli tyres, and the fact Lewis has been able to be strong on Pirelli too has been one of his big strengths.

“The other thing you notice is he’s comfortable with the rear of the car bouncing around. He’s tremendous at Montreal because the rear of the car is always unstable, but he’s comfortable enough to put his right foot down and play with the throttle.

“The modern tracks have more short, sharp turns and less of the fast-flowing corners of Silverstone or Spa or Monza, so when you go to a place like Abu Dhabi – sector three around the hotel – he’s brilliant; the middle sector at Budapest he’s happy; but also the first sector at Austin – a flowing section of corners where line and placement is critical.”

Sometimes it seems the only thing that can defeat Lewis Hamilton is Lewis Hamilton. He is not alone in this, but it’s apparent that he finds the current era of high-degradation tyre management driving in F1 enormously frustrating, and he has to work hard to stop this getting the better of him.

“In this current era of F1, they’re not driving to the limit, and I think sometimes being forced to drive under the potential of his own ability, and of the car’s ability, frustrates him,” Chandhok adds. “Sometimes that frustration boils over.”

SBL01HMLAT



There was once a time when it seemed Sebastian Vettel could probably walk on water had he felt inclined to do so. He practically did just that to score his first grand prix victory for Toro Rosso in the sodden 2008 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Despite going on to achieve extraordinary success with Red Bull, via the sort of symbiotic designer/driver relationship with Adrian Newey that Jim Clark enjoyed with Colin Chapman at Lotus, Vettel's abilities are not usually revered in the way Clark's were.

"I am a bit of a Vettel fan, but I seem to be in a minority," reckons Chandhok. "There don't seem to be as many absolute Vettel admirers in the paddock as you would imagine for a four-time world champion.

"I don't know why, because his junior formula record was fantastic, and that win for Toro Rosso – it was just incredible!

"If you look at 2011-13, the number of races he won versus Mark Webber [29 to three], and the points Seb scored against Mark, it's impressive. And Mark's not a tugger..."

Vettel is perceived by some as a driver who 'lucked in' to Red Bull's best seasons from a technical standpoint, but that analysis overlooks the fact his driving skill was key to making those underpowered Red Bulls work to such devastating effect.

"Vettel's driving is almost entirely about the exit," explains Wilson. "He's all sharp angles and very rapid rotations in the corners – 'point and squirt', as it's often called in racing parlance.

"This worked brilliantly for him when F1 cars had double diffusers, and were using exhaust gases to enhance downforce via driver application of the throttle.

"The earlier he could get back on that throttle in a corner the better, and it allowed him to achieve a late, sharp turn, with stability. That seemed to be Vettel at his peak – the perfect driver for that car.

"Everything is about the exit for him. As long as he can achieve the rotation from the rear on corner entry, with some stability, he's a rocket ship.



XPB IMAGES

"This style relies a lot on the braking system, because that affects the way the car pivots, and the loss of double diffusers and exhaust-blown downforce has taken away some of that rear stability he needs.

"When he tries to be one of the late brakers it often goes a little bit awry. He does overshoot the odd corner. And I think he's probably still experimenting at finding his way into the corners, to be as good going in as he is coming out.

"He's at his best when he's got cornering challenges that are slow, which allow him to manipulate the car to achieve a good exit. He needs stability immediately past the point of rotation. When he gets a car that will deliver that he is very, very good."

Chandhok is also impressed by Vettel's ability to execute sharp diagonal lines when negotiating slow corners. "That's why the blown diffuser suited him to a tee – because he would brake bloody hard in a straight line but get the car to pivot," Chandhok explains.

Vettel was a master of pivoting the car in the double-diffuser era – this is him in 2012



“Vettel’s driving is almost entirely about the exit... He’s all sharp angles and very rapid rotations in the corners”

“If you watch his steering input at the last corner in Sepang, brake-brake-brake, and then woof! A very aggressive input of steering, then throttle. Mark struggled with that, but Vettel was able to get his brain to work counter-intuitively and boot the throttle to counter the oversteer.

“When the blown diffuser went away he struggled. He wasn’t so hot in the first part of 2013, and he had a massive wobble in ’14. He got beaten convincingly by Daniel Ricciardo.

“But the motivation must have been difficult for Vettel – pre-season was a disaster, the car wasn’t competitive, he knew he wasn’t going to fight for the world championship, and he was frustrated because the car wasn’t doing what he wanted it to do. He just wasn’t mentally up for the fight.

“I think history will judge Vettel after the Ferrari years. He’s been great so far, but you’re judging him against Kimi Raikkonen. Fernando Alonso blew Kimi apart. Vettel hasn’t. Is that because Kimi has got better? Or is Vettel not as good as Fernando? You can’t know.

“To be an all-time great, winning races consistently, or a world championship with more than one team, is very important. You look at Valentino Rossi in MotoGP, the fact that Fernando’s been a title contender with Renault, McLaren and Ferrari, the fact that Lewis has done it, Michael Schumacher, Juan Manuel Fangio and Alain Prost, too.

“Seb’s very intelligent. I think politically he’s very smart, he knows how to judge things. Whether he can do what Michael did at Ferrari is his ultimate test.”

THE THROTTLE JOCKEY

SEBASTIAN VETTEL



THE HUSTLER

FERNANDO ALONSO

Alonso is considered by many paddock insiders to be the absolute best driver on the grid, certainly the most complete – in the sense that he appears utterly in control of every aspect of his environment, whether that be inside the car or out of it. The double world champion hasn't enjoyed title success for a decade, and he last tasted race victory champagne in 2013, but, although his current competitive standing with McLaren-Honda is low, the driving skill that makes the Spaniard so respected is still very much on show.

"Alonso is a very, very fast racing driver, with a style that means he will go into a corner very fast and use a fairly abrupt turn on the steering that creates a bit of understeer, which slows the car down," Wilson explains.

"Then he will get onto the throttle as early as possible. That makes his corners go on a bit longer than necessary – he will still be turning

"The way Alonso pivots the car so aggressively around the outside front tyre means he can live easily with imperfections"

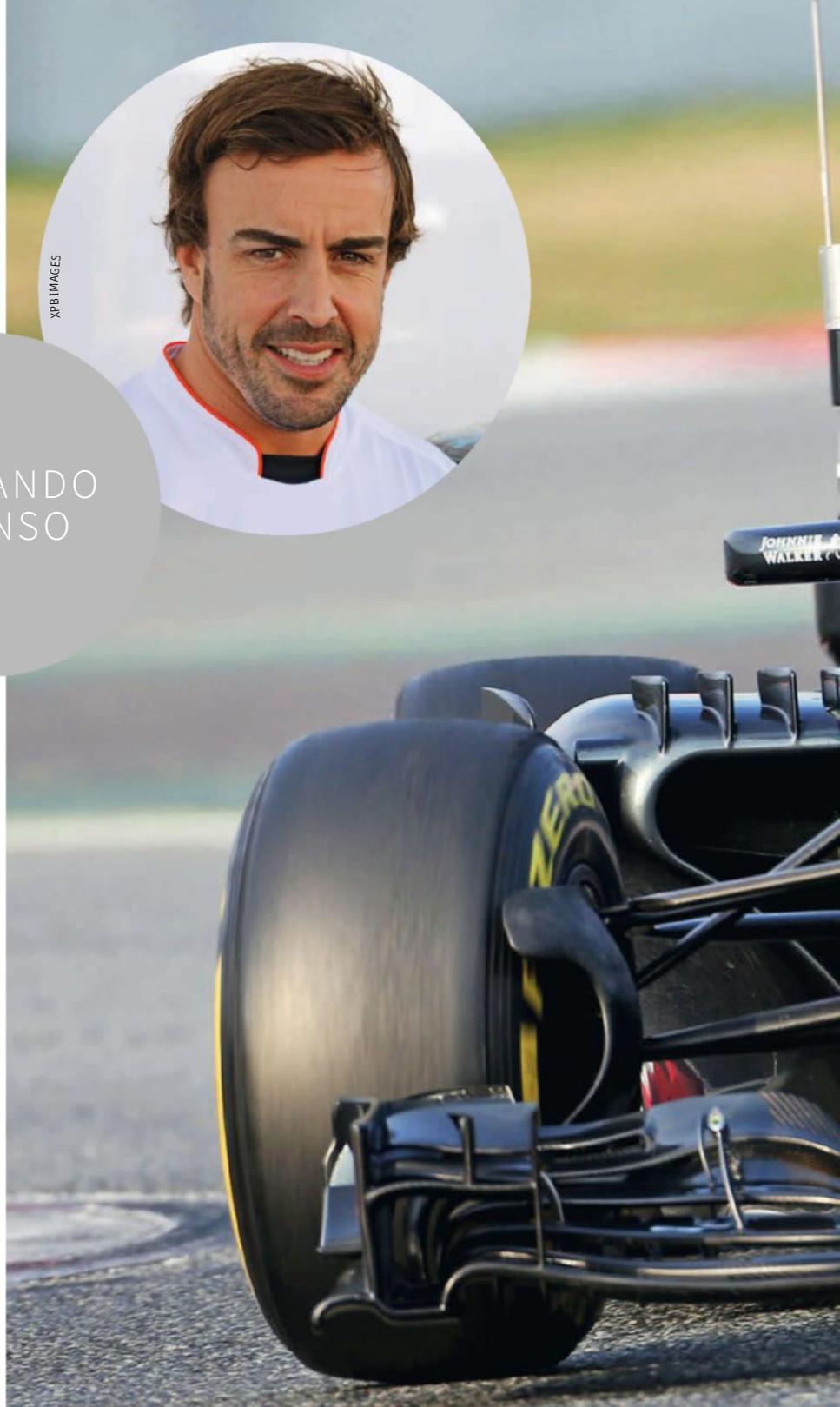
the steering wheel while on full throttle – but that does shift weight to the rear and give you traction.

"This style requires he work harder at the exit than some drivers, because it relies on his car control to sort out any problems – such as snaps of oversteer when the car finally straightens out."

The way Alonso pivots the car so aggressively around the outside front tyre means he can live easily with imperfections in set-up and handling imbalances. It asks a lot of his concentration and reflexes – Alonso is certainly a driver who lives on his wits – but he has such feel and capacity behind the wheel that he is rarely caught out.

"I'm not so sure that style allows one to develop a car," argues Wilson. "I don't think many racing cars have specifically gone forward with Alonso at the team, so whether one should follow a development path around him I'm not sure."

But engineers who've worked closely with Alonso say his capacity to delineate between his own performance and that of the car is second to none, and his ability to hustle an imperfect car around the circuit makes him formidable in races.



"The ultimate driver on a Sunday," reckons Chandhok. "His biggest strength is his Schumacher-esque ability to reel out lap after lap after lap after lap at the absolute limit.

"Michael set the gold standard for that in the mid-'90s, the team could put him on different strategies and he had the ability to drive to that strategy and make it work for him.

"I look back to the San Marino Grand Prix in 2005, when Michael had Fernando under pressure the whole time. A lesser driver would have buckled under pressure. Mark Webber told me he thought Alonso is even a step up on Michael.

"What's amazing with Fernando is that he's had so many knocks in his career, going to teams where the car hasn't performed the way he expected, but he still has this tremendous motivation, and ability to dig deep and drag a result out."

Chandhok feels Alonso is an impressively adaptable driver, shown by the way he successfully transitioned from Michelin to Bridgestone tyres "overnight" between the 2006 and '07 seasons, adjusting his rates of steering input to compensate for the changes in construction.

Alonso's cornering style enables him to shift weight to the rear of the car on the exit, helping traction



XPBIMAGES

He is also impressed by Alonso's racing brain, and his ability to make progress in the early stages of a grand prix.

"Fernando has never had great qualifying results, he doesn't have a whole load of pole positions, he's never had a car capable of putting him on the front row very often, but if you look at where he's started and where he's been at the end of lap two, nearly always he's up," Chandhok argues.

"He's got this fantastic ability to place the car in a way that he's always gaining positions, and that has a huge knock-on effect for the rest of the afternoon.

"He's very cerebral. I remember talking to an engineer who worked with him at Renault, and during a pre-season test at Barcelona Fernando came into the pitlane and was already on the radio saying, 'OK, we should move the weight distribution this amount, we should do this with the electronics, we should do this with the engine maps'.

"Between hitting the pitlane speed limiter and turning the car into the garage he'd already reeled off five different set-up changes he thought they should do!

"I also heard a story from Fuji 2008, when he went back to Renault and won. During the race he was asking about the strategies of Robert Kubica and all the other drivers, trying to work out what everyone else was doing. To have that amount of spare capacity is just tremendous."

It seems extraordinary that such a talent should only have two world titles to his name, the last of those won 10 years ago. But Chandhok argues that Alonso bears some responsibility for failing to get himself into the right team at the right time often enough.

"Part of being a complete Formula 1 driver is being able to read the paddock and choose where to be at the right time," he explains. "You could argue Fernando has missed having the car his ability deserves for the last 10 years, really since 2007.

"Prost left Renault to go to McLaren when McLaren was on the up, he took a sabbatical as a gamble knowing he could get to Williams and win another championship in '93.

"Sometimes it's down to luck, but for a driver of Fernando's ability you can dictate a lot more. He's 11 points away from being a five-time world champion – that says it all really."

SEEKING CONSISTENCY

THE TRAVAILS OF GROSJEAN

WHEN ALL IS RIGHT with his world, Romain Grosjean is capable of being a stunningly fast grand prix driver. Just recall the last part of his 2013 season with Lotus if you want proof.

He has had to fight hard to rebuild his reputation – twice – after getting spat out by Renault following a troubled rookie half-season in 2009, and then labelled a ‘nutcase’ for a sequence of first-lap incidents when he came back to the grid in ‘12.

Now established as a proper professional, he is yearning to make that final leap into a top drive. But he has yet to find the consistency that would make him a sure-fire bet for a leading team.

When he is good, he is usually very good, but when he is not he is anonymous. He seems to be a driver with a highly attacking style that demands an inordinate amount from the car, which can make it tricky for the engineering team to give him a consistent balance.

Autosport’s technical consultant Gary Anderson often talks of the need to sacrifice peak downforce on a car for the sake of usable downforce, because the driver will get more out of a car that way.

Grosjean seems to be the driving equivalent of

a peak-downforce car. In the perfect circumstances he will be outstanding, but too often he finds himself unable to work within the boundaries of possibility.

“He does ask a lot of the brakes, but he also relies a lot on trying to out-corner other people,” is Wilson’s assessment. “He’s regularly on the edge and sometimes a bit over it in the high-speed corners. He’s very brave, but always on the ragged edge of what’s physically possible. He’s one of those ‘flat-out’

“He’s very brave, but always on the edge of what’s possible”

drivers, which means it’s difficult for him to be consistent.”

He’s also very emotional in the car, as evidenced by his portfolio of fruity radio communications with the teams he’s raced for. Not everyone at Lotus felt this was the most sensible way to work, although you can believe Grosjean when he says he’s trying to be productive.

Grosjean argues it’s an important mechanism for letting off steam, and

communicating effectively what he feels is wrong with the car. But that leaves serious question marks concerning his ability to remain calm and make crucial decisions with clarity while under stress.

“Grosjean is obviously very quick, but he does lose his rag when things start to go wrong,” reckons Chandhok. “The red mist comes down and things tend to spiral quite quickly downhill for him. He is an emotional guy, where perhaps you need a slightly more pragmatic approach.

“Until I went to sportscars I was very sensitive in needing a car that was good on the brakes. If I didn’t have confidence on the brakes, I couldn’t attack the entry of the corner, and I think Grosjean’s the same.

“I remember we were racing in GP2 at Silverstone in 2008. He was running third, and I was coming up from behind.

“The tyres were really marginal that day. It was a hot day, and all of us were hitting the cliff. But when he hit the cliff he just started locking up everywhere.

“It was tough for all of us, but when it started to go, he just fell apart. That was a while ago now, but I feel sometimes that hasn’t gone away from him.”



DUNBAR/LAT

Daniel Ricciardo’s stock has risen substantially in Formula 1’s V6 hybrid era. Opportunistically winning three races amid the Mercedes dominance in 2014, and vanquishing quadruple world champion Vettel at Red Bull, announced Ricciardo as a driver capable of joining the true elite.

He has not yet found himself in a car capable of challenging for a world championship, but as a driver he has displayed all the hallmarks of a potential champion – blinding qualifying speed, superb racecraft and imperviousness to pressure.

He’s also relaxed and that wins him friends off the circuit, and makes him easy to work with. He’s arguably been the standout driver on the grid in 2016, with consistently excellent race weekend performances.

“Ricciardo is similar to [1970 F1 world champion] Jochen Rindt in that he can hold a four-wheel drift and still keep going forward,” says Wilson. “He is very comfortable with the car moving around underneath him. He drives fractionally long corners, but can carry massively high speed and still maintain forward momentum in a drift. He’s wonderfully gifted – just an extraordinarily fast racing driver.”

On track, Ricciardo looks like a blend of Raikkonen and Vettel in many respects. He carries a lot of momentum, in the Raikkonen mould, and prides himself on his ability in the high-speed stuff, but



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DANIEL RICCIARDO

THE DRIFT KING



Ricciardo knows how to get the most out of fragile Pirellis

DUNBAR/LAT

he's also very adept on circuits with lots of short, sharp corners – like Monaco or Singapore – thanks to his love of 'dangerous' street circuits.

He's also very disciplined in his technique, careful not to demand more of the Pirelli tyres than they are willing to offer.

"I think Dan's big strength is qualifying, really," says Chandhok. "He seems to have a great feel for how to prepare the tyres on the out-lap, how to get them in the window, how to get the right feeling that he needs from the front tyre to be able to lean on it. That is something that is very tricky in this Pirelli era, and I think he has done really well to understand how to do that.

"He's got great racecraft. I think he's a bit like Lewis in that he's got good feel and is very confident on the brakes. He's comfortable with

"Ricciardo is similar to Jochen Rindt in that he can hold a four-wheel drift and still keep going forward"

the rear of the car dancing around, and he very rarely seems to make mistakes. He's very good on street tracks too.

"Style-wise, he's a bit like Lewis, but I think when it comes to racing he reminds me a little bit of Fernando – very good at staying out of trouble, picking his place on the opening lap, picking his moments, picking his battles. I think he's very smart that way.

"He doesn't get flustered, and I think he's quite adaptable, so he's a very, very fast, well rounded driver. And he does all of it with a smile on his face, which is great. He's so popular in the team. They love him.

"He doesn't seem to be fazed by pressure, so if he gets the opportunity with a car that's capable of winning a world championship, that's a really important quality to have."

THE SCIENTIST

NICO
ROSBERG



Formula 1's current championship leader is often portrayed as the Alain Prost to Hamilton's Ayrton Senna in the land of lazy stereotyping, principally because Hamilton is known to be such an obsessive fan of Senna.

In terms of a story arc, Rosberg is actually closer to Senna – in the '80s sense of being the pretender to Hamilton's throne, striving to overturn F1's established hierarchy. But in the technical sense, he is very much like Prost – hard-working, diligent, a clever, thinking-man's driver.

He is meticulous in his approach, like a scientist conducting an experiment – research, hypothesis, test, conclusion, and begin again. He is a driving jigsaw, studiously put together piece by piece. Rosberg is devastatingly effective when all those pieces are in the right place, but perhaps lacks the creative flair of a fresh painting on a blank canvas.

Witness his occasional ham-fisted overtaking attempts. He is a driver of the established sciences, not the black arts.

"Rosberg is very good at introducing the car to every input, progressive with his use of the brakes, steering and throttle," says Wilson. "He's a little bit like Mika Hakkinen, in terms of taking a very traditional line around the circuit, very technical.

"He craves a stable car, but most drivers want that. Rosberg is very clever, and a hugely hard worker at getting the best from himself. Unlike Hamilton, he sometimes insists on using every available centimetre of the track, which is not always to Rosberg's advantage, because it can sometimes be a bit bumpy on the inside and a bit dusty on the outside."

This is evident if you watch the two Mercedes drivers through the final chicane at Montreal, or the first chicane at Monza. Rosberg will straightline those cornering challenges as far as possible, utilising the Mercedes' superior ride quality over the bumps and greedily asking as much of the car as it can take, while Hamilton will typically leave more margin, making his turns on a slightly different trajectory.

"He seems less comfortable with the rear of the car dancing around than Lewis," says Chandhok. "He certainly seems to have a smoother style in terms of rate of steering inputs than Fernando or Lewis.

"He does seem to use more steering lock than Lewis, because he follows the front of the car. Lewis tends to have the rear doing a bit of the steering for him. Nico's is a more understeery sort of style, which is probably going to put less energy into the rear tyres and is maybe a slightly better situation in terms of managing tyres in races.

"He's not quite as silky smooth as Jenson, but in the Vettel category of being in-between. Nico is a bit like Prost, in that he uses all of the tools in terms of the engineering side. He spends a lot of time trying to understand how to optimise the brake-by-wire system, how to optimise the electronics on the differential, how



Rosberg is less comfortable with the rear moving around than Lewis

HONE/LAT

“He is meticulous in his approach, like a scientist conducting an experiment – research, hypothesis, test, conclusion”

to optimise the engine strategies.

"He's one of these drivers who recognises that if you know how to use all of those tools effectively, it can help you. I watched his Bahrain qualifying lap, and was amazed at how much he changes brake balance across the lap."

Rosberg's qualifying record against Hamilton in the current V6 era is near enough a match, showing that over a single lap he can be up there with the very best when he gets everything right.

What he seems to lack is an ability to turn things around in adversity, as well as finer judgment in wheel-to-wheel racing, or when the car is not at its best. He doesn't often deal with the stress of added complications, and tends to overdrive in those situations, but he is adept at managing technical problems on the car, and is hard to beat if he enjoys an untroubled weekend.

"Nico's biggest issue is he's up against Lewis Hamilton, who is just a really hard bloke to beat!" Chandhok adds. "To beat Lewis you have to be so on top of your game in every part of the weekend – practice, qualifying, start, strategy, racecraft. Nico has absolutely done that, but there have been more weekends where Lewis has done it, which is why Lewis has won the last two world championships."

LEWIS HAMILTON Hamilton uses as little of the kerb as possible, relying more on oversteer to help the rear turn the car



NICO ROSBERG Rosberg uses more of the kerb, relying on the Mercedes to ride the bumps, and stressing the rear tyres less



SEQUENCES: TEE/LAT

TEE/LAT



HONE/LAT

Kimi Raikkonen is revered as arguably the most naturally talented driver of his generation. Before Max Verstappen probably even knew he wanted to be a racing driver, here is a guy who graduated to F1 after just one season of car racing – in Formula Renault UK!

That a driver of his obvious ability has only won a single world championship title – in fortuitous circumstances at the 2007 season finale – seems extraordinary, but it is often the way that gifted sportsmen fail to achieve the success their skill merits.

Debate rages over whether age and hard living have finally caught up with Raikkonen, dulling the finer points of his driving. But he feels he is driving as well as ever, and clearly still well enough to earn gainful employment with one of F1's top teams, at the ripe old age of 37.

"Kimi Raikkonen's gift is his feel for the track surface, and his rate of throttle application in relation to when the weight is coming down onto the driving wheels," says Wilson, who sat alongside the Finn in the earlier days of his career.

"He's a driver that almost didn't need traction control during the traction control era – such is his sensitivity on the throttle.

"He's always so beautifully on the cusp of traction with his throttle work, and that gift still manifests in the way he looks after tyres now. He's suffered a couple of low-speed spins in the V6 turbo era that counteract that impression, but on each occasion an unusual



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spike in boost pressure has caught him out."

Raikkonen has a hypersensitivity to car and tyre behaviour that makes him a great asset to engineering teams, if you can work with his particular brand of minimalist communication. But he can find himself limited sometimes by particular handling characteristics.

"Kimi needs a car that follows its nose, no understeer," Wilson adds. "Nigel Mansell was the same. If Kimi gets that he will be very, very fast. Once the car is there, he will deal with the rest.

"There is a certain similarity to Button in terms of a classical style, but I would give Raikkonen the edge on pure speed."

Raikkonen, here in 2005, was at his peak with McLaren during the middle of the last decade

THE SPEED DEMON

KIMI
RAIKKONEN



“His gift is his feel for the track surface, and his rate of throttle application in relation to when the weight is coming down onto the driving wheels”

Raikkonen possesses excellent judgment at high speed. If you watch him in action at somewhere like Stowe, at Silverstone, he visibly carries more entry speed than most other drivers. But as a result of this he's also relying heavily on the car supporting him, which often it doesn't do, and on the Pirelli tyres particularly, which tend to punish overly committed drivers with understeer.

He's certainly a ballsy driver. Even now he is one of the bravest out there. McLaren used to have to stop him looking at the lap times of other drivers in qualifying, because he would simply try to extract more than was physically possible from the car.

Raikkonen suffers if the car is not well balanced, because, at the speeds he wants to carry, his margin for error is much narrower than other drivers'. If the car goes slightly off course, or does something he doesn't expect, he often pays a higher price.

“I think Kimi's peak was 2004, '05, '06,” reckons Chandhok. “Some of the qualifying laps still make the hairs stand up when you watch. His one-lap ability at that period was right up there with the best qualifiers in F1, probably *the* best qualifier at the time.

“I think Kimi post-2009 doesn't have that same devastating one-lap speed. I do think having two years out took that little bit of edge off his ultimate pace. That ability to turn a lap is still there, but it's just not there every time like it used to be.

“Where Kimi 2.0 is now very good is in the races. He has more ability to think about strategy and drive to a strategy, and he's probably one of the best at tyre management. In the current Pirelli era, that's a big arrow to have in your bag.

“Kimi drives straight lines. If you look at his style, it's quite straight – 'brake, one input, off'. And he doesn't overload the tyre. That really helps him in the races. Look at Barcelona this year: he sat in Verstappen's dirty air on a two-stopper – that's tough to do.”

THE CLASSICIST

JENSON
BUTTON



TEELAT

Button is a world champion, and winner of 15 grands prix in a career that has lasted 17 unbroken seasons. His sheer longevity is testament to his ability, but he is rarely talked about in the same breath as the legendary greats of Formula 1 history. Few consider him one of the very best on the current grid.

Perhaps that's because his skills are particular and unassuming. He is not earth-shatteringly fast over a single lap, but he is a very effective and consistent racing driver. He rarely makes mistakes, has brilliant feel in mixed conditions, and has compared favourably as team-mate to two of modern F1's greatest drivers – Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso.

"Button is a driver built on classic lines and momentum," explains Wilson. "He makes the perfect geometric corner. So he is a completely classic driver in almost every sense, with also a great feel for the track surface and great rates of input – similar to Hamilton in that respect.

"That means he's not likely to put too many energy spikes into a car. And therefore, despite his long and geometrically ideal lines, he's still quite nice to the tyres, because his driving style doesn't tend to make them slip and slide. He's an elegant and traditional driver."

Button appears to be quite minimalist in his inputs, and often gets called a 'smooth' driver, but, rather like a duck paddling in a pond, Button looks serene on the surface of the cockpit while underneath

"He's very Prost-like – a silky smooth, minimalist sort of driving style, brilliant in the wet, great feel in changeable conditions"

his feet are furiously flapping at the pedals. This is a style he adopted in his early karting days, and it has remained throughout his career.

Engineers at McLaren recall steering data traces of Hamilton and Button during their years together. Hamilton's would always show furious spikes of correction at the wheel, while Button's would map gentle sine waves through the same lap.

"Button often gets compared to Alain Prost, but Prost was different," argues Wilson. "Prost would ask for a car with built in understeer and was able to rotate that car with that understeer. The understeer would still equal traction, so he'd achieve the rotation through the corner with his hands and feet, and then still have brilliant traction for the exit. Keke Rosberg couldn't drive that McLaren.

"Button is comfortable with understeer, his demeanour is similar to Prost's in looking relatively unspectacular but still being fast, but Prost used understeer to an art form.

DREAM TEAM? HULKENBERG AND PEREZ

Button always looks serene in the cockpit



“Button is a driver who needs the car to be absolutely right to be fast. He will be as fast as the car, but no more.”

Chandhok believes Button is an underrated world champion, in the mould of Damon Hill, but feels his minimalist steering style sometimes holds him back in qualifying.

“He’s very Prost-like – a silky smooth, minimalist sort of driving style, brilliant in the wet, great feel in changeable conditions, but what’s sometimes tricky for him is to switch the tyres on in qualifying,” Chandhok explains.

“Sometimes you have to be aggressive to switch the front tyres on, and on occasions where it’s difficult to get the tyres into the window for that one lap in qualifying, he seems to struggle more than others because of his particular style. He’s more gentle with the wheel, and therefore he puts less energy into the tyre.

“He also seems more sensitive to a car that’s not quite right. He’s not able to hustle a lap out of it like Fernando, or Schumacher, or Senna, or Lewis. That [lack of] adaptability is sometimes a bit of a weakness with Jenson.

“But he’s a tremendous team player, the engineers like working with him, and when the car’s in the right window for him... look at Spa 2012, I still think that’s one of the all-time greatest performances by a driver on a single weekend. Utterly, utterly dominant.”

HERE IS A FINE EXAMPLE of two drivers with different skill sets coming together productively to push their whole team forward, and improve each other’s driving at the same time.

“Nico Hulkenberg is a fantastic natural driver, and has a great feel for mixed conditions – which is part of being a natural driver,” explains Wilson.

“He can be quite aggressive, and has slightly harsh inputs. Hulkenberg is one of the outstanding natural drivers, with wonderful car control.

“If we still lived in the times of treaded tyres and low downforce, he’d be winning races constantly. He’d be almost unbeatable.

“Formula 1 generally restricts that sort of expression now, but if you want to see that, look for Hulkenberg in mixed conditions.

“By contrast, Sergio Perez has an elegance with his driving inputs that is great for protecting the tyres, while still lapping quickly.”

Perez also possesses an excellent sensitivity on the throttle, which helps enormously in protecting the rears from the immense torque of the V6 turbo engines.

He seems to have built in more qualifying speed from being paired with Hulkenberg at Force India since the beginning of 2014 – there is often little

to choose between them on most Saturday afternoons unless one or the other is derailed by a problem or major error.

However, Hulkenberg seems to have become better at managing the sensitive Pirelli tyres, from being able to see in detail some of what Perez does.

But it also looks as though instinctively he doesn’t like to drive that way. The way he reversed through the top order after qualifying superbly in mixed conditions in Austria this year highlights how he can

“There is often little to separate Nico and Sergio in qualifying”

sometimes lose his discipline in the race, chewing through tyres like pieces of gum.

Perez seems more comfortable executing the race according to his car’s limitations, without over-reaching and asking more from the car than it’s prepared to give.

“Perez was always good at tyre management,” reckons Chandhok, who coached Perez in British F3 for T-Sport, and raced against him in GP2 in 2009.

“He’s fast – he can turn a quick lap, but I think

he’s benefited a lot from where F1 has gone. If you look at his best results, even in the Sauber days, they all came in races where you had to manage tyres [excessively].

“One thing Checo is good at is street circuits. He’s good at Baku, he’s good in Canada, he’s good in Monaco. But his strength is clearly on Sundays. He doesn’t get very flustered either – he’s quite laid back, so kind of lets the races come to him.”

Chandhok agrees that Hulkenberg has often been frustrated by the current tyre formula in F1, reckoning him to be, along with Hamilton, the standout driver he shared a circuit with in the junior formulas.

“I think if we were still on Bridgestones we would have seen Hulkenberg outperform Perez,” Chandhok says. “He’s incredibly fast!

“I think that Hulkenberg is a little bit frustrated with how his career’s panned out. I think he’s also a little frustrated with the current era of Formula 1, where you’re having to under-drive, and he’s not able to lean on it.

“I saw him at Le Mans [in 2015], and we were chatting before the race. He loved the fact that he could lean on the car and just rag it! And he was brilliant. He’s not lost any of his ability.”



Max Verstappen looks to be *the* coming force in Formula 1. Grand prix racing's youngest ever winner has already made a massive impact on F1 during a career that isn't yet two full seasons old.

He has won legions of fans with his daring overtaking moves, and the relentless never-say-die attitude with which he approaches his racing.

He has also courted controversy with his ruthless and aggressive nature in wheel-to-wheel battle, and he has caused F1's governors to change rules in a bid to prevent young drivers reaching single-seater racing's pinnacle too soon, and stop them defending positions overzealously when they get there.

Verstappen's consistently impressive displays behind the wheel of a Formula 1 car have made him one of the hottest properties on the grid in a very short time, forcing Red Bull to countenance the early demotion of Daniil Kvyat, and a renewal of Verstappen's contract on terms that would ward off rival suitors.

Reigning world champion Lewis Hamilton has already called Verstappen a "force to be reckoned with", and he certainly looks that way when you watch him at work up close.

"He is terrific at even the slightest angle braking up towards an apex in a corner, and not locking his front wheels," says Wilson. "He's got just exactly the right feel for the correct rate of brake pressure decrease. This helps him negotiate corners on diagonal lines, getting the rotation over and done with and therefore good traction coming out."

This talent shows up particularly well in the slow-speed corners, where Verstappen is arguably at least a match for anyone on the grid. His style also helps him reduce duration of stress on the rubber, which makes him excellent at tyre management.

There are two brilliant examples of this: his victory in May's Spanish Grand Prix, where he held off Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen by completing a mammoth 32-lap stint on one set of tyres, and June's race in Austria, where he beat Raikkonen to second by doing 56 laps on a single set.

"And if you're on the hunt for a Verstappen mistake, that's almost a highlight if he makes one," Wilson adds. "You never think, 'Oh, he got that lap together', that's just the norm for him already."

Chandhok reckons that Verstappen's style of driving in diagonal



lines is among the most extreme he's seen in F1.

"His biggest strength is braking, entry to the slow-speed, and entry to any corner," says Chandhok, who describes Verstappen as a "natural phenomenon". He does a lot of the steering on the brakes, and he gets the car to pivot before the apex. If you look at the angle of his car at the apex, he's often completed more of the corner on the way in, before he arrives there.

"I remember standing on the outside of Turn 4 at Barcelona in pre-season testing – it's a great place to watch – and you can see the back of his car is sort of out of line. He drives in rear first, steering the car on the brakes and then opening up the steering wheel, so the car is straight for when he comes to the traction zone. It's very much a karting style.

"You think he must be overloading the rear left tyre, but his tyre management is brilliant, so he's got the balance right. He doesn't have as much lock on at the apex and from mid-corner to exit, and therefore he's not loading the rear tyre as much when it comes to

Verstappen rotates the car early, allowing him to get on the power while also looking after the tyres



“He is terrific at even the slightest angle braking up towards an apex in a corner, and not locking his front wheels”

the acceleration zone. I think that's why he's so good when it comes to tyre management in the races.”

Chandhok is also impressed with the way Verstappen behaves off the track too. “The benefit of youth is that he's not afraid to go into wheel-to-wheel combat,” he adds. “His racecraft is very good. He pulls off overtaking moves where other people would never think about it. He's very exciting.

“The downside of youthful exuberance is you see accidents like in Monaco, and you see mistakes, but he's got tremendous ability and maturity to soak up the pressure. He's not afraid of tackling issues, and tackling other drivers and dealing with [their negative] comments.

“He's only 19, and you've got multiple world champions and much more experienced drivers slamming his driving style, and it's just water off a duck's back to him! He's dealt with all of that pressure amazingly well. Shoved into the limelight, shoved into a top team mid-season.

“It's going to be interesting to see his ultimate potential. People at Toro Rosso maintain that in many ways Carlos Sainz Jr made Max look good, because Max would often follow Carlos's lead in terms of set-up. Max would often start the weekend in his own direction, but then learn a lot from what Carlos was doing and follow his lead.

“I think that was something Max really benefited from. Whether with experience he'll be able to do all of that on his own without relying on someone else, I don't know. I'm sure right now he's relying on Daniel.”

He was to begin with, but since the Malaysian GP Verstappen has started to follow his own nose technically, with encouraging results.

“He's a very, very clever and gifted operator, a top quality performer who has shown extraordinary maturity,” says Wilson. “And I think he's only going to get better, from a pretty scarily high standard already.”✿

THE PRODIGY

MAX
VERSTAPPEN



XPB IMAGES

HONELAT



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Ogier considers 2017

WHEN THE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP lines up for the start of January's Monte Carlo Rally, the fastest rally car ever made will be sitting quietly under a dust sheet at the back of a factory in Hannover.

The ramifications of Volkswagen's decision to pull the Polo R WRC from the 2017 season will be felt for a long time, but the immediate focus has switched to the three highest profile casualties: Sebastien Ogier, Jari-Matti Latvala and Andreas Mikkelsen.

As the WRC descended on Wales for the final European round of the season last month, it was generally accepted that the driver market was settled. Esapekka Lappi would join Juho Hanninen at Toyota, while Ott Tanak and Elfyn Evans would be installed in M-Sport Ford Fiestas.

Hyundai, Citroen and Volkswagen were all confirmed. So the prospect of three drivers who had accumulated 20 wins from the last 25 WRC rounds landing on the market two days after Rally GB finished was not something anyone had considered.

M-Sport's Malcolm Wilson has been quick out of the blocks and has already started negotiations with Ogier. Wilson, who came

close to signing the Frenchman at the end of 2011, could not be clearer on his intentions.

He told Autosport: "I will do everything I can to make sure he doesn't get away this time. I'm convinced we have the car for him to take a fifth world championship."

A seat in M-Sport's 2017 Ford Fiesta RS WRC test car is being made ready. "That's something we've talked about," said Wilson, "but obviously Sebastien has still got a fair amount of talking to do with Volkswagen before he knows exactly where he's at and can come and drive our car."

One of the immediate stumbling blocks to an M-Sport deal would be Ogier's wage demands. While he and his Volkswagen team-mates will retain their salary next season – as well as their personal sponsorship deal from Red Bull – Wilson would still have to secure multi-million-pound funding before sticking #1 on the sides of his car.

There are two possibilities: further Ford funding or a transfer of Red Bull's Volkswagen sponsorship. Red Bull's head of international motorsport, Thomas Ueberall, said there were no immediate plans to back another WRC



MCKEIN/LAT

OPINION

THE COST OF VW QUITTING THE WRC

ALL THE BANNERS, THE funny hats, the T-shirts and the funky videos are done with. This time next week, Volkswagen will be preparing to leave the building.

On its departure, it will take with it some of the most creative and fan-friendly promotional material seen in the World Rally Championship.

Unfortunately, it will also remove the opportunity for a handful of young drivers to make the step up to the big time. It's the likes of Esapekka Lappi, Teemu Suninen and, looking further down the order, Brits such as Jon Armstrong or Osian Pryce that could still be paying for VW's departure in the future.

Despite Yves Matton's encouraging message of support for Craig Breen and Stephane Lefebvre, it would be naive to think the chance of immediate glory would be looked over for a punt on unproven talent.

With manufacturers allowed to enter three cars and the highest placed two scoring points in the makes' race, experience counts more than ever.

The WRC will miss Volkswagen badly next season, and I will miss the team on a personal level. Beyond the drivers and co-drivers, there are the engineers and the mechanics.

Some of the 200-strong squad will find their way back, but it won't be the same seeing them out of their VW blue.

DAVID EVANS

options after VW pullout

team following the loss of Volkswagen.

Sources insist that Toyota is the place for a big-bucks Ogier deal, but the Yaris WRC is set to be the weakest of the options in terms of machinery. Citroen is another obvious option, despite Ogier departing Paris under a cloud after he fell out with Sebastien Loeb at the end of 2011.

Team principal Yves Matton insists there are no lingering issues from what happened between Loeb and Ogier, saying: "None of the people who were working with Sebastien at the time that he left are still here, they have all gone, so this wouldn't be a problem."

Immediately after the VW announcement there were plenty within the sport who felt Ogier would be a shoo-in at Citroen, with Craig Breen and/or Stephane Lefebvre being sacrificed for what is on the face of it an obvious marriage of French world champion and French manufacturer.

Matton has, however, consistently underlined

his commitment to the three drivers he has already announced for next season: Kris Meeke, Breen and Lefebvre.

"I have not spoken with Sebastien," said Matton. "It's for him to decide what he wants to do; it's his decision to take about the future, but I want to make clear that there is no idea in this team to change the driver line-up."

When asked about the prospect, Citroen lead driver Meeke has said he would be happy to see Ogier alongside him.

Mikkelsen and Latvala will be left to pick up what's left by Ogier, with the Finn tipped to move to Tommi Makinen's Toyota squad.

Makinen has a car availability problem, with a third Yaris arriving in Corsica in April, but only for selected rounds thereafter – and Makinen insists Hanninen remains in a car on every event.

The full picture of who goes where will only become clear in time for FIA and Monte Carlo registrations in the middle of December.

DAVID EVANS

"I will do all I can to ensure he doesn't get away this time"

FORMULA 1

BOTTAS AND STROLL CONFIRMED AT WILLIAMS FOR '17

LAST WEEK WILLIAMS revealed one of Formula 1's worst-kept secrets: it will give 18-year-old Lance Stroll his F1 debut next season, alongside Valtteri Bottas.

It is a bold decision but one that makes sense and has been a long time in the making. Stroll (below, left) was signed as a development driver last November. It was decided around a month ago that he would get the race seat.

His performance in European F3 has been impressive, winning 14 out of 30 races on his way to the championship. As deputy team principal Claire Williams put it, he "annihilated" the opposition.

Positive feedback from Williams personnel, F3 team Prema and those who worked with him during his Daytona 24 Hours outing this year (where he finished fifth) provided further evidence to the F1 team of his talent. He has performed well in the simulator and in the six days he has had so far in a 2014-spec car.

Stroll is a remarkable character, too. He confidently addressed the team's staff last Thursday morning and then thoughtfully answered questions from the media. It was a slick performance.

The perception has been that his fashion billionaire father

Lawrence has bought him success. It's true he has been bought the opportunities, but he has delivered each time and has three single-seater titles to his name.

"Everyone has their own opinion and I can't change that," he said. "I come from money, I'm not going to deny that, but I believe I earned my shot in F1 because I won every championship that I've competed in in single-seaters.

"Now the FIA have put in the superlicence [criteria] for that reason, so people can't buy their way into F1; you have to prove yourself and win in junior categories."

Williams insists Stroll has been signed because of talent rather than financial considerations.

"Money doesn't drive performance – you either have the talent or you don't," she said. "Lance has proved he has talent. He has to do the job next year and he will do that."

While financial considerations may not have forced the decision, its undeniable they played a big part. The testing programme that has allowed him to clock up thousands of miles will make him one of the best-prepared rookies in close to a decade. And that won't have come cheap.

If he is as quick as the team hopes, Williams could be quids in – in more ways than one.

LAWRENCE BARRETTO



XPB IMAGES



Lopez heads WEC shake-up

Triple World Touring Car champion joins Toyota – and there will be changes at Porsche

T

THE ARRIVAL OF THREE-TIME WORLD TOURING Car champion Jose Maria Lopez at Toyota could be one of a raft of driver changes at the two manufacturers left in the LMP1 division of the World Endurance Championship next season. The recruitment of the Argentinian will be the only move at the Japanese marque, but there could be major changes at Porsche.

Lopez will contest the WEC with Toyota next year alongside his Formula E programme with the Citroen-supported DS Virgin squad on the French manufacturer's withdrawal from the WTCC at the end of 2016. The deal has been done, but the Toyota Motorsport squad is refusing to confirm Lopez's signing.

TMG technical director Pascal Vasselon would only say that Toyota had already assembled its six drivers for

2017 and that "maybe" there were changes to the line-up. It seems likely Lopez will replace 41-year-old Stephane Sarrazin, who is set to retain a role with the team if it opts to field three cars at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Lopez is believed to have been signed before Audi dropped its bombshell late last month that it would be withdrawing from the WEC at the end of this season. How an influx of drivers, some with ongoing contracts with a Volkswagen Group brand, into the marketplace will affect Porsche's selection of drivers for any vacancies is unclear.

Porsche LMP1 team principal Andreas Seidl insisted that 2015 Le Mans 24 Hours winners Nick Tandy and Earl Bamber, who raced in the GT Le Mans class of the IMSA SportsCar Championship this season, remain at the front of the queue. He said: "They are high up on our list; you can say they have the top spots."

Asked if there was more than one vacancy at Porsche next year, Seidl replied: "That is not a topic of discussion for the moment, but a huge part of our success has been the stability in our driver line-up. We will do the analysis at the end of the season and then decide."

The futures of Marc Lieb and Romain Dumas, who share the points-leading Porsche 919 Hybrid with Neel Jani, appear to be in question. Neither has been consistently at the same level as their Swiss co-driver or team-mates Mark Webber, Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley in 2016.

Seidl stressed there are no plans to run a third Porsche at Le Mans in 2017. "Our programme hasn't changed: we will run two cars for the same reasons as this year," he explained, before adding a caveat. "Of course there are discussions following Audi's announcement with Pierre Fillon and Gerard Neveu [who respectively run Le Mans and the WEC]."

Vasselon insisted that Toyota had yet to make its decision on a third car, before suggesting it would "be logical for Porsche and Toyota to race with three cars each now that Audi is going".

GARY WATKINS

XPB IMAGES

IN THE HEADLINES

ZANDER MOVES FROM AUDI TO SAUBER

Audi technical director Jorg Zander will rejoin the Sauber F1 team next year. Zander, who will take up the role of technical director, worked for the squad in its BMW-owned days as chief designer, and has also worked for Toyota, Williams and Brackley-based BAR/Honda/Brawn.

LIBERTY MEDIA COULD FACE PROBE

The planned purchase of Formula 1 by Liberty Media could face an investigation by Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA says it is "considering" whether the deal contravenes Britain's anti-competition laws.

HILDEBRAND LANDS CARPENTER SEAT

JR Hildebrand will take the Ed Carpenter Racing IndyCar seat vacated by Penske-bound Josef Newgarden in 2017. Hildebrand has not had a full-time seat since leaving Panther Racing after the 2013 Indianapolis 500, although he has raced at Indy for Carpenter for the past three years.

ULLRICH TO STEP DOWN AS AUDI BOSS

Long-time Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich will hand over duties to the manufacturer's DTM chief Dieter Gass at the end of this season. Ullrich will work side-by-side with Gass during 2017 before his retirement at the end of the year.

WEC WON'T AVOID FORMULA E CLASH

The World Endurance Championship will not change the date of its Nurburgring race next year to avert a clash with Formula E's New York event. Series boss Gerard Neveu had said he was willing to move the race from July 16, but the Nurburgring could not guarantee that July 23 would be available and the WEC does not hold races in the four weeks following June's Le Mans 24 Hours.

TEAM HARD TO RUN VW CC AGAIN

Team Hard will return to racing VW CCs in the British Touring Car Championship next season. After running the Toyota Avensis in 2016, it has bought the three ex-Team BMR and Team BKR cars, which Team Hard originally built and raced in '13. They will be upgraded to RML spec.

PEDROSA TO RETURN AT VALENCIA

Honda MotoGP rider Dani Pedrosa will return from injury in this weekend's Valencia finale after breaking his right collarbone in four places and fracturing his right fibula in a practice crash at Motegi on October 14.

STRAKKA SWITCHES TO BLANCPAIN

The British Strakka team will move from the World Endurance Championship to the Blancpain GT Series with McLaren next season. Strakka will field a minimum of four 650S GT3s in both the Endurance and Sprint segments of BGTS. The deal, which covers the 2017 and '18 seasons, will involve Strakka running McLaren's GT Academy drivers.



F1 PREVIEW

Brazilian Grand Prix

November 11-13



INTERLAGOS

LENGTH 2.677 miles **NUMBER OF LAPS** 71

2015 POLE POSITION Nico Rosberg 1m11.282s

POLE LAP RECORD Nico Rosberg 1m10.023s (2014)

RACE LAP RECORD Juan Pablo Montoya 1m11.473s (2004)



Tyre allocation



UK start times

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1

FRIDAY

FP1 1200 **FP2** 1600

SATURDAY

FP3 1300 **QUALIFYING** 1600

SUNDAY

RACE 1600

HIGHLIGHTS ON CHANNEL 4

QUALIFYING SATURDAY 2000 **RACE** SUNDAY 2200

Previous winners

2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2012	Jenson Button	McLaren
2011	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2010	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2009	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2008	Felipe Massa	Ferrari
2007	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari
2006	Felipe Massa	Ferrari

Themes to watch

ROSBERG'S TITLE BID

The drivers' championship will be Rosberg's if he wins the race. Even if he doesn't win, he will be champion if he outscores Hamilton by seven points.

BATTLE FOR FOURTH

Vettel, Raikkonen and Verstappen are all in the hunt for fourth in the points – with the trio covered by only 10 points heading into the final two races.

SAUBER'S POINT HUNT

Sauber desperately needs a point to get back into the top 10. After Ericsson finished 11th in the Mexican Grand Prix, can the improving squad finally score?

FEEDBACK

Attack on authority damages the sport



Whatever Sebastian Vettel thinks about the race stewards in Mexico, it is imperative in all sport that the primacy of the officials is maintained and respected. Look at the comparisons between Rugby Union and football to see what happens if you let the competitors gain the upper hand over the referee.

While many may believe Vettel's expletive-laden rant at Charlie Whiting to be amusing and a minor transgression, it is not – it is a direct attack on his authority and must be punished with a significant penalty to make it clear who is in charge, otherwise control and order in a highly charged and dangerous situation will be lost.

A one-race ban is the minimum that should be imposed on Vettel, otherwise authority will have been permanently undermined.

Ian Woodcock
Byemail

Shame on potty-mouth Vettel

Totally unnecessary language – I am obviously referring to Vettel's tirade in Mexico. I was absolutely appalled by his potty mouth. It is bad enough when he has to constantly whinge about the blue flags/slower drivers – blue flags do not mean move out of the way.

I am no angel, but feel there is a time and place for everything. Does Vettel not realise that F1 is a family sport, which attracts many young viewers who just wouldn't understand?

Bob Smith
Byemail

Who is Formula 1 run for?

In Formula 1, penalties are applied when drivers push each other to the edge of the course. The new F1 regulations for 2017 will make it harder for the following driver to challenge or overtake the leading driver. And the distribution of F1 revenues guarantees

Should Vettel face a proper punishment for his sweariest outburst?

a stratified field, winners and losers predetermined by financial support from FOM.

It is clear that whoever runs Formula 1 doesn't like wheel-to-wheel racing. Unfortunately, wheel-to-wheel racing is what the fans want. Kinda indicates who Formula 1 is run for.

Bruce Merchant
Carmel, California

A quick and simple solution

At all times a driver should stay within the limits of the track, with at least two wheels. The track limit is defined as the white line that is to be found on the edges of the grey matter we usually race on.

Compliance will be judged with the highly advanced monitoring system called the 'naked eye'. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a penalty: the next lap the driver takes a five-second penalty on his previous clean-lap pace, by slowing to a delta-pace, like during the virtual safety car.

I really believe we quickly need a simple and resolute solution like this. Foremost to keep our young viewers on track toward a basic understanding of our sport. In these times, fewer people will be willing to keep up with an immensely difficult and subjective rulebook, or wait for hours on a stewards' decision.

Peter Rozemeijer
Donderen, The Netherlands

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The stay-or-go gamble

Being able to read the driver market, therefore knowing when to sit tight or jump ship, is a key skill that F1 drivers must try to master

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

[@BenAndersonAuto](#)

STICK OR TWIST? THAT'S THE CONFOUNDING question perennially facing Formula 1 drivers when trying to read the driver market, and how their own futures might fit into that shifting landscape.

It's something akin to crossing the road backwards wearing a blindfold, while being chased by a rabid dog. Your life depends on making the right move, but it's a situation fraught with peril, about which you can never know the full picture.

"Part of being a complete Formula 1 driver is being able to pick the teams to race at, being able to read the paddock and choose where to be at the right time," says Channel 4 F1 analyst Karun Chandhok in this week's cover feature.

"Alain Prost left Renault to go to McLaren when McLaren was on the up; he took a sabbatical as a gamble knowing he could get to Williams and win another championship in 1993. Having that ability to read the paddock, and choose where you want to be at the right moments, is such a big part of the sport."

Even F1's top drivers struggle with this. Fernando Alonso is a double world champion, but hasn't won a title in 10 years since leaving Renault at the end of 2006. Since then he's usually battled the handicap of driving for teams not quite capable of a proper challenge.

Lewis Hamilton played a blinder, quitting McLaren four years after his first title to join Mercedes. Now he's a triple world champion and winner of 51 grands prix.

This all about having the foresight, judgement and opportunity to read a constantly evolving competitive picture, and somehow know what will make the most sense for your long-term career prospects.

Trouble is, there is almost no such thing as a nailed-on long-term prospect in Formula 1, such is its fluid nature. All you can do is play the probabilities.

This is even more difficult if you are one of F1's midfield hopefuls, desperate to work (or buy) your way to a top drive, lacking the clout of a world champion or multiple race winner, but believing you have the talent and potential to succeed.

Hot young properties come and go like the wind, so it is important to take chances when they come, or else you can quickly find yourself forgotten.

Take Nico Hulkenberg. Once feted as a future multiple world champion, he has spent his career flitting between midfield teams. He has finally been offered the chance to join a manufacturer outfit, and has grasped it with both hands. This is logical. Hulkenberg is 29, and there appears

little chance of him joining any of the big four (Mercedes, Ferrari, Red Bull, McLaren) any time soon.

Current Force India team-mate Sergio Perez has taken a different view, turning down the chance to go where Hulkenberg is headed for 2017. The 26-year-old Mexican has more time on his side, and has taken the short-term view that Force India is the place where he can achieve better results now. Should he continue to perform, the logic goes, opportunity will come knocking again.

Carlos Sainz Jr has taken a similar view, also turning down the chance to race for Renault, on a multi-year agreement, for a one-year extension at Toro Rosso and 12 months more to prove he belongs in Red Bull's A-team. But he is also aware that his stock may not be so high in a year's time. He's chosen to stick, and back his own ability to vanquish Daniil Kvyat and remain one of F1's hottest young pretenders.

But, let's face it, this is not clear-cut. Renault is going to finish ninth in the constructors' championship this year, and has a long way to go to get back to the front of the grid, with

no guarantees it will ever get there (or not pull out before it does). Romain Grosjean was so unconvinced that Renault would even complete its buyout of Lotus at the end of 2015 that he chose to jump ship to newcomer Haas, and focus on trying

to become Kimi Raikkonen's eventual successor at Ferrari.

A lot of drivers will have half an eye on that opportunity, as and when it presents itself. Valtteri Bottas (remaining with Williams for a further a season, alongside newcomer Lance Stroll) came close last year, and will probably fancy his chances again. As will Perez, Grosjean, and Sainz.

They all decided Renault wasn't for them right now. Kevin Magnussen held further talks with Haas recently (perhaps fancying his ultimate chances at Ferrari as well). But he says he wants to stay with Renault and fight for his future.

With talented rookie Esteban Ocon the favourite to succeed Hulkenberg at Force India, Magnussen is the next up-and-comer facing the tricky stick or twist conundrum – peering into his crystal ball trying to decide whether to stand by a team that has openly courted other drivers (and may still overlook his efforts and loyalty), or focus on joining a different outfit, with perhaps less potential, but maybe more desire to incorporate his talents.

If it were easy, Alonso would surely have got it right every time. 🍀

“Hamilton played a blinder moving from McLaren to Mercedes”

Perfect Porsche wins again

Porsche put away the manufacturers' championship, but Toyota's leading trio did enough to keep themselves in the drivers' title hunt

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

🐦 @gazzasportscars



Timo Bernhard, Mark Webber and Brendon Hartley dominated the Shanghai World Endurance Championship round to secure a second

consecutive manufacturers' crown for Porsche. Or at least they were in control of proceedings, but Toyota might have kept them honest on a day the Japanese marque ensured the drivers' title race goes down to the wire in Bahrain.

The 59.8-second margin by which Webber and his team-mates claimed a fourth victory of the season aboard their Porsche 919 Hybrid would have been much smaller had the best of the Toyota TS050 HYBRIDs not been hit by two punctures over the course of last Sunday's race. Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Stephane Sarrazin were still able to recover to second, which was enough to keep the drivers' title race alive, but they should have been closer. Much, much closer.

Kobayashi had taken the #6 Toyota into second in the third hour and Conway was half a minute behind when he came into the pits with a slow left-rear puncture shortly after the halfway mark. The delay dropped him over 90s behind the leading Porsche, but it wasn't quite the disaster that it might have appeared.

That was because the pitstop at this point effectively removed the need for a splash-and-dash at the end of the race. When the Brit came back in 17 laps later with a second puncture, it in effect put the car back on the same fuel schedule as its rivals and meant that it would after all need the late stop. That was the knife in the heart for any victory bid from Toyota.

Both Toyotas got away with staying on the same set of Michelins when they made their final stops with just over 20 minutes to go. The leading Porsche had

been given a new set of tyres and the 40-plus seconds lost would have given Toyota at least a sniff of victory in the dash to the flag.

Toyota wasn't sure it could have snatched a second victory in two races, however. Toyota Motorsport technical director Pascal Vasselon suggested that the 59s deficit at the end would have been somewhere in the region of 10s but for the tyre woes. "That's not an exact calculation," he stressed, "but we would have been much closer, that is sure. We would have been in the fight."

Porsche knew it would have had a battle on its hands at the end but for Toyota's tyre issues. "It could have been much hotter there at the end," reckoned Hartley, who pointed out that the #1 Porsche had a faultless run on Sunday. "If we talk about a perfect race in 2016, it's probably going to be Shanghai."

The only hitch along the way for the winners was the change of nose required after what Hartley described as a "football-sized" lump of spent rubber hit the front of the Porsche a handful of laps before he handed over to Bernhard.

Hartley had taken the lead from a fast-starting Sebastien Buemi in the #5 Toyota two thirds of the way around the opening lap. He was able to edge away, first from the Swiss and then Lucas di Grassi in the best of the Audis through his first stint.

The Kiwi finished his double with an 18s advantage over Neel Jani in the second Porsche, before Bernhard was able to pull away from the sister car, now with Marc Lieb at the wheel, almost as he pleased. A seven-second advantage at the start of the stint was up to 29s by the time Kobayashi made it up to second ahead of Lieb, who explained that he'd destroyed his front tyres in traffic at the beginning of the stint.

The #1 Porsche was definitely the fastest car in the opening exchanges around the 3.39-mile Shanghai International Circuit, but once again the track came to Toyota as the rubber



Porsche had the upper hand over Toyota in the opening stints, but inconsistency cost the #2 car

went down. The higher the grip level, the better it is for a car that lacks downforce in comparison to its rivals.

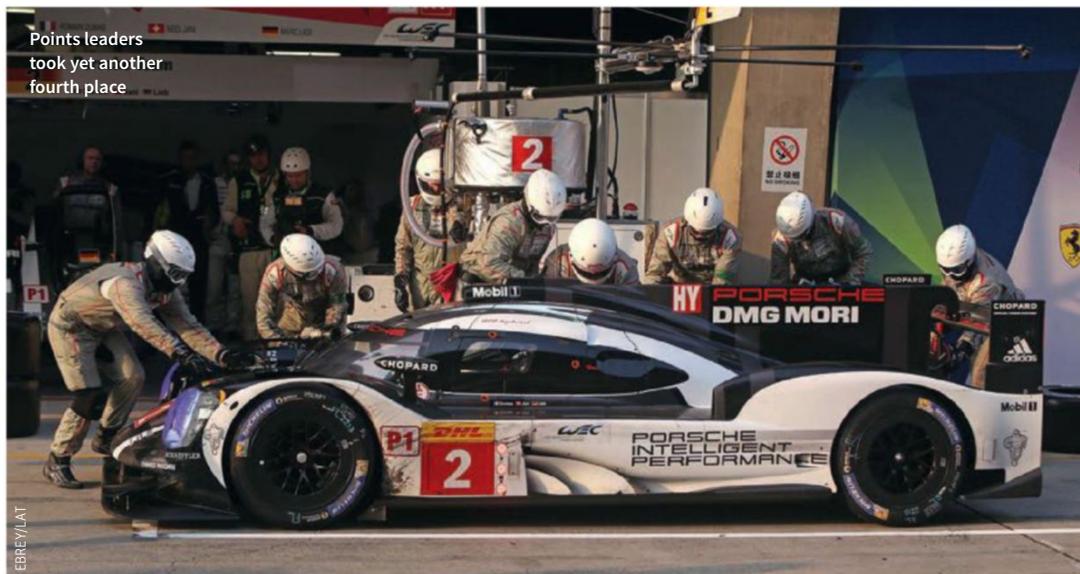
"As the grip comes up we are more competitive," explained Sarrazin, "but maybe it came a bit too late for us."

There wasn't really much to choose between the #1 Porsche and the #5 Toyota in terms of pace in the final three-and-a-bit hours.

The second Toyota, which Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima had qualified second just 0.060s behind pole winners Hartley and Webber, wasn't a match for the sister car come the race. It was able to fight with the #2 Porsche, which Romain Dumas shared with Jani and Lieb, but twice dropped behind during the pitstops over the second half of the race.

The TMG squad had a problem with a wheel gun and nut that it reckoned resulted in a total delay of 13s. Toyota's tactic of double-stinting tyres at the end, however, ensured that Buemi, Nakajima and Anthony Davidson leapfrogged ahead of the second Porsche to collect some silverware for the first time this season.

The second Porsche 919 finished fourth in the hands of Jani, Lieb and



Points leaders took yet another fourth place



Dumas after another of the inconsistent runs that has been the hallmark of their season since winning the Le Mans 24 Hours in June. This was, remarkably, the fourth time that they had taken the chequered flag in that position this campaign.

The car had qualified only sixth after Lieb, by his own admission, made two mistakes on his crucial lap, but Jani's pace in the opening two stints suggested that it would be a factor in the race this time. He moved up to third before the first round of pitstops began and was second when he climbed out of the car.

"It looked like we were back to the good old times at the beginning," explained the Swiss. "But then Marc really struggled and when I got back in the car we had a lack of pace. I needed to charge but the speed wouldn't come."

Audi had a disastrous race in its first WEC appearance since the announcement that it will be ending its involvement in the prototype ranks at the end of this season. The two R18 e-tron quattros finished fifth and sixth after troubled runs in which they fell out of contention early on. >>

FORD DOMINATES AGAIN

FORD PROVIDED A REPEAT PERFORMANCE OF its Fuji domination last month on the resumption of the WEC in China. One-two on the grid, its pair of GTs repeated the trick in a race in which they were barely challenged. The only difference was that the margin between winners Andy Priaulx and Harry Tincknell (below) and team-mates Stefan Mucke and Olivier Pla was much bigger this time around.

Priaulx and Tincknell claimed pole after going quicker than Mucke and Pla on their respective qualifying runs. Priaulx converted pole into the race lead, while Mucke fell behind a fast-starting Gianmaria Bruni in the #51 AF Corse Ferrari 488 GTE.

Pla briefly came back at Tincknell in the second hour, but a slow puncture for Mucke after he got back in the car meant there was no way back for the drivers of the #66 machine. The extra stop for the chasing Ford GT meant the final margin was 50s at the end of the race.

No-one else was in the game in GTE Pro in Shanghai, and all of Ford's rivals had received Balance of Performance breaks for the Chinese race. Ferrari, which was given slightly more power with changes to its engine boost curve and one litre more fuel capacity, couldn't match Ford in either qualifying or the race. Bruni and James Calado were best of the rest aboard the #51 Ferrari, but ultimately finished 23s behind the second Ford.

"It is obvious to see, we are not in the same league," was all AF Corse boss Amato Ferrari wanted to say after the race.

The Ferrari camp was not a happy place last

weekend. Rulemakers the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest applied rules governing the base barometric pressure against which the boost of the turbo cars is measured in a new way. It changed its figure day to day in line with the atmospheric conditions, and Ferrari cried foul.

It complained on qualifying day that a new adjustment had robbed it of horsepower. It should be pointed out that the only other turbo car in the field, the Ford, happened to put its cars one-two on the grid.

Aston Martin, which had been given a 0.2mm restrictor break, was again not on the pace, but fourth position for Marco Sorensen and Nicki Thiim kept them in the lead of the championship. Closest rivals Davide Rigon and Sam Bird ended up fifth in the second AF Ferrari after the car sustained a puncture on the first lap in an incident that resulted in the retirement of the Aston shared by Richie Stanaway and Darren Turner.

There was no stopping Aston Martin Racing trio Pedro Lamy, Paul Dalla Lana and Mathias Lauda from taking a fifth GTE Am victory of the season. They dominated, but the win wasn't enough to give them a realistic shot at the drivers' title going into the Bahrain finale.

The AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia of points leaders Emmanuel Collard, Francois Perrodo and Rui Aguas was classified second after initially finishing third on the road. Wolf Henzler had passed Aguas on the final lap aboard his Proton Porsche 911 RSR. A stewards' decision reversed the positions after a post-race inquiry.



G-DRIVE'S WIN, SIGNATECH'S TITLE

G-DRIVE RACING MADE IT TWO WINS FROM two starts, but it finally did what it has been threatening to do all year in Shanghai – dominate a race throughout. Alex Brundle, Roman Rusinov and Will Stevens finished a lap up on the opposition aboard their Jota-run ORECA-Nissan 05.

The mammoth winning margin had a lot to do with G-Drive finally stringing together a clean race. Not only did stand-in driver Stevens have to cede position to the RGR Sport Ligier at Fuji last month after a track-limits violation, but Jota's ORECA did the majority of the race with a broken right-rear damper.

The other factor was the failure of its rivals to string together a consistent race in China.

Jota didn't get it right in qualifying, however. Incorrect tyre pressures meant Brundle and Rusinov couldn't add to the team's tally of five poles this year, and they ended up in fourth place. The Brit was able to make it through into the lead during the opening stint, which gave a hint at what was to come.

The Extreme Speed Motorsports entry of Tom Blomqvist, Sean Gelael and Antonio Giovinazzi finished second. The Ligier-Nissan JSP2 was in the hunt until the fourth hour when Stevens (on new tyres) pulled a big gap on Gelael, who was struggling on old rubber, and effectively settled the matter.

An advantage of 90s turned into a full lap when the overall winner crossed the line between Stevens and Blomqvist.

The RGR Sport Ligier, which Filipe Albuquerque shared with Bruno Senna and Ricardo Gonzales, lost time when Senna became stuck behind Mikhail Aleshin's SMP Racing BRE during the opening stint. A drivethrough penalty for avoidable contact subsequently left them too much to do.

Signatech Alpine drivers Nicolas Lapierre, Gustavo Menezes and Stephane Richelmi came into this race with a 38-point advantage and looked like they might seal the title in style aboard their ORECA-Nissan. Their bid for victory unraveled because Menezes struggled on a set of the harder-compound Dunlops. The need to hand over to Richelmi early would mean an extra stop.

Lapierre shadowed Albuquerque through the final stint, safe in the knowledge that they had done enough to seal the title.

EBREV/LAT



Result kept leading Toyota trio (left) in the championship hunt



EBREV/LAT

“We weren't going to win, but we had the potential to finish high up on the podium”

Lucas di Grassi

Lucas di Grassi moved the #8 car that Oliver Jarvis and Loic Duval had qualified third into second position on lap four and was only six seconds behind at the first round of pitstops. At this point, it all started to go wrong for the Audi trio which still had title aspirations coming into the race.

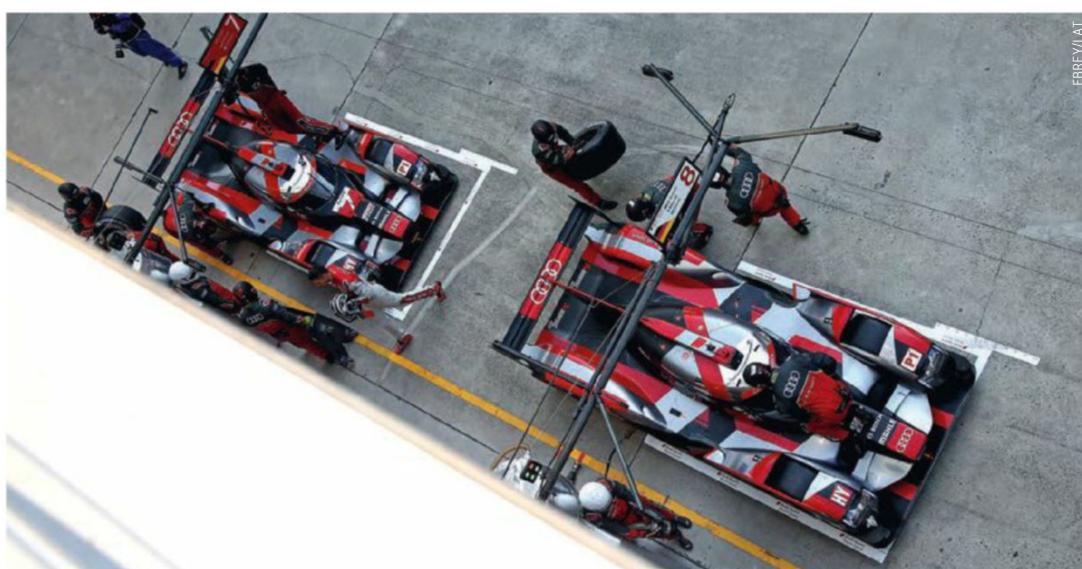
The Audi Sport Team Joest squad couldn't get the full load of diesel into the R18, which meant even though di Grassi continued in second he had to pit early for his next stop. There was an ongoing problem with the fuel rig, which meant further delays in the pits as the team struggled to fill the car. Only ahead of the final stop was the problem fixed.

“We weren't going to win, but we

had the potential to finish high up on the podium,” explained di Grassi. “Second was feasible, which would have meant we would still be in the fight for the championship.”

The second Audi wasn't on the pace of its sister car. Andre Lotterer struggled with inconsistent handling through his opening double stint, and then Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler endured similar problems over the rest of the race. Worse still, the car lost time in the pits after Jarvis and Treluyer came together in the fourth hour.

The Audi wasn't quite the competitive proposition it had been at every WEC race since Le Mans. The long straights of the Shanghai



International Circuit favoured its petrol-powered rivals that run in the eight-megajoule hybrid class, reckoned Joest boss Ralf Juttner.

“The missing 2MJ we have [the Audi runs in the 6MJ class] is definitely a significant factor on this track,” he said.

Privateer LMP1 honours went to the ByKolles team for the first time since the Austin round in 2015. Its CLM-AER P1/01 driven by Pierre Kaffer, Oliver Webb and Simon Trummer didn’t have the pace of the rival Rebellion-AER R-One, but engine problems for the

Fuel rig problems dogged Audi in a bad race for the marque

Anglo-Swiss team allowed ByKolles to take the win, even with brake issues.

ByKolles came within a lap and a half of making the overall top six. Trummer was ahead of the delayed #7 Audi R18 until the penultimate time around the Shanghai circuit.

The Rebellion shared by Alexandre Imperatori, Dominik Kraihamer and Matheo Tuscher ran into engine problems that the team believed were the result of the increase in fuel flow it had been afforded ahead of the Fuji race (but not used in Japan) and was using for the first time here. The AER V6 needed a change of spark plugs on the right bank of cylinders in the second hour and then a change of injectors on the same bank later in the race.

Second place for the #6 Toyota means that Conway and crew go to the Bahrain finale later this month 17 points behind the championship-leading Porsche drivers. A second WEC title for the Japanese manufacturer remains a long-shot that is effectively dependent on a non-finish for Jani, Lieb and Dumas.

“It’s sad,” said Vasselon, “that we have to wish a problem on them.” ❄

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RESULTS ROUND 8/9, SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER 6 (195 LAPS – 660.465 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME
1	Brendon Hartley (NZ) Timo Bernhard (D) Mark Webber (AUS)	Porsche Team	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LMP1	6h00m27.901s
2	Mike Conway (GB) Stephane Sarrazin (F) Kamui Kobayashi (J)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	+59.785s
3	Sebastien Buemi (CH) Anthony Davidson (GB) Kazuki Nakajima (J)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID	LMP1	+1m06.038s
4	Neel Jani (CH) Romain Dumas (F) Marc Lieb (D)	Porsche Team	Porsche 919 Hybrid	LMP1	+1m40.855s
5	Lucas di Grassi (BR) Loic Duval (F) Oliver Jarvis (GB)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LMP1	-3 laps
6	Andre Lotterer (D) Marcel Fassler (CH) Benoit Treluyer (F)	Audi Sport Team Joest	Audi R18 e-tron quattro	LMP1	-14 laps
7	Oliver Webb (GB) Simon Trummer (CH) Pierre Kaffer (D)	ByKolles Racing Team	CLM-AER P1/01	LMP1	-14 laps
8	Alex Brundle (GB) Roman Rusinov (RUS) Will Stevens (GB)	G-Drive (Jota Sport)	ORECA-Nissan 05	LMP2	-15 laps
9	Tom Blomqvist (GB) Antonio Giovinazzi (I) Sean Gelael (RI)	Extreme Speed Motorsports	Ligier-Nissan JSP2	LMP2	-16 laps
10	Bruno Senna (BR) Ricardo Gonzalez (MEX) Filipe Albuquerque (P)	RGR Sport by Morand	Ligier-Nissan JSP2	LMP2	-16 laps
11	Nicolas Lapierre (F) Gustavo Menezes (USA) Stephane Richelmi (MC)	Signatech Alpine	ORECA-Nissan 05	LMP2	-16 laps
12	Ryan Dalziel (GB) Pipo Derani (BR) Chris Cumming (CDN)	Extreme Speed Motorsports	Ligier-Nissan JSP2	LMP2	-16 laps
13	Mikhail Aleshin (RUS) Nicolas Minassian (F) Maurizio Mediani (I)	SMP Racing (AF)	BRE-Nissan BR01	LMP2	-18 laps
14	Vitaly Petrov (RUS) Victor Shaytar (RUS) Kirill Ladygin (RUS)	SMP Racing (AF)	BRE-Nissan BR01	LMP2	-18 laps
15	Ho-Pin Tung (PRC) David Cheng (USA) Paul-Loup Chatin (F)	Baxi DC Racing	Alpine ORECA-Nissan 05	LMP2	-19 laps
16	Alex Lynn (GB) Matt Rao (GB) Richard Bradley (GB)	Manor	ORECA-Nissan 05	LMP2	-21 laps
17	Andy Priaulx (GB) Harry Tincknell (GB)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-25 laps
18	Stefan Mucke (D) Olivier Pla (F)	Ford Chip Ganassi Team UK	Ford GT	GTE Pro	-25 laps
19	Gianmaria Bruni (I) James Calado (GB)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Pro	-25 laps
20	Marco Sorensen (DK) Nicki Thiim (DK)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	-25 laps
21	Davide Rigon (I) Sam Bird (GB)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTE Pro	-27 laps
22	Richard Lietz (A) Michael Christensen (DK)	Dempsey Racing	Proton Porsche 911 RSR '16	GTE Pro	-27 laps
23	Pedro Lamy (P) Paul Dalla Lana (CDN) Mathias Lauda (A)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Am	-29 laps
24	Alexandre Imperatori (CH) Matheo Tuscher (CH) Dominik Kraihamer (A)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-AER R-One	LMP1	-29 laps
25	Emmanuel Collard (F) Francois Perrodo (F) Rui Aguas (P)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTE Am	-29 laps
26	Wolf Henzler (D) Christian Ried (D) Joel Camathias (CH)	KCMG	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-29 laps
27	Patrick Long (USA) Khaled Al Qubaisi (UAE) David Heinemeier Hansson (DK)	Abu Dhabi-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-29 laps
28	Ricky Taylor (USA) Pierre Ragues (F) Romain Brandela (F)	Larbre Competition	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTE Am	-31 laps
29	Ben Barker (GB) Mike Wainwright (GB) Adam Carroll (GB)	Gulf Racing UK	Porsche 911 RSR	GTE Am	-31 laps
R	Richie Stanaway (NZ) Darren Turner (GB)	Aston Martin Racing	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	GTE Pro	1 lap-accident damage
R	Mathias Beche (CH) Tor Graves (GB) Roberto Gonzalez (MEX)	Manor	ORECA-Nissan 05	LMP2	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 109.938mph. **Fastest lap** Hartley 1m45.935s, 115.103mph.

LMP2 Lynn 1m55.490s, 105.580mph. **GTE Pro** Priaulx 2m02.217s, 99.769mph.

GTE Am Lamy 2m04.734s, 97.756mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Hartley/Webber 1m44.462s; **2** Buemi/Nakajima 1m44.522s; **3** Jarvis/Duval 1m44.610s; **4** Sarrazin/Conway 1m44.810s; **5** Fassler/Treluyer 1m44.868s; **6** Jani/Lieb 1m45.051s; **7** Kraihamer/Imperatori 1m49.828s; **8** Webb/Trummer 1m51.285s; **9** Lynn/Rao 1m54.225s; **10** Lapierre/Menezes 1m54.382s; **11** Blomqvist/Gelael 1m54.398s; **12** Brundle/Rusinov 1m54.759s; **13** Senna/Gonzalez 1m54.845s; **14** Beche/Gonzalez 1m54.899s; **15** Aleshin/Mediani 1m55.754s; **16** Petrov/Shaytar 1m56.429s; **17** Dalziel/Cumming 1m56.439s; **18** Tung/Cheng 1m57.111s; **19** Tincknell/Priaulx 2m01.391s; **20** Pla/Mucke 2m01.528s; **21** Thiim/Sorensen 2m02.040s; **22** Bruni/Calado 2m02.315s; **23** Turner/Stanaway 2m02.432s; **24** Rigon/Bird 2m02.866s; **25** Lietz/Christensen 2m03.767s; **26** Lamy/Dalla Lana 2m04.997s; **27** Collard/Perrodo 2m05.334s; **28** Long/Al Qubaisi 2m05.466s; **29** Camathias/Ried 2m06.344s; **30** Barker/Wainwright 2m07.712s; **31** Taylor/Brandela 2m07.857s.

Fastest in each class **LMP1** Hartley 1m44.307s; **LMP2** Senna 1m53.632s; **GTE Pro** Tincknell 2m01.240s; **GTE Am** Lamy 2m04.030s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

LMP drivers **1** Dumas/Jani/Lieb **152**; **2** Sarrazin/Kobayashi/Conway **135**; **3** Duval/di Grassi/Jarvis **121.5**; **4** Webber/Hartley/Bernhard **119.5**; **5** Fassler/Lotterer **86**; **6** Tuscher/Imperatori/Kraihamer **60.5**.
LMP manufacturers **1** Porsche **301**; **2** Audi **222**; **3** Toyota **207**. **LMP2 drivers** **1** Menezes/Lapierre/Richelmi **183**; **2** Senna/Albuquerque/Gonzalez **148**; **3** Rusinov **137**; **4** Cumming/Derani/Dalziel **104**.
GTE drivers **1** Sorensen/Thiim **131**; **2** Rigon/Bird **119**; **3** Pla/Mucke **110**; **4** Bruni/Calado **110**; **5** Priaulx/Tincknell **105.5**; **6** Turner **104**. **GTE manufacturers** **1** Ferrari **261**; **2** Aston Martin **251**; **3** Ford **221.5**; **4** Porsche **113**. **GTE Am drivers** **1** Collard/Perrodo **173**; **2** Lauda/Dalla Lana/Lamy **148**; **3** Heinemeier Hansson/Al Qubaisi **126**; **4** Long **105**.



ByKolles took a rare LMP1 privateer success in seventh overall

EBREY/LAT



MORRIS & ARE THE

Congratulations to the



Seb Morris

Sunoco Whelen Challenge Champion

British GT3 racer Seb Morris was pushed all year by Radical racer Marco Cencetti but in the end Seb's combination of finishing positions, fastest laps and pole position points were too good to be matched. As the 8th winner of the Challenge Seb knows that the US racing scene has high expectations of him when he jumps behind the wheel of a Whelen sponsored prototype at the Rolex 24 At Daytona. Last year's Sunoco Whelen Challenge winner Jonny Adam impressed the Action Express team with his speed and race craft – can Seb be as impressive?

2017 key dates

- ROAR Before The Rolex 24
- BMW Endurance Challenge
- Rolex 24 At Daytona

Follow Seb and Max on

In partnership with



SUNOCO WHELEN CHALLENGE

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. Seb Morris | 80.06 |
| 2. Marco Cencetti | 72.83 |
| 3. James Littlejohn | 63.57 |
| 4. Marcello Marateotto | 59.40 |
| 5. Manhal Allos | 59.14 |

BLADON CHAMPIONS

Sunoco Challenge Winners!



Max Bladon Sunoco 200 Challenge Champion

6-8th January 2017
26-27th January 2017
28-29th January 2017

www.sunocochallenge.com

Max Bladon has been stunning in the Mini Challenge Cooper class this year with 14 race wins, 7 pole positions and 5 fastest laps over 17 races and beat 163 other racers to the Sunoco 200 Challenge crown. Max will now have to quickly learn how to handle a much more powerful rear-wheel drive muscle car at the 31 degree banked Daytona – definitely not for the fainthearted. For 2017 the race has been upgraded to a 4 hour race and renamed the BMW Endurance Challenge so Max needs to make sure that he is both mentally and physically fitter than ever.



SUNOCO 200 CHALLENGE

1. Max Bladon	109.91
2. Rick Parfitt Jnr	87.39
3. Steve Burgess	82.50
4. Mike Robinson	80.67
5. Derek Johnston	80.67



Multiple GT champs in bumper year

Honours were shared across Blancpain's three championships after a hard-fought season

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

[@gazzasportscars](#)

Three different manufacturers claimed the three titles up for grabs, a fourth took arguably the biggest prize on offer at the Spa 24 Hours,

and another two marques made it onto the top step of the podium. The reorganised Blancpain GT Series flourished in a season of monster grids and ultra-close competition.

New rules that effectively forced teams and manufacturers to contest both elements of the BGTS, the renamed Endurance and Sprint Cups, and a shorter season of just 10 races resulted in a boom in what had been the Blancpain Sprint Series. The grid effectively doubled, while the championship that we previously knew as the Blancpain Endurance Series held up at a figure in excess of 50 cars.

And the Balance of Performance was perhaps less contentious than at any time

in the past. McLaren, Audi and Mercedes shared out the end-of-season silverware, while BMW took the big one at Spa. Bentley and Lamborghini were the other race winners over the course of year.

The Endurance Cup

That Shane van Gisbergen ended up with a share of the Endurance Cup title summed up a championship that it seemed no one wanted to win come the Nurburgring finale in September. The Kiwi was on duty down under in the Australian Supercars Series when his Garage 59 McLaren squad made the trip to Germany. Regular team-mates and fellow championship leaders Rob Bell and Come Ledogar were joined by Duncan Tappy in their bid to seal the title, so there was no way van Gisbergen could come away with the crown, right?

Wrong! Bell and Ledogar failed to add to their tally after a disappointing race that summed up McLaren's championship run-in, but then each of the rivals failed to garner enough points to overhaul the McLaren trio >>



ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

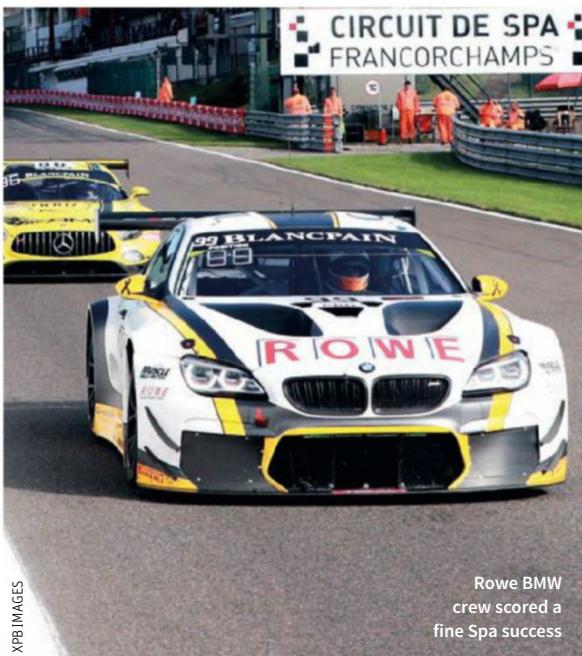
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	PTS
1	Shanevan Gisbergen (NZ) Rob Bell (GB) Come Ledogar (F)	Garage59	McLaren650SGT3	1	6	1	20	19	68
2	Jazeman Jaafar (MAL) Dominik Baumann (A) Maximilian Buhk (D)	TeamHTPMotorsport	Mercedes-AMGGT3	2	1	DNF	6	4	67
3	Maxime Soulet (B) Andy Soucek (E) Wolfgang Reip (B)	BentleyTeamM-Sport	BentleyContinentalGT3	3	23	4	4	15	59
4	Philipp Eng (A) Alexander Sims (GB)	RoweRacing	BMWWM6GT3	DNF	4	DNF	1	9	56
5	Maxime Martin (B)	RoweRacing	BMWWM6GT3	-	4	-	1	-	55
6	Laurens Vanthoor (B)	WRT	AudiR8LMS	8	2	12	3	2	54
7	Mirko Bortolotti (I) Rolf Ineichen (CH)	GRTGrasserRacingTeam	LamborghiniHuracanGT3	7	3	DNF	10	1	49
8	Frederic Vervisch (B) Dries Vanthoor (B)	WRT	AudiR8LMS	8	2	12	19	2	45
9	Alex Buncombe (GB) Lucas Ordóñez (E) Mitsunori Takahashi (J)	NissanGTAcademyTeamRJN	NissanGT-RNISMOGT3	4	DNF	5	24	3	39
10	Nico Müller (CH)	WRT	AudiR8LMS	5	9	-	3	-	26



Eclectic mix:
no single marque
dominated in 2016

11 Alessandro Pier Guidi/Michele Rugolo/Pasin Lathouras (AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3) 25; **12** Christian Engelhart (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 24; **13** Jeroen Bleekemolen (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 24; **14** Gregory Guilvert/Mike Parisy/Christopher Haase (Sainteloc Audi R8 LMS) 21; **15** Will Stevens (Audi Sport Team WRT Audi R8 LMS) 19; **16** Rodrigo Baptista (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 19; **17** Filipe Albuquerque (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 19; **18** Jan Magnussen (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 19; **19** Christopher Mies (Audi Sport Team WRT Audi R8 LMS) 18; **20** Frank Stippler (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 18; **21** Markus Winkelhock (Audi Sport Team Phoenix Audi R8 LMS) 18; **22** Rengervan der Zande/Tristan Vautier (AMG – Auto Sport Promotion Mercedes-AMG GT3) 18; **23** Felix Rosenqvist (AMG – Auto Sport Promotion Mercedes-AMG GT3) 18; **24** Rene Rast (Audi Sport Team WRT Audi R8 LMS) 18; **25** Steven Kane/Guy Smith/Vincent Abril (Bentley Team M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3) 16; **26** Alessandro Bonacini/Michal Broniszewski/Andrea Rizzoli (Kessel Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 16; **27** Michele Beretta/Andrea Piccini/Luca Stolz (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 15; **28** Thomas Jäger (AMG – Team HTP Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3) 12; **29** Gary Paffett/Maximilian Götz (AMG – Team HTP Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3) 12; **30** Antonio Garcia (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 12; **31** Indy Dontje/Luciano Bacheta/Clemens Schmid (HTP Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3) 10; **32** Alexander Mattschull (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 10; **33** Steve Parrow (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 10; **34** Daniel Keilwitz (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 10; **35** Pierre Kaffer/Adrien De Leener (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 8; **36** Bertrand Baguette (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 8; **37** Marlon Stockinger/Filip Salaquarda (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 7; **38** Edoardo Mortara (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 7; **39** Hubert Haupt/Andreas Simonsen/Adam Christodoulou (Black Falcon Mercedes-AMG GT3) 6; **40** Norbert Siedler (Emil Frey Racing Jaguar Emil Frey G3) 6; **41** Jonathan Hirschi/Christian Klien (Emil Frey Racing Jaguar Emil Frey G3) 6; **42** Matt Griffin/Duncan Cameron (AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3) 4; **43** Davide Rizzo (Kaspersky Motorsport (AF) Ferrari 458 Italia GT3) 4; **44** Michael Meadows/Stuart Leonard/Robin Frijns (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 4; **45** Nicky Catsburg (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 2; **46** Daniel Zampieri/Patric Niederhauser (Attempto Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 2; **47** Fabio Babini (Attempto Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 2; **48** Motoaki Ishikawa/Lorenzo Bontempelli (AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3) 1; **49** Philippe Giauque/Franck Perera/Henry Hassid (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 1; **50** Giancarlo Fisichella (AF Corse Ferrari 488 GT3) 1; **51** Dirk Werner (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 1; **52** Stef Dusseldorp (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 1; **53** Nicolas Lapierre (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 1; **54** Raymond Narac/Thierry Cornac (Imsa Performance Porsche 911 GT3-R) 1; **55** Maxime Jousse (911 GT3-R) 1; **56** Patrick Pilet (Imsa Performance Porsche 911 GT3-R) 1.

Ide took four wins on his way to the Sprint Cup crown



Rowe BMW crew scored a fine Spa success

XPB IMAGES

SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	1
1	Enzo Ide (B)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	13
2	Christopher Mies (D)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	13
3	Dominik Baumann (A) Maximilian Buhk (D)	HTP Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG GT3	5
4	Jules Szymkowiak (NL) Bernd Schneider (D)	HTP Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG GT3	37
5	Laurens Vanthoor (B) Frederic Verusch (B)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	3
6	Rob Bell (GB) Alvaro Parente (P)	Garage 59	McLaren 650S GT3	9
7	Felix Rosenqvist (S) Tristan Vautier (F)	Auto Sport Promotion	Mercedes-AMG GT3	7
8	Andy Soucek (E) Maxime Soulet (B)	Bentley Team M-Sport	Bentley Continental GT3	1
9	Will Stevens (GB) Rene Rast (D)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	14
10	Robin Frijns (NL)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	4

11 Philipp Eng/Alexander Sims (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 23; **12** Franck Perera/Marlon Stockinger (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 21; **13** Norbert Siedler (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 19; **14** Marco Seefried (Rinaldi Racing Ferrari 488 GT3) 19; **15** Mike Parisy (Sainteloc Junior Team Audi R8 LMS) 17; **16** Christopher Haase (Sainteloc Junior Team Audi R8 LMS) 17; **17** Nicolas Pohler/Mirko Bortolotti (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 16; **18** Dries Vanthoor (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 12; **19** Filip Salaquarda/Frank Stippler (ISR Audi R8 LMS) 10; **20** Nicolaj Moller Madsen (Phoenix Racing Audi R8 LMS) 8; **21** Alessio Picariello (Phoenix Racing Audi R8 LMS) 8; **22** Michele Beretta/Luca Stolz (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 7; **23** Clemens Schmid/Jazeman Jaafar (HTP Motorsport Mercedes-AMG GT3) 5; **24** Steven Kane/Vincent Abril



BEROUD/NSA



Factory Bentleys were rapid but didn't have the luck

BEROUD/NSA

at the top of the table.

The lead 650S GT3 entered by the new in-house Garage 59 set-up at McLaren GT made a flying start to the championship. They won the season opener at Monza in April, bagged some decent points at Silverstone the following month and then won again, thanks to a bit of luck, at the points-and-a-half Paul Ricard 1000km at the end of June.

That gave them a 22-point advantage after three races. They would score only a further two points over the final two races courtesy of the eighth place in which they were running at the six-hour cut-off in the 24 Hours at Spa at the end of July.

Ledogar had a clash at Spa that left the McLaren out of the scoring positions at 12 and 24 hours, and then a penalty, a spin and a puncture at the 'Ring meant that they finished the season on the

through to final qualifying. Buhk and co would recover to sixth as the second Merc home.

Bentley trio Andy Soucek, Maxime Soulet and Wolfgang Reip went to Germany second in the table – and just nine points shy of the McLaren drivers – after a third-place finish at Monza, a fourth at Ricard and then a decent points haul from Spa. They were on course for the title when the left-rear wheel of their Continental GT3 wouldn't come off at the first round of stops in Germany, the knock-on from which left them outside the points.

Spa winners Alexander Sims and Philipp Eng were also in the hunt at the end of the season courtesy of their Spa win with the factory Rowe Racing squad. Caught out by a red flag in qualifying, they were always up against it at the 'Ring after starting 39th in the M6

“There were plenty of tales of woe, and Bentley perhaps had the biggest gripe come the end”

68 points they'd accrued by Saturday evening at Spa.

HTP Mercedes trio Maximilian Buhk, Dominik Baumann and Jazeman Jaafar came closest to overhauling that mark. Fourth place at the finale left them just one point shy of the McLaren drivers' total when the flag dropped after three hours of racing at the Nurburgring.

They had followed up on a close second at Monza with a victory aboard the new Mercedes-AMG GT3 at Silverstone in May, only for their championship challenge to go off the rails. They were out of the points at Ricard, which was followed by the bizarre episode of Mercedes' Spa assault.

The German manufacturer blocked out the top six positions in qualifying, only for an inconformity to be discovered – after a thorough search lasting into the small hours of race morning – with the new car's ignition mapping. That resulted in a grid penalty and a five-minute stop/ go for each of the cars that had made it

GT3 in which they had been joined by Nick Catsburg.

There were plenty of tales of woe over the course of the season. All the teams that missed out could point to races where they lost the title.

Bentley perhaps had the biggest gripe come the end of the season. Soucek, Soulet and Reip had the quickest car for much of the dry portion at Spa, but a succession of drivethroughs, a puncture and the wrong call on tyres during a wet spell removed them from contention.

A misunderstanding of the new rules governing pitstop times left them fourth at the finish. Ultimately more decisive in the outcome of the championship was a flash refuelling fire at the car's final pitstop at Ricard that in all likelihood cost them the win and left them to finish fourth.

Gearbox problems cost Buhk, Baumann and Jaafar points at Ricard, but HTP could have won the title had it decided to invoke team orders at Spa >>

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	PTS
8	3	1	1	4	1	2	1	3		102
8	3	1	1	4	1	2	-	-		79
2	18	7	10	6	4	1	6	8		67
7	1	2	8	3	5	5	10	31		59
1	5	15	24	7	3	8	13	4		58
4	8	4	2	1	17	17	16	13		56
32	9	9	27	10	2	4	3	1		51
11	10	3	6	32	16	9	4	2		47
36	-	-	3	2	10	3	5	18		39
22	6	12	-	-	11	7	1	3		33

(Bentley Team M-Sport Bentley Continental GT3) 5; **25** Stef Dusseldorp (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 4; **26** Maxime Martin (Rowe Racing BMW M6 GT3) 4; **27** Nico Muller (WRT Audi R8 LMS) 2; **28** Ezequiel Perez-Compagnon/Raffaele Giammaria (AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia GT3) 2; **29** Romain Monti/Edward Sandstrom (Sainteloc Junior Team Audi R8 LMS) 1; **30** Daniel Zampieri (Attempto Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 1; **31** Patric Niederhauser (Attempto Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3) 1.

and move the best of its full-season line-ups ahead of the additional entry for Gary Paffett and Maximilian Gotz and Thomas Jager in fifth. The team admitted that such a move was considered and dismissed. The extra two points would have made the difference.

Sprint Cup

The WRT Audi squad, three times a winner of the BES in the past, ended up only sixth in the Endurance Cup with Laurens Vanthoor, but it did add to its collection of Blancpain titles in the Sprint Cup. Belgian amateur Enzo Ide, who was partnered by Christopher Mies in four rounds and Robin Frijns in one, took the spoils after an ultra-consistent season.

Ide and Mies followed up on a podium

“The Mercedes title looked unlikely until McLaren’s late struggles”

in the Brands Hatch qualifying race with a victory in the full-points race, after which their Audi R8 LMS never finished outside the top four. Mies missed the final round at Barcelona in order to successfully chase the ADAC GT Masters title and Frijns was brought in as a substitute. Two podiums were more than enough to seal the title for Ide.

Ide’s closest challenge for the title was the Buhk-Baumann combination at HTP. They were second in the main race at the Misano opener in April and claimed their solitary victory at the Hungaroring at the end of August. They had only an outside chance of the title going into the Barcelona decider and opted to concentrate on maintaining their advantage at the head of the overall BGTS classification.



BEROUD/VSA

DTM legend Bernd Schneider, contesting his first full championship since his retirement from the German tin-top series at the end of 2008, and Jules Szymkowiak in another of HTP’s fleet of Mercs took qualifying race honours at Brands and followed it up with two main-race podiums to take fourth in the points.

Vanthoor and his Sprint team-mate Frederic Vervisch made a flying start to the championship. They lost out on victory in the qualifying event at Misano in April when their rivals got lucky during a full-course yellow, but made amends when full points were on offer the following day. That was as good as it got for the Belgian duo, who had a season plagued by bad luck and only made the podium on one more occasion.

Garage 59 McLaren crew took Enduro title, while HTP Merc duo won the overall Blancpain crown

The overall championship

A near-miss in the enduro points with Jaafar and a main-race win in the sprints made Buhk and Baumann the overall BGTS champions. It was a victory that looked unlikely going into Spa week. McLaren driver Bell, who was partnered by Alvaro Parente in the shorter races, held a 44-point lead in the overall table after taking a main race victory in the Nurburgring Sprint round at the start of July.

But McLaren’s late-season woes in the enduros was mirrored in the sprints. Bell and Parente scored no more points after the ‘Ring, which meant the HTP duo’s cautious runs to sixth and eighth in Spain were enough to see them home.

Vanthoor took third in the points, while second position for Bentley drivers Soucek and Soulet in the final sprint of the season propelled them into fourth position. Ide took sixth on the basis of points scored in the sprints alone.

The big question is whether Buhk and Baumann will be remembered as the winners of the overall title or two thirds of the trio that just missed out on the Endurance Cup crown. The reorganisation of the Blancpain arena was partly devised to put new emphasis on the series as a whole, but it remained a confusing landscape in 2016.

Or maybe the season will be recalled for massive grids, close racing and the fact that four manufacturers shared the big prizes that the BGTS has to offer. 🍀

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	PTS
1	Maximilian Buhk (D) Dominik Baumann (A)	Team HTP Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG GT3	134
2	Rob Bell (GB)	Garage 59	McLaren 650S GT3	124
3	Laurens Vanthoor (B)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	112
4	Maxime Soulet (B) Andy Soucek (E)	Bentley Team M-Sport	Bentley Continental GT3	106
5	Frederic Vervisch (B)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	103
6	Enzo Ide (B)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	102
7	Christopher Mies	WRT	Audi R8 LMS	97
8	Philipp Eng (A) Alexander Sims (GB)	Rowe Racing	BMW M6 GT3	79
9	Jazeman Jaafar (MAL)	Team HTP Motorsport	Mercedes-AMG GT3	72
10	Felix Rosenqvist (S) Tristan Vautier (F)	Auto Sport Promotion	Mercedes-AMG GT3	69

➔ P47 AUTOSPORT’S TOP 10 DRIVERS



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AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

**1 CHRISTOPHER MIES**

There's never been any doubting the talents and speed of Mies, but the quiet man of Audi's GT roster has often been overshadowed by the likes of Laurens Vanthoor and Rene Rast. This was the season that he emerged from those shadows, at least as far as the BGTS went. The German was a full-season participant (or at least did all but one of the races) in the Sprint Cup only and played a key role in Ide's title triumph with the WRT team. He might, too, have won the 24 Hours at Spa with Phoenix but for a puncture.

**2 SHANE VAN GISBERGEN**

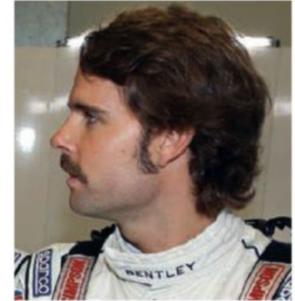
It would have been all wrong had van Gisbergen not ended up with his name on the Endurance Cup winners' trophy along with Bell and Ledogar, even if his in absentia triumph was strange in the extreme. The New Zealander might have only raced in the enduros, but he was still the standout driver within the pseudo-factory Garage 59 McLaren squad this year. And it should not be forgotten that this was only his second proper season of racing in Europe.

**3 ROB BELL**

Bell sometimes does himself a disservice with his low-key profile and workaday demeanour. A case in point was the Briton's reaction to his amazing drive that anchored the eventual champions' first win of the season in the Monza enduro. It was all in a day's work to him, but the fact he had propelled the Garage 59 McLaren up the order from 16th on the grid to third by the start of the first round of pitstops was nothing short of sensational. There were other strong drives, too, notably in the Nurburgring Sprint Cup round.

**4 LAURENS VANTHOOR**

Vanthoor has topped this listing in the past, and it would be wrong to suggest he underperformed in any way this season. Luck wasn't always on his side in either segment of the BGTS during a season in which he only won once. Losing victory in the qualifying race at Misano at the start of the season courtesy of the vagaries of a full-course yellow perhaps set a marker for the year that was to come, even if he and Frederic Vervisch did dominate the main race. Vanthoor remains for many the benchmark driver within Audi's GT roster.

**5 ANDY SOUCEK**

The second M-Sport Bentley had always appeared to be just that before 2016, a number-two car. Soucek, Maxime Soulet and whoever joined them in #8 appeared to be in the shadow of the #7 Bentley and the crew led by Steven Kane. This year was different. They generally had the edge over the sister car and Soucek had a phenomenal season that wasn't properly rewarded in terms of silverware. His effort on slicks that yielded a qualifying-race win at Misano and the drive that resulted in the near-miss at Spa were the high points.

**6 MAXIME SOULET**

There wasn't much to choose between Soulet and his full-season team-mate at Bentley, Soucek. They were equally matched in their performances on track and perhaps well matched as team-mates. Perhaps it was the bond between them that has grown over the three seasons of Bentley's Blancpain adventure that played a part in their success in 2016. Soulet was ultra-strong at Spa (as you'd expect for a Belgian weaned on the event), impressive at Ricard and solid in his defence of first place in the Misano qualifier.

**7 MAXIMILIAN BUHK**

Buhk opted to stay with HTP after its split with Bentley and return to the Merc fold, a decision that paid off with another crown to go with his BES title of 2013. The German undoubtedly had a good season as the team leader in the championship-winning car, but another title or no the jury is still out on his abilities. Mega on his day, there were others when Buhk was matched by 52-year-old Bernd Schneider and the fast-but-erratic Jules Szymkowiak. If he really is the real deal, he needs to consistently outperform them and their like.

**8 ALEXANDER SIMS**

Sims and regular team-mate Philipp Eng had a strong rather than stellar season either side of their Spa victory, but the Briton came of age as a sportscar driver in what was really his first full season in the discipline. The new BMW M6 GT3 they shared at Rowe wasn't always the most competitive car, and it was definitely one of the more tricky to drive – particularly in the wet. That makes their Spa victory in admittedly not one of the wettest 24 Hours on record all the more impressive, while Sims's drive on slicks at Misano was also a bit special.

**9 FRANCK PERERA**

Some impressive qualifying performances and opening stints with the ISR Audi squad – including Sprint Cup poles at Brands Hatch and Barcelona – underlined the talents of the Frenchman that he'd shown on occasion in lesser seats in the Blancpain arena. A strong season could have yielded more in terms of results (though he did finish second in the Endurance Cup pro-am standings), but has brought him to the attention of the HTP squad. It's given him a foot in the door at Mercedes that could result in the factory deal some believe he deserves.

**10 ENZO IDE**

Should a driver who is a true amateur and races purely for the hell of it really be listed in the top 10? He should if he drives the way Ide did on the way to the Sprint Cup title. The Belgian wasn't as quick as co-drivers Mies and Frijns, but he was much more than just solid and at times put other drivers on Audi's books to shame. A driver blessed with immense car control, he was more than capable of mounting a resolute defence of position and soaking up the pressure from behind him.



Dillmann delivers at

FORMULA V8 3.5
BARCELONA (E)
NOVEMBER 5-6
ROUND 9/9

SEVEN DRIVERS HEADED INTO THE CLIMAX of the Formula V8 3.5 season in contention for the championship, but the final meeting of the year coalesced into a titanic duel between AVF's 'hired gun' Tom Dillmann and Fortec's gifted rookie Louis Deletraz.

The field faced a wet but drying track for Saturday qualifying. Dillmann, fellow title contender Matthieu Vaxiviere, and series newcomer Jack Aitken made effective use of slicks to occupy the top three grid positions. Points leader Deletraz persisted with wets. He held provisional pole with 50s of the session remaining, but was then bumped to fourth.

Aitken stalled and caused an aborted start, which cleared the road for Egor Orudzhev, who charged from fifth into the lead at Turn 1. He ultimately won by almost 10s, sealing the teams' title for Arden in the process.

This dominant showing shifted focus to

Dillmann and Deletraz's intense scrap for second. Driving a spare chassis – with new gearbox, engine and suspension fitted – resolved recent difficulties for Dillmann, who started strongly before experiencing tyre degradation. He lost second to Deletraz on lap 19, after locking up and taking to the asphalt runoff while defending position at Turn 1.

Deletraz thus extended his lead in the standings to six points. Vaxiviere retired with brake-related problems, and a culling of other assorted hopefuls produced a two-horse race for the title in Sunday's finale.

Deletraz secured pole, six spots clear of Dillmann, but lost the advantage away from the line. Into Turn 1 Deletraz dropped to fourth, immediately ahead of Dillmann.

The decisive overtaking manoeuvre of the race took place at the pitlane exit. Dillmann used an early pitstop strategy to undercut Deletraz and grab track position when the stops shook out.

Dillmann set a string of fast laps when he emerged, propelling himself into the lead at the completion of the pitstop sequence on lap 13. Three-time 2016 winner Roy Nissany followed



DUTCHPHOTO AGENCY

Revised car helped Dillmann claim title with race victory

the death

in second, three seconds clear of Pietro Fittipaldi's other Fortec entry, and Deletraz.

Early leader Matevos Isaakyan fell out of victory contention in the pitstops cycle when he suffered a delayed tyre change.

In the closing laps the championship hung in the balance. Had Nissany overhauled Dillmann for the win, Deletraz would have lifted the crown on tiebreak, by virtue of two race victories to Dillmann's one.

Nissany narrowed the deficit to a little over a second, but then after being obstructed while lapping traffic finished 1.4s adrift of a deserving champion at the chequered flag.

PETER MILLS

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Egor Orudzhev 25 laps in 39m40.100s; 2 Louis Deletraz +9.891s; 3 Tom Dillmann; 4 Aurelien Panis; 5 Matevos Isaakyan; 6 Vitor Baptista; 7 Pietro Fittipaldi; 8 Yu Kanamaru; 9 Roy Nissany; 10 Beitske Visser. **Race 2** 1 Dillmann 25 laps in 39m47.303s; 2 Nissany +1.405s; 3 Fittipaldi; 4 Deletraz; 5 Isaakyan; 6 Rene Binder; 7 Orudzhev; 8 Visser; 9 Jack Aitken; 10 Kanamaru. **Points** 1 Dillmann 237; 2 Deletraz 230; 3 Orudzhev 197; 4 Nissany 189; 5 Panis 183; 6 Matthieu Vaxiviere 175.



The champion Lambo leads the field

Lambo duo lifts GT crown

**INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
BARCELONA (E)
NOVEMBER 5-6
ROUND 7/7**

THOMAS BIAGI AND FABRIZIO CRESTANI were crowned champions with a second-placed finish in the opening race.

Chasing home the Attempto Racing Porsche of race winners Kevin Estre/Peter Terting proved enough to get the job done for the Lazarus Lamborghini pairing, as chief title rivals Fernando Monje/Gustavo Yacamán (Teo Martin BMW) finished a lowly 13th.

That pairing began to lose ground in the early stages, as poleman Crestani led Estre and Duncan Tappy's McLaren, while Yacamán slipped behind Euan Hankey's Aston Martin.

A 10-second penalty for the BMW – for needing a push in the pits – undid its race.

Terting held the lead after the stops and raced on to a narrow victory from Biagi, with the McLaren of British racers Phil Keen and Shaun Balfe charging to third, tying Balfe with Monje/Yacamán for second in the points.

The Lambo of Daniel Zampieri and Marco

Antonelli won the final race of the season, which was interrupted by two safety car periods – the first caused by a collision between race-one winner Terting and the McLaren of Come Ledogar; the other by a big crash for Jean Luc Beaubelique's Mercedes, which also collected Tappy's McLaren.

Balfe sealed second in the standings with sixth, after the Yacamán/Monje BMW broke a wheel against the race-winning Lambo.

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Kevin Estre/Peter Terting (Porsche 911 GT3-R) 38 laps in 1h10m54s806s; 2 Thomas Biagi/Fabrizio Crestani (Lamborghini Huracán GT3) +3.733s; 3 Shaun Balfe/Phil Keen (McLaren 650S GT3); 4 Daniel Zampieri/Marco Antonelli (Lamborghini); 5 Michael Benham/Duncan Tappy (McLaren); 6 Jean-Luc Beaubelique/Jerome Policand (Mercedes-AMG GT3). **Race 2** 1 Zampieri/Antonelli 30 laps in 1h01m31s796s; 2 Francesco Sini/Jody Fannin (Aston Martin Vantage GT3) +0.692s; 3 Miguel Ramos/Pieter Schothorst (BMW M6 GT3); 4 Biagi/Crestani; 5 Alex Moiseev/Marco Cioci (Ferrari 488 GT3); 6 Balfe/Keen. **Points** 1 Crestani/Biagi 183; 2 Balfe 132; 3 Fernando Monje/Gustavo Yacamán (BMW) 125; 4 Ramos 124; 5 Keen 109; 6 Salih Yoluc/Euan Hankey (Aston Martin) 102.

Habsburg, Herta on top

**EUROFORMULA OPEN
BARCELONA (E)
NOVEMBER 5-6
ROUND 8/8**

FERDINAND HABSBURG AND COLTON Herta rounded out the season with a victory apiece, helped by some overzealous driving from their chief rivals.

Teo Martin's Dorian Bocolacci was the culprit in race one, climbing to second when early leader Habsburg ran wide, but then turning Carlin racer Herta around while trying to wrest the lead from him.



Herta leads Habsburg

Bocolacci crossed the line ahead, but was demoted to third by a five-second time penalty, allowing Habsburg to seal second in the championship with victory from Herta.

Series champion Leonardo Pulcini looked set to banish the disappointment of a collision with Diego Menchaca in race one by winning the season finale, after jumping Habsburg and Herta at the start.

But he dropped back suddenly on lap four of 17 so had to settle for third, behind Herta – who passed Habsburg's Drivex car exiting Turn 1 on the first lap – and Habsburg.

Bocolacci ended his eventful weekend with a fourth-placed finish, ending the race not far behind Pulcini.

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Ferdinand Habsburg 17 laps in 29m14.548s; 2 Colton Herta +1.049s; 3 Dorian Bocolacci; 4 Damiano Fioravanti; 5 Keyvan Soori; 6 Ameya Vaidyanathan. **Race 2** 1 Herta 17 laps in 28m49.302s; 2 Habsburg +0.601s; 3 Leonardo Pulcini; 4 Bocolacci; 5 Antoni Ptak; 6 Diego Menchaca. **Points** 1 Pulcini 303; 2 Habsburg 247; 3 Herta 199; 4 Menchaca 145; 5 Fioravanti 136; 6 Ptak 94.

Giz whizzes closer to Supercars kingship

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
PUKEKOHE (NZ)
NOVEMBER 5-6
ROUND 13/14

SOONER OR LATER, IT HAD TO happen — and in New Zealand, 'it' did.

Shane van Gisbergen and Jamie Whincup had already turned the Supercars title fight into a private affair, and in the third of four races were chasing leader Mark Winterbottom. Whincup, in third, had more speed; just yards ahead of him, van Gisbergen had track position. On the sixth lap, on the way into the hairpin, Whincup looked down the inside line...

In a flash, both Red Bull Holdens were spinning backwards off the road. By the time they regained the track van Gisbergen was back in eighth and Whincup was 11th — which became 26th (and last) when he served a pitlane penalty for turning his team-mate around.

"Completely my fault," Whincup admitted. "I locked the rears. I had a much quicker car than Shane, he kind of half let me through and I made a meal of it."



Shane van Gisbergen (left) won race two before clash with team-mate Whincup

The two had already split the two Saturday races in a dominant display, and Whincup stormed back to win the fourth race after making, perhaps, the most impeccable start of his career. But the damage was done. Van Gisbergen is now nearly certain to win his maiden title, in his first year in what was up until now seen as Whincup's team.

There were challengers to the Triple Eight team's dominance but none of them were consistent. Scott McLaughlin put his Volvo on the podium twice, and Ford's Scott Pye and Chaz Mostert also scored top-threes, but they did not back it up. Neither did Craig Lowndes, who struggled on Saturday, particularly in qualifying, before returning to form on Sunday.

The results in the races not only put van Gisbergen in the box seat for the title, they gave him the Jason Richards Trophy, named after NZ's late Supercars ace. For

a man who grew up 25 miles from the Pukekohe track, the weekend could hardly have gone any better.

PHIL BRANAGAN

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore) 35 laps in 45m37.7579s; 2 Shane van Gisbergen (Holden) +6.5047s; 3 Scott McLaughlin (Volvo S60); 4 Mark Winterbottom (Ford Falcon); 5 Garth Tander (Holden); 6 James Courtney (Holden). **Race 2 1 van Gisbergen** 35 laps in 37m36.1250s; 2 Whincup +2.1810s; 3 Chaz Mostert (Ford); 4 Fabian Coulthard (Ford); 5 Winterbottom; 6 Will Davison (Holden). **Race 3 1 Winterbottom** 35 laps in 38m06.2689s; 2 Scott Pye (Ford) +10.1496s; 3 van Gisbergen; 4 Craig Lowndes (Holden); 5 Coulthard; 6 Mostert. **Race 4 1 Whincup** 35 laps in 37m37.1619s; 2 van Gisbergen +8.7366s; 3 McLaughlin; 4 Mostert; 5 Winterbottom; 6 Lowndes. **Points 1 van Gisbergen 3089;** 2 Whincup 2898; 3 Lowndes 2596; 4 McLaughlin 2575; 5 Davison 2403; 6 Winterbottom 2384.

Resilient Rossi rewarded for Roca rampage

SUPER TC2000
GENERAL ROCA (RA)
NOVEMBER 6
ROUND 11/12

TOYOTA DRIVER MATIAS ROSSI HAD a most productive weekend, winning the Saturday and Sunday races with his Corolla and edging closer to points leader

Agustin Canapino (Chevrolet Cruze).

Renault poleman Facundo Arduso and team-mate Leonel Pernia led away Saturday's encounter ahead of Rossi, who was soon into second at Pernia's expense. Rossi then went in pursuit of Arduso, and bagged first place when the Renault careered straight on, possibly owing to steering problems. From then on Rossi

Rossi's double has given him a shot at the 2016 title

cruised to victory, finishing more than five seconds ahead of runner-up Pernia, with Canapino completing the podium.

In Sunday's race, Rossi led away from Canapino at the start, while Arduso, also a contender to the title until this weekend, tried to salvage some points after his previous day's retirement. Arduso's hopes of reaching the podium were dashed by a gutsy drive from Fiat's Bernardo Llaver.

Canapino hung on to second place and thus heads to the 12th and last round of the series with a healthy advantage in the standings, with Rossi second.

TONY WATSON

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Matias Rossi (Toyota Corolla) 22 laps in 37m58.783s; 2 Leonel Pernia (Renault Fluence) +5.847s; 3 Agustin Canapino (Chevrolet Cruze); 4 Mariano Werner (Peugeot 408); 5 Emiliano Spataro (Renault); 6 Carlos Javier Merlo (Fiat Linea). **Race 2 1 Rossi** 22 laps in 36m22.854s; 2 Canapino +2.825s; 3 Bernardo Llaver (Fiat); 4 Facundo Arduso (Renault); 5 Facundo Chapur (Peugeot); 6 Spataro. **Points 1 Canapino 213;** 2 Rossi 178.5; 3 Arduso 175; 4 Pernia 151.5; 5 Spataro 138.





Savvy Barrichello scores big

V8 STOCK CARS
GOIANIA (BR)
NOVEMBER 6
ROUND 10/12

RETURNING TO THE SCENE OF HIS FIRST victory in his Stock Car career in 2014, Rubens Barrichello drove a faultless race under treacherous conditions and grabbed his first main-race win of the current season.

Barrichello started from pole position and survived intense pressure from series leader Felipe Fraga all the way. He also managed to save enough fuel to then be fifth in the sprint race without making a pitstop, and added 10 more points to his tally — setting a new weekend points record since the double-header system's debut in 2014.

It helped bring Barrichello to just 29 points behind Fraga (who ran out of fuel in the sprint

race) with 105 points still on the table.

The sprint race was won by Atila Abreu, who also got his car to the flag without pitting for fuel, depriving Thiago Camilo of a second sprint race win in a row. Camilo had given up fifth place in the main race by pitting for fuel to improve his victory chances in the sprint, but he had to make do with second place. Diego Nunes came home third.

LITO CAVALCANTI

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Rubens Barrichello (Chevrolet Cruze) 28 laps in 48m00.997s; 2 Felipe Fraga (Peugeot 408) +3.822s; 3 Valdeno Brito (Chevy); 4 Marcos Gomes (Peugeot); 5 Diego Nunes (Peugeot); 6 Julio Campos (Chevy). **Race 2 1 Atila Abreu (Chevy)** 19 laps in 31m41.529s; 2 Thiago Camilo (Chevy) +1.825s; 3 Nunes; 4 Max Wilson (Chevy); 5 Barrichello; 6 Galid Osman (Chevy).

Points 1 Fraga 252; 2 Barrichello 223; 3 Brito 189; 4 Gomes 165; 5 Wilson 159; 6 Nunes 159.

Edwards singing in the rain

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY (USA)
NOVEMBER 6
ROUND 34/36

WITH THE PRESSURE OF CAPTURING A coveted spot in the Homestead NASCAR Sprint Cup Chase finale mounting on the shoulders of seven drivers, a race delayed by almost six hours because of downpours was not the low-stress environment they were looking for.

After the delay, it was Carl Edwards who weathered the storm best to confirm his place alongside Jimmie Johnson at a tricky Texas Motor Speedway. The rain meant the scheduled afternoon start actually became a night race amid cooler temperatures, a green track and a set-up unsuited to the wildly different conditions.

After a handful of laps under the green and

yellow start, Joey Logano speared his Penske Ford past poleman Austin Dillon for the lead and led 158 laps out of the first 167.

Martin Truex Jr and Edwards went for the undercut during the green-flag stops at just over half race distance, and gamely used the strategy to move ahead of Logano.

And another savvy display of teamwork by the Joe Gibbs Racing crew enabled Edwards to jump Truex in the pit phase under cautions on lap 255, following a spin for Dillon.

But it wasn't plain sailing. Edwards then had to manage the caution period and subsequent restart for Dillon and Kevin Harvick touching, before a final downpour left strategists debating whether to roll the dice. Series bosses decided to end the race 40 laps shy, declaring Edwards the victor over Logano and Truex.

Kyle Busch bounced back from a torrid practice and qualifying to snatch fifth despite a raft of balance issues, outscoring fellow Chase contenders Harvick and Matt Kenseth in sixth and seventh.

RESULTS

1 Carl Edwards (Toyota Camry) 293 laps in 3h16m00s; 2 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion) +0.620s; 3 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota); 4 Chase Elliott (Chevrolet SS); 5 Kyle Busch (Toyota); 6 Kevin Harvick (Chevy); 7 Matt Kenseth (Toyota); 8 Kasey Kahne (Chevy); 9 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 10 Ryan Newman (Chevy). **Round of 8 1 Jimmie Johnson** 1 win/4074 points; 2 Edwards 1/4049; 3 Logano 0/4074; 4 Busch 0/4074; 5 Kenseth 0/4073; 6 Hamlin 0/4072; 7 Harvick 0/4056; 8 Kurt Busch 0/4040.



Edwards joined JJ as a Chase round winner

MILLER/LAT

IN BRIEF

BRAZILIAN FORMULA 3

Teenager Matheus Iorio became the new Brazilian F3 champion by grabbing his ninth victory of the season. The 19-year-old celebrated the title with second place in the following round, won from the lights to the flag by first-time victor Christian Hahn. Gustavo Samaya was second twice to secure runner-up in the championship.

FRENCH FORMULA 4

A disastrous end to the season for French F4 champion Yifei Ye opened the door for three different winners in the Barcelona season finale. Javier Cobain claimed his second victory of the campaign in the opener, before Michael Benyahia and Arthur Rougier became winners for the first time.

ASIAN CARRERA CUP

Porsche LMP1 candidate Earl Bamber won the first of the season-ending Carrera Cup Asia races at Shanghai, as Nico Menzel wrapped up the title. Bamber led home Maxime Jousse in the opening race, with Menzel third. The title rivals then repeated their positions in race two, handing Menzel the crown by eight points. Bamber withdrew from the sequel, which was won by Martin Ragginger.

SEAT LEON EURO CUP

Victory in the opening race of the Barcelona season finale put Niels Langeveld on the brink of the SEAT Leon Eurocup crown, before Stian Paulsen's retirement at the start of the final race confirmed it. Mikel Azcona inherited race-two honours after a last-lap clash between race-long leader David Cebrian and Briton Alex Morgan.

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

Johnny Sauter extended his NASCAR Trucks points lead with victory from 16th on the grid at Texas. Sauter made it back-to-back wins in the first two rounds of the Chase, completing his comeback with a round-the-outside pass on Matt Crafton two laps from home. Poleman Spencer Gallagher slipped to seventh.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

Kyle Larson (below, left) survived a lap side-by-side with Brad Keselowski to clinch the win at Texas. Larson made a round-the-outside pass stick at the final restart 30 laps from the finish. Kevin Harvick made it a Sprint Cup-dominated podium, with Joe Gibbs' Erik Jones best of the second-tier Chase contenders in fourth.



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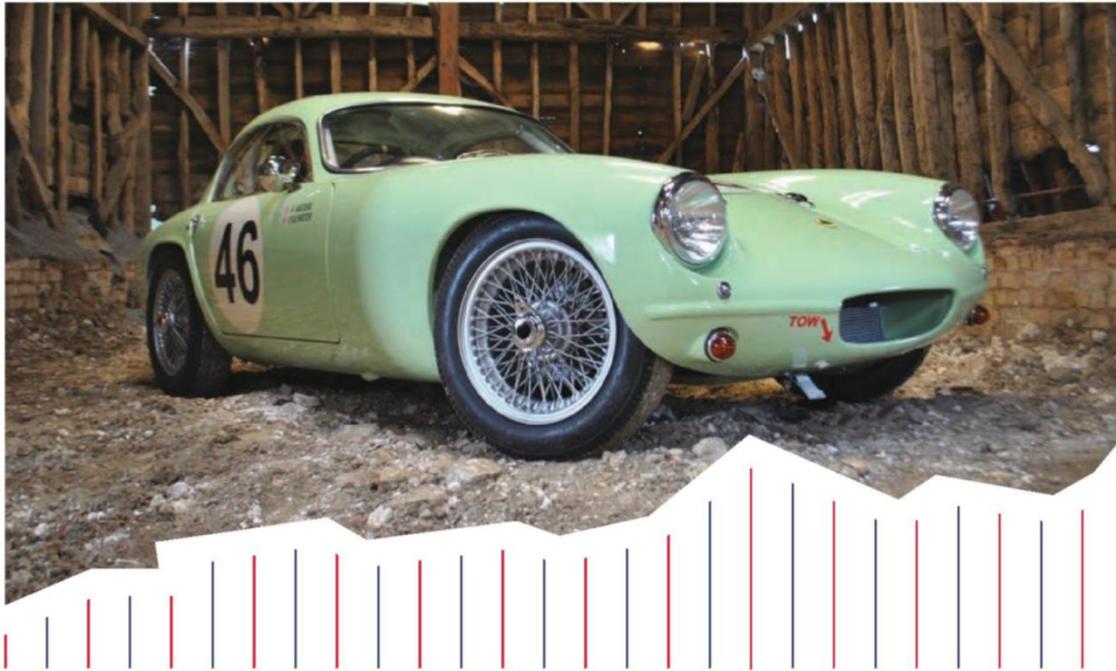
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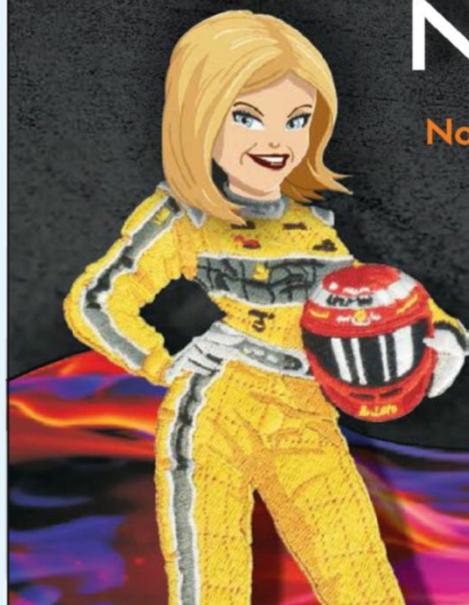
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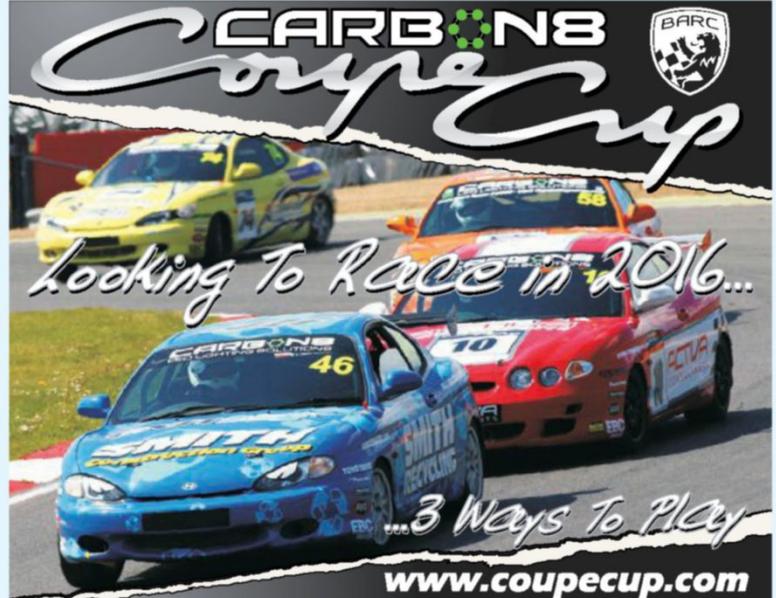
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AF Corse to join British GT grid in 2017

FACTORY FERRARI TEAM AF CORSE will return to British GT next year for a full assault on the GT3 championship with seasoned hands Matt Griffin and Duncan Cameron.

The Italian squad, which is owned by Amato Ferrari, has entered a single Ferrari 488 GT3 for works driver Griffin and experienced amateur driver Cameron. The team is also in talks to run a second 488 in the class next year.

For Griffin and Cameron the deal marks their first full British GT campaign since 2012, when they finished fourth in the points. They fought for the title almost every season since joining the championship as an MTECH-run pairing in 2009, with their best result being third overall in 2010.

In recent years the pair have enjoyed success in Europe, taking the Blancpain Endurance Pro-Am Cup title last season. They were runners-up in the European Le Mans Series GTE class in 2014 and contested the Le Mans 24 Hours twice.

“Even though we’ve been racing at the top level in recent seasons, it’s going to

be brilliant coming back to British GT,” said Irishman Griffin, 34. “I first raced in the championship in 2003 and did at least one round in it every year until 2014, and I’ve missed it.

“It’s good to have your name out there on a national level as well as international, and Britain has the best selection of circuits anywhere in the world. They’re real un-neutered tracks.”

It is expected that Griffin and Cameron will combine their British GT challenge with another as yet unconfirmed programme in Europe.

“Duncan wanted to come back this year and add British GT to our plans in Europe, and AF is the team to do it with,” said Griffin. “This will be the first time they’ve run a truly focused British GT title challenge, so we want the title, both for the team and for Duncan and I, as we definitely have unfinished business here.

“There’s been a lot of negative talk about British GT3, saying it’s dying out, but that’s not the case. We’re expecting a healthy and competitive grid.”

AF’s entry also marks the first full



Griffin (left) and Cameron have raced together since 2009

season for the new Ferrari 488 GT3 in British GT, although one did feature on the podium at Silverstone last year with Marco Attard and Adam Carroll making a one-off appearance with FF Corse.

“The 488 is a huge step up from the 458,” added Griffin. “It has 30-40% more downforce and is based on the GTE chassis, not an upgraded Challenge car.

“As technology moved on the 458 got outpaced, but the 488 will be at the front as it’s much faster in a straight line and has the downforce through the corners too.”

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BRITISHGT

Tregurtha and Middleton to pair up in GT4

GINETTA JUNIOR TITLE RIVALS WILL Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton are set to team up in British GT next year as part of HHC Motorsport's planned move into the category.

The leading Ginetta Junior team has submitted a GT4 entry for 2017, but with the class oversubscribed it has now entered the selection process that decides which teams will be on the grid.

HHC driver Tregurtha, 16, won this year's Junior crown by 40 points from Douglas Motorsport driver Middleton, 17. If HHC's application is successful, the duo will share a Ginetta G55 GT4.

"I'm really excited. I tested the GT4 Supercup

car and was fast, but the British GT-spec car is a little bit different," said Tregurtha. "Since I can remember I've been trying to watch things like the American Le Mans Series and I've always liked endurance racing; that's where I want to go.

"I'm really looking forward to working with Stuart next year. I know he's very fast, hard working and knows that we will both have to support each other to get the best out of the car.

"There were times like Thruxton where we were together, but we drove really calmly and didn't take each other off, unlike some others.

"We're racing together at the moment to get our licences, as well as do some team bonding for 2017."

In a step towards gaining the six signatures required for an International C licence, Tregurtha appeared in the Open Wheel Allcomers race at last weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy driving HHC's Reynard SF79 Historic Formula Ford 2000, while Middleton competed in an Elden Mk8. The two also raced Ginetta G40s in the Closed Wheel race, with Tregurtha beating Middleton by one place in 15th.

HHC team boss Charlie Kemp said: "It's our long-term aim to run a second car in GT4 and also operate an entry in GT3 as well, so our commitments to the British GT Championship is absolute as we aim to make this our home for the foreseeable future."

CARRERACUPGB

JTR starts testing for debut campaign

LE MANS 24 HOURS winner Nick Tandy's JTR team has started Porsche Carrera Cup GB testing, and could run up to four cars in the championship next season.

The multiple British Formula Ford title-winning squad confirmed in July that it would expand into the Carrera Cup. It is now considering running four cars due to the level of driver interest.

"There are a lot of drivers who want to do the Carrera Cup next year, particularly with

the Le Mans support race," said factory Porsche driver Tandy.

"Operationally, it doesn't make much difference whether we run three or four cars."

Those to have tested with the team include Tio Ellinas, Lewis Plato, Ryan Ratcliffe and Patrik Matthiesen.

"From day one we've had a good basic set-up from my testing with the factory cars and with other teams," Tandy added. "We know the car is on the pace."



CARRERACUPGB

Sullivan eyeing Porsche move

AUSTRALIAN RACER LIAM SULLIVAN TESTED a Porsche Carrera Cup car last week ahead of a prospective move into the category in 2017.

The 2015 Mighty Mini champion came to the UK in '14 after winning national karting championships in Australia.

Despite visa issues, which have prevented him from competing regularly, 26-year-old Sullivan is in advanced talks with race-winning outfit Parr Motorsport to join the Carrera Cup full-time next year.

"I was chatting to some teams and Porsche gave me a call and offered me a test after being impressed with my CV," said Sullivan, who drove the car last Wednesday (November 2).

"I've been talking to Parr Motorsport, but we haven't finalised anything. But we're in advanced discussions with them."



BRITISH F3

Owen targets BRDC F3 graduation

AMERICAN RACER CHASE OWEN IS IN talks about a move into the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship next year with the Hillspeed/Cliff Dempsey Racing partnership.

Owen, 23, contested the National FF1600 Championship with Dempsey's team this year and recently tested one of the Tatuus-Cosworth F3 cars at Silverstone.

The team has already signed 15-year-old Jordan Cane, but has two other cars available.

"It makes sense for me to keep racing in the UK as budgets in America have gone up a lot recently," said Owen, who was 12th in last weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy (above).

"I couldn't stop laughing after testing the F3 – it's stupidly fast compared to my FF1600. Things like the downforce and the paddleshift gearbox make it feel so good. I'm talking to the team and we'll arrange a second test soon and see where we go from there."

IN BRIEF



TOTAL CONTROL RACING TO ENTER BGT

Total Control Racing is poised to make its British GT debut next season after lodging a GT4 class entry. TCR wants to field two Ginetta G55 GT4s as it looks to expand beyond its current GT4 Supercup and Ginetta Junior programmes. "We've always wanted that link from our junior series into professional GT or touring car racing and GT4 is the best place at the moment," said team boss Lee Brookes. GT4 Supercup podium finisher Callum Pointon (above) is in contention for one of the seats, after finishing sixth in the Supercup this year with TCR.

OLIPHANT SET FOR MIDDLE EAST BOW

Porsche Carrera Cup GB driver Tom Oliphant will contest the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East over the winter as part of his preparations for 2017. Oliphant finished fourth in his first season in the Carrera Cup this year and plans to return to the series next year, but has yet to sign a deal. "Through the winter you can't really test in the UK, so it's a logical thing – plus there are six races, so I'll never effectively stop racing; I shouldn't be rusty when it comes to the start of next season," he said.

LEE BREAKS RECORDS IN PICKUPS

Freddie Lee broke a host of BARC Pickup Championship records at Brands Hatch last weekend. The 19-year-old became the youngest ever series champion, while also becoming the first person to take the Pro1 (2016) and Pro2 (2014) championships. "I think we had the pace last year but lacked the maturity," he said. "This year I've concentrated on making the top six and that has paid off."

GOUGH TESTS GT4 MASERATI

Ex-National FF1600 champion Stuart Gough is eyeing a move into GT racing next season. "I think it'll be sportscars next as GT4 has grown so much," said Gough, who tested Ebor GT's Maserati last month. Gough also contested last weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy in a Spectrum.

HAMILTON RETURNS IN WHT

Matt Hamilton returned to single-seater racing for the first time in eight years at the Walter Hayes Trophy last weekend. Hamilton, who finished sixth in the 2008 British Formula Ford championship, took second in the opening heat and ended up 15th in the final.



BRITISH F4

Sharp Motorsport steps into British F4

A BRAND NEW TEAM WILL enter British F4 next year, pledging to help young drivers who are short of money.

Sharp Motorsport is the brainchild of transport company boss Joe Sharp and was created to give his son Jamie a chance to race in the BTCC support category.

Sharp Jr is a member of the Arden Young Racing Driver Academy, but struggled to raise the budget to race in F4.

"We are starting our own F4 team to give kids a chance," said Sharp. "We looked into it and decided to do it ourselves."

Sharp Sr added that the team could potentially run

as many as three cars in 2017.

"We ordered the first car last week so it's starting to get real," he said. "We want to give the kids the best chance we can so if that means buying brand new cars, we'll buy brand new cars."

"We're very excited and F4 has welcomed us."



GINETTA JUNIOR

Milner joins Elite for Winter Series

JUNIOR SALOON CAR TITLE CONTENDER Katie Milner will compete in the Ginetta Junior Winter Series at Brands Hatch this weekend as part of an expanded line-up for Elite Motorsport.

Milner finished second in the JSCC points, but could be promoted to champion if her technical exclusion at Knockhill is overturned in an upcoming court hearing. She will be too old to race in Ginetta Junior next year, but will use the Winter Series to gain experience in

the G40 as she considers a move into the GT5 Challenge, which uses the same car.

"GT5 is the perfect option at the moment, but we've not made any decisions," said her double British Rally champion father Jonny.

Milner Jr will join Harry King and Greg Johnson at the team.

"We've done three test days with Katie and she took to it extremely well," said boss Eddie Ives. "She's still got a bit of outright pace to find, but should be fine by the Winter Series."

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Jackie Stewart pays his respects to Walter Hayes

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@Autosport](#)

THAT SIR JACKIE STEWART WAS AT SILVERSTONE last Sunday afternoon to present the Walter Hayes Trophy awards speaks volumes for his respect for Ford's great visionary, who did so much for JYS's career.

As the only three-time Cosworth DFV-powered Formula 1 world champion – racing a pair of Tyrrell-run Matra-Ford MS80s in 1969 and Ken's eponymous chassis in '71 and '73 – the ultra-loyal Scot knows better than anybody the magnitude of Blue Oval PR chief Hayes' contribution to both the company and its motorsport influence.

Hayes' elegantly expedited deal for Ford to badge Keith Duckworth and Mike Costin's magnificent Cosworth DFV engine – with 155 grand prix victories between 1967 and '83 the most successful power unit in F1 history – and espousal of Formula Ford in '67, which begat nine F1 champions in the DFV era alone, was pure genius.

An enthusiast of the highest order, the former journalist inspired his board to wield the corporate chequebook prudently. Never has a motor manufacturer derived such long-term benefit from the sport so cheaply.

James Beckett might not have the financial clout to underpin his racing vision, but he is another good guy who recognises incredible value and has always made a little go a long way with his own promotions.

Following Hayes' passing in December 2000, Beckett inaugurated the WHT as an FF1600 race within the BRDC's final Silverstone Historic Festival of 2001, won by Neil Fowler, who went on to claim five successive Historic Sports Car Club championships. Beckett then went it alone. With unstinting support from the Formula Ford fraternity, his tireless efforts have grown the end-of-term fixture into a multi-faceted

showpiece run by the circuit-based HSCC with global focus and more than 100 entries.

Such is the popularity of the frenetic season-closer that many old-stagers turn out to watch. Among those in the BRDC on Sunday were Julian Bailey, Alan Cornock, Ralph Firman, Rick Morris, the indomitable Roger Pedrick and John Village, now enjoying Classic FF1600 with a Crossle 25F. Morris – who has raced in Australia and South Africa this season – was talking excitedly of joining fellow champion of the '70s JV next season, having recently acquired a Royale RP26.

Also in the clubhouse was smiling veteran Robs Lamplough, delighted to have made his FF debut in a 1969 Winkelmann WDF2, effectively the US-market version of the Len Wimhurst-designed Palliser chassis his brother Peter raced successfully in '71.

Having started competing in April 1962 and reached the lofty echelons of F2 and early F5000 (he still has the unique Lamplola), Lamplough has long adored his historic racing. The accomplished warbird pilot will be racing his FJunior Brabham BT2 at Hampton Downs and Taupo in New Zealand in January.

Back home, Formula Ford's 50th anniversary will be widely celebrated in 2017. Exactly half a century after Ray Allen won the first FF race there on July 2 1967, the season's focal point will undoubtedly be the HSCC's Historic championship rounds for pre-'72 cars (run annually since '95) at its Legends of Brands Hatch Superprix. As devotees watch capacity fields of competitors from 17 to past 70, battling it out on the Grand Prix circuit, everybody can thank promoter John Webb, Ford competition manager Henry Taylor, Motor Racing Stables' Geoff Clarke and Hayes for establishing the greatest single-seater training class in history. 🍀



DODGY DODGE FOILS SHADOW

A second Dodge engine failure in three years thwarted Rob Hall's test in the ex-Jackie Oliver Formula 5000 Shadow within a few laps at Donington last Thursday. Owned by Hall's father Rick, DN6/2A was crashed at Long Beach in 1975. It may reappear next with Chevrolet V8 power, per its early-season specification.

COLIN FOLWELL 1939-2016

Big-hearted Colin Folwell, founder of Corbeau Equipe, died at his home on October 29 following a short illness. Club racer Folwell began making specialist competition car seats in his garden shed. Founded in 1963, to satisfy demand, Corbeau grew rapidly through quality and dynamic marketing. At the end of '73 Folwell bought Tony Hazlewood's DAF V8 to keep the Super Saloon prime mover racing. This, and support for other aspiring drivers, was typical of the generosity for which Colin was renowned and loved by all whose lives his enthusiasm and laugh enriched. To his wife Nessie and son Ben, Autosport extends sincere condolences. A memorial party will be held in the Kentagon at Brands Hatch from midday on Wednesday, November 23.



JORDAN DRIVES IRISH BENZ

F1 pundit Eddie Jordan completed Sunday's London-Brighton Veteran Car Run in a 1902 Benz, among fewer than 30 cars on Ireland's roads when delivered to Mercedes-Benz performance instructor Austin Kinsella's grandfather. Owned by Mercedes since '69, it last did the run in '82 with *Motor Sport* founder Bill Boddy up.

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Murray leads in final's atrocious weather

"I'm delighted with that – I did 1m02.2s, so I'm really happy," he said after the race. "I had to pull the whole bar forward to change gear and spent a whole lap just in fourth. Every time I changed gear it was in a different place."

Gear linkage fixed for the first semi, Murray surged from fourth on the grid to lead into Becketts and was untroubled thereafter.

If anything, Askew's path to the final was slightly more straightforward. He won his heat comfortably after a host of his key rivals were taken out of contention (see right), and was also victorious in the second semi after making a brilliant move around the outside of both Foster and Michael Moyers at Brooklands on the final tour.

He carried that form into the final and took the runner-up spot despite it being his first ever wet race, finishing some nine seconds clear of the fight for third.

"The conditions were completely different and I had to adapt," said Ray GR15 driver Askew. "I made a little mistake but he [Murray] was unbelievable, I learned so much from all those guys. I don't want to leave [England]!"

While the lead battle was dull, the fight for third – or first, as Fisher thought – was anything but. A host of different drivers occupied the position before dropping back, with Moyers the first to hold the place and then lose it on the opening lap.

"I dropped it on my own [at Luffield]," he said. "Joey was up the inside of me and I turned in alright, but then the car decided it didn't want to turn. I got out of the gravel but the clutch failed."

He was to be far from the only one caught out in visibility he described as "the worst I have ever experienced".

Next up to inherit and lose third was Foster, who had earlier taken a memorable win in heat four after a tremendous battle throughout with Luke Williams, Moyers and Chase Owen. But he was passed by Rob Hall around the outside of Luffield before spinning at Becketts and eventually taking 10th.

It wasn't long before Hall was the prey of the charging Kirkwood and Fisher, with third finally being settled by that stunning move from Van Diemen RF99 driver Fisher on the final lap.

"I've got mixed emotions really – I thought I had won!" he said. "Still, >>

The stars who failed to match their potential

WHILE KYLE KIRKWOOD SOAKED UP THE ATTENTION with his drive from row 12 to fourth in the final, he was one of a sextet of star drivers facing an early start on Sunday in the 9am Progression race.

Combe Carnival winner Ben Norton claimed pole for heat one, but that was the zenith of his weekend as he tangled with Kirkwood at Brooklands mid-race. The pair were one-two again come Sunday morning, but by the time Norton grabbed second (from row nine) at Becketts on lap two of the Progression, Kirkwood was already up the road. The Wiltshire College-run Spectrum advanced through two more races to line up on row 13 for the final, by which time the conditions had changed. "It was too much for me," Norton said after retiring two laps in. "I couldn't see a thing and can't afford the repair bill."

Scottish teenager Jamie Thorburn blew his Ray's engine during heat two, prompting an overnight change to one last used years earlier by his father Stuart. That saw him safely through to the second semi, but electrical issues forced him out on lap two.

Australian Scott Andrews was promoted to a top-three finish in the 2015 WHT, and he was twice on the podium on Sunday with third in the Progression race and a narrow victory over Stephen Daly in the Last Chance clash. His involvement was a result of gearbox issues that blighted qualifying and caused him to retire from sixth in heat five. His hopes of a berth in the final were ended by a spin at Luffield in the first semi-final.

Saturday's biggest incident came on lap two of the final heat. Attempting to brake for Becketts on an oil slick, Daly climbed over the top of James Raven's Ray, leaving the latter's steering wheel L-shaped. Both climbed through the repechage to reach the final, Raven netting eighth and Daly 13th after a spin.

Last year's Hayes winner Graham Carroll was also caught up in the heat incident, but took the restart and went straight through to the semis. Complaining of a lack of straightline speed, he did a rain dance before the final, but even that was not enough and he finished 17th.

At least they made it as far as the weekend: twice runner-up Oliver White had engine woes on two separate cars during testing (Richard Tarling offered his RF80 after the original failure), while 2008 Vee champion Daniel Hands and Michael Beaver were both ruled out with weekday accident damage.

IAN SOWMAN





Tofts took historic consolation victory in Reynard 88F

JONES

McArthur takes historic trophy as older cars struggle

GONE, IT WOULD SEEM, ARE THE DAYS WHEN drivers can turn up to the Walter Hayes Trophy in a venerable machine from the halcyon days of Kent-engined Formula Ford and spring a surprise against more modern machinery, as the much-missed David Leslie and Neil Cunningham did in years gone by. Indeed, only four cars from the pre-Zetec era progressed to the Grand Final, Joe Porter (Van Diemen RF92) the highest placed of those. The Janet Cesar Trophy was awarded to the highest placed Historic car (pre-'90 for these purposes) in the final, Tom McArthur (RF89) taking that from Ryan Campbell after switching from his modern mount.

The Historic consolation race was won convincingly by Neil Tofts (Reynard 88FF), who was aided when Nigel Thompson (Van Diemen RF88) aquaplaned off at Copse while challenging for the lead. Such was the advantage over the rest that Thompson retained second, while Andrew Blair's Reynard completed the podium after Mark Armstrong's RF80 fell sick.

Fernando Ribeiro held the Silverstone club circuit FF1600 lap record in 1979, and 36 years after his last race at the circuit took a creditable eighth.

Two legendary drivers from the Zetec era of Formula Ford also made their return, with Kevin McGarrity finishing the final in 29th. His rival from the 1995 season, Bas Leinders, had to be content with seventh in the non-Historic consolation race (a new initiative for 2016), after a spin in his semi-final, an incident that also ruled Matt Cowley out of the final.

Scott Andrews and Ian Gough were among the favourites for the Extra Go Trophy, as the bonus race was dubbed, but Andrews went off at Brooklands on lap one and was collected by first Adam Higgins and then Gaius Ghinn as he rejoined. Gough, who had an airborne moment in his heat and was pushed into a spin in the semi, tangled with Luciano Carvalho at Becketts.

That left Frenchman Thomas Cappelzone (Swift SC16) to take the win from Jack Wolfenden, while Alex Ames regained third on the final lap after Cowley erred at Becketts.

IAN SOWMAN



Heat four was the pick of the races, with Foster (r), Williams (95) and Moyers (25) all in the fight

from 19th on the grid to third is good."

He could well have actually fought for the win but for a spin while tussling with Stuart Gough on the final lap of his semi that cost him several places and resulted in his lowly grid spot.

But it was Kirkwood who arguably provided the story of the weekend. The Cliff Dempsey Racing driver seemed down and out after a collision with Ben Norton while fighting for the lead of the opening heat. "We can only go forward from here," he said afterwards on Saturday.

And on Sunday that's exactly what he did. The Ray GR08 driver gained a whopping 72 places through the Progression race, Last Chance, semi-final one and then the final to eventually come home an incredible fourth.

"I just had a really good start," he enthused. "I went on the inside of Becketts and found a lot more grip there and mobbed by everyone."

But Kirkwood was also caught out by Fisher's confusion. "I didn't know where [position] I was," he said. "I knew Fisher was quick and I pretty much let him by — then I saw him celebrating and thought I'd let him win!"

"From 23rd to fourth and from yesterday I had no hope."

Behind Kirkwood were Hall and Chris Middlehurst — who just like in the Festival came on strong when it really mattered — as Boyd ended up seventh after losing a handful of places with a spin early on.

In a final brimming with quality drivers there were a host of other star names who eventually dropped back



Boyd won a heat in new Medina JL16K

after being part of the fight for third.

Gough pushed Hall hard for the win in the second heat but seemed to struggle in the wet, falling back to ninth in his Kevin Mills Spectrum.

Previous podium finisher Rob Barrable wound up 11th after a spin at Brooklands, while heat one winner Jordan Dempsey was 21st after an excursion at Luffield on the opening tour. That was just one place behind another heat winner, with Ed Moore languishing down in 20th.

Heat four stars Owen and Williams also had disappointing ends to their meetings, with Owen dropping to 12th by the finish and Firman RF1600 driver Williams being the victim of a collision with Canadian scholarship driver Parker Thompson.

But while these drivers weren't quite able to deliver on the promise they had shown, winner Murray heads into his Mazda Road to Indy scholarship shootout brimming with confidence.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Allcomer races add diversity to WHT event

THE ALLCOMERS' SUPPORT races for the 16th annual Walter Hayes Trophy added a dash of variety to the weekend, with a wide variety of cars, ranging from pre-'70s classics to modern hot hatchbacks, competing in four one-off races.

The most exciting battle came at the start of the weekend, with George Daws in his Merlyn battling Chas Mallard's Chevrolet Camaro for race victory in the Pre-1970 race.

However Mallard's attempt to hold off Daws for the win proved to be in vain, as he suffered an engine failure on the last lap.

Andrew Schryver

dominated the post-1969 race, bringing his Chevron home 55 seconds ahead of Mark Wright's Ford Sierra RS500. Wright recovered well after a bad start, having slipped back to sixth in the early stages.

In the only open-wheel race, polesitter Cian Carey recovered after an early spin to finish second. His mishap handed Jamie Brashaw the victory in his March 73A.

The Radical PR6 in the hands of Jon-Paul Ivey dominated the final allcomers race of the weekend. In the only car in his class, Ivey lapped the entire field in a race he described as "boring".

JORDAN HARVEY

RESULTS

WALTER HAYES TROPHY HEAT 1 (8 LAPS) 1 Jordan Dempsey

(Van Diemen LA10); 2 Matt Hamilton (Van Diemen RF00) +3.654s; 3 Rob Barrable (Van Diemen RF02); 4 Andy Charsley (Ray GR15); 5 Patrick Pasma (Mygale SJ08); 6 Luke Cooper (Swift SC16). **Class winner** Jonathan Miles (Van Diemen RF89). **Fastest lap** Cooper 1m03.191s (93.37mph).

Pole Ben Norton (Spectrum 010B). **Starters** 19.

HEAT 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Rob Hall

(Ray GR16); 2 Stuart Gough (Spectrum 011C) +0.121s; 3 Felix Fisher (Van Diemen RF02); 4 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14); 5 Joe Porter (Van Diemen RF92); 6 Chris Acton (Ray GR08). **CW** Klaus Dieter-Hackel (Van Diemen RF88). **FL** Gough 1m02.785s (93.98mph). **P** Hall. **S** 17.

HEAT 3 (8 LAPS) 1 Wayne Boyd

(Medina JL16K); 2 Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99) +0.093s; 3 Josh Fisher (Van Diemen RF99); 4 David McArthur (Van Diemen LA10); 5 Geoff Richardson (Van Diemen RF03); 6 Jack Wolfenden (Van Diemen RF01). **CW** Neil Tofts (Reynard 88FF). **FL** Murray 1m02.299s (94.71mph). **P** D McArthur. **S** 16.

HEAT 4 (8 LAPS) 1 Joey Foster

(Ray GR08); 2 Luke Williams (Firman RF1600) +0.249s; 3 Michael Moyers (Spectrum 011C); 4 Joshua Smith (Van Diemen JL013K); 5 Abdul Ahmed (Ray GRK09); 6 Chase Owen (Ray GR14/15). **CW** Tom McArthur (Van Diemen RF89). **FL** Ahmed 1m02.804s (93.95mph). **P** Foster. **S** 19.

HEAT 5 (8 LAPS) 1 Ed Moore

(Van Diemen JL013K); 2 Parker Thompson (Ray GR08) +0.484s; 3 Neville Smyth (Ray GR12); 4 Richard Tarling (Van Diemen JL16); 5 Matthew Cowley (Van Diemen JL013); 6 Thomas Capezzone (Swift SC16).

CW James Lovett (Lola T200).

FL Scott Andrews (Spectrum 011) 1m02.817s (93.93mph).

P Thompson. **S** 17.

HEAT 6 (8 LAPS) 1 Oliver Askew

(Ray GR15); 2 Graham Carroll (Firman RF1600) +8.188s; 3 Bas Leinders (Ray GR15); 4 Ryan Campbell (Reynard 89FF); 5 Alex Ames (Ray GR11); 6 Rory Smith (Van Diemen JL15K).

CW Campbell. **FL** Askew 1m02.841s (93.89mph). **P** Askew. **S** 20.

PROGRESSION (10 LAPS) 1 Kyle

Kirkwood (Ray GR08); 2 Norton +5.034s; 3 Andrews; 4 Stephen Daly (Ray GR11); 5 James Raven (Ray GR12); 6 Jamie Thorburn (Ray GR15). **CW** Jaap Blijleven (Reynard 88FF). **FL** Andrews 1m02.809s (93.94mph). **P** Ian McCulla (Reynard 83FF). **S** 23.

LAST CHANCE (10 LAPS)

1 Andrews; 2 Daly +0.060s; 3 Kirkwood; 4 Norton; 5 Adam Higgins (Van Diemen JL12); 6 Bob Higgins (Van Diemen RF90).

CW Wayne Poole (Van Diemen RF89). **FL** Kirkwood 1m02.286 (94.73mph). **P** Daniel O'Beirne (Swift SC95). **S** 36.

SEMI FINAL 1 (12 LAPS)

1 Murray; 2 Boyd +0.199s; 3 Gough; 4 Hall; 5 Dempsey; 6 Hamilton.

CW Tofts. **FL** Murray 1m02.527s (94.37mph). **P** Boyd. **S** 36.

SEMI FINAL 2 (12 LAPS)

1 Askew; 2 Moyers +0.097s; 3 Foster; 4 Thompson; 5 Williams; 6 Tarling. **CW** T McArthur. **FL** Thompson 1m02.694s (94.11mph). **P** Askew. **S** 36.

NON-HISTORIC CONSOLATION (12 LAPS) 1 Capezzone;

2 Wolfenden +4.405s; 3 Ames; 4 Nigel Dolan (Van Diemen JL012K); 5 Cowley; 6 Acton. **FL** Ian Gough (Van Diemen DP08) 1m14.254s (79.46mph). **P** Capezzone. **S** 30.

HISTORIC CONSOLATION (12 LAPS) 1 Tofts;

2 Nigel Thompson (Van Diemen RF88) +9.561s; 3 Andrew Blair (Reynard 84FF); 4 Tom Brown (Van Diemen RF79); 5 Poole; 6 Blijleven. **FL** N Thompson 1m16.746s (76.88mph). **P** Tofts. **S** 35.

FINAL (15 LAPS) 1 Murray;

2 Askew +8.543s; 3 J Fisher; 4 Kirkwood; 5 Hall; 6 Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10); 7 Boyd; 8 Raven; 9 S Gough; 10 Foster. **CW** T McArthur. **FL** P Thompson 1m12.307s (81.60mph). **P** Murray. **S** 36.

HSCC CLOSED-WHEEL

ALLCOMERS PRE-'70 (20 LAPS)

1 George Daws (Merlyn Mk6A); 2 Tom Smith (Marcos 1800GT) +25.770s; 3 Alan Bull (Jaguar E-type); 4 Mike Gardiner (Ford Falcon); 5 John Muirhead (Lotus Super 7); 6 Mark Jordan (Ginetta G4). **CW** Smith; Gardiner; Steve Smith (MG A). **FL** Chas Mallard (Chevrolet Camaro) 1m05.999s (89.40mph). **P** Daws. **S** 24.

HSCC CLOSED-WHEEL

ALLCOMERS POST-'69 (20 LAPS)

1 Andrew Schryver (Chevron B26); 2 Mark Wright (Ford Sierra RS500) +55.078s; 3 Myles Castaldini (Davrian Mk8); 4 Roger Waite (Royale S2000M); 5 John Truslove (Chevrolet Camaro); 6 Tony Bianchi (Chevron B52). **CW** Wright; Castaldini; Waite; Darren Rayfield (Lancia Monte Carlo). **FL** Schryver 1m00.263s (94.91mph). **P** Schryver. **S** 16.

ALLCOMERS OPEN-WHEEL (20 LAPS) 1 Jamie Brashaw

(March 73A); 2 Cian Carey (Dallara F311) +1.010s; 3 Neil Glover (Chevron B37); 4 Chris Hodgen (Dallara F304); 5 Neil Hunt (Tatuus MSV F4-016); 6 Chris Davison (Dallara F301). **CW** Carey; Andrew Smith (March 78B); Will Tregurtha (Reynard SF79). **FL** Carey 54.216s (108.83mph). **P** Carey. **S** 15.

ALLCOMERS CLOSED-WHEEL (20 LAPS) 1 Jon-Paul Ivey

(Radical PR6); 2 Richard Fearn (Radical SR8) -1 lap; 3 Oliver Bryant (Lola T70 Spyder); 4 Tim Gray (BMW E46 M3); 5 Stephen Bracegirdle (Nemesis RME 98); 6 Tony Jones (Toyota MR2).

CW Fearn; Gray; Bracegirdle; Philip Hart (Mallock Mk16); Alex Osborne (Austin Mini). **FL** Fearn 58.980s (100.07mph). **P** Ivey. **S** 28.





BRANDS HATCH
BARC NOVEMBER 5-6

Smith articulates the BTRC title

THE BRITISH TRUCK RACING Championship Division One title was decided in last Saturday's first encounter at Brands Hatch. Ryan Smith earned second place – and the crown – in race one, almost glued to the back of victor and 10-time champion Stuart Oliver.

Smith only needed two points from the weekend, but still harried his rival and only missed out on victory by less than half a second. Smith won again in Sunday's first race, though Oly Janes came close, ahead of Ray Coleman in third. The last race was cancelled after an accident off the startline, as Luke Garrett's Renault briefly went airborne during a heart-stopping few seconds.

The pre-final on Sunday had Oliver and his son Michael facing off for third place, but it was the father who claimed the spot. Smith won that encounter, as Shane Brereton put in a fantastic effort to finish in second.

The final was a completely different story: the circuit was wet, dark and windy. Simon Reid's Iveco finished nearly half a minute ahead of second-place David Jenkins, while Oliver Sr rounded off a consistent weekend with third.

Adam Bint picked up a class victory in the final, and even though things were all wrapped up for him, there was a diverse and international entry in Division Two.

Mika Makinen, four-time Finnish truck racing champion, claimed victory on his first visit to Brands Hatch in the first of the class's individual races on Saturday over Belgian brothers Frans and

Rody Smit. Frans took victory in the second race, with Rody third and Paul McCumisky splitting the pair. Frans repeated the feat in the last Division Two race on Sunday, over Makinen and Ryan Colson.

Connor Mills narrowly missed out on victory in Saturday's first Legends race, as Jack Parker took first place on the run to the line, while Sebastian Kluyskens came third. Mills and Parker swapped places for Saturday's second race, while series champion John Mickel took third. Mickel then won the third Saturday encounter by inches over Thomas Grainger, as Parker came third.

The new day brought little change in results as Mickel again won in Sunday's first race, though Matthew Pape and Parker came close in second and third respectively. British Touring Car racer Rob Austin made a cameo with second in the next race despite suffering brake problems, trailing Mills, who took his

Ryan Smith (88) earned the BTRC title with second in race one.

second victory of the weekend. Parker ended the weekend with a win in the damp and dark conditions of the finale, while Kluyskens roared from near the back of the grid to earn second from Sean Smith.

The final round of the Pickup Truck Racing Championship took place on Sunday, with Freddie Lee needing only the points for 14th to win the crown. That proved to be no trouble at all as he took fourth in the first race, which just 12 cars started. Former BTCC racer Lea Wood won his fifth race of the season, with Scott Bourne second and Paul Jones in third ahead of new champion Lee.

Two-time series champion Michael Smith won the second affair, having moved ahead at the start before cementing a comfortable lead. Carl Boardley took second late on with a classic late-braking move on Wood into the perilously slippery Paddock Hill Bend.

Chris Bassett picked up a win in Saturday's first Tin Tops Championship race. The Peugeot 205 GTi driver enjoyed a sizeable gap between him and Daniel Fisher (Honda Civic Type R). Robert Hosier was third and took a class victory in his SEAT Leon. The second race was tougher, as Bassett and Fisher traded laps until coolant leaked onto Bassett's front tyres and he spun, handing Fisher a first win of the season. Mikey Day, in third, took the T3 class win.

The first of the Intermarque Championship races was a damp affair, with Ricky Hunn taking victory ahead of Malcolm Blackman and Richard Smith.





Anthony Bennett was the first of the Caterhams to cross the line, winning his class and finishing 14th overall. Race two took place on a slowly drying track, and produced the best overtake of the weekend as Steve Burrows took third in a three-wide move around the outside at Druids. In second was Simon Smith, who snatched the lead on the first lap but lost it as Blackman charged through, winning by a wide margin.

Dale Gent's Subaru Impreza comfortably won both races for the Quaife Saloon Championship, although the weather cut proceedings short – the second race was red-flagged owing to rain. Rod Birley won the championship with a third and then a second in his Ford Escort, while Tony Skelton's Renault filled in the podium gaps, finishing second and third.

SAMARTH KANAL

Gent took two Saloon successes in his Subaru Impreza

RESULTS

BRITISH TRUCK RACING ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISION ONE (16 LAPS)

1 Stuart Oliver (Volvo RH13);
2 Ryan Smith (MAN TGA) +0.421s;
3 Mat Summerfield (MAN TGX);
4 Shane Brereton (MAN TGA Euro 6);
5 David Jenkins (MAN TGX);
6 Simon Reid (Iveco Stralis).

Fastest lap Smith 1m01.340s (70.89mph). **Pole** S Oliver.

Starters 11.

RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 Smith;
2 Oly Janes (Buggrya-Freightliner Big-Boy-16) +7.619s; 3 Ray Coleman (MAN TG); 4 Brereton;
5 Jenkins; 6 Steve Powell (MAN).

Class winners Smith; Frans Smit (Scania T112). **FL** Smith 1m01.748s (70.42mph).

P Janes. **S** 16. **RACE 3** abandoned.

PRE-FINAL (11 LAPS) 1 Smith;
2 Brereton +2.366s; 3 S Oliver;
4 Summerfield; 5 Michael Oliver (Scania); 6 Janes. **CW** John Powell (Ford Cargo). **FL** Smith 1m00.337s (72.07mph). **P** M Oliver. **S** 15.

FINAL (8 LAPS) 1 Reid;

2 Jenkins +26.291s; 3 S Oliver;
4 Summerfield; 5 Brereton;
6 Smith. **CW** Adam Bint (Volvo Aerodyne). **FL** Reid 1m16.040s (57.18mph). **P** S Powell. **S** 17.

DIVISION TWO (14 LAPS)

1 Mika Makinen (Sisu SL250);
2 Frans Smit (Scania T112) +0.216s;
3 Rody Smit (Volvo F12); 4 Simon Cole (Mercedes Truck); 5 Marco Donk (Volvo VM); 6 Manuel Rodriguez (Volvo). **FL** Rodriguez 1m12.530s (59.95mph). **P** F Smit. **S** 13. **RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 F Smit;**
2 Paul McCumisky (Volvo FM12) +3.741s; 3 R Smit; 4 Rodriguez;
5 Jim Bennett (Seddon Atkinson); 6 Donk. **FL** R Smit 1m04.334s (67.59mph). **P** Trevor Martin. **S** 14.

RACE 3 (14 LAPS) 1 F Smit;

2 Makinen +8.108s; 3 Ryan Colson (Foden Alpha); 4 McCumisky;
5 Adam Bint (Volvo Aerodyne); 6 Rodriguez. **FL** F Smit 1m03.213s (68.79mph). **P** J Powell. **S** 14.

LEGENDS (10 LAPS)

1 Jack Parker (34 Ford Coupe);
2 Connor Mills (34 Ford Coupe) +0.388s; 3 Sebastian Kluyskens



Jenkins leads the pack in the BTRC final

(Chevy Coupe); 4 Matthew Pape (34 Ford Coupe); 5 Sean Smith (34 Ford Coupe); 6 Stephen Whitelegg (Coupe 1250). **FL** Pape 1m08.932s (63.08mph). **P** Parker. **S** 30.

RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Mills;
2 Parker +0.134s; 3 John Mickel (34 Ford Coupe); 4 Pape;

5 Kluyskens; 6 Jean-Michel Poncelet (34 Ford Coupe). **FL** Parker 1m02.021s (70.11mph).

P Mickel. **S** 30. **RACE 3 (14 LAPS)**

1 Mickel; 2 Thomas Grainger (34 Ford Coupe) +0.088s; 3 Parker; 4 Pape; 5 Mills; 6 Whitelegg. **FL** Pape 55.776s (77.96 mph).

P Mercer. **S** 30. **RACE 4 (10 LAPS)**

1 Mickel; 2 Pape +0.276s; 3 Parker; 4 Matt Allen (34 Ford Coupe); 5 Mills; 6 Paul Simmons (34 Ford Coupe). **FL** Parker 55.853s (77.85mph). **P** Mickel. **S** 30.

RACE 5 (12 LAPS) 1 Mills; 2 Rob Austin (Sevan) +1.308s; 3 Parker; 4 Kluyskens; 5 Robert King (34 Ford Coupe); 6 Mickel. **FL** Austin 55.705s (78.06mph). **P** Smith. **S** 30.

RACE 6 (10 LAPS) 1 Parker;
2 Kluyskens +4.997s; 3 Smith; 4 Mills; 5 Grainger; 6 Austin. **FL** Kluyskens 1m12.723s (59.79mph).

P Nathan Anthony (Sevan). **S** 30.

PICKUPS (16 LAPS) 1 Lea Wood;
2 Scott Bourne +0.420s; 3 Paul Jones; 4 Freddie Lee; 5 Mark Willis; 6 David Weaver. **FL** Bourne 52.433s (82.93mph).

P David O'Regan. **S** 12.

RACE 2 (18 LAPS) 1 Michael Smith; 2 Carl Boardley +1.089s; 3 Wood; 4 Bourne; 5 O'Regan; 6 Antony Hawkins. **FL** Boardley 52.206s (83.29mph). **P** Smith. **S** 16.

TIN TOPS (16 LAPS) 1 Chris Bassett (Peugeot 205 GTI);
2 Daniel Fisher (Honda Civic Type R) +5.337s; 3 Robert Hosier (SEAT Leon); 4 Vic Hope (Honda Civic

Type R); 5 Mikey Day (Citroen Saxo); 6 Danny Brooker (Mini Cooper S). **CW** Hosier; Day; Clifford Pellin (Ford Fiesta ST150). **FL** Fisher 56.763s (76.70mph).

P Bassett. **S** 22. **RACE 2 (15 LAPS)**

1 Fisher; 2 Bassett +7.298s; 3 Day; 4 James Alford (Renault Clio 172); 5 Trevor Collar (Honda Civic Type R); 6 Steve Everson (Citroen Saxo). **CW** Day; Pellin; Rod Birley (Mini Cooper). **FL** Bassett 55.087s (78.94mph). **P** Bassett. **S** 20.

INTERMARQUE (12 LAPS)

1 Ricky Hunn (VW Corrado);
2 Malcolm Blackman (Vauxhall Tigra) +2.507s; 3 Richard Smith (Mercedes SLK); 4 Ian Hales (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Steve Burrows (Peugeot 206cc); 6 Simon Smith (BMW Z4). **CW** Anthony Bennett (Caterham R300). **FL** Hales 59.287s (73.34mph). **P** Smith. **S** 25.

RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 Blackman;
2 Simon Smith +11.161s; 3 Burrows; 4 Michael Thurley (Tigra); 5 Keith White (Z4); 6 Hales. **CW** Colin Watson (Caterham C400). **FL** Blackman 49.260s (88.27mph). **P** Philip Young (Mitsubishi Colt). **S** 26.

QUAIFE SALOONS (12 LAPS)

1 Dale Gent (Subaru Impreza);
2 Tony Skelton (Renault Clio) +6.097s; 3 Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC); 4 Danny Cowan (Ford RS500); 5 Graham Crowhurst (BMW E46 M3); 6 Mark Cripps (BMW E36 M3). **CW** Skelton; Cripps; Andy Woods-Deans (Honda Civic). **FL** Cowan 51.067s (85.15mph). **P** Birley. **S** 22.

RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Gent; 2 Birley +5.802s; 3 Skelton; 4 Crowhurst; 5 Nicholas Wall (Renault Clio); 6 Woods-Dean. **CW** Skelton; Wall; Woods-Dean. **FL** Gent 56.111s (77.50mph). **P** Gent. **S** 21.



Lee was crowned Pickup champion

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Adam defends his Aston crown

With changes coming in the GT3 class next year it was fitting that last year's champion made history by successfully defending his title

By Rob Ladbrook, GT Correspondent

[@LaddersMN](#)



The changing face of the British GT Championship in 2016 had just two familiar landmarks – Aston Martin and Jonathan Adam at the top.

This year we were treated to new-generation cars, new race winners and the latest, and perhaps most defining, shift in popularity between the GT3 and GT4 categories.

But above all of that, it was familiarity that won through, in both GT3 and GT4, as the old hands and known packages reaped rewards from continuity.

Adam made history this year by becoming the first driver to successfully defend the British GT3 title, and also the first to win it with two different teams. He did use the same weapon both times, as Aston Martin racked up its third British GT drivers' title in four years with the venerable Vantage GT3.

While the Vantage came into the season with minimal upgrades from the car that Beechdean AMR head Andrew Howard and Adam used to win the 2015 title, the scenery was new.

Tom Ferrier's TF Sport team had been something of a sleeping giant in recent seasons. The squad itself wasn't a newcomer, having been founded from

Johnston/Adam took the title with second in the season finale

the ashes of the title-chasing Scuderia Vittoria team of 2011. Ferrier's crew took its experience of British GT to a new level with the acquisition of reigning champion and factory driver Adam, partnering amateur Derek Johnston.

TF Sport had been making waves before Adam's arrival. The team took a breakthrough pole and podium at last year's penultimate round at Snetterton, before ending its British GT duck with a win in the Donington Park finale, thanks to Johnston and Matt Bell. But Adam's arrival brought experience with an older car that needed a few new tricks.

While the car spec remained the same, its tyres didn't. British GT's move to

The move to Pirelli changed things up, and actually proved a game-changer for us.

“The tyre was more durable and more grippy than the Avons, and that really favoured Derek, particularly in qualifying. We worked on the car balance to try and keep things as neutral as possible with brake balance and suspension, and Derek felt the changes right away. He was just over a second off me at the first test day, and from then I knew we could win this championship.”

TF formed one third of the title fight, with Barwell Motorsport and Team Parker Racing completing the three-way contest. And circumstances for both TF’s rivals were very different.

Barwell’s decision to move from running BMWs to Lamborghinis was a big one, and necessitated new tooling, staffing and a steep learning curve. The biggest selling point was support from the Lamborghini factory’s Squadra Corse racing arm, which supplied engineers and data to the programme.

Barwell had known quantities in its drivers, with series veterans Jon Minshaw and Phil Keen spearheading its attack. But since the Lamborghini is one of the new-generation GT3 machines, it behaved differently to older cars.

The Huracan’s aero was designed by Dallara, and was much more advanced. The design traded outright power for downforce, which made it a force on fast, flowing tracks. However, this cocktail was a trickier prospect for amateur racers. Racing with high downforce hasn’t been a mainstay of GT3 racing in recent years, meaning the Huracan was more like a formula car on the limit. Amateurs had to learn to trust the car and carry maximum apex speed, as the Huracan didn’t have the pure grunt for the straights to make up for much lost time.

Team Parker was in a similar situation, having secured a factory Bentley deal with promising amateur Rick Parfitt Jr and ex-GP3 man Seb Morris. The Continental GT3 was a proven product, and mixed the best elements of the Vantage and Huracan. It had mighty grunt and also solid aero, and was often the star of qualifying. Parfitt and Morris took more poles than anybody – four – but suffered from a mixture of bad luck and inexperience in taking just one win.

The three styles of car made for an intriguing battle as the season went on.

For the first stage, at least, Aston was well on top. Johnston/Adam benefited in the season-opener at Brands Hatch from a key strategic call and bad luck for their rivals. Minshaw was shunted off so failed to score, while a change to the Code 80 virtual safety car-style rule confused much of the field. Parfitt enjoyed a comfortable lead until he caught cars not doing the correct speed under the rule, allowing Johnston/Adam to skip well clear. The rule was ditched after the first round.

TF then did an unexpected double when Johnston scorched clear of the >>

Pirelli rubber for 2016, having spent a decade running on Avons, threatened to mix up the pecking order. While Aston has done the majority of its development domestically running on Avons, almost all of the new wave of GT3 cars were built and developed on the Pirelli rubber run in the European Blancpain classes.

It put TF on the back foot, and made Adam’s familiarity with both the Vantage and Pirelli tyres he’d sporadically used on Blancpain outings with AMR crucial.

“This year was great because it was a new challenge, but in a familiar environment,” says Adam. “I’d driven the Vantage for five years before this season, so I knew it as well as anybody could.

AUTOSPORT’S TOP 5 AM DRIVERS



1 DEREK JOHNSTON

TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage GT3

Simply superb. His stint at Rockingham was one of the drives of the season, although his coolness under pressure while leading the Donington finale was mega too. Lost some confidence after mid-season troubles, but showed the strength of character to pull it back. Class act.



2 ALEX REED

*Lanan Racing
Ginetta G55 GT4*

Should have had a Porsche but drove an untested Ginetta, with a fraction of the experience of some rivals, yet shone. Spa win was a tipping point and his Snetterton pole was sublime. Blessed with great pace and will be a title challenger next year.



3 MARK FARMER

TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage GT3

Few drivers progressed this year as Farmer did. His stint in the lead at Spa was as gutsy as it was skilful, and brought that maiden win. With Jon Barnes alongside, coaching, TF looks to have two title challengers on its books for 2017.



4 JON MINSHAW

*Barwell Lamborghini
Huracan GT3*

Early season troubles masked his pace, but once his luck arrived, and he’d got into the groove with the Huracan, he was one of the best Ams on the grid. Such a shame his title challenge ended like it did at Donington, as he deserved more for his efforts.



5 CIARAN HAGGERTY

*Ecurie Ecosse McLaren
570S GT4*

Both Haggerty and the equally impressive Sandy Mitchell did a superb job to show their talent while developing a new-generation challenger for a major brand. Haggerty gets the nod for fighting through pain at Donington after a hand injury.

pack to overturn a 20-second pitstop penalty and win at Rockingham. But from then on things were harder for the Aston duo. An unfavourable balance of performance at Oulton Park limited their results, and things got worse.

“Mid-season we had a terrible run,” says Adam. “At Silverstone, Derek hit standing water when leading and crashed, then we had another big shunt at Spa during practice when a GT4’s engine blew in front of us. It knocked Derek’s confidence, and it took a lot of strength from him to come back from that.”

By contrast, Barwell came into its own late-season. Minshaw was well on top of the car by mid-year, and he and Keen maximised their chances by winning the three-hour showpiece at Silverstone in tricky conditions, after Johnston’s off.

Minshaw/Keen then took a double at Snetterton, where TF again struggled after Johnston was nerfed off in race one, and the team then threw away a near-certain race win with a seatbelt mix-up during the pitstops in race two. Suddenly, the long-term leaders were behind.

British GT’s annual Donington Park finale is renowned for drama, and this year was no exception. The title was decided when Minshaw was forced wide passing a GT4 car down the Craner Curves while chasing the leaders. He dipped a wheel on the grass and the Lambo snapped on him before ploughing into the gravel. Game over.

Johnston and Adam took the title with second place.

“Donington Park’s finale is renowned for drama”

“It was great for me, but even better for the team,” says Adam. “Tom [Ferrier] ended up engineering our car himself, so he took as much if not more satisfaction from seeing his team win its first title with a car he was spanninger.

“Derek also thoroughly deserved the title. He proved the difference this season.”

Parfitt and Morris stayed in the mix all year, but lost points when Parfitt shunted in practice at Rockingham and had to start at the back after missing qualifying. Morris then ran wide at Silverstone and broke the radiator, bringing about the car’s sole retirement.

Barwell’s other car of Liam Griffin/Adam Carroll also took a victory, as did the second TF Aston of Mark Farmer and 2008 British GT champion Jon Barnes, but neither crew scored as consistently heavily as their team-mates. The only other winners were Alasdair McCaig and



Rob Bell, who triumphed in the finale with Ecurie Ecosse’s McLaren 650S.

That Donington race also highlighted an issue for British GT when only 11 GT3 cars lined up. While the season began with a near 50-50 split between GT3 and GT4, entries in the top class slowly dropped away while GT4 gradually grew.

The reasons were mostly down to cost and inaccessibility. There’s little sharing in terms of budget between amateurs in GT3 and their professional counterparts. Instead it’s become about the richest drivers buying seats in the best cars with the fastest pros alongside them.

SRO has recognised the issue and has brought in sweeping changes for next season in an effort to open up GT3 racing to aspiring professional drivers and all-amateur crews. Championship bosses are aiming for a minimum of 15 GT3 cars on the grid for the start of 2017. >>

GT3 DRIVERS’ CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1	Derek Johnston (GB) Jonny Adam (GB)	TF Sport
2	Jon Minshaw (GB) Phil Keen (GB)	Barwell Motorsport
3	Rick Parfitt (GB) Seb Morris (GB)	Team Parker Racing
4	Mark Farmer (GB) Jon Barnes (GB)	TF Sport
5	Liam Griffin (GB)	Barwell Motorsport
6	Lee Mowle (GB) Joe Osborne (GB)	AmD Tuning
7	Alasdair McCaig (GB) Rob Bell (GB)	Black Bull Ecurie Ecosse
8	Adam Carroll (GB)	FF Corse
9	Andrew Howard (GB)	Beechdean AMR
10	Ross Gunn (GB)	Beechdean AMR

11 Ross Wylie/Phil Dryburgh (Motorbase Performance Aston Martin Vantage) 42; 12 Ian Stinton/Mike Simpson (Tolman Motorsport Ginetta G55) 32.5; 13 Ryan Ratcliffe/Will Moore (Optimum Motorsport Audi R8 LMS) 27; 14 Alexander Sims (Barwell Motorsport Team ABBA with Rollcentre Racing BMW Z4) 27; 15 Fabio Babini (Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan) 23; 16 Fabio Babini (Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan)



New machinery made for varied competition

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 5 PRO DRIVERS



1 PHIL KEEN

Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3

Every time he got into the new Huracan he made something happen, and it was agonising to see him fall short of a British GT title yet again. Despite his British GT pedigree, he's somehow still rated as a silver driver, yet is capable of matching platinum ones on his day.



2 JONATHAN ADAM

TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage GT3

Made history by being the first driver to successfully defend the GT3 title, and contributed so much to the TF Sport team along the way with his knowledge and technical ability. There aren't many people more capable in a Vantage than Adam.



3 SEB MORRIS

Team Parker Bentley Continental GT3

Impressive maiden season in GT racing for the ex-GP3 man. Only made one mistake all year, which sadly brought a non-score. However, he marked himself out as a qualifying star and proved more than handy in the races. Off to Daytona in January.



4 MIKE ROBINSON

Optimum Motorsport Ginetta G55 GT4

Contradictory that silver-rated Robinson isn't a true 'Pro' but he drove like one. Showed superb consistency all season and always got the maximum from the older Ginetta. He and Johnson held off wealthier opposition and deserved the GT4 crown.



5 SCOTT MALVERN

Team Parker Porsche Cayman Clubsport GT4

Tough season for the only gold-rated driver in GT4. Car didn't showcase his ability to the wider world, but those in the know saw the times he was setting against far quicker machinery. Flying finish to the season bodes well for 2017 for both him and the Cayman.

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Aston Martin Vantage GT3	1	1	5	4	DNF	7	4	2	2	163
Lamborghini Huracan GT3	DNF	2	7	3	1	6	1	1	DNF	147.5
Bentley Continental GT3	2	10	3	1	DNF	2	3	5	3	143
Aston Martin Vantage GT3	6	8	4	7	8	1	2	4	DNF	109.5
Lamborghini Huracan GT3	3	4	1	5	DNF	8	9	DNF	5	98.5
BMW Z4 GT3	4	9	2	9	2	9	5	3	-	96
McLaren 650S GT3	7	7	8	2	4	DNF	DNF	DNF	1	95.5
Ferrari 488 GT3	-	4	1	5	3	-	-	-	-	75.5
Aston Martin Vantage GT3	5	3	14	6	9	DNF	-	-	4	66.5
Aston Martin Vantage GT3	5	3	14	6	9	DNF	-	-	-	48.5

22.5; **15** Marco Attard (FF Corse Ferrari 488) 22.5; **15** Abdulaziz Al Faisal/Miguel Toril (Black Falcon Mercedes AMG) 22.5; **18** Oliver Morley/Daniel Juncadella (Black Falcon Mercedes AMG) 18; **18** Rory Butcher (Beechdean AMR Aston Martin Vantage) 18; **20** Hunter Abbott/Rolf Ineichen (GRT Grasser Racing Team Lamborghini Huracan) 15; **21** Pete Littler/Jody Fannin (PFL Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage) 12; **22** David Pattison/Luke Davenport (Tolman Motorsport Ginetta G55) 11; **23** Mike Brown/Matthew Manderson (Ultimate Speed Aston Martin Vantage GT3) 5.

GT4: the future of British GT?

Healthy grids, a broad spread of increasingly competitive machinery and close racing boosted GT4's claim to be a category on the up

By Rob Ladbrook, GT Correspondent

[@LaddersMN](#)

Optimum Motorsport's Graham Johnson and Mike Robinson emerged on top of a record GT4 entry, one which grew both in terms of numbers and quality this season. There's no question that GT4 is enjoying a boom in popularity at the moment, and there are several compelling reasons for that.

First and perhaps foremost is the sheer cost of it. Budgets within GT3 have skyrocketed in recent seasons as the teams and the racing in general has become more professional. Figures of above £300,000 per car have been circulated, which makes the class unachievable in its current guise for many. By contrast, a Ginetta G55 GT4 costs around £80,000 per season to run.

As well as making more financial sense, the racing has a broader appeal too. Since the cost of going single-seater racing is still more prohibitively expensive, many talented young drivers have switched to try and carve careers in GT racing. The issue with GT3 is that those drivers are up against proven professional names when vying for seats alongside well-funded amateurs, making it tough to get a chance.

GT4 is the next-best option and this year a record nine crews signed up for the GT4 Silver Cup, for two silver-graded semi-pro drivers. By contrast, GT3's all-Silver class got just one.

But, in truth, the gap between the GT3 and GT4 entry was never a chasm. The two classes were only ever a handful of cars apart, and numbers were skewed by two rounds featuring a combined grid with European GT4 entries. That led to a GT4 grid in the 30s, with GT3s only in the low teens. It created a tough image to

shake off and prompted much talk of GT4 taking over as GT3 slowly dies. That's not the case.

GT3's revamp is already generating interest ahead of next year, and there are more than a few GT4 crews eyeing the category. So, for the foreseeable future, British GT will remain a two-tier series.

The racing in GT4 this season was also great, once the pack had caught up to Johnson and Robinson. The pair had finished second in the class in 2015 and were tipped for this year's title, especially since as they were the only crew inside the top 10 to return unchanged.

Their charge got off to a winning start at Brands Hatch, where they timed their pitstop perfectly and drove away from the field to win by a clear lap. That stamped an early authority for Optimum, but there were also occasional mistakes. Johnson threw away the race lead at Rockingham when he collided with a GT3 car shortly before the pit window, and



Rockingham shunt didn't derail title charge

ALL PICS: EBREV/LAT

GT4 DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
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2	Jack Bartholomew (GB)	Beechdean AMR
3	Ciaran Haggerty (GB) Sandy Mitchell (GB)	Black Bull Ecurie Ecosse
4	Marcus Hoggarth (GB) Abbie Eaton (GB)	Ebor GT Motorsport
5	Matthew Graham (GB) Jack Mitchell (GB)	Generation AMR MacMillan Racing
6	Jordan Albert (GB)	Beechdean AMR
6	Joey Foster (GB) Alex Reed (GB)	Lanan Racing
8	Anna Walewska (GB) Nathan Freke (GB)	Century Motorsport
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Robinson was caught up in a collision in the Silverstone 500 three-hour race. Both rounds brought non-scores. Fortunately for Optimum, Johnson and Robinson starred more than they erred, taking a dominant double win at Oulton Park and a second place at Spa. A podium in the season finale put them out of sight.

“To be honest we still can’t believe it,” says Robinson. “We’ve had such a consistent car all season. Mine and Graham’s combined age is over 75, and some of the pairings in the field this year don’t even add up to Graham alone! It shows what amateurs can achieve in the right environment, and I think us winning the title is good for the championship. It shows you don’t need millions in the bank and a top pro driver.”

Optimum’s biggest challenge came from the Beechdean AMR team that took Jamie Chadwick and Ross Gunn to the 2015 title. It signed up BRDC Formula 4 graduates Jordan Albert and Jack

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From then on they were consistent, but trouble struck with three races to go when a contractual issue forced Albert to step back. Keen to try to defend its title, Beechdean brought Gunn back to share with Bartholomew for the final races.

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A host of electrical gremlins limited results, but once the car was on song it flew. Mitchell and Haggerty should have won at Spa but for a fuel pump failure. The breakthrough win came at Snetterton, backed up by a controlled victory at Donington. The McLaren will be a force next year. But it’s expensive, being the first car in the class to run a carbonfibre chassis. Hopefully it won’t start an arms race among manufacturers.

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Nick Jones and Scott Malvern did bring a Cayman out mid-season, but it was largely uncompetitive until most of the upgrade package arrived in time for Donington. Malvern, who put in some superb performances to haul a road car into positions it shouldn’t have been capable of, finished the season just a few tenths down on the McLaren’s fastest lap. The Caymans will be fully upgraded for next season, and will almost certainly add to the mix at the front of GT4. 🏆

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Aston Martin Vantage GT4	5	1	6	6	3	8	2	1	6	152
McLaren 570S GT4	6	5	9	4	12	DNF	1	4	1	115.5
Maserati Gran Turismo MCGT4	8	4	DNF	2	6	4	7	5	4	106
Aston Martin Vantage GT4	DNF	6	2	7	11	3	3	DNF	2	100.5
Aston Martin Vantage GT4	5	1	6	6	3	8	-	-	-	97
Ginetta G55 GT4	7	3	DNF	10	14	1	4	3	EX	97
Ginetta G55 GT4	2	EX	4	DNF	2	7	9	13	5	92
Ginetta G55 GT4	3	8	3	5	8	5	6	7	EX	88.5
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WHAT'S ON

Big hitters play the strategy game

AS FAR AS BOOK-WRITING partnerships go, the alliance between Ross Brawn and Adam Parr is an unexpected one.

Brawn needs no introduction to any motorsport fan, and while some will remember Parr's stint at Williams from 2006-12, first as CEO and then as chairman, it's fair to say he didn't quite have the same impact on grand prix racing as his more illustrious partner.

What Parr does bring to the book *Total Competition: Lessons in Strategy From Formula 1* is an interesting framework. The strategy in question is not so much race-related as a look at strategic thinking in F1 and business holistically, in the context of military strategy. It starts with a 60-page review of Brawn's career, which is worth the sale price in itself and is full of great nuggets of information – Rory Byrne and Brawn resigning from Benetton in 1994 over team principal Flavio Briatore being willing to accept an exclusion from Imola '94 that ultimately never happened, the fact Riccardo Patrese was paid more than Michael Schumacher the season before thanks to taking a cut of a sponsorship deal, and a fascinating insight into the culture of Ferrari after he arrived there.

"What became apparent was that because of the management culture there, middle and top management were watching their backs the whole time," says Brawn. "Their whole philosophy was to preserve their own position. That was the biggest challenge. Great workforce, wonderful, passionate and committed people who were proud to work for Ferrari; but middle management were petrified of putting a step out of line and therefore were not functioning properly."

After the career review, it's into what might be termed the serious stuff. The ground covered is extensive, offering



Parr and Brawn's insight makes for entertaining reading in *Total Competition*

insights into team building, car development, race strategy, driver management – just about everything that's involved in running a grand prix team. Perhaps the greatest achievement of this book is that it covers a huge amount of ground very quickly and in a way that carries its knowledge very lightly. That's the ideal combination to ensure it has widespread appeal as well as offering a unique insight into F1.

The military parallels occasionally seem a little forced, but work more often than not. Take Parr talking about Bernie Ecclestone, for example. "The way I see Bernie is that in life, stuff doesn't always go your way," he says. "That's what the military call 'friction'. Bernie is friction. If you have a weak spot, ultimately he is very good at finding it. He is very good at playing human nature. But he only has one tactic. Which is divide and rule. In all

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Strategy talk focuses on business of F1, including Brawn's spell at Ferrari

my experience, I have never met anyone who does the same thing so consistently, so predictably, so effectively."

The book has its sensational moments – in the best possible way. You'll likely have heard about Brawn's comments on how he couldn't trust Toto Wolff and perhaps even Paddy Lowe in his later days with Mercedes, and how he lost the will to fight the political fight. Brawn also reveals how then-McLaren team principal Martin Whitmarsh being statesmanlike ultimately cost McLaren-Mercedes its works status and allowed Brawn and co to sell the ex-Honda team to the Three-Pointed Star, and how Wolff stymied a likely Red Bull deal for Mercedes engines. For anyone with an interest in F1, this is a must-read.

Total Competition: Lessons in Strategy From Formula 1 is on sale now at £20.

EDD STRAW

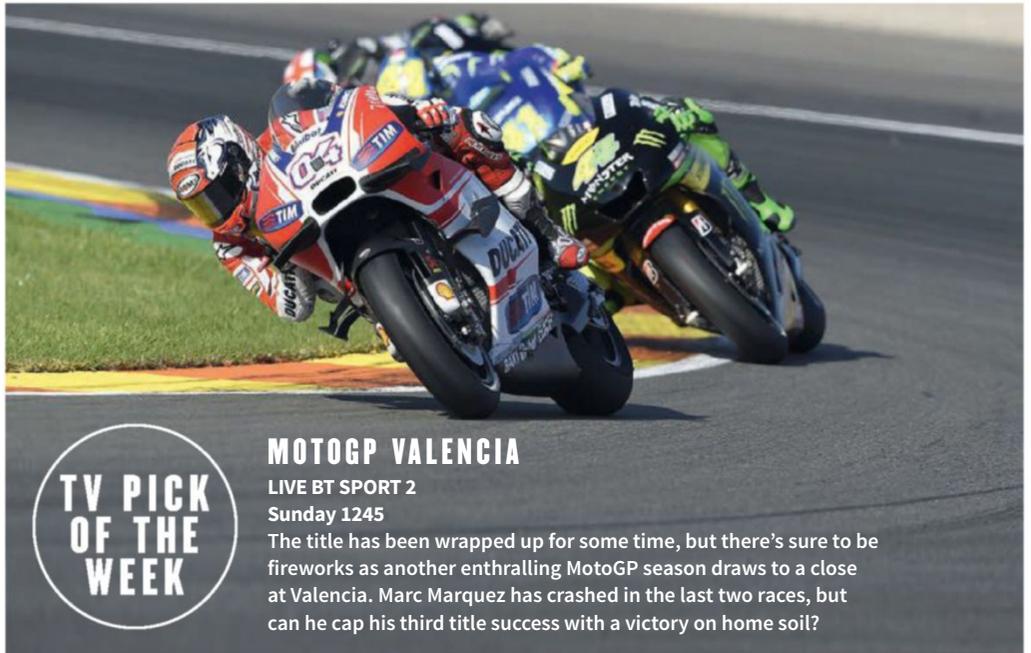


HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

You Tube SPINNING IN THE RAIN

Search for: Michael Eastwell Extra Go Race

Walter Hayes Trophy first-timer Michael Eastwell's participation in the non-historic consolation race was brief but incident-packed, and after being hit three times in one lap the resulting suspension damage to his Simon Green Motorsport-prepared Ray GR13 spun him out of fifth place.



**TV PICK
OF THE
WEEK**

MOTOGP VALENCIA

LIVE BT SPORT 2
Sunday 1245

The title has been wrapped up for some time, but there's sure to be fireworks as another enthralling MotoGP season draws to a close at Valencia. Marc Marquez has crashed in the last two races, but can he cap his third title success with a victory on home soil?

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

Formula 1 World Championship
Rd 20/21

Sao Paulo, Brazil
November 11-13

WATCH ON TV
Live Sky Sports F1,
Sunday 1530 **Highlights**
Channel 4, 2200

FORMULA E

Rd 2/10
Marrakech, Morocco
November 12

WATCH ON TV

Live Channel 5,
Saturday 1530

SUPER GT

Rd 7/7
Motegi, Japan
November 12-13

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 35/36
Phoenix, Arizona, USA
November 13
WATCH ON TV
Live Premier Sports,
Sunday 1900



TAYLOR-MEDHURST/LAT

UK MOTORSPORT

ANGLESEY BARC RACE OF REMEMBRANCE

November 11-13

BRANDS HATCH MSVR

November 12-13
FF1600, Britcar, Ginetta Junior, Trackday Trophy, Allcomers, Lotus Sprint



RACE OF REMEMBRANCE

SSO

EXT

DEFENSE de FUMER X

WHEATCROFT RACING TEAM
CHURCH FARM, PAGHAM
SUSSEX, ENGLAND.





THE ARCHIVE

Derek Bell's Brabham-Ford BT26 sits in the Spa paddock at the 1970 Belgian Grand Prix. It wasn't a happy race for the future sportscar ace – he started 15th and retired after one lap thanks to a gearbox problem.

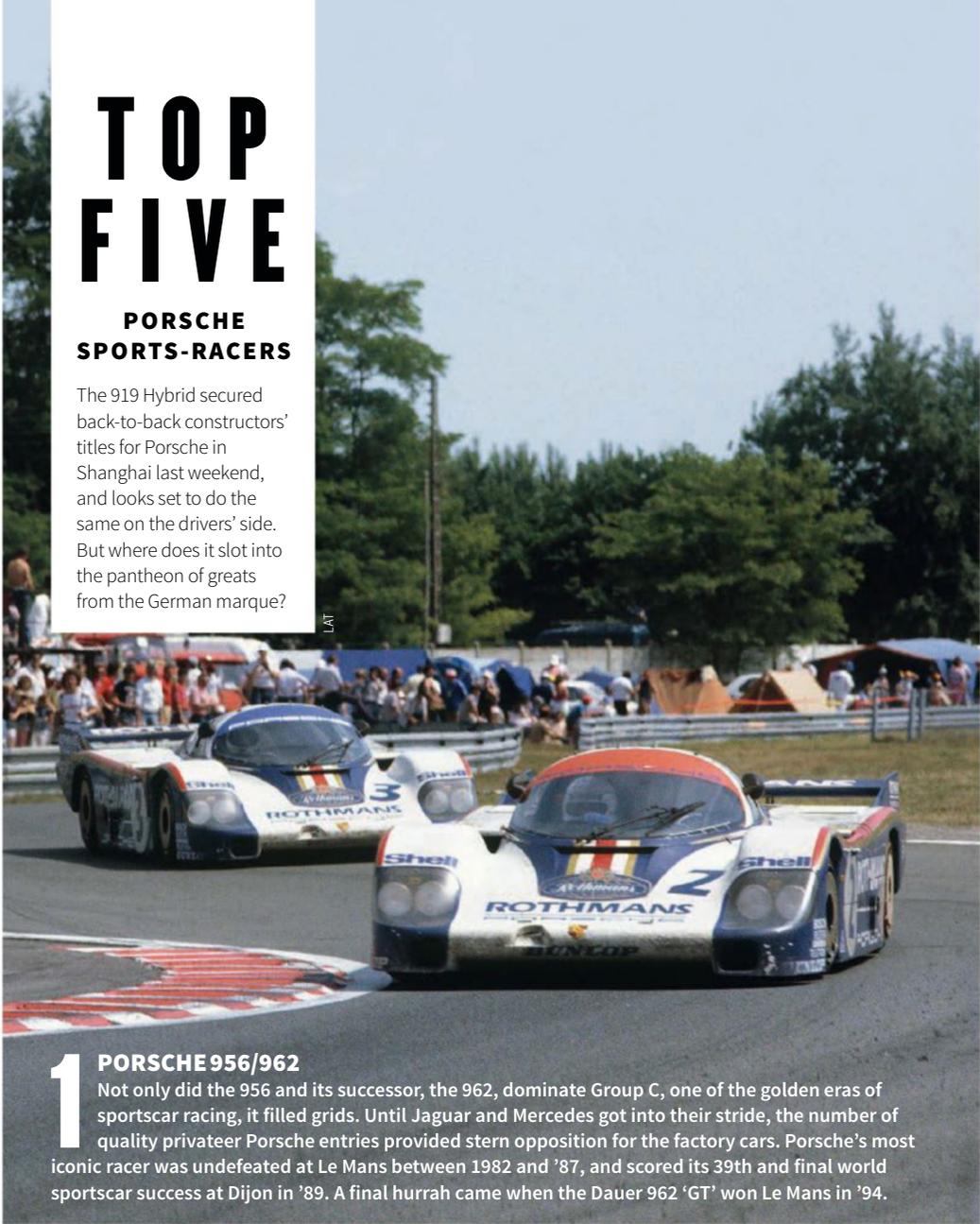
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TOP FIVE

PORSCHE SPORTS-RACERS

The 919 Hybrid secured back-to-back constructors' titles for Porsche in Shanghai last weekend, and looks set to do the same on the drivers' side. But where does it slot into the pantheon of greats from the German marque?

LAT



1 PORSCHE 956/962

Not only did the 956 and its successor, the 962, dominate Group C, one of the golden eras of sportscar racing, it filled grids. Until Jaguar and Mercedes got into their stride, the number of quality privateer Porsche entries provided stern opposition for the factory cars. Porsche's most iconic racer was undefeated at Le Mans between 1982 and '87, and scored its 39th and final world sportscar success at Dijon in '89. A final hurrah came when the Dauer 962 'GT' won Le Mans in '94.



LAT

2 PORSCHE 917

Seeing a gap in the rules, the Stuttgart firm produced 25 of these five-litre prototypes in 1969 so that it was essentially homologated as a 'production sportscar'. Initially aerodynamically wayward, the 917 nevertheless made everything else obsolete and scored Porsche's first two Le Mans victories. The 240mph monster was banned from world sportscars, so then dominated Can-Am.

3 TWR PORSCHE WSC95

The oddball of this bunch, the WSC95 was based on one of the successful Jaguar XJR-14 chassis run by Tom Walkinshaw Racing. Porsche initially mothballed the car in 1995, but Reinhold Joest stepped in and ran two of the open prototypes at Le Mans in '96. The lead car outran the factory Porsche 911 GT1s to win, and then scored a sensational double the following year when the leading GT1 expired.



LAT

4 PORSCHE 919

The various iterations of the 919 Hybrid, which first arrived in the World Endurance Championship in 2014, are not only the most technologically advanced Porsche racers ever – they also moved the goalposts at the pinnacle of sportscar competition. Moving into the top eight-megajoule hybrid class in LMP1 was bold, but helped see off intra-brand rival and previous prototype benchmark Audi.



MAUGER/LAT

5 PORSCHE 908

It's a close-run thing between the 908 and 936. It was the 936 that won Le Mans (the first turbocharged car to do so), but the 908 was Porsche's breakthrough sports-racer, moving it from being chiefly a class contender to an overall challenger. The 908 dominated the 1969 world sportscar season, despite efforts from Ferrari and JWA Ford, and subsequent versions were still competitive as late as the early '80s.



LAT



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