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MONACO GRAND PRIX AND
INDY 500 PREVIEW SPECIAL

AUTOSPORT

CAN ALONSO **REALLY** WIN THE INDY 500?

F1 star qualifies fifth but his biggest
challenge is yet to come



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Alonso's Indy challenge gathers momentum

TWO OF MOTORSPORT'S BIGGEST EVENTS ARE coming up this Sunday and, thanks to Fernando Alonso, the Indianapolis 500 has the chance to overshadow the Monaco Grand Prix.

Until last weekend it was hard to know exactly what to expect from Alonso in the US's greatest race. On the one hand, we all know that the double Formula 1 world champion is one of the best racing drivers in the world – and has been for over a decade. On the other, jumping into such a competitive environment with no previous experience of the car or ovals is a tough challenge for even the greatest.

But Alonso's graft and ability shone through in qualifying, the Spaniard putting his McLaren Honda Andretti Dallara fifth on the grid. And then he admitted he thought there was more to come from the car.

That performance has increased expectations. Can he really win the Indy 500? That's the big question and one Edd Straw tackles in our cover feature (see page 14). Some key figures think Alonso can do it.

In Monaco, we are likely to see the latest instalment of the Lewis Hamilton-versus-Sebastian Vettel duel, with possible cameos from Valtteri Bottas and the Red Bulls – Daniel Ricciardo scored the only non-Mercedes pole of 2016 around the principality.

The tight confines of a street circuit provide drivers with special challenges and we've spoken to a number of the sport's greats to unlock the secrets to success between the walls (p24). We've also taken a look at F1's finest street performers. Number one may not be a surprise, but there are a few interesting appearances further down the list...



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Levitt/LAT Images

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PERFORMANCE SUPPLEMENT



The McLaren-Strakka GT young-driver programme, a Silverstone GP track guide, Rob Wilson's masterclass, and focus on Pro-Sim are all part of this issue.

NIGEL ROEBUCK

Why Indy makes sense for Alonso

MY FIRST VISIT TO THE INDIANAPOLIS 500 was back in 1981, when Bobby Unser, then 47 years old, won the race for the third time. It must be said that his victory was a contentious one, Unser being accused of passing several cars ‘under yellow’ as he rejoined the track after a pitstop, and the following day he was given a ‘one-place’ penalty. That morning I was on a flight to New York when the pilot, learning of the United States Auto Club’s decision, immediately decided to share it with his passengers. “So therefore, ladies and gentlemen,” he concluded, “the winner of the Indy 500 is... Mario Andretti!”

I can still hear the whoop of delight through the cabin, and the following weekend, in Monaco, Andretti, congratulated by one and all, was still understandably high on it. Months later, though, after a protest by Unser’s Penske team, USAC – somewhat curiously – reversed its decision, and 36 years on Mario is still sore about it.

The Indianapolis Motor Speedway was a very different place back then. For one thing, the old Gasoline Alley was still there, and I’ll always be glad I experienced it; for another, Indycar – or ‘championship racing’, as it was traditionally

known – was anything but a one-make series; for another yet, the track’s daunting perimeter wall was as it had always been: concrete. Shortly before half-distance Danny Ongais’s beautiful Interscope – racing for the first and last time – went off at Turn 3, and it was one of those accidents to make the crowd silent. Ongais somehow survived, but terrible leg injuries effectively ended his career.

In preparation for leaving for Indianapolis, last weekend I watched qualifying on TV, and a pattern comfortably established itself, the commentators doing their thing as a succession of drivers reeled off their four timed laps. Everything was proceeding smoothly enough until Sebastien Bourdais, clearly faster than the rest on his first couple of laps, got loose at the entry to Turn 2, tried with his road racer’s instinct to correct the slide, and speared into the wall with extraordinary force. In a brutal second, one was reminded of the consequences of a mistake at 230mph.

In terms of violence, of the angle of impact with the wall, I confess that it immediately made me think of Gordon Smiley, who was killed during qualifying in 1982. In terms of sheer violence, this was perhaps the most



Alonso, here with Gil de Ferran, is enjoying his Indy experience



Drivers such as Clark saw Indy 500 as a big earner

disturbingly horrible accident I have ever seen, and it didn’t surprise me that Bourdais’ shunt revived similar memories for many others, too.

How much, though, has changed in the matter of motor racing safety. Back in 1982, Rick Mears’s pole speed was 207mph, compared with the 230-plus routinely seen today, but the cars are immeasurably stronger now than then – and if something does go wrong they hit not concrete, but SAFER (Steel and Foam Energy Reduction) barriers, which are reckoned to reduce g-force energy on impact by 50%. Thus, while Smiley’s life was lost in his disintegrating car all those years ago, Bourdais – while suffering pelvis and hip fractures, caused inevitably by his belts – will race again.

In the manifold improvements to safety that have come in recent times, not least the miraculous HANS device, it seems to me that none has had a more dramatic effect than the SAFER barrier, introduced at Indianapolis back in 2002, and now widely used across the world. The IMS authorities,



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who funded its initial development, cannot be too highly commended.

Thanks to the participation of Fernando Alonso, Indy is this year attracting way greater worldwide interest than for a very long time. Half a century ago, when such as Jim Clark and Graham Hill raced – and won – at the Speedway, the 500 was an event very much in the British consciousness, and it was the same in the early 1990s, when Nigel Mansell briefly left Formula 1 to drive for Newman/Haas. In more recent times, though, it has ceased to mean much this side of the water, and it pleases me to see its status appreciated again.

The other day Alonso's one-time team-mate, Felipe Massa, said he thought it 'not correct' that Fernando was skipping the Monaco Grand Prix to compete in another series. Quite what he meant by 'not correct', I have no idea, but his comment chimes with others from such as Nico Hulkenberg, Romain Grosjean and Christian Horner, all of whom have been critical of Alonso's venture to Indianapolis.

“Alonso doesn't need the money, so he's doing the Indy 500 purely because it's a new challenge”

People have said that Ron Dennis would never have allowed Alonso to miss Monaco, let alone drive at Indy, and they're right, which goes a long way towards explaining why Fernando, for all the continuing frustrations of Honda's F1 engine programme, is so much happier to be working with Zak Brown.

Others have suggested that Bernie Ecclestone, were he still running Formula 1, would have found a way to block Alonso's path to the 500, but when I spoke to him the other week he said not so.

“Let's face it, when Clark and the others went to Indy in the '60s, it was mainly for the money – the chance of a good pay day when Formula 1

drivers didn't earn very much. Now Alonso's going to Indy, but you can't say he's doing it for the money – he doesn't need the money, so he's doing it purely because it's a new challenge.

“Remember when he did that demo in my old '51 Ferrari at Silverstone a while ago? Michael [Schumacher] drove it a few years earlier, but he really didn't want to – no seatbelts, etc. Fernando, though, drove the wheels off it – even did an extra lap he wasn't supposed to do – and I thought that was great. Fernando's more of a racer than any of them, isn't he? He's going to Indy purely because he wants to, and good luck to him – it's asking a lot on his first time there, but I hope he wins it...” ❄



INDIANAPOLIS 500

Dixon grabs Indy pole as Bourdais seriously hurt

SCOTT DIXON'S THIRD INDIANAPOLIS 500 pole position was a crushing one, as he set a pace no-one could live with. But, after celebrating, the Chip Ganassi Racing Honda driver was quick to point out that pole had been there for the taking for a driver lying in the Methodist Hospital in Downtown Indianapolis: Sebastien Bourdais.

The former Toro Rosso Formula 1 driver had topped 'Fast Friday' and was setting a searing pace on his Saturday qualifying run that nobody would have beaten, establishing himself as clear favourite for Sunday's Pole Day. But after setting laps of 231.472mph and 231.595mph in the first half of his run, he unsuccessfully attempted to correct a slide at Turn 2, and his Dale Coyne Racing car (above) speared into the wall with an impact measured at 115g.

Bourdais successfully underwent surgery on Saturday night, but will sit out the rest of the season, with his seat for the 500 taken by James Davison. His absence from the Fast Nine Shootout that decided the front three rows of the grid left Dixon a clear run at pole position.

Dixon's speed of 232.164mph in the shootout on Pole Day blew the opposition out of the water, with second-placed Ed Carpenter, who had set the pace on Saturday, managing only 231.664mph in comparison.

"Got to give a shoutout to Sebastien Bourdais," said Dixon, whose pole position points have

given him the lead in the IndyCar Series table. "To be honest, I think he would have been the one who snatched pole today."

Bourdais might well have done, but Dixon is being overly modest. So fast was his pace that it was the quickest four-lap qualifying run at Indianapolis since Arie Luyendyk's famous pole-record run in 1996 at 236.986mph. This emphatically answered the question of whether Ganassi had the time to understand the Honda aero kit at Indianapolis, having defected from Chevrolet after last season. It has, at least in qualifying trim.

"I thought maybe the dash had broken on the steering wheel and brought up a fake number," said Dixon of his surprise at the pace. "We seriously didn't expect to see the speed that we did. When I saw that first [lap] number,

I was like, 'Wow, this is impressive.'"

So was everyone else. Andretti Autosport looked to be the team to beat in the Fast Nine Shootout, with four of its six cars, including the McLaren-branded entry of Fernando Alonso, in the hunt on Pole Day. Alexander Rossi, last year's winner, secured the final front-row spot in third.

"Seeing Scott's speed is pretty impressive," said Rossi. "I don't know we could have done that. It was something that really bothered me last year, that we didn't make the Fast Nine, so Saturday was a pretty big relief."

Takuma Sato, who showed strong pace

"I thought the dash broke and gave up a fake number"



AP

INDY 500 GRID

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	ENGINE	SPEED
1	Scott Dixon	<i>Ganassi</i>	Honda	232.164mph
2	Ed Carpenter	<i>Carpenter</i>	Chevrolet	231.664mph
3	Alexander Rossi	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	231.487mph
4	Takuma Sato	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	231.365mph
5	Fernando Alonso	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	231.300mph
6	JR Hildebrand	<i>Carpenter</i>	Chevrolet	230.889mph
7	Tony Kanaan	<i>Ganassi</i>	Honda	230.828mph
8	Marco Andretti	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	230.474mph
9	Will Power	<i>Penske</i>	Chevrolet	230.200mph
10	Ryan Hunter-Reay	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	231.442mph
11	Ed Jones	<i>Coyne</i>	Honda	230.578mph
12	Oriol Servia	<i>RLLR</i>	Honda	230.309mph
13	Mikhail Aleshin	<i>SPM</i>	Honda	230.271mph
14	Graham Rahal	<i>RLLR</i>	Honda	230.253mph
15	Max Chilton	<i>Ganassi</i>	Honda	230.068mph
16	Charlie Kimball	<i>Ganassi</i>	Honda	229.956mph
17	James Hinchcliffe	<i>SPM</i>	Honda	230.271mph
18	Juan Pablo Montoya	<i>Penske</i>	Chevrolet	229.565mph
19	Helio Castroneves	<i>Penske</i>	Chevrolet	229.515mph
20	Jay Howard	<i>SPM</i>	Honda	229.414mph
21	Sage Karam	<i>D&R</i>	Chevrolet	229.380mph
22	Josef Newgarden	<i>Penske</i>	Chevrolet	228.501mph
23	Simon Pagenaud	<i>Penske</i>	Chevrolet	228.093mph
24	Carlos Munoz	<i>Foyt</i>	Chevrolet	227.921mph
25	Gabby Chaves	<i>Harding</i>	Chevrolet	226.921mph
26	Conor Daly	<i>Foyt</i>	Chevrolet	226.439mph
27	Jack Harvey	<i>Andretti</i>	Honda	225.742mph
28	Pippa Mann	<i>Coyne</i>	Honda	225.008mph
29	Spencer Pigot	<i>Juncos</i>	Chevrolet	224.052mph
30	Buddy Lazier	<i>Lazier</i>	Chevrolet	223.417mph
31	Sebastian Saavedra	<i>Juncos</i>	Chevrolet	221.142mph
32	Zach Veatch	<i>Foyt</i>	Chevrolet	221.081mph
33	James Davison	<i>Coyne</i>	Honda	no time



Kiwi Dixon starts Sunday's race from pole

LAT IMAGES

throughout practice, put in a characteristically aggressive drive. He brushed the wall twice during his run to fourth and will line up on the inside of row two alongside team-mate Alonso and the second Ed Carpenter Racing car of JR Hildebrand.

Will Power was the only one of the five Team Penske drivers to make the top nine, but he was slowest in the shootout, behind Tony Kanaan (Ganassi) and Marco Andretti.

Stormy weather that hit The Brickyard at the moment when Saturday qualifying was supposed to start made life difficult for many drivers in terms of set-up. Former champion Ryan Hunter-Reay ran too high a downforce level and the Andretti Autosport man missed the cut for the Fast Nine, blaming the weather.

“We just had a bad draw in qualifying, going

early when the sun was out compared to a lot of guys who made it into the Fast Nine later in the day when the clouds came out,” said Hunter-Reay, who it should be noted was only one place before Dixon in the Saturday running order.

Hunter-Reay salvaged 10th place in Saturday's Group 1 qualifying, which decided positions 10 to 33. His run of 231.442mph would have been good enough to have put him fourth overall had he made the Fast Nine.

Penske's form was baffling, with Juan Pablo Montoya, Helio Castroneves, Josef Newgarden and Simon Pagenaud all in positions 18 to 23. None of the quartet showed Power's qualifying speed and never seriously threatened the Fast Nine. Newgarden did crash during the four days of practice, stressing after Pole Day that he was

more confident about his race pace.

Ed Jones was the best of the remaining Dale Coyne cars in 11th, ahead of Rahal Letterman Lanigan returnee Oriol Servia.

Ex-Manor F1 driver Max Chilton was best of the British drivers in 15th, with Jay Howard, making his first IndyCar start since the abandoned Las Vegas 2011 finale, earning 20th place for Schmidt Peterson Motorsports after setting the pace on day four of practice.

Debutant Jack Harvey complained of a mystery car problem after qualifying 27th, having got his week off to a bad start when he crashed while leaving the pits at Turn 2 thanks to a steering-column problem on the opening day of practice. Pippa Mann will start 28th.

EDD STRAW



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Outrageous fortune

Dale Coyne Racing went through the mill in the run-up to the Indy 500. Sebastien Bourdais looked good for pole, but then came his huge crash...

By David Malsher, IndyCar Correspondent

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IF ANY MEMBER OF DALE COYNE RACING IS SUFFERING a Sisyphus complex right now, they should be forgiven without hesitation. Because without wishing to sound flippant, what Sebastien Bourdais physically went through at Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Saturday, May 20 – a 227mph/118g oblique-angled collision with the SAFER barrier at Turn 2 – is what his crew had mentally been through since Saturday, April 29.

That was the evening when Bourdais became an entirely innocent victim in the Mikhail Aleshin-triggered five-car shunt at Phoenix International Raceway at the end of the opening lap of the fourth round of the IndyCar season.

So much componentry was damaged that the #18 crew had to forgo the test at Gateway Motorsports Park to rebuild the car. With Pippa Mann due to join Bourdais and full-time rookie team-mate Ed Jones for the Indianapolis 500, the team couldn't take the risk of running three cars without a back-up, and so they apologised to their loved ones and set to work.

The team finished just in time to roll from their Plainfield, Illinois base to Indianapolis for the Indy Grand Prix, but a new complication arose.

The engine in Bourdais's car had ingested debris in the course of the accident at Phoenix and so Honda supplied a new one, and the crew had installed it during the car's rebuild.

Imagine their joy on discovering that those hard-working folk at Honda Performance Development had repaired the original, and IndyCar rules therefore obliged the Coyne team to refit it in place of the zero-miles unit... Out with the new, in with the old.

It was gratifying in the extreme, therefore, to see Bourdais reach the Firestone Fast Six in qualifying for the Indy GP, rather less so when that wretched engine let go at the end of lap three on race day.

Turns out that the darkest hour is just before a false dawn. Through the practice days for the 101st Indianapolis 500, Bourdais looked strong. Yes, he had another engine issue on Thursday that required yet another change. But all week he reported the car was handling well in traffic, and also his laps without the aid of a draft were fast.

Bourdais's race engineer Craig Hampson, who knows everything there is to know about the Honda aerokit and how to optimise its set-up after several years at Andretti Autosport, had worked his magic. The man who helped guide Bourdais to his four Champ Car titles with Newman/Haas Racing, and who joined Coyne precisely because Bourdais was heading there,

had created a DCR car that could trade blows with any rival.

On Fast Friday, when teams first experience the increased turbo boost they run in qualifying – 1.4 bar, up from 1.3 – Bourdais set the fastest speed of the month, a 233.116mph, and his no-tow speed ranked him second.

Then on Saturday, in the one-run/one-chance attempt to make it into the Fast Nine shootout, Bourdais's first two laps were above 231mph, around 1mph quicker than Dixon at that time. Then, of course, all hell broke loose.

The following day, after Dixon had taken pole, he said of Bourdais: "He's a team-mate with me in [Ganassi's] Ford GT programme, we've spent a lot of time together over the years, and he's a hell of a driver. To be honest, I think he would have been the one who snatched pole today. So I've just got to wish him well... Hopefully he can be in a car very soon."

Said Hampson on Monday: "I think Dixon is being extremely gracious because he's a good guy. But I'm almost positive that we'd have been on the front row. But we all know the big payday is the following weekend, and we had a fabulous car in traffic

too. So I feel sorry for James Davison [Bourdais's Indy 500 stand-in] because we've had to give him this Frankenstein's monster of a car that's not nearly as fast as Sebastien's original. But the important thing is that Sebastien is still with

“The important thing is Sebastien is still with us. All else is small potatoes”

us. When you look at the energy level of the accident, and the fact that he had pelvic injuries, that he's already standing with crutches is something I'm amazed by.

"Everything else is small potatoes by comparison. But Sebastien himself is terribly disappointed. He's lost a great chance to win Indy, he's lost a great chance to defend his Le Mans win (in GTE), and he's not going to be with us for the remainder of the year. Considering the group that Dale has put together, I think we've lost the chance to win more races. So I'm sad that my friend got hurt, sad for the amount of work that the mechanics have been through, and sad for the amount of money Dale has had to spend just in the last month.

"And I'm sad I've lost my superfast Indy 500 car. We had put so much effort into turning out the best-ever Dale Coyne Racing Indianapolis car, and Dale gave us the money to do that."

Despite my striving for journalistic objectivity, I'll admit to hoping for a strong result for this beleaguered team this Sunday. But should fate allow that, I'll also be left wondering what might have been achieved by Bourdais at the wheel of the original #18 car... ❄️



LAT IMAGES

FORMULA 1
CAREY WANTS TO SCRAP CONCORDE

FORMULA 1 BOSS CHASE Carey does not want to negotiate a new Concorde Agreement with teams when it expires in 2020 and would prefer a new form of “partnership”.

“We have the infamous document called the Concorde Agreement, which defines the financial arrangements with teams,” said Carey.

“Our goal is to create much more of a long-term partnership, not a partnership that sort of has a point in time that you go out and renegotiate the next eight-year partnership, that there’s a continuum.”

Carey said that always having a looming deadline for the next agreement creates problems as the parties fight to get the best deal, which makes longer-term planning difficult.

“What I’d like to have is everybody’s priority being continually looking three years down the road, not looking at a specific point in time,” he said. “I think they all welcome getting there, but we’ve got to drive it.”

But Carey accepts it will not be easy to change the existing culture: “It’s a sport that historically was a little bit every man for himself, and how do you game each other and the like, and that leads to one plus one is one and a half. If you could pull together and figure out what is the right path forward for everybody, you make one plus one is three. That’s our goal.”

ADAM COOPER



WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Perrinn sells two LMP1 cars for 2018 WEC campaign

FLEDGLING BRITISH RACING CAR CONSTRUCTOR Perrinn will be on the World Endurance Championship grid next season with a privateer LMP1 chassis.

The Yorkshire-based organisation, which first announced its plans to build a P1 car in 2013, has revealed that it has sold two examples of its latest design. The identity of the team that has bought the £1.2million cars and the engine that will power them is scheduled to be announced in the run-up to next month’s Le Mans 24 Hours.

Marque founder Nicolas Perrinn, who has worked with the Williams Formula 1 team as both an aerodynamicist and a track engineer, explained interest from a potential customer at the beginning of this year led to him restarting the project.

“We closed the project because the market was so small,

but increased support and rules stability from the FIA and Automobile Club de l’Ouest [which write the rules], coupled with programmes from other manufacturers, has meant we’ve had a lot of discussions with teams seeking more freedom than the new LMP2 category,” he said. “The market has changed and a customer came to us, which allowed us to get started again.”

Perrinn explained that he had spent “the past few months updating the design” and that the car was scheduled to run for the first time in December. He revealed that the build would be centred on an undisclosed engineering facility in Northamptonshire. There is capacity, according to Perrinn, for further cars to be built in time for the 2018 season.

GARY WATKINS



OBITUARY

Nicky Hayden 1981-2017

NICKY HAYDEN, THE 2006 MOTOGP champion, has died from injuries sustained when he was hit by a car while cycling near Rimini in Italy on May 17.

Hayden was rushed to a local hospital with severe head and chest trauma and several fractures, before being transferred to the Bufalini Hospital in Cesena. The 35-year-old’s condition was not stable enough to perform

surgery to relieve the pressure on his skull caused by cerebral edema, and he remained in a critical condition in intensive care until succumbing to his injuries on Monday evening.

The American made 217 MotoGP starts between 2003 and ’16, beating Valentino Rossi to the 2006 world championship in the fourth of his six seasons with the factory Honda team. He

moved to Ducati in ’09 and spent his final two full-time campaigns with the Aspar squad before making two appearances last year as an injury replacement.

In 2016 he moved to the World Superbike Championship with Honda, winning at Sepang and finishing fifth in the standings, and was 13th after five events this season.

MITCHELL ADAM

IN THE HEADLINES

VERSTAPPEN BEATS ZANDVOORT RECORD

Max Verstappen set the quickest time ever recorded on the former Dutch Grand Prix venue of Zandvoort in a demo run last weekend in the 2012 Red Bull RB8. "I finally got some new tyres and it was not really a demonstration run anymore," he said. "I decided to push it a little bit. If you are here with so many fans I think that's a good idea."

PIRELLI LOOKS INTO SOFTER TYRES

Pirelli has told Formula 1 drivers that it is looking into softer tyres for 2018. There was a consensus that this year's rubber was too conservative in the wake of doubts over how fast the 2017 cars would be. Pirelli has dropped its hard compound as a choice for the British Grand Prix. It was an option for the Spanish GP but was unraced, Sergio Perez describing it as only good enough for "pictures".

BRAWN IN F1/MOTOGP DATE DISCUSSION

F1 sporting boss Ross Brawn has met MotoGP organiser Carmelo Ezpeleta to discuss avoiding date clashes in the future, with eight on the calendar in 2017. "We're not too proud to consult with other championships and work out the best way forward," Brawn said. Brawn has appointed ex-Williams, Toyota and Lotus man Jason Somerville as head of aerodynamics, and former BAR, Honda, Brawn and Williams engineer Craig Wilson as head of vehicle performance.

MIKKELSEN GETS CITROEN FOR SARDINIA

Volkswagen refugee Andreas Mikkelsen will take Stephane Lefebvre's seat at Citroen for next month's Rally Italy. The Norwegian's C3 WRC debut in Sardinia is a one-off as the French firm aims to get its season back on track. Mikkelsen, who tested recently with Hyundai, joins Kris Meeke and Craig Breen in the line-up.

VISOIU JOINS CAMPOS FOR F2

Campos Racing has signed up Romanian Robert Visoiu for the remainder of the Formula 2 season. It is a return to the category for the GP3 race winner, who competed in its GP2 guise in '15. He partners Ralph Boschung in the car raced by Stefano Coletti and Roberto Merhi at the opening two rounds.

THINGS GET A BIT CHILE IN FORMULA E

Formula E will not return to London for the 2017-18 season, Autosport has learned. Instead it is understood that a race in Chilean capital Santiago is looking likely for mid-January, and there could be a round at Sao Paulo in March, using part of the old IndyCar street circuit, and forming a Latin-American triple-header with Mexico City. The European leg of the season has a June date that could be filled by Moscow or Zurich. The draft calendar seen by Autosport kicks off with Hong Kong on December 2-3 this year, going through to July 2018 with double-headers in New York and Montreal.

JIM McELREATH 1928-2017

A star of Indycar racing in the 1960s and '70s, Texan Jim McElreath died last week at the age of 89. He started racing on short tracks in '46, and won Indy 500 rookie of the year honours in a front-engined Kurtis-Kraft roadster in '62. This would be the first of six top-six finishes in the race, including third in a Brabham in '66 behind Graham Hill and Jim Clark; he took second in that year's USAC series behind Mario Andretti. He also won the first race at Ontario Motor Speedway in '70 with a Coyote, and was third in that season's points, racing on until the early '80s.

F1 PREVIEW

Monaco Grand Prix

May 25-28



MONTE CARLO

LENGTH 2.074 miles NUMBER OF LAPS 78

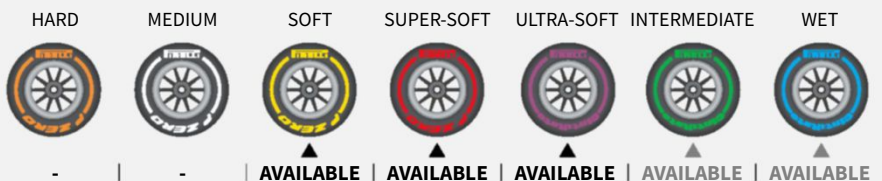
2016 POLE POSITION Daniel Ricciardo 1m13.622s

POLE LAP RECORD Sebastian Vettel 1m13.556s (2011)

RACE LAP RECORD Michael Schumacher 1m14.439s (2004)



TYRE ALLOCATION



UK START TIMES

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1 & CHANNEL 4

THURSDAY

FP1 0900 FP2 1300

SATURDAY

FP3 1000 QUALIFYING 1300

SUNDAY

RACE 1300

RADIO COVERAGE

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 1300

PREVIOUS WINNERS

Year	Driver	Team
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2012	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2009	Jenson Button	Brawn
2008	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren
2007	Fernando Alonso	McLaren

THEMES TO WATCH

MERC LESS WIELDY?

Monaco could play against Mercedes, which has the longest-wheelbase car. But the W08 was on the pace in Barcelona's tight final sector.

BUTTON IS BACK

While Fernando Alonso gets on with cracking the Indy 500, Jenson Button returns to the F1 cockpit with McLaren on a circuit where he won in 2009.

RED BULL REVIVAL

Red Bull got closer to the qualifying pace in Spain, and Monaco is where Ricciardo took the only non-Merc pole in 2016. Can there be a repeat?

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FEEDBACK

Why stop at the Triple Crown, Fernando?



Congratulations to Fernando Alonso on qualifying fifth for the Indy 500. A fantastic achievement for a first attempt by anyone's standards.

It is also great to see that Alonso has Le Mans in his sights, for his ongoing journey to compound his status as one of the world's most complete racing drivers.

However, I wonder if Alonso would consider taking his path further by a step or two. Perhaps that nice Mr Ganassi (another Honda customer) could offer him a NASCAR drive at Daytona.

Even better still (albeit for selfish reasons on my part, as a UK resident), how about an appearance at a BTCC event? Those Team Dynamics Hondas, in their Halfords livery, do not look a million miles away from the revived papaya orange of McLaren.

Richard Newell
Byemail

Indy always beats Monaco

I'm not surprised Fernando Alonso has decided to forego the Monaco GP in favour of the Indy 500. I've been to both. Monaco is a joke. So narrow that the pole winner almost certainly wins. Very slowly. And I won't even start about ticket prices.

Then there's Indy. Cars going at

220mph-plus and laps reeling off at a dizzying pace. That's a real race. The Monaco GP is emperor's new clothes, and it's about time that was recognised!

John Starkey
Byemail

Stick to the racing

No, it was not refreshing to see the coverage of the child crying at Barcelona (Letters, May 18). Enthusiasts watch TV coverage to see the racing whatever the category they follow, not cutaways to assorted WAGS, celebrities, team personnel, etc, which all too often come at the wrong moment and always interrupt the flow of the race coverage.

Sorry to sound like an old grump, but if I want to watch human-interest stories I'll watch *Panorama*!

Tim Barrett
Byemail

Safety is never a certainty

At last it seems a small amount of common sense has prevailed, with the FIA deciding to press ahead with a shield safety device, rather than the halo.

The shield looks far better from an aesthetic point of view, but F1 is, and always should remain an open-wheeled

Once Alonso has ticked off Indy and Le Mans, how about the Daytona 500?

concept. This may not sit well with some, but it's safe to assume the risks associated with motorsport are well known and accepted by those who compete.

There is no doubt that anything that can be done to ensure the safety of drivers, officials, volunteers and fans should be done, but the fact is there is probably no device that can fully prevent future tragedies. Accidents occur when a set of freak circumstances combine.

With the whole matter dividing opinion throughout the paddock, especially among drivers, is it perhaps time that the concept was quietly dropped? From a purist point of view, changes to the technical and sporting regulations may be a better way of achieving the same objective.

Michael Brierley
Stalybridge, Cheshire

Don't cross the red line

Drivers say they relish the thrill of track limits being physically demarcated – for example, Monaco's barriers or Montreal's 'Wall of Champions'. For reasons of safety we see Monza's Parabolica now emasculated with runoff Tarmac, while other places, such as the exit to Spa's La Source, have for years seen the acres of track apron routinely abused.

Many decry the lack of effect on drivers' races when running off-track into these 'safe' spaces. Without compromising safety, could virtual gravel traps/walls be employed, marked by a very fat, very red and very visible line? To go onto or over this line would incur a penalty: one wheel, two seconds; two wheels, 5s; three wheels, 10s; four wheels, black flag?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone
Elland, West Yorks

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Can Alonso really win the Indy 500?





The F1 ace will start from row two at Indianapolis this weekend. We gauge his chances of success

By Edd Straw, Editor-in-Chief

[@eddstrawF1](#)

Make no mistake, Fernando Alonso knows that winning the Indianapolis 500 at the first attempt is possible. Not easy, perhaps not even likely – but possible. Like all the true greats, Alonso is a driver who delivers the near-impossible on a regular basis. And for all his talk of needing to learn, his total lack of oval-racing experience and the quality of the opposition, he will be racing to win on Sunday – after the third day of practice he said the aim is to “try to win it”. Above all, Alonso looks utterly, imperiously confident.

His progress during five days of practice and two days of qualifying at Indy was remarkable. He started the Month of May (really, that should be ‘fortnight’ these days) with just 110 laps under his belt on an oval. He was fastest in the rookie/ refresher session on Monday, impressed seasoned observers with his decisiveness in traffic-simulation runs on Tuesday, mastered tricky winds on Wednesday, had built a good feel for the set-up tricks of The Brickyard by Thursday and, on Fast Friday, when qualifying work begins, established himself among the favourites to make the Fast Nine Shootout for pole position.

Oh, and as for the old aphorism that there are only two kinds of oval racers, ‘those who have hit the wall and those who will hit the wall’, Alonso is still firmly in the second group. He even adapted well to the fans who constantly surrounded him, even giving autographs and posing for photographs on pitroad after putting his balaclava on before jumping in the car!

On Saturday, even with bad weather reducing everyone to just one run on the truncated opening day of qualifying, Alonso duly made the top-nine shootout in seventh place with an average speed of 230.034mph, without the safety net of additional runs or the chance to try the car on a track that had been affected dramatically by heavy rain. Those conditions, it should be added, caught out some very accomplished Indy regulars. But Alonso took it in his stride, and vowed to go quicker on Pole Day.

“It was stressful when the weather came in, because you only have one shot, one attempt,” said Alonso. “But the car felt good, the team did a fantastic job to put me in the right position. I could have improved a little bit – I was not extracting the >>

Running in traffic is the biggest test



ALONSO'S VITAL INDY WEAPON

FERNANDO ALONSO USED THE word “experience” continually during the first week of 2017 Indianapolis practice. Every day, every run was a new learning opportunity, and he wasn’t afraid to point out that he was battling a serious deficit. That’s where Gil de Ferran, 2003 Indianapolis 500 winner and two-time CART champion, comes in.

Honda-contracted de Ferran is officially Alonso’s driver coach. But, as he puts it, “I’m certainly not here to teach him how to drive”. But he is a vital bank of experience for Alonso to draw from.

“Gil’s just been a mentor, sharing his experience because Fernando’s just sucking in as much as he can in a short period of time,” explains McLaren team boss Zak Brown. “Gil gives him those experiences to shorten his learning curve. Fernando wanted someone like that and Gil was the guy we wanted.”

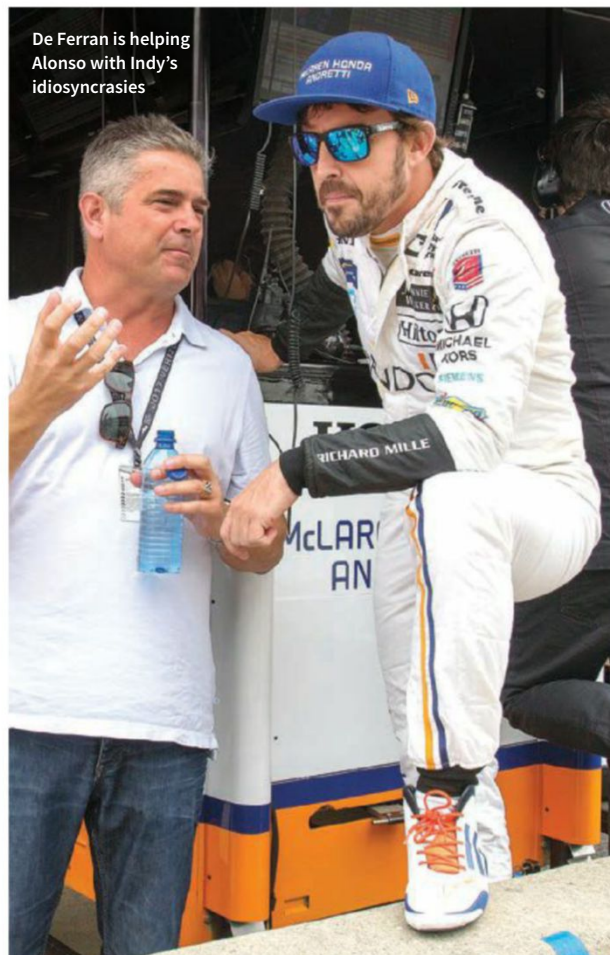
Alonso has made great use of de Ferran. The Spaniard wanted someone in the coaching role, and is certainly happy to have the 49-year-old Brazilian who, as well as being

an American open-wheel legend, also understands the European racing culture that Alonso comes from.

“It’s as an extra pair of eyes, another set of brains,” says de Ferran. “We’ve been bouncing around things about the car, about driving, really openly exchanging views about what’s going on, what he thinks he needs. Discussing how to approach some situations that worked and some that didn’t work.”

De Ferran also warned Alonso that the four-lap qualifying run would be the “most horrible” of his career. The fact that Alonso seemed to take qualifying in his stride is testament to the value of de Ferran. Not that de Ferran is seeking any credit for his contribution, preferring to talk up Alonso, who he only knew in passing before the Indy adventure.

“His success as a racing driver, it’s clear that hasn’t just come from an ungodly amount of skill,” he says. “His, as Jackie Stewart would say, mind management is very good. He is very intelligent, very perceptive, very focused, very calm, even keel, clear thinking. The ultimate professional.”



De Ferran is helping Alonso with Indy’s idiosyncrasies



Alonso can draw on lots of experience from the Andretti driver line-up

maximum from the car. I keep learning and tomorrow I will use that lesson and be quicker."

And he was, albeit in track conditions that were fractionally faster. He briefly held top spot in the Fast Nine shootout before being shuffled back to fifth. Having been keen to lean out the Andretti Autosport car more after first qualifying, he suspected the team had gone too far on Pole Day. Alonso also reckoned he could have shot for pole but for an overboost, which led to the McLaren ECU momentarily easing back the power as per the regulations, at the end of the second lap of his four-lap run.

"Unfortunately, we had an overboost problem at the exit of Turn 4 on lap two and we lost 0.3 or 0.4mph on the average," he said after the run. "It was like hitting the brakes. Maybe we would be up there with Scott [Dixon, polesitter] now."

Alonso is stretching a point when he suggests he could have threatened Dixon. But a gain of just 0.187mph on his run average would have got him onto the front row. Even so, the middle of the second row is a very good place to start.

So let's look at how things stack up: Alonso is one of the world's great drivers, arguably the greatest, he's driving for the team that has won two out of the past three Indy 500s, he's quick, he's got a good starting position. So can he win?

"Absolutely," says 1992 and '94 Indy 500 winner Al Unser Jr without even a hint of hesitation. "He's got a great team, Andretti has got more cars than Penske or Ganassi in the top nine, he's got great talent, he's working at it, he's concentrating, he's thinking. There is a strong possibility he will win the race.

"He's attacking it like he would a Formula 1 World Championship and he's brought the mentality of what he's done there to this. So he's going to be a force to be reckoned with on race day, just like Emerson Fittipaldi and Nigel Mansell were."

Unser is well placed to make the comparison, as he was at the peak of his powers during Mansell's two years in Indycars in 1993 and '94, as well as racing with Emmo both as team-mate and rival. Indy brims with legendary drivers during the Month of May, and every one of them has been quick in praise of Alonso.

The key, unanswered, question is how Alonso will fare in battle. Even after plenty of running with his five Andretti Autosport team-mates in the build-up to qualifying, the 'proper' pack running will be tense.

"The learning curve is going to be in the race," explains Rick Mears, four-time winner of the Indy 500 and holder of the pole-position record with six. "He's been getting a lot of practice in traffic, which is a good thing, but you're going to learn more in the race than you learn in six months of practice because you end up getting into situations that you would never get into in practice. But he's a smart racer and he will deal with them.

"The main thing is not to get caught out on something. The closing rate can be so quick here if someone checks up in front of you. Even in practice, I saw it sneak up on him a little bit, but he was ahead of it, he caught it. I'm sure the next time that scenario happens, there will be a bigger gap. He's going to do well."

Alonso certainly isn't overawed. Relatively early in his traffic-running on day two of practice, he confidently scythed through the Penske cars of Helio Castroneves and Juan Pablo Montoya on the backstretch. As for the walls, he has showed supreme confidence when running quickly. Even after old F1 rival Sebastien Bourdais crashed heavily on the first day of qualifying and sustained multiple fractures to his pelvis, Alonso continued to back his supreme talent. Certainly, he doesn't fear his lack of experience, the traffic, or the unyielding Indianapolis walls.

"The most difficult thing will be the race itself," says Alonso. "All the things that happen in a race like this one, like running in traffic, learning the little tricks to overtake and to use the performance of your car in which moment of the race and why. All of these little things that you can only learn with experience. I don't have that experience, and I don't have that time, so I know I will be weaker in some of these aspects.

"The danger? It's motor racing. Every single race, every single lap you do behind a steering wheel in any series, you have a danger factor. When you jump in the car, when you close the visor, you never think about that and you want any extra mph you can get."

And it's not only the traffic, for there is also the fact that track conditions evolve during the race, and the key is to have a car that's strong for the closing stages. Again, knowledge is power.

Then you have to factor in the 32 other drivers, and the fact that a few of them will be keen to put one over this interloper from F1 — even though he has been welcomed with open arms.

So it's a massive challenge. Mansell fought for victory in his rookie Indy 500 and finished third after being ambushed by Fittipaldi and Arie Luyendyk at the penultimate restart. And that was as a full-season driver with more experience in Indycars. But if anyone can do it, it's Alonso. And with Michael Andretti, who never won the Indy 500 but who somehow managed to lead more laps than the legendary Mears, calling strategy on the pitwall, and Eric Bretzman, who engineered Scott Dixon to victory in 2008, in his corner, to count him out would be a big mistake.

And if Alonso does win, and McLaren were to get him signed up for 2018, what would that mean for next year?

"We're not in the business of compromising our F1 team in any way, shape or form," says McLaren team boss Zak Brown. "Had we been running at the front in F1, this wouldn't have happened. One has to assume that next year we're not going to be where we are today, which will mean whoever is in our Formula 1 cars is going to be in Monaco."

So, for now at least, this is a one-shot deal for Alonso. Not only that, but it's his best, surely only, chance to win a race this year. He's not favourite — far from it — but while everyone has been saying Alonso must not underestimate Indianapolis, Indianapolis must also not underestimate him. He's clearly revelling in the challenge, the environment and the chance to race a competitive car, and has done everything he can to prepare. A rookie victory would be the crowning glory of a remarkable career.

Over to you, Fernando. 🍀



When McLaren *nearly* went to Indycar

After the British team secured both Formula 1 titles in 1984, sponsor Marlboro hatched a bold plan for it to race in the United States

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

[@gazzasportscars](#)

The idea of a car bearing the word 'McLaren' on orange-liveried flanks racing in this year's Indianapolis 500 would have sounded preposterous a little more than a month ago. The prospect of the same Formula 1 team competing at the Brickyard 30 years ago would have seemed just as ridiculous. Yet there was a plan for McLaren to race Indycars full-time in the mid-1980s in a different hue of orange – the familiar lurid orange-and-white of Marlboro.

The plan belonged to Marlboro parent Philip Morris rather than McLaren. Its representatives in both the US and Europe spent considerable time and effort through 1985 trying to

persuade a team that had dominated F1 with Niki Lauda and Alain Prost in '84 to double up on its racing programme and enter the CART Indycar series in '86.

Marlboro was making its first significant steps into the CART arena in 1985. It had renewed its relationship with Emerson Fittipaldi, the driver who had brought the cigarette brand to McLaren 11 years before. There were also further personal sponsorship deals with Danny Sullivan and Al Unser Jr under the 'Marlboro World Championship Team' banner that will be familiar to anyone with a collection of Marlboro F1 event stickers. Bruno Giacomelli, who completed a limited CART programme with Patrick Racing that season, had a separate deal with Philip Morris International in Europe that had carried on from his days in F1.



The company's plan was to ramp up big-time in 1986. The Marlboro Pole Position Award came on stream, eventually helping to spawn the end-of-season Marlboro Challenge non-championship race run from 1987 until '92. But central to the ambitions of Philip Morris was getting its colours on the side of a car in the series. And who better to run it than McLaren?

It would have been a natural call, and not only because McLaren was riding the crest of a wave after taking both the F1 drivers' and constructors' titles in 1984. The team, albeit in a previous incarnation, had Indycar form. Its chassis had taken a trio of Indy 500 victories in the 1970s, and it was the team's US operation that had kept McLaren solvent in the early '70s before Fittipaldi arrived with Marlboro's millions. It had effectively subsidised the F1 team until that point.

McLaren technical director John Barnard was also no stranger to Indycars. He'd spent five years across the Atlantic, designing first the race-winning Parnelli-Cosworth VPJ6 in the United States Automobile Club era and then the Chaparral 2K that went on to dominate the second season of the new CART series in 1980 with ex-McLaren driver Johnny Rutherford. (Barnard had left by then after a dispute with Chaparral boss Jim Hall over who should be given credit for the design.)

The initial discussions designed to take McLaren Stateside were set up by John Hogan, who ran Philip Morris International's sponsorship operations from Lausanne in Switzerland.

"I was privy to it and instrumental in it," says the man who four and a half years earlier had brokered the deal for McLaren to merge with Ron Dennis's Project 4 Racing squad, which had been gearing up for an F1 entry with a Barnard design. "The 1984 season was a seminal one for McLaren and Marlboro. We had hit the ground running with the TAG turbo engine after years of disaster and the thinking in North America was, 'Why can't we do that here?'"

"Philip Morris in Europe was asked to review the proposition of getting McLaren involved in Indycar racing.

“I saw a bigger slice of the cake coming into my department. I was all for it”

I was being politically ambitious in that I could see a bigger slice of the cake within Philip Morris coming into my department. I was all for it."

The first meeting about the potential Indycar programme took place in Woking in March 1985. Present were former Long Beach Grand Prix marketing boss Brian Turner, who had been retained as a consultant by Philip Morris USA, and Hogan. Their recollections of that meeting are very different, however.

"Ron didn't seem very excited about the plan and ummed and ahed about it and finally agreed that he'd do a proposal, which he put to us in New York in July," says Turner.

Hogan, conversely, says that the then-McLaren boss was keen on the idea.

"Ron's initial reaction was to say yes – he was very positive," he recalls. "He spied the spiel and said they could run a March chassis in the first year, tidy it up and make it better, and then come with their own car in 1987."

Dennis did put a proper proposal forward in July, but it wasn't what the Marlboro men had been hoping for.

Internal Philip Morris USA documents, freely available from the University of California, San Francisco 'Truth Tobacco' legacy library, reveal that Dennis had backed away from the idea of running a customer chassis in year one of the programme.

"A formal presentation was held on July 30, at which time McLaren proposed a two-year association with the >>

Barnard says he would have been against a McLaren Indycar effort



Fittipaldi and Patrick Racing would bring CART success for Marlboro



objective of having a competitive Marlboro entry in CART in 1987," reads the memorandum dated September 4 1985. "This one-year delay is based upon both technical and political issues, which must be overcome before McLaren can realistically compete with a purpose-made engine and car."

The Philip Morris strategy called for a car to be up and running in Marlboro colours in 1986. McLaren was asked to reconsider, but at a subsequent meeting at the end of August reiterated its position. The team believed, according to the document, that "a 1986 McLaren effort in CART using a 'kit-car' [ie a March or Lola] would be detrimental to their company and counterproductive to their future involvement in CART".

Philip Morris therefore began to make alternative arrangements and agreed a deal with Patrick Racing to sponsor Fittipaldi's car from 1986. It had an option with the team that had to be taken up by September 30, but less than two weeks before that Dennis got back in contact asking if he could again pursue the idea of joining the CART ranks in '86.

The documents from the legacy library suggest that senior Philip Morris executives were waiting by the phone in a New York office on October 10 for a call from Dennis to confirm that the 1986 plan was on. The phone never rang. Instead a telex arrived calling the whole thing off.

Hogan believes that Barnard, ever the perfectionist, ultimately scuppered McLaren's expansion into Indycar racing.

"John was hostile to the whole idea; he did not want to do it," he says. "He didn't want to run someone else's car in year one and was only interested in doing a full-carbon car like the F1, and the regulations didn't allow that [and wouldn't until 1991]."

Getting McLaren's side of the story is nigh-on impossible. Dennis's office didn't reply to Autosport's requests for an interview (he declines, as a rule, to talk about the past) and Barnard has absolutely no recollection of Marlboro's plans.

He is insistent that Dennis never discussed it with him. But he does say that he would have been against it.

Hostile, in fact, just as Hogan says.

"I have a take on this, which is that Ron would have

Dennis announces Lauda's F1 retirement in 1985



McLaren went on to win four consecutive F1 doubles between 1988 and '91



known that I was anti doing anything outside of F1 at that time,” Barnard explains. “We had a few people come along talking about road cars and this and that, and I always resisted. Firstly, we just didn’t have the capacity and, secondly, Ron and I couldn’t divert our attention away from F1.”

Barnard points out that McLaren at the time would have been incapable of undertaking a second project without a significant expansion.

“Don’t forget that we won the 1984 championship with Niki with a total staff of, I think, 74 people,” he explains. “I remember that because there is a big picture somewhere of everyone lined up in Boundary Road [the team’s factory location at that time] for the cameras. The design office was six people and me.

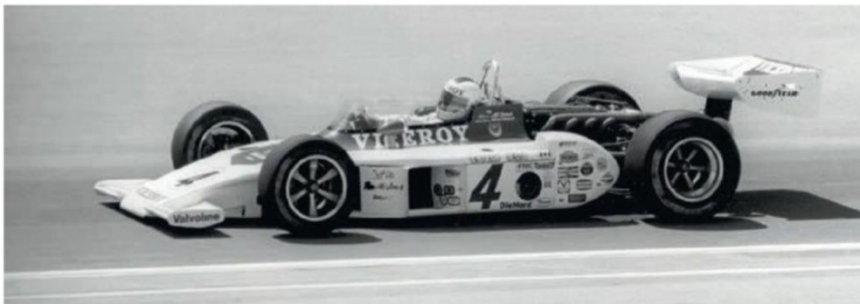
“We would’ve had to bring in a new group and I knew good people over in America from my time there. But I would’ve been in charge of the design group, so it would still have been a distraction.”

Put it to Barnard that Dennis might not have told him of the Marlboro approach for fear of his reaction, and he replies: “I wasn’t known for my subtlety, let’s put it this way, so the answer is probably yes.”

Dennis wouldn’t have been obliged to tell Barnard. McLaren’s technical director had sold his 40% stake in the company to Mansour Ojeh, who had previously funded development of the Porsche-built TAG twin-turbo V6, at the end of 1984. “If you ask me why I did it, I can’t tell you,” he says. “I decided that I wanted to get rid of my shareholding, cash it in if you like.”

Barnard does, however, remember an earlier approach for McLaren to build an Indycar. It came from his old employers

“Ron and I couldn’t divert our attention from F1. It would be a distraction”



In 1975 Barnard joined Vel’s Parnelli Jones Racing, which ran Unser at Indy that year (above). Lauda (right) won five F1 races in ’84



Barnard-designed Chaparral 2K (below) dominated CART between 1979 and ’81



Vel Miletich and Parnelli Jones. It, too, was rebuffed.

“It must have been 1982, possibly ’83, and I remember Ron booking a meeting room at a hotel at Heathrow,” recalls Barnard. “We had the talks, but Ron said, ‘I don’t think this is right for us.’ That’s as far as it went. Vel was a great big guy and Parnelli a crazy, bull-necked ex-driver. I don’t think they were Ron’s kind of people.”

The surprise telex from Dennis forced Philip Morris to go back to the drawing board and back to Patrick. The problem was the team had already signed a deal for Fittipaldi to be sponsored in 1986 by 7-Eleven after Marlboro failed to take up its option. Kevin Cogan was to be the team’s second driver, but Philip Morris didn’t want him: it wanted the driver who’d given Marlboro its first F1 world title in 1974.

“I had to go back to Patrick and buy out Emerson’s contract with 7-Eleven,” recalls Turner. “He ended up racing the Marlboro car and Cogan drove the 7-Eleven car.”

Fittipaldi continued to win races with Patrick, now with his March decked out in Marlboro colours and powered by a Chevrolet engine, in 1986. A switch to a Penske chassis in ’89 yielded the Indy 500 and CART title double. That was also the first season that a Penske-run car appeared in Marlboro livery, on Al Unser Sr’s car at the Indy 500.

Philip Morris got on board with Penske full-time the following season and didn’t do too badly in both CART and the IndyCar Series before tobacco sponsorship was outlawed, while in F1 McLaren and Marlboro continued racking up world titles.

They were won with and then without Barnard, and without the distraction of a second racing programme on the other side of the pond. ❄

Nelson Piquet: Indy's pay and pain

The triple Formula 1 world champion recalls the challenge of the Indy 500 and the 1992 practice crash that nearly cost him his feet

By Stuart Codling, Executive Editor

[@CoddersF1](#)



Even today, 25 years on, Nelson Piquet walks with a pronounced and pained shuffle, the legacy of the enormous crash that ended his top-level racing career.

He'd been persuaded to enter the 1992 Indianapolis 500 for a substantial fee; the tragic irony is that he fell in love with the challenge of the Brickyard, felt denied by wrecking his Lola-Buick (and his feet) in practice, and longed for a comeback. But there would be no fairytale return for the three-time Formula 1 world champion.

Over the course of four largely underwhelming seasons with Lotus and then Benetton, Piquet's F1 stock had dropped and the arrival of Michael Schumacher as his team-mate late in 1991 hastened his departure from the scene. He concedes now that he'd spent those years racing largely for the generous pay packets on offer, and hiding the true extent of a head injury he'd suffered in an F1 shunt at Imola's Tamburello corner in 1987.

"I lost three dimensions," he says. "Not double vision – it was flat, like a TV. In the car, I was so slow. I had to have somebody in front of me [to follow] during qualifying. I was getting better, but never the same as before, and that's why in the middle of that year I signed the big contract with Lotus. I thought I would never be as quick as I had been before the [Tamburello] accident."

Come 1992, with his F1 career over, Piquet was lured back into action by the prospect of another big pay day.

"I'd stopped racing and gone back to work in Brazil, to look after my business," he says. "But I'd always wanted to do the Indy 500 and Le Mans. When I was back in Brazil I was offered a chance to run in the Indy 500. I thought, 'Do I really want to do this?'; as I was busy working. But it was a lot of money [he rubs his thumb and forefingers together to add visual emphasis]. They paid me, and I went, and I had an accident before the race!"

If Piquet arrived at Indianapolis in cruise-and-collect mode, something changed during the first few days of rookie orientation and practice. The high-revving stock-block Buick V6 engine, built by Piquet's Menard team, had grunt aplenty (if not always the stamina for a full race distance) and the Lola chassis was easy to drive. Piquet sailed through the rookie tests and was straight into the pace ballpark, lapping consistently at 225mph and beyond.

He had always been a technical driver, known for his dedication to testing, and so learning the unique tricks of Indianapolis – where speed is highly sensitive to changes in ambient temperature and track conditions – appealed to him.

"I loved the circuit," he says. "Loved the challenge, the pure aerodynamics, the stagger of the tyres. In the morning I had minimal downforce, was flat everywhere. Started sliding at midday as it got hot – I put more wing on and was flat everywhere again. Then in the afternoon, down on the wing again, still quick. For three or four days, I was quickest in the morning, the middle of the day and the afternoon. I realised people were doing six, seven, eight laps quick – I was doing every bloody lap quick!"

The passage of time is lending some economy to the actualité here, since Jim Crawford topped 230mph several times in his King Racing Lola-Buick over the first six days of testing. Piquet was nevertheless impressive enough for observers to consider him in with a shot at qualifying in the top 10. But on May 7 – 17 days before the race – he hit the wall.

Piquet explains today that he had been concerned about wasted time spent in the pits during refuelling stops and caution periods, that because of changing track conditions "if you lose 20 minutes you have to start over [on set-up]". That's why, when the yellow lights were illuminated that Thursday, he stayed committed to the throttle and then dived into the pits at the last minute: he thought that if he made a very short stop he would have time to do another run after the errant piece of metal on the back straight had been retrieved.

Footage later emerged of him running over that debris shortly before the accident, but it's most likely that it was the sharp lift

of the throttle at Turn 4 as he turned in to the pits that prompted the Lola to gyrate. The impact with the wall left Piquet's feet "pulverised", to quote Dr Terry Trammell, Indycar racing's resident surgeon, who presided over the six-and-a-half-hour operation that followed at Methodist Hospital.

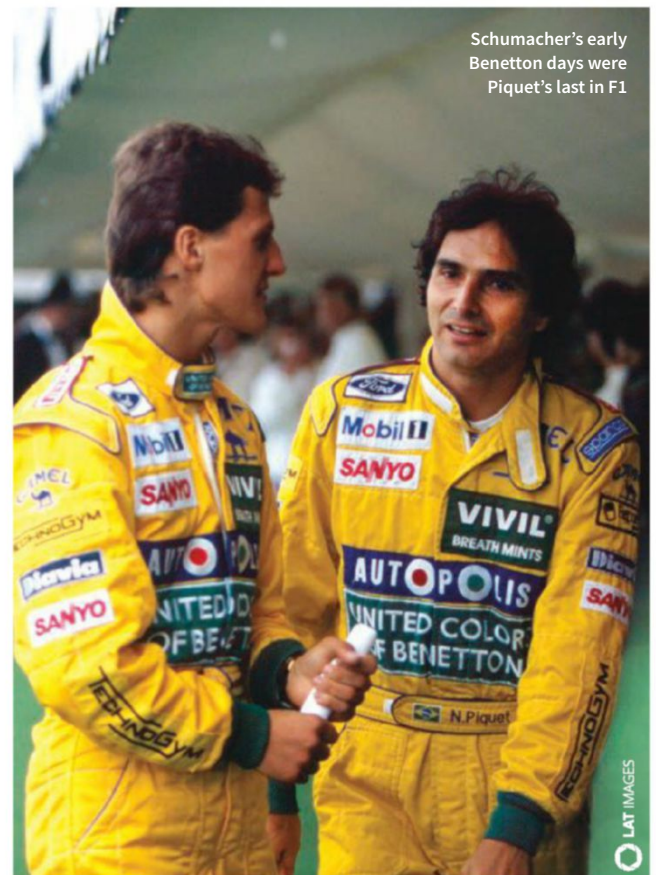
"There was so much of the foot missing that there was a significant question of whether we could put together what was damaged," said Trammell.

Meanwhile, Al Unser Sr took over Piquet's entry, qualified 22nd and finished third. Over the coming months, as he recuperated, Piquet determined that he would have another go, regardless of the pain in his reconstructed feet. At Indianapolis in 1993 he qualified 13th, but then his engine blew after 38 laps.

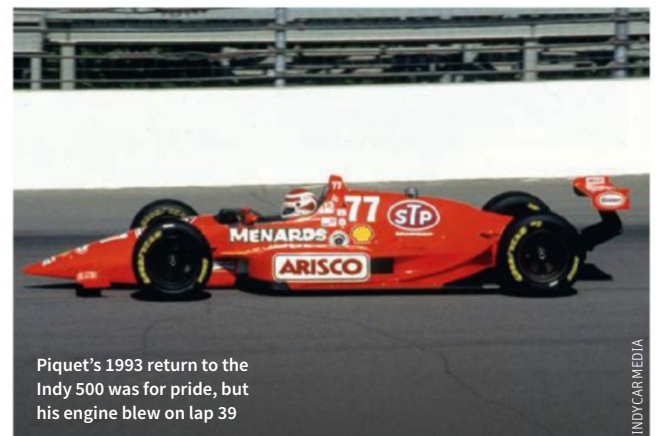
Asked if he made the decision to go back to the 500 again because of the money on offer, he gives an emphatic answer: "No, it was for pride."

Bar a couple of sportscar outings and some Formula 3 racing in Brazil, he has been absent from the racing scene ever since, except in support of his sons' racing careers. But he remains in touch with events, and admits to being very interested in Fernando Alonso's unexpected 2017 Indy 500 campaign.

"It's a completely different way of racing," he says. "He'll like it. My advice? Keep off the wall..." ❄



Schumacher's early Benetton days were Piquet's last in F1




Piquet's 1993 return to the Indy 500 was for pride, but his engine blew on lap 39



Secrets of the street fighters

It's Monaco Grand Prix week, so it's time to wallow in some street-racing fever. How have some of the greats of city tracks revelled in the challenges they present?

By Kevin Turner, Editor

 @KRT917



Street-racing master Ayrton Senna heads to victory at the 1989 Monaco GP, one of his six successes there

Racing in the confines of a street track is always special. The wheel-to-wheel action may not always be the best, but the spectacle of the best racers flirting with the barriers makes it one of the sport's greatest challenges. That's particularly true now that most conventional circuits, particularly in Formula 1, have large runoff areas. And it helps to explain why the Monaco Grand Prix, the 75th edition of which will take place this weekend, is considered by many as the jewel in F1's crown.

Red Bull racer Max Verstappen believes that the greater risk on street circuits means drivers approach the early part of the weekend slightly differently. Track time – and not putting it in the wall – is key. “On a normal track, even when you go a bit wide it's fine – you can run off if you want to,” he says. “Obviously on a street circuit it's not possible so I think you build it up a bit easier. It's just about feeling the grip, because you are always sliding and there's not a lot of grip. That makes a difference between the drivers.”

Dario Franchitti scored many of his IndyCar successes on street circuits. He has always been a fan of their demands, and believes that finding the limit is harder than on a conventional track. “I loved them all,” he says. “Even downtown Houston – it was all 90-degree corners, but it was still a hell of a challenge. Then there's something completely different like Surfers Paradise, which I adored.

“There's no room for mistakes. If you make a slight misjudgement you generally, at best, ding a tie rod. If you clip an apex wall, it sends you into the outside wall and you've done a lot of damage. It's the precision of it.”

The four-time IndyCar champion also points out that commitment and confidence are big factors in finding lap time. And it's not just the proximity of the walls that makes life difficult. “Because of the walls a lot of the corners are blind, so you commit to the corner, the brakes, to getting off the brakes and running the speed without being able to see the exits,” adds Franchitti. “You've really got to know what comes next, which requires a level of commitment.

“With American and DTM street courses, the bumps and surface changes were another aspect to it – another part of the challenge. Toronto had concrete patches on the apex of every corner. You'd come down hellishly bumpy braking zones, get off the brakes and turn in on Tarmac and then hit the concrete and have no grip, so you had to learn how to deal with that.

“I see it now with Max Chilton [IndyCar driver and ex-F1 racer, who Franchitti helps in his role at Chip Ganassi Racing]. He's driven at Monaco, but he's never really – until Indy Lights – driven a proper, bumpy street course. You've got to read the bumps and changes in grip – they dictate how you drive a corner. Two corners could have identical geometries, but because of the surface changes and the bumps it completely changes how they drive. You're working with the car leaving the ground.



I loved the challenge. It was probably my favourite discipline.”

The different surfaces also add an extra dimension when rain arrives. Nigel Mansell blamed his 1984 Monaco GP shunt on a white line, and Franchitti believes it's a valid point. “Wherever it is in the world, the local government don't use FIA non-slip paint,” he says. “Zebra crossings and arrows can be in the most unfortunate places. I can see where Nigel was coming from about Monaco – he was dead on with that one!

“Some surfaces hold the water more than others, some have got different grip levels. At Toronto, for example, the buses use the same line as you use when you're braking for the hairpin. So when you go down there, there are two troughs full of water.”

Verstappen (top) believes a different approach is needed, but Stewart (above) isn't so sure

Q&A DARIO FRANCHITTI



What was your best win on a street track?

Surfers Paradise in 1999. Juan Pablo Montoya and I were in the championship fight and I was able to put it on pole by nearly a second [from Bryan Herta; Montoya was sixth]. I pushed 'Monty' into making a mistake and crashing, and won the race when the

pressure was on. That was one of my better performances – the one Indycar I've got at home is that one.

Which drivers impressed you on street circuits?

There were quite a few. Michael Andretti always had a way of getting the job done, Alex Zanardi was quite similar,

Montoya was good. It didn't seem to matter where Alex qualified. I remember he came back from a lap down and beat me at Long Beach [1998]; it wasn't so fun when he went steaming past! It was amazing what he did that day.

Street circuits can sometimes produce poor racing and a

lack of overtaking, but that doesn't seem to be a problem in Formula E. Why is that?

The cars have no real aero, by the rules. It's not a chassis formula; it's about powertrains. It's not like you get within two car lengths and lose the front end of the car, the classic issue with cars with big downforce.



LAT IMAGES

Another fan of the art is Mario Andretti. The 1978 F1 world champion and four-time Indycar title winner believes street circuits require a very specific approach. “What I loved was the fact that you needed very controlled aggression,” says the 77-year-old. “That’s what would pay off. You had to be aggressive, but you really had to measure your slides and so forth. Today, even in my two-seater [Indycar], when I go out there... people don’t know this but I drive the shit out of it, and I get really close to the walls. I love that part of it, because it pays you back.

“The drivers that get it done always have some whitewalls on the tyres. All you have to do is leave about six inches from the wall, and you’re not going to get your lap time. The trick

is to use every inch and be bold, not be afraid of the walls. You really have to flirt with the walls and the guardrails, even on the inside. You have to play it by the inch.”

Street circuits thus put a premium on the things that are always important in circuit racing and highlight them. As well as precision and confidence, getting into the groove and being able to lap consistently is crucial.

Six-time Monaco winner Ayrton Senna famously talked of getting quicker and quicker during a long run, almost mesmerised between the walls. This allows some drivers to make more of a difference.

“Rhythm is really important on a street track,” confirms Franchitti. “When you get in the rhythm and the car is working you can really make a gap to the opposition. The driver can make the difference, but you’ve got to get the car working too. Part of it is giving the feedback to the engineer of what you need and what you think you’re going to need because there is a lot of track evolution. I wanted a car to work well over the bumps and be something I could be confident with.”

From an engineering point of view, the bumps are far more of a concern than the barriers. Mark Williams, former head of vehicle engineering at McLaren, worked in Formula 3000 before reaching F1 and knows the strain that street tracks put on machinery. “When I ran cars at the Birmingham Superprix it was as bumpy as hell because the Tarmac wasn’t laid for the racing line but rather as required by the Highways Agency,” he says. “So roundabouts were a nightmare and suspension components suffered. Now when you walk Monaco it feels like it’s laid as a race track, so the only difference to a normal circuit is the proximity of the barriers.”

Although the Monaco GP has long been considered one >>

Vettel’s only Monaco GP win so far came in 2011 for Red Bull



Clark was quick at Monaco but never won



F1's greatest street fighters

SO WHO'S THE BEST WHEN IT COMES TO Formula 1 between the walls? We put together a list of relevant circuits and then totted up the winners.

Given his mastery of Monaco, it's perhaps not surprising that Ayrton Senna tops the list of F1 World Championship street-race winners. As well as his six Monte Carlo successes, he also took a hat-trick in Detroit and braces in both Phoenix and Adelaide. More than 21% of his F1 career-points total came from street venues, an even higher rate than five-time Monaco winner Graham Hill.

Selecting which circuits to include was a trickier challenge than expected. Chief among the criteria was that at least part of the circuit had to consist of public roads. They also had to have a genuine street/town nature, as opposed to road circuits such as Reims.

The final list, used to calculate the table below, was: Adelaide (Australia), Albert Park (Australia), Dallas (USA), Detroit (USA), Las Vegas (USA), Long

Beach (USA), Marina Bay (Singapore), Monsanto (Portugal), Monaco, Montjuich (Spain), Pedralbes (Spain), Phoenix (USA), Porto (Portugal) and Valencia (Spain).

Behind Senna there are 28 other drivers who have scored two F1 street victories or more. Sebastian Vettel is second on the all-time list, even though he currently has just one Monaco win. Albert Park (two wins), Marina Bay (four) and Valencia (two) put him on a par with Michael Schumacher, who took five of his nine street wins in Monaco.

The other current drivers on the list are Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso on six wins, the same as retired reigning world champion Nico Rosberg. Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart round out the top 10, both amassing their totals on far fewer starts than the drivers above them.

Jenson Button, who will return to F1 in Monaco this weekend while Alonso races at Indianapolis, is 11th, with four wins.

F1'S TOP 10 STREET WINNERS

DRIVER	STARTS	WINS	POLES
Ayrton Senna	28	13	16
Sebastian Vettel	33	9	10
Michael Schumacher	43	9	6
Alain Prost	36	7	6
Lewis Hamilton	35	6	11
Fernando Alonso	44	6	3
Nico Rosberg	36	6	3
Graham Hill	23	5	2
Stirling Moss	11	5	5
Jackie Stewart	11	5	4

of the great races, the challenge of street circuits has not always been so different to other venues. The appeal and speciality of them has grown over time as more conventional circuits have evolved.

Sir Jackie Stewart, who won three Monaco GPs, points to the lack of runoff at most tracks in the 1960s and '70s. So the approach when arriving at a street venue was not dissimilar. "Monaco was my first street track [in F3 in 1964], which was a huge thrill because of the history of it," says the three-time world champion. "I'd never been to Monaco. Since '29 it's been the highest level of motorsport and the big guys have won it.

"But I didn't see it as anything different to a normal race track. On most circuits there were no runoff areas or kerbs. You couldn't make mistakes – the penalty was so big. You didn't have to go far to hit a wall. The discipline had to be so severe; the penalties were so severe."

Stewart also has an interesting take on how Monaco stacks up against other events. He places it alongside his home GP and the old Nurburgring as one of the three circuits he always wanted to win at, but doesn't believe it was the most challenging: "I don't think it's that difficult to win Monaco – if you qualify well and you don't make mistakes you can win. I don't think it's as big a deal as some people make it.

"In 1971 I won with no rear brakes, so you can't say I was driving on the limit to the extent you'd expect. It was obviously a good win, but the fact that there were no rear brakes on a place that's all stop-and-go...

"Jim Clark never won Monaco, but that's because he drove



LAT IMAGES

Long Beach 2009 was one of many Franchitti wins on street circuits

for [Lotus boss] Colin Chapman. Monaco wasn't the billiard table it is today – there were kerbs and manhole covers. There was no-one smoother than Jim Clark and he didn't run into anybody – the car didn't finish."

Monaco has certainly proved a car breaker, as well as a driving challenge, over the years. In the early days of the world championship it was not unusual for only two or three cars to cover the full 100 laps, and even as late as 1996 there were only three cars running on track at the finish.

One thing that's beyond doubt is that street races can provide spectators with a real spectacle. They can normally get closer to the cars, and the walls help highlight the speed and sound. At Pau, Stewart, Graham Hill and Clark used to go trackside for

the support races. "Everyone made mistakes and it was spectacular," says Stewart. "Fans are closer to it [at street tracks] – Monaco and Pau are good examples."

Franchitti, who now commentates on the city-based Formula E series, agrees. "I always feel that street-course racing is an event," he says. "You can walk to restaurants, go for a beer – it's as much a party. You feel the whole city or town is getting into it."

That will happen again in Monaco this weekend. Of the top four in the 2017 drivers' championship, only Valtteri Bottas has yet to taste success there. It will be interesting to see if the long wheelbase of the Mercedes W08 will hinder it around the tight confines of the principality, or whether its basic pace advantage will help the Finn add his name to an illustrious list of winners. ❧

Andretti likes getting close to the walls in twin-seater (right). Mansell crashed on white line in 1984 Monaco GP (far right)



THE DEBATE

Is Monaco the greatest street race in the world?



YES

EDD STRAW

Editor-in-Chief

🐦 @eddstrawF1



NO

MATT JAMES

Motorsport News Editor

🐦 @MattJMNews

The Monaco Grand Prix has it all: history, driving challenge, setting, charisma, prestige and global renown. Squeezed, improbably, into a principality of just under 0.8 square miles on the Cote d'Azur, this is an event that transcends motorsport. It has everything it needs to justify its status as the greatest street race.

It's a track that rewards commitment in a way few others do. At Tabac, when on a fast one, grand prix drivers actually aim to hit the barrier on the inside in the knowledge that the car will slide and, hopefully, take a perfect apex. As Ralf Schumacher discovered at Tabac in 2005, get that equation fractionally wrong and you're in the wall.

Stand at the exit of the first Swimming Pool left/right on lap one of the Monaco Grand Prix and you can't help but be stunned as drivers correct infinitesimal slides. Watch at Massenet, the entry to Casino Square, as cars come over the crest and drivers dare to steal a little width before turn-in, and the difference between triumph and disaster is razor-thin. In 2010, Fernando Alonso wrote off his Ferrari chassis there. Even the best get bitten at Monaco. Hard.

But the best also thrive here. Ayrton Senna won six times, and no great F1 CV is complete without a victory on the streets. It can be a cruel mistress too, for Jim Clark was never able to win at Monaco despite four pole positions. Bad luck can stop you winning at Monaco, good luck can help you, but nobody ever wins on pure luck.

It's the race every driver wants to win, every fan wants to go to, every wealthy hanger-on wants to be seen at and every television viewer is sucked in by. Monaco has it all.

Even as the jetfoil approaches Macau harbour, it seems impossible. This little enclave is a hustling, bustling place with no room to move. There is action everywhere, and this is just a city going about its regular business.

But this is also the home of the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix, the race that has been going since 1954 in its various guises. It is where reputations are made, hearts are broken and only the best prevail. Ask any young driver which race he wants on his CV and Macau will automatically be top of the list.

The circuit really is a tale of two halves. There are the sinuous twists and elevations through the city itself, with no margin for error and no margin for reluctance. And then there is the flat-out sweep from Fisherman's Bend down to Lisboa, where outright speed and power mean everything. And that is the compromise: does a driver go for grip, downforce and a darty swoop through the city streets, or struggle with that part and put the emphasis on outdragging rivals down the blast back down at sea level? The compromise can be crucial to making or breaking a reputation.

It is also an education for young drivers. Macau is a far-flung place, a trip that many aspiring racers will not have made before. This is not a quick trip to Spa for an overseas round, nor is it 20 laps around the Nurburgring.

The event has the feel and demeanour of an international showpiece, because that's what it is. It is a place where you can see the young up-and-coming racers come of age, wide-eyed at the challenge of an awesome track in a place that is nothing like home. >>





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Kubica in 2010 is etched in Straw's memory

YES

Most of what you say about Macau is correct; it is a remarkable place for a remarkable race. But, as you say, it's the race every *young* driver wants to win on their way to the top. Once they get there, Monaco takes its place. Offer any driver the choice between having either a Monaco or a Macau win on their CV, and the honest ones will all take the former.

Macau is hugely challenging, there's no argument about that. That's why it's a track where the best rising stars can make their careers. But this debate is not just about the greatest street track, it's about the greatest street race. Monaco has intangible qualities and wider appeal Macau can't hope to match.

Watching trackside at both Macau and Monaco is an experience you'll never forget. But the extra speed carried by the grand prix cars at Monaco makes it that much more spectacular. Watching Robert Kubica in the Renault through Casino Square during the 2010 grand prix weekend remains one of my defining memories of motorsport.

Macau is certainly a wonderful event for hardcore motorsport aficionados, many of whom will be reading Autosport. But even within the racing fanbase there will be some who care little about it. And outside of our readership, many of those who know and love the famous Monaco Grand Prix would not even have the faintest idea where Macau is.

While they will remember Nigel Mansell's late chase of Ayrton Senna in the 1992 Monaco GP, they are desperately unlikely to know the story of Rickard Rydell's F3 comeback win later that year.

The bottom line is that Monaco is the big one. To be the greatest street race, it has to be a race for the top guns, not just the up and comers.

NO

I certainly won't forget Nigel Mansell hunting down Ayrton Senna's McLaren in the dying throes of the 1992 Monaco Grand Prix. It's an image etched on the memory of all motorsport fans. I remember Mansell valiantly, and ultimately pointlessly, hassling the McLaren, probing for a way ahead but failing to do so because there are no overtaking opportunities on the circuit.

And that is one of the problems with Monaco. The races can be tense, but name me an overtaking move in the modern era for the lead? Instead, it's a follow-my-leader, wait-for-the-pitstops carnival.

That's not the case at Macau, where there is a chance to overtake on every lap, and no significant strategy to come into play. There is plenty of passing provided by the long front stretch, meaning the races are never dull. So if you are arguing about which provides the greatest races rather than which is the greatest track, there is your answer.

I too have stood at Casino Square and seen the greatest of them all dance between the Armco. And it is stunning: F1 cars generally are, and so they should be, and the drivers who win are rightly celebrated. That is because they are already F1 drivers.

They are strutting their stuff in front of Hollywood A-listers, Champions League winners and assorted Champagne-swilling musicians. If you think that is what makes a motor race great, then good luck to you.

Macau is a must for young guns on the up



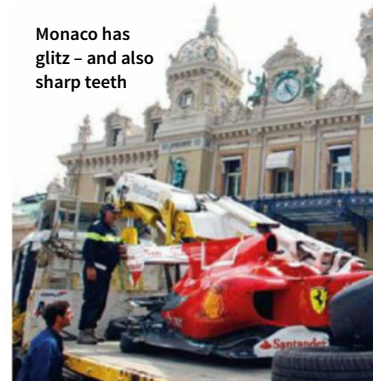
SUTTON



Rydell's Macau win in 1992 impressed...

SUTTON

Monaco has glitz - and also sharp teeth



...but Mansell's pursuit of Senna is now folklore





I prefer good, honest toil on a fantastic circuit for drivers who are striving to make their mark. The TV sets of Beverly Hills might not be tuned in to Macau, but does that really matter? The city streets of Macau provide a pure motor-racing test, denuded of all the hangers-on. Give me that any time.

YES

You have hit the nail squarely on the head when you say that Macau is about drivers who are striving to make their mark. It does so brilliantly, and it's among the highlights of the motorsport calendar. But we are talking about sporting greatness here, about the greatest street race, period.

Was Muhammad Ali 'The Greatest' because he was a fantastic up and comer? No, greatness is about the ultimate success, it's about going down in history, it's about making an indelible mark on people's consciousness. Monaco is not the greatest street race because the so-called 'great and the good' are there, they are there *because* it is the greatest.

The Monaco Grand Prix transcends motorsport, it transcends sport. And don't forget that the millions watching on TV, and the thousands in the grandstands on the harbour-front or clinging to whatever vantage point they can above the track, are honest, everyday, normal motorsport fans who cannot resist Monaco.

It's true that overtaking is sparse in Monaco, but that's not the point. It might be relatively easy to win from pole position, but it's far from easy to start from the front. But with the chaos of Macau qualifying and the safety car riddled races, it's possible for fortune to play as big a part in the result as it does in the casinos that proliferate in the former Portuguese enclave.

You like Macau without the hangers-on? Great, that's one of its many appeals and it should never change. But that's not in keeping with the definition of the greatest street race.

Think of all the truly great sporting events: Wimbledon, the Superbowl, the Football World Cup – these transcend their sports. That's what the Monaco Grand Prix is to motorsport. Being the greatest is not about being a hidden gem, no matter how wonderful.

NO

So it seems you are all about the headlines, Edd. Are you saying that motorsport only matters, and great race tracks can only be defined, if they have a grand prix?

I would beg to differ. I have never heard of a world championship round at Bathurst or Laguna Seca.

And you are also assuming every up-and-coming talent will make it to F1. You are wise enough to know that motor racing doesn't always work that way – some of the sport's finest haven't been able to pull up a chair at the top table. However, nearly all of them will have travelled to the street race in the Far East at some point in their careers.

Macau is a place where talents can put themselves in a shop window and get picked up – whether or not they have the rich parents or the benevolent oil firm from their home country that is going to assuage their path to grand prix racing.

Macau is also a circuit that they won't have sampled before. If you are an F1 driver, it is very likely that you will have tackled Ste Devote in GP2/F2, GP3 or even Formula Renault 3.5 (and any of its antecedents). In previous generations, it would be a track that the best had sampled in F3. When they have to perform at the top level, they have a background of knowledge.

That isn't the same at Macau: it is virtually a one-shot hit. Get there, learn, perform, win, and get out. That is the mark of an event that sorts the proper drivers from the rest. That, in my mind, is what makes it the greatest street race.

No, it might not have the profile. No, it might not have the prestige. No, it might not be a global attraction. You don't have to shine a spotlight on Macau to make it the ultimate street race – that's not what it's about.

It is about the best of the best of the crop of hungry young drivers pushing to the very limits to forge a reputation on a circuit that has the best of everything. 🏁



And not forgetting...

THE NORISRING IS NOT ONLY a brilliant street circuit but also a beautiful illustration of Italian philosopher George Santayana's much-paraphrased 'those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.

Rather than demolish the structures that hosted Adolf Hitler's Nuremberg rallies in an attempt to bury the past, the Germans preserved them. And, with a delicious two fingers to the Nazis, they turned the venue into a place of entertainment, most spectacularly with the Norisring street races, which currently star the DTM and the Formula 3 European Championship.

Unlike most other street tracks, this is motorway-wide at the start-finish line, where in the 1930s the tanks rolled past the massive tribune – now inhabited by tens of thousands of beered-up race fans rather than Third Reich officials. These days, the cars rush past here, slipstream down to the ultra-tight hairpin, before blasting back up the other side of the dual carriageway, an S-bend taking them behind the big stand and along

Zeppelinstrasse.

It's an eerie-but-awesome festival of noise and colour, and has to be on any self-respecting motorsport fan's bucket list.

So too must Pau, another stop-off for European F3 – presumably the lads in this series need *some* recompense for having to drive on the short version of the boring not-so-new Nurburgring...

In the shadow of the Pyrenees, this pretty university town comes to life thanks to a track that's ridiculously tight and, in places, surprisingly fast. There isn't much overtaking, but you can get pretty close to the judgement of the drivers.

That's just two of the European classics. Over in North America, IndyCar has a strong quota of street tracks: Long Beach is the most famous, but Toronto is approaching classic status. And if you're literally on the other side of the world, then Surfers Paradise and Adelaide are the most-famed stop-offs for Australia's Supercars series.

MARCUS SIMMONS

HAVE YOUR SAY

You've heard the arguments, but what do you think? Write to us at autosport@autosport.com, tweet us on @autosport or head to our Facebook page to tell us whether you agree with Edd Straw that Monaco is the greatest street race, or Matt James that it's Macau. Or maybe you'd advocate somewhere else...



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World's weirdest street tracks

We've looked at the greatest venues, but what about the oddities? Here are just a few

By Gary Watkins, Special Contributor

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PALANGA Surprise Lithuanian success

EVERYONE HAS A FAVOURITE MOTORWAY slip road they reckon should be copied and incorporated into the next Formula 1 'Tilke-drome'. Over in Lithuania, they went one better and created a circuit entirely out of sections of motorway and the junctions between them.

The Palanga circuit, which has played host to a 1000km event every year since 2000, was the brainchild of sometime Formula Renault racer Darius Jonusis. He'd already organised street races in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius among other places, but after the Russian financial crisis of 1998, he had to start again and began looking for a venue where he could hold a long-distance event.

"You can hold a sprint race in a city centre, but I wanted to do a long-distance race," recalls Jonusis, who has also just launched a TCR series in the Baltic states. "I wanted

to create something that was near a town or a city, but not actually in the town, so I started driving around Lithuania looking for the right place."

He settled on a site near Palanga, a resort town that swells in population in the summer courtesy of its proximity to the Baltic coast.

"When I came across these roads, I was smiling," continues Jonusis. "I started talking to the government about how we could do it. Even though we have to close three highways, it was not such a big problem."

Jonusis created a 1.86-mile circuit that was subsequently shortened to 1.67 miles. It is unusual to say the least, as one of the most high-profile winners of the Palanga 1000Km attests.

"There's a hairpin that links the two straights down either side of what you

might call a motorway, but is actually quite narrow," says Peter Dumbreck, who triumphed in 2008 aboard a Spyker C8 Spyder GTR2. "It was full lock and you had to dip the clutch to get around – it was that tight.

"It was very bumpy and very slippery. There were lots of barriers that were very close and makeshift chicanes with tyres and hay bales, so I always tried to keep a bit in reserve."

A petrol station, in which refuelling is undertaken with conventional pumps, only serves to make the Palanga circuit even more surreal.

The race is a success, though. It now goes out live on Lithuanian TV and attracts a three-day crowd into six figures, as well as entries from as far afield as Australia. And Jonusis is still smiling.



BALLYJAMESDUFF At least the pubs were good

YOU MIGHT NOT THINK THAT THERE'S ANY connection between a world championship sportscar race and a club event in a tiny Irish village. You'd be wrong because the idea for the Ballyjamesduff street circuit – all 0.41 miles of it – was dreamed up at the Silverstone 1000Km in 1984.

The late Dave Byers and Eddie Fitzgerald, the men behind the Phoenix Park races in Dublin at the time, were on a visit to a cold and blustery Silverstone in May 1984 when they came up with the idea for a street event.

“Qualifying had stopped and we were sitting in our road car trying to get warm and talking about motor racing as usual,” recalls Fitzgerald. “We said we needed to do something different. That’s where the idea of a street race came from.

“Dave had grown up in Ballyjamesduff, so his family knew all the people there. We came up with a circuit centred on the crossroads in the middle of the village.”

Safety was rudimentary at a circuit

that hosted racing in 1985 and '86.

Even Fitzgerald admits that today.

“It was all spectator barriers, hay bales and tyres,” he says. “We did have some homemade ‘Armco’ bolted to oil drums filled with concrete, but we later found out at Phoenix Park that it didn’t really work. No-one really thought what would happen if a car went off at 30, 40 or 50mph, but no-one got hurt.”

Ballyjamesduff wasn’t a classic street circuit by any measure, reckons long-time Formula Ford driver Cliff Dempsey.

“It wasn’t much of a circuit to be honest,” says the winner of the Crossle Challenge event for outboard-suspended cars in 1986. “It had a very short straight and it was all first and second gear. At least I don’t remember ever using third gear.”

Racing in Ballyjamesduff lasted just two years because, explains Fitzgerald, “it haemorrhaged money – the locals weren’t interested”.



BRIAN FOLEY

But motor racing in a village that was said to boast 14 pubs is fondly remembered.

“Socially, it was one of the best events I ever went to,” reckons Dempsey, who recalls watching legendary boxer Barry McGuigan win the featherweight world title on the Saturday evening of the 1985 event. “Everyone was in the pub cheering him on.”

Circuit wasn't up to much, but village's 14 pubs provided a lively source of alternative entertainment



“We came up with a circuit centred on the crossroads in the middle of the village”



ZHUHAI Real motor racing spirit

THE MAYOR OF ZHUHAI HAD ASPIRATIONS for his city to become the Monaco of south-east Asia. Which was how he ended up bringing international motor racing to the People's Republic for the first time with BPR GT races in 1994-95.

Mayor Liang Guangda put his plans to the Hong Kong Automobile Association, the territory's motorsport authority, where he linked up its boss, long-time Macau Grand Prix clerk of the course Phil Taylor, and his deputy, Andrew Windebank.

"The vision for the mayor was always Formula 1," says Windebank. "That's where the idea for the permanent Zhuhai circuit opened in 1996 came from, but the initial plan for the street circuit was for a track that ran along the seafront."

That turned out not to be possible courtesy of the difficulties of accessing a coastal road, but after Guangda's initial sketches had been turned into a workable 2.61-mile circuit the first event took place in March 1993. It was essentially made up of the cars that used to fill the undercard at Macau: there was a race for supercars and another for Group A cars up to 1.6 litres.

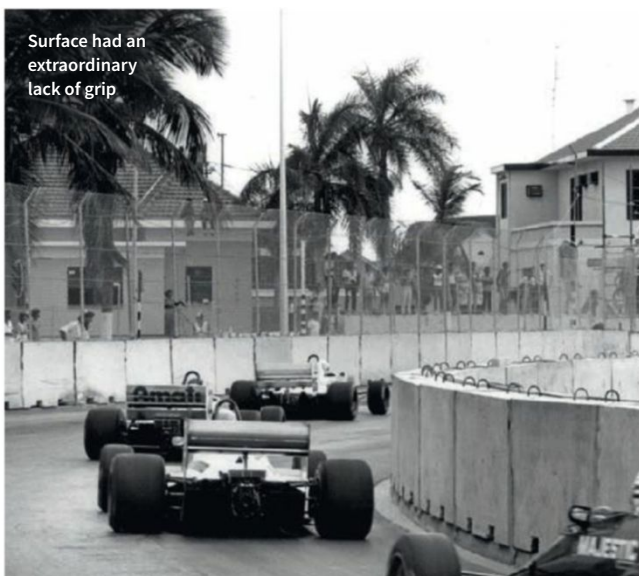
Zhuhai became an international event when Jurgen Barth, the 'B' of the BPR, found out about the mayor's plans from the FIA's representative in the region, Kazuo Suzuki. Porsche's boss of customer racing made a flying visit on the way back from a Japanese Group C race and a deal was done for one of the BPR's International GT Endurance Series races to take place in November 1994.

Tiff Needell, who finished second with Franz Konrad in the Austrian's Porsche 911, describes the circuit as "very bumpy and low-grip, with an incredibly tight chicane".

So not a particularly memorable track, then, but anyone who was there – this writer included – felt a pioneering spirit as motor racing proper arrived in communist China. A paddock in the car park of the hotel where everyone stayed only added to the feeling.

The track itself would perhaps have left an indelible mark had the mayor's own layout been used – it was probably somewhere in the region of eight miles in length. "It had to be that long," says Windebank, "because when we first went out there, it took four hours to walk it!"

BPR Endurance Series pioneered international motor racing in China



CURACAO Failing to get a grip

THE TRACK SURFACE IS ALWAYS A HOT topic during any street event. But when Formula 3000 visited the Caribbean island of Curacao in the Dutch Antilles for a non-championship race in Willemstad at the end of 1985, it dominated the event. Not that the surface was eating tyres. Rather, the reverse.

So gripless was the 2.20-mile track that the cars ran on wets in the opening session of free practice. And for the race, qualifying tyres were the order of the day.

"We did the race on the qualifiers and, afterwards, you could still see the seams where they had come out of the moulds," remembers John Nielsen, who won the Curacao Grand Prix in a works Ralt-Cosworth RB20.

"We were getting wheelspin in every

gear, so we had some new tailpipes for the exhaust made by a local blacksmith. They probably cost us 50bhp, but it made the car more manageable."

Nielsen was given the freedom of Curacao for his efforts, though he has yet to go back to find out exactly what that means.

The race turned out to be a one-off. The government had aspirations to host a grand prix, and one apocryphal story suggests that the event ended because it had been expecting a grid of F1 cars in October 1985.

The truth is less interesting. Curacao was on the F3000 calendar for 1986 as a championship round along with races at Curitiba and Goiania as part of a Latin American triple-header. When the Brazilian events fell over, so did the street race in Willemstad.

SAN LUIS Thruxton with walls



Circuit's flowing nature – “like Thruxton with walls” – won FIA GT drivers' approval

STEPHANE RATEL BOARDED A PLANE to Argentina with hopes of reviving the Buenos Aires 1000Km. The Frenchman came home a few days later having announced a round of his FIA GT Championship at a track he'd previously never heard of.

The Circuito Internacional Potreros de los Funes, laid out on the public roads around an extinct volcanic lake, had first been used in the 1970s before

a one-year revival in 1987 that ended in tragedy with the deaths of two spectators. Twenty years later, the local governor had the idea to bring it back to put the state of San Luis on the map. And that fitted with Ratel's dream of taking FIA GTs to the South American country.

“I always had a fascination with Argentina and its motorsport heritage,” explains Ratel. “I was talking to Carlos Garcia Remohi, the boss of the Automovil Club Argentino, and we went to look at the Buenos Aires circuit. I quickly realised that doing something there wouldn't be possible. Then I was told of another possibility, and the next moment I was on a private jet to San Luis.

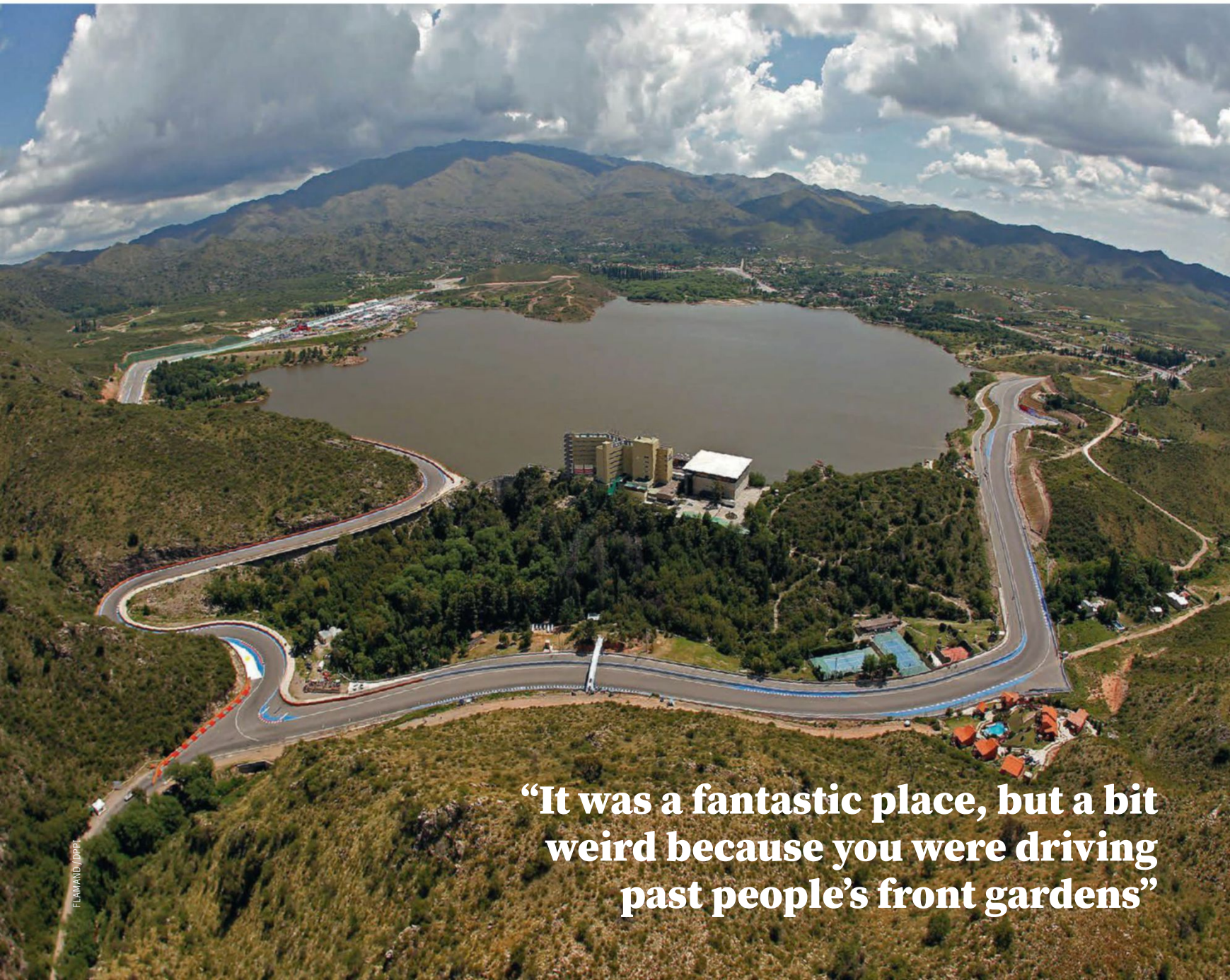
“The governor, Alberto Rodriguez Saa, showed me these little mountain roads that had made up the old track and I didn't understand how they could build an FIA Category 2 circuit out of them, but he asked

me how much it would cost to bring FIA GTs. I gave him a figure and he took me straight into a room with 50 press and we announced the race for the following year.”

Potreros, by now a modern international track measuring 3.9 miles, hosted the final FIA GT race of 2008, before the FIA GT1 World Championship returned in 2010 and '11. It met with the approval of nearly every driver who got to race on it.

“It was a fantastic place, but a bit weird because you were driving past people's front gardens,” recalls Rob Bell, who raced a Ferrari 430 GT2 for CR Scuderia in 2008. “It was really flowing, a bit like Thruxton with walls.”

Potreros dropped off the international calendar with a change of governor, though Saa was re-elected in 2015. But it still hosts a round of the domestic TC2000 series every year on what these days is best described as a semi-permanent venue.



“It was a fantastic place, but a bit weird because you were driving past people's front gardens”

The greatest Monaco duel that time forgot

Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi, two stars of their generation, put on one of the finest street battles at the 1933 Monaco Grand Prix

By Paul Fearnley

🐦 @paulpunter

Blue sky, deep blue sea, pale blue Bugatti driven by a stone-cold talent – and a blood-red Alfa Romeo driven by a man “who looked satanic, with his lean face and wiry frame” according to *Motor Sport’s* report. “Black with spectators” craning from every vantage point, reckoned *Autocar*. Monaco’s gamble had paid off. Its colourful street race instantly glamorous and famous, this, its fifth running, had been awarded *Grande Epreuve* status – joining those of Belgium, France, Germany and Italy, plus the Indy 500 and RAC Tourist Trophy.

All its previous winners – French-born Brit William Grover-Williams, Rene Dreyfus from nearby Nice and Monaco’s very own Louis Chiron, plus reigning European champion Tazio Nuvolari – were present, too. But it was Achille Varzi *a la corde*, ie on pole, while Rudolf Caracciola was *a l’hospital*, occurrences not unconnected.

Influential French engineer/journalist/organiser Charles Faroux had insisted that Monaco should follow Indianapolis’s lead by arranging its grid according to lap times set during practice rather than by ballot; overtaking at Monaco was, in theory, difficult even then and the faster cars placed further back were being unduly hampered. A new pressure, a European first, was on, therefore, and the calculating Caracciola – third at Monaco in 1929 and the runner-up of ’32 – for once got his sums wrong.

In the aftermath of the withdrawal of the works Alfa Romeo squad, the German ace had formed a team with friend and love rival Chiron. This was Scuderia CC’s debut, and the first of three one-hour practice sessions, each held just after first light, saw its Alfa Romeo 8C Monzas – Rudi’s white with a blue stripe, Louis’s the reverse – running line astern for

more than 20 laps, and at increasing speed. Misjudging his braking, Caracciola slammed into a stone staircase, smashed his right femur and was carried away in a chair appropriated from the nearby tobacconists.

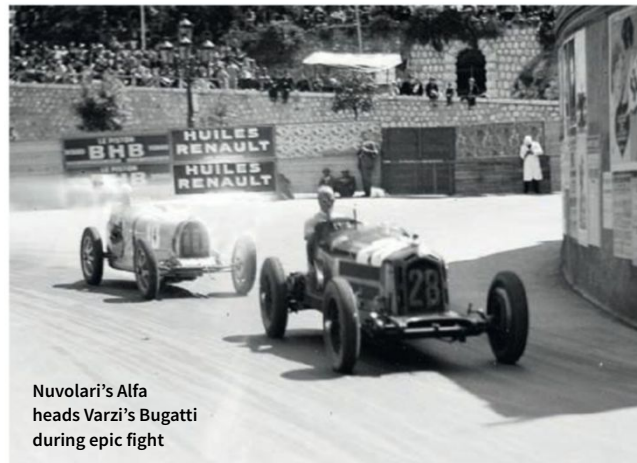
Nuvolari made a similar mistake at the same corner, the same day, albeit with only mechanical consequences: back axle and bodywork. He, too, was pining for the dominant Alfa Romeo P3 Monoposto now under lock and key at Portello. Though he had won the Tunis Grand Prix and the Mille Miglia in March, he was unhappy at having to make do with a two-seater Alfa, and bridleing against the rule of Enzo Ferrari, whose eponymous scuderia had become the de facto works team.

Varzi in contrast was his chain-smoking, unsmiling, verging-on-sullen, self. Though his friendship with Nuvolari was real, their rivalry, stoked by newspaper hyperbole, was based in fact. They had tried – and failed – to work together in a bid to consolidate their switch from two to four wheels in 1928, and had in the main been avoiding each other ever since. For ‘junior partner’ Varzi, if driving for a foreign team during increasingly nationalistic times guaranteed number-one status, so be it: he joined Bugatti in 1931. He

suffered in the second half of 1932 on account of this decision – he for one was glad to see the Monoposto’s back – but now his 2.3-litre Type 51 was a match for Nuvolari’s stopgap, even though the latter’s boasted a straight-eight stretched to 2.6. The rumour that Bugatti would be bringing its new 2.8 to Monte Carlo proved unfounded; it was neither ready nor was there yet need.

This would be a fair fight in evenly matched cars.

Nuvolari’s practice prang relegated him to the second row of a tightly packed 3-3-3 grid – there is suggestion, too, that he’d had his engine fitted to a car originally designated for test driver Eugenio Siena – and he completed the opening lap where he started it: fourth. >>



Nuvolari's Alfa heads Varzi's Bugatti during epic fight



Varzi leads away from the first GP grid set by practice times



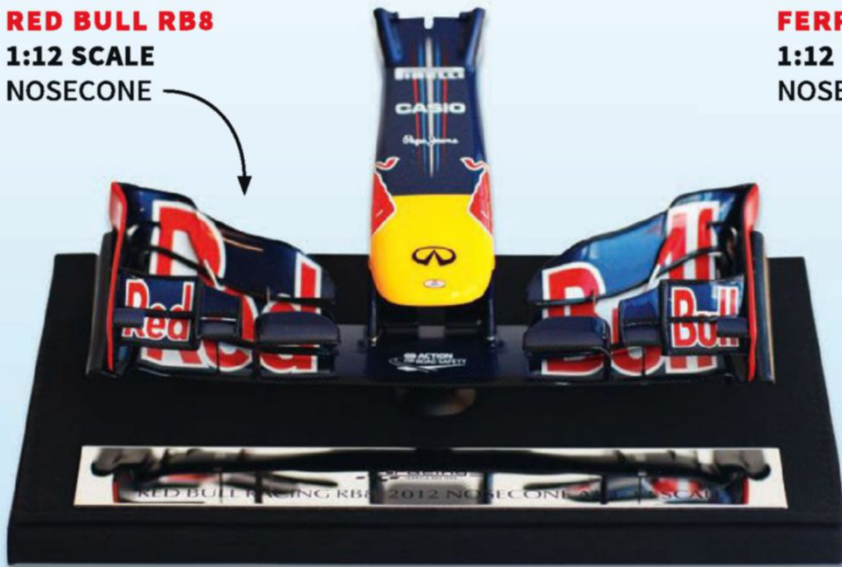
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When sportscars raced at Monaco

ALTHOUGH IT MADE ITS NAME quickly and has been the social highlight of every Formula 1 world championship since 1955, Monaco went ‘round the houses’ in its early days, even running races for motorbikes (as a support package in ‘48) and sportscars (’52).

The first hiccup occurred in 1938 when Adolf Hitler’s aggrandisement and the dominance of the German Silver Arrows persuaded the Automobile Club de Monaco (ACM) to sit tight – unlike Pau, whose GP in April resulted in embarrassing defeat for Mercedes-Benz at the hands of a stripped Delahaye sportscar.

Pau was faster to the post-war punch, too, Monaco staging its return a year later,

Giuseppe Farina’s Maserati winning in 1948.

After a sabbatical, Monaco hosted the second round of 1950’s inaugural world championship for drivers, eight days after Silverstone had hosted the first. Alfa Romeo’s Juan Manuel Fangio won a race notorious for a first-lap pile-up at Tabac that eliminated nine cars and flooded the track with fuel. The race continued.

And that was that until 1955 – bar a one-off for sportscars. This was run because the ACM held no truck with the two-litre Formula 2 cars filling the void at the sport’s highest level. Notable for another pile-up (above), the experiment was unsuccessful.

The Jaguar C-type of Stirling



Moss had just lost the lead to Robert Manzon’s handier Gordini T15 when they happened on Reg Parnell’s Aston Martin in the barriers at Ste Devote. Manzon spun on the DB3’s oil and rammed it; Moss missed the wreckage but clobbered the Jag’s nose. Though the latter resumed

after lengthy repairs, he was disqualified for having received outside help from a couple of holidaymakers.

Privateer Ferrari 225s in a variety of guises – from berlinetta to barchetta – thus filled the first five places, Vittorio Marzotto winning from Eugenio Castellotti.

The meeting, however, was marred by Luigi Fagioli’s accident in a Lancia Aurelia during practice for the Prix de Monaco for two-litre sportscars. The first flag-to-flag winner of the Monaco Grand Prix (1935) crashed exiting the tunnel and succumbed to his injuries three weeks later.

Varzi meanwhile made the most of pole to lead from Scuderia Ferrari’s Baconin Borzacchini and the fast-starting Bugatti of Marcel Lehoux, winner of the inaugural Pau GP street race in the snow of February. Nuvolari’s intention was clear, however. Having already gathered up a trip across the pavement, he was leading by lap four, by which time the leading quartet had been joined by Philippe Jean-Armand Etancelin, nicknamed ‘Phi-Phi’ but as tough as old boots, and broken away from the rest.

The latter, a wool merchant from Rouen driving an Alfa painted French blue, had set fastest time during Friday practice and clearly had the vim to challenge the favourites. French-Algerian Lehoux, in contrast, was already issuing the smoke that signalled his eventual gearbox failure after 25 (of 100 laps). Perhaps unsighted by the oil mist on his aero-screen, Etancelin clipped the harbour chicane with his right-front wheel and pirouetted 50 yards before stalling. He jumped out to check for damage, registered none and cranked the engine into life, a process that took 43 seconds. In response he lapped at record pace – 2m01s – and passed Borzacchini on lap 58. The man in trademark back-to-front cap then began to close on the top two.

Varzi and Nuvolari were perhaps playing cat-and-mouse. Certainly it was not yet dog-eat-dog. The former’s pole time – 2m02s – had equalled his lap record from the previous year, and he was content to circulate at that speed now. He had been chasing Nuvolari in 1932, too, when his rear axle failed at half-distance. He knew how hard this race was on man and machine, as his chasers were to discover. Accelerating from the Gasworks Hairpin – it wasn’t all glamour! – on lap 65, the lead apparently within reach, Phi-Phi had to freewheel to his pit because of a broken driveshaft. Borzacchini, having been towed along by the inspired Etancelin, promptly began to fade, his 2.6 hinting at failure.

So then there were two.

“Varzi ignored his rev-counter and set a lap record faster than his pole time”

They took stock and the race settled at last into a pattern commensurate with their personalities. Nuvolari’s “impetuous vivacity”, as the official magazine for the Royal Automobile Club of Italy put it, saw him lead more often than not – some reports reckoned 64 laps, others 10 fewer – while Varzi’s “tenacious will” meant that rarely was he more than a second behind. The latter’s Dunlop-shod Bug was perhaps nimbler than the Alfa on Pirellis, which appeared to gain on traction but was causing its driver anxious moments despite, or perhaps because of, newfangled cockpit-adjustable dampers.

The crowd’s anticipation was rising, the shortness of the lap and engine notes echoing from buildings that trapped the ‘boot polish’ whiff – some reports suggested ‘tinned pineapples’ – of doped fuel kept all its senses on alert.

Varzi broke the pattern by taking the lead with 20 to go. With 10 to go, however, Nuvolari was back in front – and four seconds to the good. Yet by lap 98 they were together again. Varzi stuffed it down the inside at the Gasworks, Nuvolari repassed him on the way out. Now it was dog-eat-dog.

Varzi, ignoring his rev-counter, held onto third gear on the climb to Casino Square to squeeze between the devil and his red 8C, and promptly set a lap record 3s faster than his pole time. And when Nuvolari attempted to return the dose on the last lap, smoke poured from under the Alfa’s bonnet.

He emerged from the Tir aux Pigeons tunnel, shorter at 98 metres but much darker than today’s, coasting while, ever the showman, stood in his seat. He then began to push his stricken machine, waving away offers of assistance. But an overzealous mechanic, plus several enthusiastic spectators, waded in and a fire extinguisher was triggered. For this, Nuvolari would be disqualified. He made no appeal. He was too disappointed to care, his car abandoned yards short of the finish.

Victory his, Varzi lit a cigarette – and smiled. ✨



Yamaha team-mates fought hard for win

Vinales victorious in thr

MOTOGP
LEMANS(F)
MAY 20-21
ROUND 5/18

“WHEN IT IS TWO LAPS TO GO, I THINK you have to take the victory,” Maverick Vinales said of his late-French Grand Prix fight with Yamaha MotoGP team-mate Valentino Rossi.

“You cannot leave any chance, you have to push over the limit of the bike. The way I did the first corner, this fast corner, was like in qualifying, I just closed the eyes and went to the corner and [waited to] see what happens.

“And the bike was really good so I said, ‘OK, I try now in second corner’. All the corners I did, I did like in qualifying. And honestly, I was riding at 110%. I think it was the day that I was riding better on the bike, but Valentino was quite impressive.

“When I entered the last lap, I said, ‘OK, now is the moment, you have to push and I did it!’”

Vinales would have been ill-advised to close his eyes watching the conclusion of the Le Mans race, though. He would have missed a scintillating showdown between one of the all-time greats in Rossi and a young man who looks more and more like a future legend.

Yamaha dominated the weekend at the

resurfaced French venue, at least it did once the wet weather that shaped the first three practice sessions across Friday and Saturday had cleared. Vinales led a Yamaha sweep of the front row, joined by Rossi and Tech3 Yamaha rookie Johann Zarco.

The rest of the pack were not far away, though, with LCR Honda’s Cal Crutchlow qualifying three tenths slower than Vinales in fourth and reigning world champion Marc Marquez also within half a second.

But as it turned out, it was basically all-Yamaha in the race as well. Zarco has forged quite the reputation for being quick, bold, assertive and successful in the early laps of his first four MotoGP starts. He continued that on home soil, sweeping past Vinales on the run into Turn 3 from the start. Again, Zarco looked comfortable at the top, but he couldn’t shake off Vinales and Rossi behind, his gap exceeding half a second only fleetingly.

The factory Yamaha pair reeled in his advantage, with Vinales taking the lead on lap seven of the 28. Vinales then had a similar, but longer, spell at the front. Zarco proved impossible to get rid of, and then Rossi stepped up, having drifted off slightly in the middle phase, albeit by no more than 1.2s.

Rossi passed Zarco with six laps to go,



AT A GLANCE

- 1 Vinales Yamaha
- 2 Zarco Tech3
- 3 Pedrosa Honda

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LAT IMAGES

illling battle with Rossi

then set a string of fastest times to catch Vinales and take the lead three laps later. The stage was set for Rossi's first win in nearly 12 months, but Vinales stayed close enough, crossing the line to start the last lap four tenths behind.

What followed was a very un-Rossi final lap. He grabbed a fraction too much rear brake on the way into Turn 8 and ran wide, letting Vinales past. He was still right behind, though, until three corners later – and just three from home – when he crashed out of the pursuit.

"Maybe I arrived 1km/h faster, but it was enough because I lost the bike in the braking and I went wide," Rossi said of the Turn 8 incident.

"So this was the big mistake, because then the other one is the consequence of the first. Today I really feel [upset] because it was the perfect race.

"I thought that I was five corners from the victory and in the crucial moment I made a mistake," he explained.

Unaware that Rossi had crashed, and expecting a last-corner challenge, Vinales set a new lap record the final time around just to make sure. In doing so he claimed his third win for Yamaha in five starts, while the excelling Zarco took his first MotoGP podium with second place.

Honda's challenge rested largely with Marquez, who looked threatening mid-race when running behind Rossi. But he crashed

out after losing the front end on the run to Turn 3 on lap 18, with team-mate Dani Pedrosa ultimately accepting Rossi's gift of the final podium spot after starting down in 13th.

With his victory, Vinales reclaims the championship lead and a 17-point advantage over Pedrosa, with Rossi and Marquez now 23 and 27 points in arrears respectively.

Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso beat Crutchlow to fourth, while Dovizioso's team-mate Jorge Lorenzo regrouped from qualifying a lowly 16th to finish sixth, albeit nearly 13s behind the Italian rider.

Zarco's fellow rookie and team-mate Jonas Folger was seventh – the only rider to score points in every race so far – ahead of Jack Miller, who somehow walked away from a monstrous crash during practice on Saturday.

KTM capitalised on a drying third session on Saturday to get both of its riders into Q2 for the first time, with Pol Espargaro and Bradley Smith both starting inside the top 10 and scoring points with 12th and 13th in its fifth race.

Aleix Espargaro was set to catch and pass Lorenzo before his engine expired, but his Aprilia rookie team-mate Sam Lowes did get on the points board for the first time in MotoGP with 14th place.

MITCHELL ADAM

IN BRIEF

MOTO2

Franco Morbidelli maintained the Marc VDS team's perfect record in 2017 as he claimed his fourth win from five starts last weekend. Morbidelli held off a spirited challenge from Francesco Bagnaia – who was riding for Valentino Rossi's junior outfit VR46 – at Le Mans. Tom Luthi finished third, ahead of Morbidelli's team-mate Alex Marquez, who competed despite having a fracture in his left foot.

MOTO3

Joan Mir romped to a third victory of the 2017 season at Le Mans, in a race that was initially red-flagged on lap two when half of the field spectacularly crashed on fluid at Turn 6. When the event restarted, Romano Fenati then led until crashing on lap eight, which handed Mir a healthy lead. The Spanish rider converted that advantage into the win and extended his championship lead to 34 points.

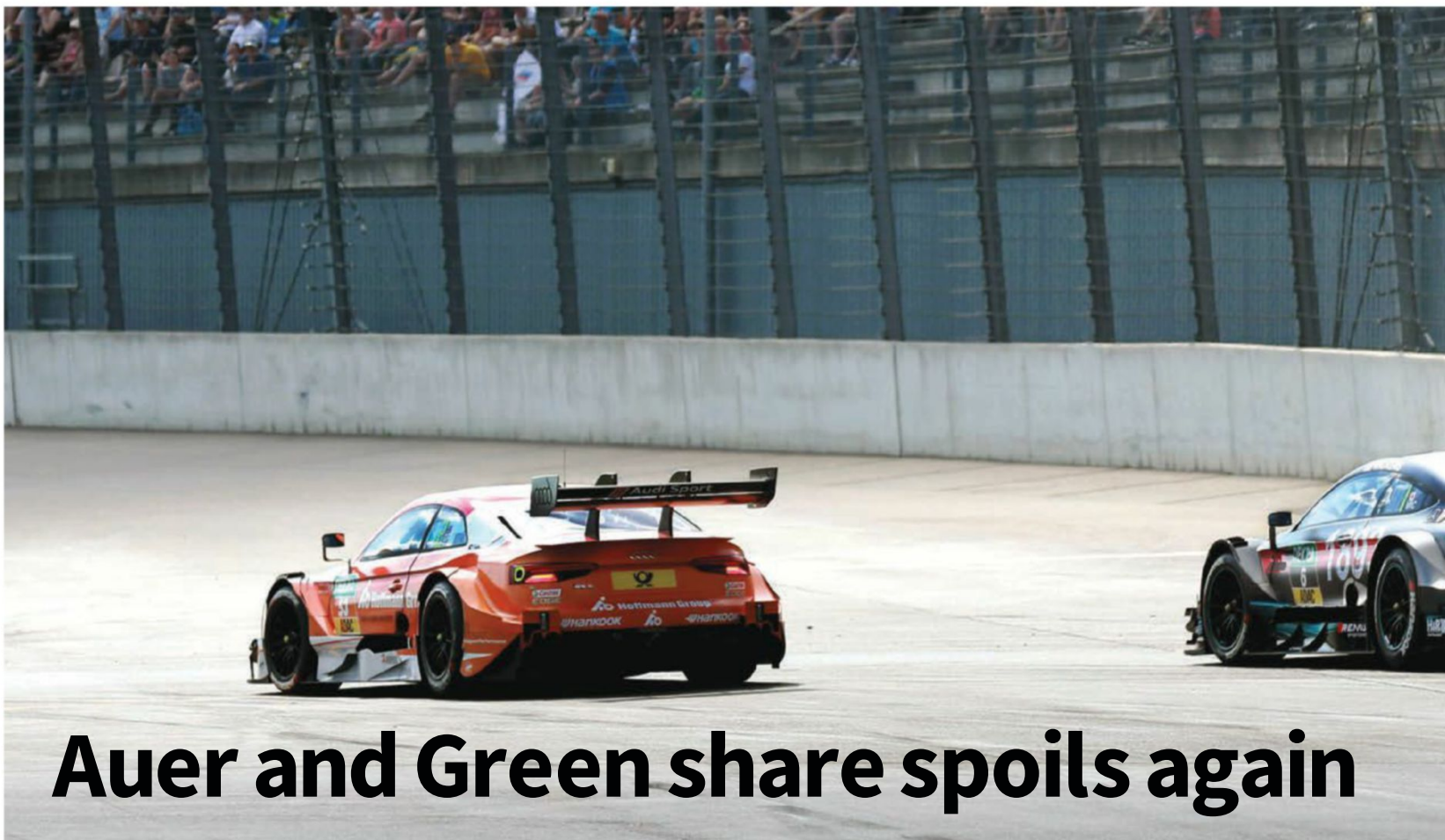
BRITISH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Fredrik Ahlin's final-stage retirement handed David Bogie his first British Rally Championship victory of the 2017 season in a thrilling RSAC Scottish Rally. The battle raged between the CA1 Sport team-mates for much of the event, and they were split by just 0.1s after SS9. But radiator damage caused by a stone halted Swedish driver Ahlin, which left Bogie clear in the lead in his Skoda Fabia R5. Osian Pryce and Marty McCormack completed the podium.

ADAC GT MASTERS

Robert Renauer and Sven Muller claimed their first win of the season after triumphing in an action-packed first race at the Lausitzring. The duo, sharing a Porsche 911 GT3-R (below) for Herberth Motorsport, moved into first place when polesitter and early race leader Luca Stolz briefly spun after his Mercedes-AMG GT3 collided with a backmarker as it emerged from the pitlane. After Muller climbed aboard for the second stint, he held off the resurgent Merc – now being driven by Luca Ludwig – for the win, while Ezequiel Perez Companc and Mirko Bortolotti completed the podium. In the second race, Perez Companc and Bortolotti secured a comfortable lights-to-flag victory in their Grasser Racing Lamborghini Huracan.





Auer and Green share spoils again

DTM
LAUSITZRING (D)
MAY 20-21
ROUND 2/9

YOU MIGHT BE DISAPPOINTED UPON reading Autosport's Lausitzring DTM report to notice the similarities between this and the write-up from the opening round of the 2017 season at Hockenheim, for in a series that in recent years has developed a reputation for producing multiple winners, it was the two opening-round victors – Lucas Auer and Jamie Green – who again shared the spoils.

Robert Wickens looked as though he might be the man to crack the Auer-Green-Auer-Green binary code after securing pole for Sunday's second race, but the writing was on the wall not long into that affair when Green divebombed past BMW Team RBM driver Tom Blomqvist for second place on lap four.

Wickens was issued a warning sign after his pitstop when, despite having stopped a lap earlier, he filtered through the first turn behind the emerging Green – although he was quickly able to dispatch the Audi RS5 through the first sequence of corners as Green squirmed about on cold tyres.

But once they were up to temperature the Briton edged his way back towards the leader and by lap 25 had got to within a second of Wickens – and crucially in range to deploy DRS – once the whole field had cycled through its pitstops.

A couple of sniffs up the inside were ample additional warning of what was about to come before Green launched his RS5 juggernaut swiftly over to the pitwall before slamming

on the anchors in time to make Turn 1 ahead of the Mercedes C63 of Wickens.

A stellar remainder of the lap dragged Green clear of any retaliatory DRS attack from the Mercedes driver, and from there the 2015 series runner-up was afforded the luxury of cruising to the finish as he quickly extended his lead to an eventual winning margin of 6.3 seconds.

Victory on this occasion was as simple as that for Green – no complications with pitstop penalties as had been the case a fortnight earlier and no questions post-race about restart procedures, just a healthy 25 points to get his title fight back on track after another slow start to the weekend.

"It's been a weekend with highs and lows," he admitted afterwards. "[But] on Sunday, things went better in terms of the set-up; I had to battle my way through the race and that worked out pretty well.

Celebrating two victories from the first two race weekends is great."

Mattias Ekstrom went one better in the passing stakes than Green, getting the job done on Wickens around the outside at Turn 1 as the Canadian racer was wise to any further attacks up the inside. Ekstrom's rise through the order in his Abt-run car was all the more remarkable given that he preserved his second set of tyres for 42 of the race's 43 laps, having pitted at the end of lap one alongside fellow Audi driver Mike Rockenfeller.

Wickens salvaged some pride, despite his double mugging at the first corner, by hanging on to Ekstrom's coat-tails to claim third and his second podium of the weekend – a vastly improved return from his opening weekend of the season when he failed to score.

Like Hockenheim, the Lausitzring round wasn't without its early problems for Green.



Auer scored his second race-win in a row

AT A GLANCE

RACE 1

- 1 Auer Mercedes
- 2 Wickens Mercedes
- 3 Rast Audi

RACE 2

- 1 Green Audi
- 2 Ekstrom Audi
- 3 Wickens Mercedes

➔ P47 RESULTS



Green seizes the race-two lead from Wickens

A place on row six for the opener would have been far from disastrous, but a mix-up meant that he used a tyre in qualifying that had been assigned to Team Rosberg team-mate Rene Rast and was consequently excluded.

He recovered to score a point in the first encounter after stopping early on, but like the rest of the field he was largely overshadowed by the increasingly impressive Auer, who ran out a convincing winner. At the scene of his first victory in the series 12 months earlier, Auer looked just as imperious in qualifying and the early part of the Saturday race as he had in 2016 – but he appears to have found the consistency to be a genuine frontrunner.

But it must be said that Auer's race-one performance was a step up from the opening round. Where he was perhaps guilty of using up his tyres too quickly in both stints at Hockenheim – which invited late pressure from Timo Glock – there were no such problems at the Lausitzring as the Austrian breezed clear.

His 3.6s winning margin over Wickens actually undersold the authoritative stamp he had placed on the race.

Third place in race one went the way of Rast, who continued his impressive start to life as a full-time driver in the DTM with a maiden podium, a result he backed up with seventh in race two.

A 10th-place finish in that affair was all Auer could muster from 15th on the grid, but he still ended the weekend having increased his championship points lead, with 16 now in hand over Green. HWA driver Gary Paffett is seven points further back in third.

JACK COZENS

First 2017 win for Rossiter and Nakajima

**SUPER GT
AUTOPOLIS (J)
MAY 21
ROUND 3/8**

JAMES ROSSITER AND KAZUKI Nakajima secured their first Super GT victory of the 2017 season aboard their Toyota Lexus LC 500 after late-race contact at Autopolis decided the race in their favour.

Rossiter had started down in seventh after Nakajima went off in qualifying, but the British driver produced a charging stint and had moved ahead of six rivals approaching the halfway stage of the 65-lap race.

In the second half of the contest, Nakajima was engaged in a close fight with Denso SARD LC 500 driver Kohei Hirate, who was sharing duties with Heikki Kovalainen. Contact between the pair forced Hirate out of contention and Nakajima held on for the win.

Naoki Yamamoto and Takuya Izawa had started on pole, but after struggling with their Honda's tyres they had to back off and



Nakajima survived late contact

eventually finished third. Koudai Tsukakoshi and Takashi Kogure, who had started from the pitlane, recovered to second.

The result handed Rossiter 20 points and moved him up to second in the standings, as championship leaders Nick Cassidy and Ryo Hiramawa (Lexus) finished sixth.

JIRO TAKAHASHI

RESULTS

1 Kazuki Nakajima/James Rossiter (Lexus LC 500)

65 laps in 1h59m56.800s; 2 Koudai Tsukakoshi/Takashi Kogure (Honda NSX-GT) +26.592s; 3 Naoki Yamamoto/Takuya Izawa (Honda); 4 Satoshi Motoyama/Katsumasa Chiyo (Nissan GT-R); 5 Tsugio Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli (Nissan); 6 Ryo Hiramawa/Nick Cassidy (Lexus).

Points 1 Cassidy/Hiramawa 36; 2 Rossiter 32; 3 Hiroaki Iishiura/Yuji Tachikawa 30; 4 Kazuya Oshima/Andrea Caldarelli 30; 5 Nakajima 26; 6 Tsukakoshi/Kogure 18.



Late mistake cost Whincup (behind), but Holden held one-two

Van Gisbergen beats Whincup

**AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
WINTON (AUS)
MAY 20-21
ROUND 5/14**

TRIPLE EIGHT PROVED THE SUPERCARS title fight is still very much open with a well-executed one-two, led by Shane van Gisbergen, in the main race at Winton.

Jamie Whincup led the majority of the 200-kilometre race, having made a better start than polesitter Scott McLaughlin, and survived a skirmish with van Gisbergen as the first round of stops shook out.

However, just when it looked like Whincup would take his first race win of the season, he ran wide at the last corner with 10 laps to go, which allowed van Gisbergen to sneak through and take the factory Holden squad's first points-paying victory since the season-opener in Adelaide.

Fabian Coulthard finished third on Sunday,

while Scott McLaughlin was just fifth after struggling with a gearbox shift-cut problem.

McLaughlin didn't come out of the weekend empty handed, though, comfortably winning Saturday's shorter race from Whincup and Coulthard, while a long stop dumped van Gisbergen down in eighth.

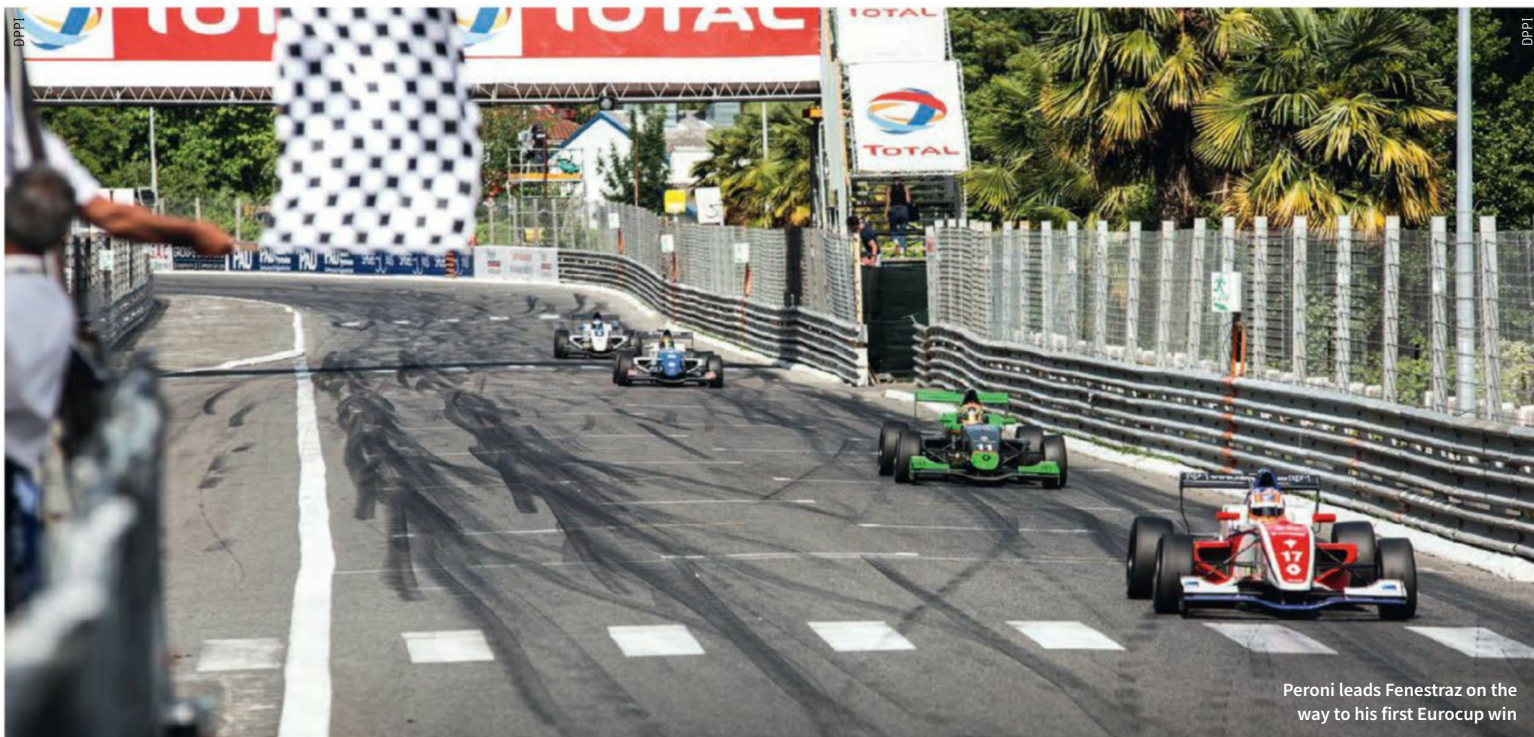
Despite being winless in 2017, Whincup is within four points of leader Coulthard.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Scott McLaughlin (Ford Falcon) 40 laps in 54m58.0579s; 2 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore) +1.6242s; 3 Fabian Coulthard (Ford); 4 David Reynolds (Holden); 5 Will Davison (Holden); 6 Craig Lowndes (Holden).

Race 2 1 Shane van Gisbergen (Holden) 67 laps in 1h35m19.8233s; 2 Whincup +1.2617s; 3 Coulthard; 4 Cameron Waters (Ford); 5 McLaughlin; 6 Garth Tander (Holden). **Points 1 Coulthard 1060; 2 Whincup 1056; 3 McLaughlin 1032; 4 van Gisbergen 1023; 5 Chaz Mostert 861; 6 Tander 804.**



Peroni leads Fenestraz on the way to his first Eurocup win

Peroni brews up a maiden success

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

PAU (F)

MAY 20-21

ROUND 3/10

ROBERT SHWARTZMAN AND EMERGING newcomer Alex Peroni delivered standout performances from the rest of the 30-car Formula Renault Eurocup throng at Pau and shared the spoils across the two races.

Baby-faced St Petersburg native Shwartzman described his lights-to-flag race-one win as “boring”, but the maximum score and his subsequent third place on Sunday transformed a pre-weekend 15-point deficit to R-ace GP team-mate Will Palmer into a one-point lead.

Max Defourny joined Shwartzman on the front row on Saturday but, under instruction not to take any undue risks, the Belgian shadowed his team-mate throughout, and conceded a

0.5-second margin at the chequered flag, as Gabriel Aubry completed the podium.

Swashbuckling Frenchman Aubry had been wrong-footed on the second lap by an erroneously shown safety-car board approaching the Lycee hairpin, and Palmer slipped past, but the Briton sportingly let the Tech 1 Racing man recover the position at the next corner.

On his maiden street-circuit outing, race-two winner Peroni – who had taken fifth in the first race – gained widespread plaudits. The Australian, who resides in Fortec’s ‘team house’ close to its Daventry factory, claimed a maiden Eurocup pole in roasting conditions on Sunday and a breakthrough victory followed in a pressure-packed bout with Sacha Fenestraz.

Peroni, the reigning VdeV Monoplace champion, almost undid a strong start by locking a wheel into Virage de la Gare and Fenestraz took to the pavement on the steep run to Pont Oscar in an

unsuccessful bid to squeeze past.

Lapped traffic on the penultimate tour provided Fenestraz – whose father took part in the Renault Twingo support races – with a final opportunity to steal the lead, but the Josef Kaufmann Racing driver was unable to convert it into a passing opportunity. Palmer claimed his second fourth-place finish of the weekend to remain in the title hunt, leading home fellow Briton Max Fewtrell – the Tech 1 racer and reigning British Formula 4 champion completed a pair of rookie wins.

PETER MILLS

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Robert Shwartzman 20 laps in 25m08.190s; 2 Max Defourny +0.592s; 3 Gabriel Aubry; 4 Will Palmer; 5 Alex Peroni; 6 Sacha Fenestraz. **Race 2** 1 Peroni 21 laps in 26m21.894s; 2 Fenestraz +0.520s; 3 Shwartzman; 4 Palmer; 5 Max Fewtrell; 6 Defourny. **Points** 1 Shwartzman 105; 2 Palmer 104; 3 Fenestraz 72; 4 Peroni 51; 5 Defourny 51; 6 Fewtrell 48.

Busch charge scoops NASCAR’s \$1m All-Star prize

NASCAR ALL-STAR

CHARLOTTE (USA)

MAY 20

KYLE BUSCH’S FIRST NASCAR VICTORY AT Charlotte Motor Speedway came with a welcome \$1 million bonus as he triumphed in the 2017 four-stage All-Star race.

Busch’s Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota passed the Penske Ford of Brad Keselowski at the start of the final 10-lap segment, and held off the fast-approaching Chip Ganassi Chevrolet of Kyle Larson to earn the first All-Star win of his career.

Larson had won the first two 20-lap stages

of the main event, which locked him into the 10-lap shootout at the end, while Jimmie Johnson was victorious in the third stage to book his place in the finale. The remainder of the 10-driver shootout was filled by the racers with the best average finishing position through the first three stages.

Before the start of the final sprint to the flag, Larson had pitted and rejoined in fifth, while Keselowski remained on the track and moved into first place. Keselowski lost that lead when he suddenly slowed after the final restart – he had run out of allocated tyre sets – and, as Larson and Johnson (Hendrick Chevy) were briefly held up

getting by, Busch nipped past and held on to win.

“We’ve never won at Charlotte in a Cup car so we finally achieved that goal tonight and won the All-Star race and a million bucks,” Busch said. “So there’s reason to celebrate and to celebrate big.”

JIM UTTER

RESULTS

1 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry) 70 laps in 1h12m47s; 2 Kyle Larson (Chevrolet SS) +1.274s; 3 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet); 4 Kurt Busch (Ford Fusion); 5 Jamie McMurray (Chevrolet); 6 Kevin Harvick (Ford); 7 Chase Elliott (Chevrolet); 8 Joey Logano (Ford); 9 Brad Keselowski (Ford); 10 Denny Hamlin (Toyota).

RESULTS ROUND-UP

MOTOGP

ROUND 5/18, LE MANS, MAY 21 (28 LAPS – 72.812 MILES)

1	Maverick Vinales (E) <i>Yamaha</i>	43m29.793s
2	Johann Zarco (F) <i>Tech3 Yamaha</i>	+3.134s
3	Dani Pedrosa (E) <i>Honda</i>	+7.717s
4	Andrea Dovizioso (I) <i>Ducati</i>	+11.223s
5	Cal Crutchlow (GB) <i>LCR Honda</i>	+13.519s
6	Jorge Lorenzo (E) <i>Ducati</i>	+24.002s
7	Jonas Folger (D) <i>Tech3 Yamaha</i>	+25.733s
8	Jack Miller (AUS) <i>Marc VDS Honda</i>	+32.603s
9	Loris Baz (F) <i>Avintia Ducati</i>	+45.784s
10	Andrea Iannone (I) <i>Suzuki</i>	+48.332s
11	Tito Rabat (E) <i>Marc VDS Honda</i>	+50.036s
12	Pol Espargaro (E) <i>KTM</i>	+52.661s
13	Bradley Smith (GB) <i>KTM</i>	+53.179s
14	Sam Lowes (GB) <i>Aprilia</i>	+55.432s
15	Sylvain Guintoli (F) <i>Suzuki</i>	+1m06.878s
R	Valentino Rossi (I) <i>Yamaha</i>	27 laps-accident
R	Aleix Espargaro (E) <i>Aprilia</i>	23 laps-engine
R	Marc Marquez (E) <i>Honda</i>	17 laps-accident
R	Danilo Petrucci (I) <i>Pramac Ducati</i>	17 laps-oil leak
R	Scott Redding (GB) <i>Pramac Ducati</i>	7 laps-gearbox
R	Karel Abraham (CZ) <i>Aspar Ducati</i>	5 laps-gearbox
R	Hector Barbera (E) <i>Avintia Ducati</i>	3 laps-engine
R	Alvaro Bautista (E) <i>Aspar Ducati</i>	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 100.438mph.

Fastest lap Vinales 1m32.309s, 101.415mph.

QUALIFYING 2

1 Vinales 1m31.994s; 2 Rossi 1m32.100s; 3 Zarco 1m32.229s; 4 Crutchlow 1m32.300s; 5 Marquez 1m32.493s; 6 Dovizioso 1m32.726s; 7 Redding 1m33.119s; 8 P Espargaro 1m33.399s; 9 Abraham 1m33.517s; 10 Smith 1m33.629s; 11 Miller 1m33.756s; 12 Baz 1m33.955s.

QUALIFYING 1

1 Dovizioso 1m32.298s; 2 Zarco 1m32.367s; 3 Pedrosa 1m32.415s; 4 Bautista 1m32.484s; 5 Folger 1m32.695s; 6 Lorenzo 1m32.830s; 7 Iannone 1m32.844s; 8 A Espargaro 1m33.187s; 9 Petrucci 1m33.231s; 10 Barbera 1m33.233s; 11 Lowes 1m33.817s; 12 Rabat 1m33.875s; 13 Guintoli 1m34.082s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Vinales 85; 2 Pedrosa 68; 3 Rossi 62; 4 Marquez 58; 5 Zarco 55; 6 Dovizioso 54; 7 Crutchlow 40; 8 Lorenzo 38; 9 Folger 38; 10 Miller 29; 11 Petrucci 26; 12 Redding 26; 13 Baz 19; 14 A Espargaro 17; 15 Iannone 15; 16 Bautista 14; 17 Rabat 13; 18 Barbera 12; 19 Abraham 9; 20 Rins 7; 21 P Espargaro 6; 22 Smith 6; 23 Lowes 2; 24 Guintoli 1.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Yamaha 108; 2 Honda 95; 3 Ducati 72; 4 Suzuki 22; 5 Aprilia 19; 6 KTM 8.

Vinales' points lead is now 17 over Pedrosa



DTM

ROUND 2/9, LAUSITZRING (D), MAY 20-21

RACE 1 (43 LAPS – 92.929 MILES)

1	Lucas Auer (A) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	56m37.503s
2	Robert Wickens (CDN) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	+3.613s
3	Rene Rast (D) <i>Team Rosberg · Audi RS5</i>	+12.581s
4	Maxime Martin (B) <i>RBM · BMW M4</i>	+17.660s
5	Mike Rockenfeller (D) <i>Team Phoenix · Audi RS5</i>	+17.810s
6	Gary Paffett (GB) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	+20.253s
7	Edoardo Mortara (I) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	+21.366s
8	Mattias Ekstrom (S) <i>Abt · Audi RS5</i>	+22.319s
9	Maro Engel (D) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	+26.361s
10	Jamie Green (GB) <i>Team Rosberg · Audi RS5</i>	+29.960s
11	Timo Glock (D) <i>RMR · BMW M4</i>	+34.423s
12	Augusto Farfus (BR) <i>RMG · BMW M4</i>	+35.163s
13	Marco Wittmann (D) <i>RMG · BMW M4</i>	+36.280s
14	Bruno Spengler (CDN) <i>RBM · BMW M4</i>	+38.467s
15	Loic Duval (F) <i>Team Phoenix · Audi RS5</i>	+39.577s
16	Paul di Resta (GB) <i>HWA · Mercedes C63</i>	+48.526s
17	Tom Blomqvist (GB) <i>RMR · BMW M4</i>	+1m01.476s
R	Nico Muller (CH) <i>Abt · Audi RS5</i>	34 laps-brakes

Winner's average speed 98.467mph.

Fastest lap Rast 1m17.343s, 100.591mph.

QUALIFYING 1

1 Auer 1m16.193s; 2 Wickens 1m16.298s; 3 Martin 1m16.404s; 4 Rast 1m16.420s; 5 Glock 1m16.424s; 6 Blomqvist 1m16.473s; 7 Muller 1m16.484s; 8 Rockenfeller 1m16.506s; 9 Paffett 1m16.510s; 10 Mortara 1m16.542s; 11 Wittmann 1m16.551s; 12 Ekstrom 1m16.751s; 13 Engel 1m16.775s; 14 Farfus 1m16.804s; 15 Duval 1m16.981s; 16 di Resta 1m17.020s; 17 Spengler 1m17.097s; 18 Green excluded.

RACE 2 (43 LAPS – 92.929 MILES)

1 Green 56m20.480s; 2 Ekstrom +6.295s; 3 Wickens +7.034s; 4 Paffett +7.387s; 5 Rockenfeller +9.750s; 6 Muller +13.039s; 7 Rast +16.370s; 8 Martin +18.115s; 9 Wittmann +19.540s; 10 Auer +26.283s; 11 Mortara +34.419s; 12 Engel +34.973s; 13 di Resta +36.322s; 14 Farfus +37.554s; 15 Glock +38.815s; 16 Spengler +39.363s; 17 Blomqvist +39.994s; 18 Duval +44.331s.

Winner's average speed 98.963mph.

Fastest lap Rast 1m17.098s, 100.911mph.

QUALIFYING 2

1 Wickens 1m16.299s; 2 Blomqvist 1m16.323s; 3 Green 1m16.326s; 4 Paffett 1m16.368s; 5 Martin 1m16.379s; 6 Rast 1m16.406s; 7 Muller 1m16.409s; 8 Ekstrom 1m16.441s; 9 Farfus 1m16.460s; 10 Wittmann 1m16.579s; 11 Rockenfeller 1m16.651s; 12 Spengler 1m16.662s; 13 Glock 1m16.704s; 14 Duval 1m16.710s; 15 Auer 1m16.812s; 16 di Resta 1m16.813s; 17 Engel 1m16.889s; 18 Mortara 1m17.127s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Auer 69; 2 Green 53; 3 Paffett 46; 4 Rockenfeller 41; 5 Wickens 38; 6 Ekstrom 32; 7 Rast 31; 8 Glock 25; 9 Muller 20; 10 Mortara 19.



IN BRIEF



STCC

Johan Kristoffersson marked his return to the Scandinavian Touring Car Championship with a clean sweep of victories at the series' first visit to Finland's Alastaro circuit. Kristoffersson's KMS Volkswagen team-mates Fredrik Blomstedt and Fredrik Ekblom followed the World Rallycross race winner home in races one and three, with Robert Dahlgren breaking the stronghold in his SEAT in race two.

V8 STOCK CARS

A controlled victory from pole position in the main race for Rubens Barrichello and a perfectly timed recovery from 20th on the grid to first at the flag in the sprint for Ricardo Mauricio put both star drivers back into the top six places in the championship standings. The results also keep them in the fight for the title after three rounds of the 2017 season. Third place in the first race and 11th in the second gave points leader Thiago Camilo an eight-point advantage on Daniel Serra, who remains in second place despite only scoring 17 points at Santa Cruz with a sixth-place finish in the main race.

SUPER TC2000

Facundo Arduso won Saturday's sprint race for Renault at Rosario, ahead of Peugeot's Mariano Werner and Toyota driver Matias Rossi. In Sunday's feature race reigning champion Agustin Canapino returned Chevrolet to the winner's circle aboard his Cruze after leading all the way, coming home ahead of Arduso and Rossi. With the first four rounds of the 2017 season now complete, Canapino sits at the top of the championship points standings.

ADAC F4

Kim-Luis Schramm, Julian Hanes and Felipe Drugovich shared the ADAC Formula 4 victories at the Lausitzring – although the results remain provisional until the outcome of a German Motor Sports Federation (DMSB) hearing, where the governing body will rule on the technical exclusion of the US Racing cars from qualifying. Schramm and Hanes claimed lights-to-flag wins in races one and two as their team raced under appeal, while Drugovich claimed his first ADAC F4 win in a Van Amersfoort Racing one-two in the finale ahead of Frederik Vesti.

The Emperor strikes back

Sebastien Ogier had to dig deep to secure what is still just his second win of 2017

By David Evans, Rallies Editor

🐦 @daviddevansrally



He's back. Did anyone think back-to-back success for Thierry Neuville in Corsica and Argentina might have dulled the capricious appeal of the 2017 World Rally Championship, after the variation of four different winners in the first four rounds? Nonsense.

The pendulum swung again at last week's Rally of Portugal as four-time champion Sebastien Ogier did what his rivals had been fearing he'd do from the first day of round one. He found his feet in M-Sport's Ford Fiesta WRC.

Seven years on from a breakthrough championship win just down the road in Faro – and on the 50th anniversary of the inaugural Rally of Portugal – Ogier equalled Markku Alen's record of five Portuguese wins.

Eighteen days before the start in

Portugal, the WRC had departed South America after a quite astonishing finale that left Neuville seven tenths of a second ahead of Elfyn Evans. Laid bare, that meant the Hyundai was 19 metres ahead of the M-Sport Ford after 357,590 metres (or 222 miles) of competition.

And that third-closest WRC finish came on the back of four different winners in the first four rallies. Just how close could things get in Portugal?

Including Thursday night's loosener at the Lousada rallycross track, the opening leg totalled nine stages and a shade under 100 miles. In that time there would be 50 positional changes in the top 10. By the end of SS4, seven drivers could lay claim to a scratch time, three (Kris Meeke, Ott Tanak and Craig Breen) having halved the first run at Ponte de Lima. We also had five different leaders in the first six stages. This was the WRC at its absolute breathless best.

M-Sport's Malcolm Wilson emerged from mission control after SS4 with Tanak third, Ogier sixth and Evans 10th.

Ogier restored his WRC authority and equalled Markku Alen's record of five wins in Portugal

And he couldn't stop smiling. "Look at that," he said. "Look at that... the top 10 separated by 18 seconds. When was the last time we had an event this close?"

Have a look back, especially on gravel rallies, and you'll see the bottom end of the top 10 is usually trailing by a matter of minutes after four stages. In competition like this, it was impossible to call form. Neuville and Mads Ostberg led, then Hayden Paddon, then Jari-Matti Latvala was out front for two stages before Meeke elbowed him aside to top the table after SS5. With half an eye on the second run at Ponte de Lima later in the afternoon, Meeke throttled back fractionally to look after hisMichelins through the intervening sixth stage. The result? He plummeted from first to fifth to sit a massive six seconds off the lead.

At that point, the rally was anybody's. Twelve months ago it was a similar story, with Paddon and Tanak very much in the fight at the start of the Ponte de Lima stage. But then everything changed when they crashed and Paddon's car burned.



SAINZ'S LANDMARK PORTUGUESE DEBUT

THIRTY YEARS HAVE PASSED, BUT CARLOS Sainz remembers it like it was yesterday. El Matador is that kind of chap. Attention to detail remains everything. And the detail of what happened on the 1987 Rally of Portugal certainly requires attention.

Sainz made his World Rally Championship debut on the event. Before that season, he was employed by Renault in the Spanish Rally Championship, but the promise of some World rounds in a Marlboro-backed Ford Sierra RS Cosworth was enough for him to begin the first of three separate stints with the Blue Oval.

And he started in some fashion. Fastest. That's how to make an impression on the WRC. And Sainz's would be a long lasting, two-title-winning impression.

"When I began my career in rallying, Spain didn't have its own round of the World Rally Championship, so Portugal

was closest to a home event for me," says Sainz. "Many fans came from the north of Spain to watch and the local people in Portugal seemed to favour me as well. It was an important rally for me; you come to Portugal and you look left and right and you see the big stars everywhere."

He would go on to win Rally Portugal twice, but that memory of 1987 stands out.

"I was driving a Sierra run by [Carlisle-based satellite Ford team] Mike Little," he said. "The car was good, but the regulations were still new [Group A had replaced Group B at the start of the season] and the cars were still struggling a little bit with reliability. We retired with a turbo problem, but I was very proud to make the scratch [fastest] time on the first stage, a mixed-surface at Estoril. I did one more fastest time before we retired. Portugal will always be a special place for me."

Sainz made his mark on his 1987 WRC debut in Portugal



There were no flames this time around, but the stage that nudges up against the Spanish border certainly had a big impact on the rally and the leaderboard as three of the top five hit trouble. Naturally, the way his luck's running this season, Paddon was among them: an electrical glitch halted his i20 Coupe WRC. Meeke slid wide on a right-hander, damaging his Citroen beyond stage-side repair, while Latvala rolled but continued.

Ott Tänak ended Friday's running in the lead as several rivals hit trouble

Post-Ponte de Lima, Tanak emerged with a 3.6s lead from Dani Sordo. Without detracting from the Spaniard's fine effort to place his Hyundai in second, the bigger threat to Tanak was just 2.6s further back and came in the shape of team-mate Ogier.

Tanak hadn't escaped the rigours of the day completely. Damage to a wishbone on the second run at Caminha had brought the best mechanic out of him. "The priority today was to make a good place on the road for tomorrow," he said, "and I think I've done that."

He'd definitely done that. With a lot of loose around on Saturday's first two stages, running further back on the road would offer a significant advantage. And if he wanted to know how bad it had been to run first on the Portuguese gravel, he only had to ask the bloke on the next table at dinner: Ogier.

"It was difficult," said Ogier. "Like always. I'm happy with what we've done today; we came close to catching Dani. Now let's see what can be done."

After such a close Friday, M-Sport World Rally Team tightened its grip on this rally through the weekend. The Fiesta WRC was quickest on six from 10 of the Saturday and Sunday stages.

One stage into Saturday, Ogier nudged Sordo aside and closed the gap to Tanak to just 1.1s. Were team orders about to arrive? Not a chance.

"There were no words [about that]," said Wilson emphatically. "I just told them to get on with it."

Tanak didn't say much at the end of the opener. Instead he saved his mental focus for an SS11 riposte. Full of confidence in his notes, he flew through. Fastest by 5.2s, and his lead was now back up to 6.3s.

Just down the road, Ogier was asked about Tanak's time. "That was a good time," he said, his face straight, without a trace of emotion.

The event had reached a pivotal point. How much would Ogier be willing to risk, given his position in the championship? In the 'old' days, he >>>

would have swatted Tanak aside, relying on his familiarity with a Volkswagen moulded around him. The generic Fiesta has taken time and probably more effort than the champ expected to come to heel. But last weekend, it did just that.

Once comfortable, the Ogier of old returned and relied on his instincts. ‘Let Tanak go, let him race. There are rocks in these roads and those rocks will always play a part in this story.’ Three seconds up coming to the halfway point of Amarante, Tanak pushed harder and was forced to throw the car at a right-hander having come in a fraction too hot. The throttle was buried as the car started to slide. Another foot or so and he’d have scabbled around. The left-rear of the Fiesta slammed against a concrete post and buckled the suspension. The leader lost 1m23s and ended his morning fifth – much of that time loss coming as a result of losing his rear brakes in the impact with the post.

“It’s part of the game,” he said after crabbing his way back to service. “He leads the championship; he is the target.”

Typically, Ogier was magnanimous, just as he has been time and again when folk have tried and failed to topple him. But this was a little bit different. Since winning in Monte Carlo, he’s only led for one stage, and looked a troubled man as he worked to find the right balance. The sweet spot had been located in terms of differential and damper set-up and everything was feeling more natural.

“It’s not good news for Ott,” he said. “He was doing so well. I hope he can carry on without losing so much – we need those points for the [manufacturers’] championship.”

For Ogier, the rally had changed and that much was clear when he reached the end of Saturday. Arriving at the finish of Amarante for the second time, he took a longer-than-usual drink before taking his helmet off and wiping the sweat from his brow. Head back, he closed his eyes for a split second. There was real relief there, but it was the timing of that emotion that told the real story. He’d still got four stages and Sunday to go to defend a 16.8s advantage from hat-trick-chaser Neuville. Ogier knew it was enough. He knew this one was in the



pocket and it’s been a while since he’s looked and felt that way.

Wilson was philosophical. You got the feeling he could see this one coming.

“It was too much for Ott,” he said. “With the time in the stage before the splits... All I will keep saying to him is, ‘Look, watch, listen and learn – he’s [Ogier] been in the business a long time and he’s not a four-time world champion for nothing.’ I’m not going to say I’m disappointed with Ott because he’s driven well and he’s still on to score a few points. But if he doesn’t bring those points, then I’ll be disappointed...”

He needn’t have worried: Tanak helped his own cause by lifting fourth from Breen on Saturday’s final stage.

The Irishman had been right in the thick of the fight on Friday night, loving the level playing field the altered stage format brought. But when the event moved into more familiar territory for his rivals – with the stages running in the same direction on Saturday and Sunday

Neuville emerged top of the Hyundai set after team-mate Paddon’s Friday misfortune

– his lack of experience on these roads started to tell and his Citroen slipped back from the fight at the front. Fifth remained, however, another supremely competent showing from a driver still in his first season at the sport’s pinnacle.

Breen remains the constant in what’s turning into something of a seesaw season for Citroen. Fortunately the manufacturers’ championship hasn’t been on the agenda in Versailles this season, because Citroen has been well and truly dropped by M-Sport and Hyundai.

Rally Portugal added further strength to this being the season of seasons when it comes to close competition. M-Sport has led for 411.26 competitive miles so far this season. That’s 3.86 fewer than Hyundai, which has the edge when it comes to stage wins: 39 to 38. But M-Sport’s team approach is paying off with 115 top-three times, 12 more than the trio of i20 drivers. Close enough?

A superficial glance at the results would point to Neuville being the top Hyundai performer in Portugal and his second place would bear that out to some extent. Dig deeper, however, and you would unearth Paddon’s best performance of the year to date. The Kiwi led on day one and would have been right in the thick of the fight for the win had it not been for that electrical issue and yet another steering problem that ensured the car couldn’t be turned left.

That reluctance to deviate from a straight trajectory was an interesting discovery for Hayden when he’d got some speed on coming through the 13th stage. When it was working, Paddon and new co-driver Seb Marshall were firm fixtures, winning four stages.



Ogier celebrates a hard-fought victory



A lack of grip at the rear of his car on Saturday's stages left Sordo struggling to keep pace with Neuville, but he was comfortably up for a successful defence of a 38s advantage over Tanak on the final day. M-Sport and Ogier may have been an unmovable force at the front of the field, but a double podium keeps Hyundai within striking distance at the top of the manufacturers' championship.

After its astonishing start to the season, Toyota is fading. Juho Hanninen drove a clean rally to finish top Yaris in seventh, but the Japanese squad's main player Latvala was knobbled by a stomach bug so severe that he spent Saturday night in hospital before returning to drive Sunday's four stages. That day-one roll didn't help, but it was Latvala's internal inversions that were the biggest cause for concern in Portugal. One cause for serious celebration was the immediate speed Esapekka Lappi found in the third Yaris WRC.

But the biggest celebration was saved for Ogier, Julien Ingrassia and Wilson's extended M-Sport family. Round-one success in Monte Carlo in January was a great way to get this new relationship started. But once the hangover had worn off, there was no denying the speed and dominance Neuville had shown in the mountains. Gifted that one, they'd grafted for this one. And it was all the sweeter.

Ogier quickly paid tribute to the team before making a further demand on the Wilson wallet. "We started Monte in a brand-new car and we won," said Ogier. "We started here in a brand-new car and won... I wonder if Malcolm can afford a brand-new car every time!" ❄️

RESULTS ROUND 6/13, RALLY PORTUGAL, MAY 18-21

POS	DRIVER	CO-DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Sebastien Ogier (F)	Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	3h42m55.7s
2	Thierry Neuville (B)	Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+15.6s
3	Dani Sordo (E)	Marc Marti (E)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m01.7s
4	Ott Tanak (EST)	Martin Jarveoja (EST)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m30.2s
5	Craig Breen (IRL)	Scott Martin (GB)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+1m57.4s
6	Elfyn Evans (GB)	Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m10.6s
7	Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Kaj Lindstrom (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+3m48.9s
8	Mads Ostberg (N)	Ola Floene (N)	M-Sport WRT · Ford Fiesta WRC	+5m29.7s
9	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)	Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+5m43.6s
10	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)	Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC · Toyota Yaris WRC	+8m13.3s
OTHERS				
13	Stephane Lefebvre (F)	Gabin Moreau (F)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+12m02.3s
14	Martin Prokop (CZ)	Jan Tomanek (CZ)	Onebet Jipocar WRT · Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+15m16.3s
17	Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE)	Chris Patterson (GB)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+21m11.2s
18	Kris Meeke (GB)	Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen Total · Citroen C3 WRC	+22m19.1s
23	Valeriy Gorban (UA)	Sergei Larens (RUS)	Eurolamp WRT · Mini John Cooper Works WRC	+26m15.4s
28	Jean-Michel Raoux (F)	Thomas Escartefigue (F)	Jean-Michel Raoux · Citroen DS3 WRC	+39m09.1s
29	Hayden Paddon (NZ)	Sebastian Marshall (GB)	Hyundai Motorsport · Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+42m38.6s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 128; 2 Neuville 106;
3 Latvala 88; 4 Tanak 83;
5 Sordo 66; 6 Evans 53;
7 Breen 43; 8 Paddon 33;
9 Meeke 27; 10 Hanninen 21.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 M-Sport WRT 199;
2 Hyundai Motorsport 173;
3 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC 113; 4 Citroen Total 85.



Citroen had to be content with fifth place

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 SSS Lousada 2.09 miles	Neuville & Ostberg 2m36.6s	Neuville/Ostberg	-
SS2 Viano do Castelo 1 16.59 miles	Paddon 15m44.3s	Paddon	Latvala +2.4s
SS3 Caminha 1 11.25 miles	Latvala 10m25.2s	Latvala	Meeke +5.0s
SS4 Ponte de Lima 1 17.06 miles	Tanak 19m14.0s	Latvala	Meeke +0.5s
SS5 Viano do Castelo 2 16.59 miles	Paddon 15m35.6s	Meeke	Latvala +0.2s
SS6 Caminha 2 11.25 miles	Neuville 10m25.0s	Tanak	Latvala +0.1s
SS7 Ponte de Lima 2 17.06 miles	Sordo 19m20.2s	Tanak	Sordo +3.6s
SS8 Braga Street Stage 1 1.18 miles	Ogier 1m48.8s	Tanak	Sordo +4.3s
SS9 Braga Street Stage 2 1.18 miles	Ostberg 1m46.5s	Tanak	Sordo +4.6s
SS10 Vieira do Minho 1 10.83 miles	Ogier 10m46.4s	Tanak	Ogier +1.1s
SS11 Cabeceiras de Basto 1 13.86 miles	Tanak 13m32.6s	Tanak	Ogier +6.3s
SS12 Amarante 1 23.33 miles	Ogier 24m41.5s	Ogier	Neuville +19.5s
SS13 Vieira do Minho 2 10.83 miles	Neuville 10m43.4s	Ogier	Neuville +18.5s
SS14 Cabeceiras de Basto 2 13.86 miles	Ogier 13m31.0s	Ogier	Neuville +23.0s
SS15 Amarante 2 23.33 miles	Neuville 24m33.8s	Ogier	Neuville +16.8s
SS16 Fafe 1 6.95 miles	Paddon 6m39.7s	Ogier	Neuville +16.0s
SS17 Luilhas 7.40 miles	Ogier 8m09.7s	Ogier	Neuville +19.3s
SS18 Montim 5.38 miles	Paddon 5m51.7s	Ogier	Neuville +17.5s
SS19 Fafe 2 (Power Stage) 6.95 miles	Tanak 6m38.3s	Ogier	Neuville +15.6s

Subaru breakthrough as Shedden takes lead

Regulatory break gives Subaru a boost while points leader Ingram's luck runs out

By Matt James, BTCC Correspondent

[@MattJMNews](#)



Turbo break for Subaru helped improve Levorg's performance

The flavour at the head of the British Touring Car Championship changed at Oulton Park, and it was race-three winner Gordon Shedden who put himself in charge of the chase. The weekend in Cheshire again highlighted just how competitive this battle is going to be.

Honda man Shedden's glory capped a weekend that had begun with a lights-to-flag win for Andrew Jordan in the WSR BMW 125i M Sport, and then in race two Subaru's Ash Sutton took Team BMR's maiden win of the 2017 campaign in style (with full ballast and soft tyres).

Subaru provided one of the main talking points of the event. A rule tweak coming into the weekend meant that series bosses could look at the turbo-boost performance of the Mountune-tended two-litre turbocharged motor in the Japanese estate cars, and those in the Ford Focus cars (Motorbase Performance, Maxim Motorsport and Team Parker).

All four Subaru drivers – Sutton, Jason Plato, James Cole and Josh Price – have been languishing in the speed traps so far this season, and were desperate for something positive. The curiosity, up until this point at least, had been the way Sutton was able to extract more from the Levorg GT than double-champion team-mate Plato.

They have essentially the same equipment, but Sutton had already taken

two third places at Donington and was firmly inside the championship top 10 going to Oulton Park, where his racecraft in race one to climb from an initial sixth to third was stunning.

He did get quite physical with Shedden for fifth at the hairpin early on, but his double pass of Colin Turkington (WSR BMW) and Aiden Moffat (Laser Tools Racing Mercedes A-Class) was sublime. He tried to go around the outside of both under braking for Lodge on lap 10, and eventually made the move stick into Old Hall.

That set him up to overhaul the fully laden Jordan in race two and scamper to a second BTCC career win. Fourth in the finale showed that he is right at the top of his game.

"I've always been a driver to extract absolutely every last drop of a car's performance, and whether that is the difference or not [over his team-mates] I don't know," said Sutton. "It's an open book; we all work together. There is nothing hidden. Yes we share data and set-ups, but my engineer and I are just focused on what we want to do, so we're not really focused on anyone else."

So was it the boost that finally helped him to the top step of the podium? Sutton, as with most people at the team, was circumspect. "The boost [increase] assisted; it has helped," he allowed. "It's not the be-all-and-end-all of it, and I think it's also shown that we have been maximising what the car has been capable of over the last few weekends when we didn't have it."

Plato said that chassis damage, which he collected with a startline shunt at Brands Hatch at the beginning of the season, meant his car was behaving differently to those of his team-mates. "There is something in the car that means we're having to go a different way on set-up," he said. "And we've had a lack of power from the engine, but gradually these things are being addressed. Sadly for us, it's come a little bit too late in the season."

Still, Oulton Park was the first time this season when Plato has scored points in all three races, although he didn't quite manage to break into the top 10.

While one champion was struggling, others were making hay. Jordan came to the meeting with no ballast on his WSR car and, when he lined up on the front row alongside Matt Neal's factory Honda for race one, a victory was on the cards.

"That does put the pressure on, because everyone thinks you have it in the bag with the rear-wheel-drive cars' starts," said Jordan. He coped manfully with the pressure and bagged his second win of the 2017 campaign – but it also



“It’s shown that we’ve been maximising what the car can do when we didn’t have it”

left him to cope with 75kg of ballast going in to race two.

The new wider tyres this year are a journey for everyone, and Jordan struggled in the second race. He was on the usual rubber rather than the softer option tyres, but – surprisingly – the softs proved the right choice last weekend despite the warmer weather. Jordan limited the damage to fifth, which gave him another front-row start for the finale, but there was to be no second win since he was unable to turn on the harder Dunlops after a mid-race safety-car period. That allowed the Honda duo of Shedden and Neal to leapfrog him. He still walked away from the weekend as the third-highest points scorer to get his championship momentum going again.

On the flip side, team-mate Turkington came to the track third in the points but left fourth.

These are worrying times for the WSR team. There has been a persistent misfire in the #4 car all season and it reappeared in qualifying. Turkington limited the damage to fourth on the grid, but a bump with Moffat while scrapping for third in race one caused the electrics to die. He had to perform a rescue job from there with 13th in race two and a terrific climb to fifth in race three, but he was lucky to finish as the car was trailing turbo smoke after the chequered flag.

“The misfire is a mystery – we can’t trace it,” said Turkington. “It’s frustrating but we will have a thorough go through the car afterwards.”



Solid scoring and a race victory elevated Honda’s Shedden to the head of the title standings

The third WSR BMW of Rob Collard qualified inside the top 10. It was the highest the Hampshireman has started this year, and he used that to finish fifth in the opener and then second in race two, tracking down Sutton after passing team-mate Jordan. That left him with 66kg for race three and he collected sixth. But with Turkington’s troubles, and a dire weekend for pre-weekend points leader Tom Ingram (see panel, >>

INGRAM'S CATASTROPHE

IF TOM INGRAM THOUGHT HE HAD RIDDEN HIS luck a bit so far this season, it marched out of the door and abandoned him at Oulton Park.

He was 17 points clear coming into the weekend and, even though he was carrying 75kg of success ballast, he was hopeful of landing some points to limit any damage. He qualified in 11th spot – “I just messed up my laps” – and was in trouble from there.

Contact in race one with Jack Goff's Eurotech Racing Honda Civic eventually led to broken suspension on Ingram's Speedworks Toyota Avensis. Race two? Exactly the same situation, when he, Will Burns (Team Hard VW CC) and James Cole (Team BMR Subaru Levorg) tried to occupy the same bit of asphalt on the exit of the Island Hairpin on lap seven.

Race three? More contact with Burns at Hislops pushed him down to 26th at the flag: “Well, that has been a bloody disaster – all I got was one point – but I put that down to my poor qualifying putting me in the middle of the pack. You're in trouble then.

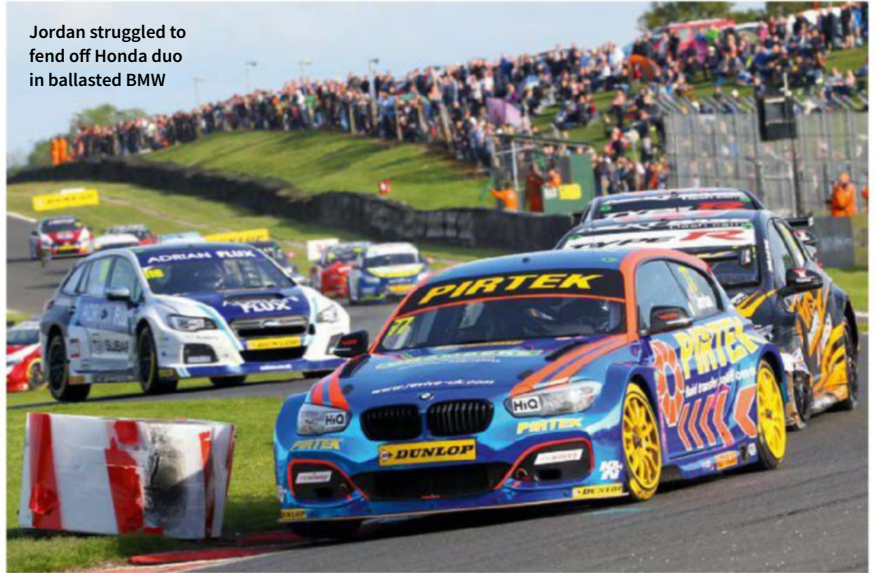
“Mind you, that point I scored was for my first fastest lap in the BTCC after 102 races, so I suppose you could call it progress,” joked Ingram afterwards. “I knew a bad meeting would be coming, but we never expected it to be quite as bad as this. You expect maybe three bad races like this a season, but I have used them all up now. I just have to look forward.”

New championship leader Gordon Shedden didn't exactly feel sympathy for his rival, but he knows about the tough breaks in the BTCC.

“Tom has had some good luck this year with well-timed red flags at Brands Hatch and Donington Park, but the rest of us have had some kicks in the teeth,” said the Team Dynamics Honda Civic driver.

“I lost a win at Donington for a ride-height infringement, and Matt Neal had a non-start at Donington and a shunt at Brands Hatch. You have to roll with the punches in this series, and that's something that Tom is going to have to start learning about.”

Jordan struggled to fend off Honda duo in ballasted BMW



p54), it was enough for him to vault to second in the standings.

While the Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R pairing of Neal and Shedden were split in qualifying and race one, with Neal valiantly chasing leader Jordan, and Shedden aggrieved at being drop-kicked from fifth down to seventh at the hairpin (by first Sutton and then Mat Jackson), the pair formed an awesome combination thereafter.

Running third (Neal) and fourth (Shedden) in race two, they traded places to allow Shedden to try to break Collard's run to second. They had ganged up on Jordan too to perform a superb double pass on the heavy BMW coming out of Old Hall on lap six.

When Shedden's chase of Collard didn't work, they swapped back on the final lap. “We had done a bit of brokering over the pits-to-car radio,” said Neal. “I let him go, then he gave the place back.”

In race three, with both on soft tyres from the second row of the grid, they set off after leader Jordan after a mid-race caution period to clear up the heavily damaged car of Moffat, which had been speared into the tyres at Hilltop.

Shedden had earlier clipped the back of second-placed Josh Cook (Maximum Motorsport Ford Focus) on lap four going into Old Hall, which damaged the rear suspension of the Ford. He would later be slapped with a reprimand for that move.

“If I'd really wanted to hit him, I could have just rolled off the brakes into the Island Hairpin – that's what people were doing to me in race one,” said Shedden. “I don't know if he didn't see me going into Old Hall or he tried to defend too late, but there was a gap there.”

Once Cook had disappeared, the Honda twins chased down the BMW ahead and, when Jordan's harder rubber failed to spark back into life after the caution period, they were both through.

It was a third podium of the weekend for Neal, and he walked out of the venue as the top points scorer, with eight more than new championship leader Shedden.

“I think that third race gave me the most satisfaction of all,” said Neal. “You don't want to be beaten by your teammate, but we worked together, didn't fight, saved our tyres and eventually got the one-two that we wanted. With the series so competitive this year, having a team-mate that you can work with is going to be vital. And Gordon and I have always worked well together.”

The leading Toyota Avensis at Oulton was not Ingram's but Rob Austin's. He placed the Handy Motorsport car 14th on the grid after admitting to not getting the most from his qualifying run, but gradually made his way up the order for a ninth, an eighth and a seventh in the final race, in which he was also the leading Independent Trophy runner. It meant he left as the sixth-highest points earner of the weekend and has climbed into the top 10 of the standings overall.

Another strong cameo came from the Team Hard duo of Jake Hill and Mike Epps. Hill took a starting slot in the top 10 after Power Maxed Vauxhall racer Senna Proctor was stripped of a row-five berth for a yellow-flag infringement. That set Hill up for three top-10 finishes, including two ninths, and Epps was also twice in the top 10. The VW CCs have always been strong cars around Oulton Park but, fitted with the newer RML-spec kit, it was a voyage of discovery for the drivers and the team.

The more-powerful Motorbase Fords also got closer to the pace. Mat Jackson scored two solid if unspectacular finishes in the opening two races. He was sixth in race one (even after his skirmish with Shedden) and then seventh in race two. He was just one place away from landing the reversed-grid pole, but an engine problem on the first lap would have made that all for nothing anyway.

“Maybe the engine can't handle all of the extra boost it has been granted,” said one rival team manager. The landscape of the BTCC title battle might have changed last weekend, but the background grumbles will always remain... ❧



RESULTS ROUND 4/10, OULTON PARK (GB), MAY 21 RACE 1 (15 LAPS – 33.390 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR·BMW 125i M Sport	21m57.078s
2	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics·Honda Civic Type R	+0.284s
3	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR·Subaru Levorg	+11.987s
4	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Laser Tools Racing·Mercedes A-Class	+17.642s
5	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR·BMW 125i M Sport	+18.750s
6	Mat Jackson (GB)	Motorbase Performance·Ford Focus	+19.325s
7	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Team Dynamics·Honda Civic Type R	+20.259s
8	Josh Cook (GB)	Team Parker/Maximum·Ford Focus	+20.561s
9	Rob Austin (GB)	Handy Motorsport·Toyota Avensis	+21.469s
10	Jake Hill (GB)	Team Hard·Volkswagen CC	+22.046s
11	Michael Epps (GB)	Team Hard·Volkswagen CC	+25.005s
12	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR·Subaru Levorg	+26.141s
13	Jeff Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing·Honda Civic Type R	+27.315s
14	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning·Audi S3 Saloon	+27.452s
15	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing·Vauxhall Astra	+27.951s
16	Aron Taylor-Smith (IRL)	Triple Eight Racing·MG6	+28.271s
17	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker·Ford Focus	+28.856s
18	Luke Davenport (GB)	Motorbase Performance·Ford Focus	+29.057s
19	Tom Chilton (GB)	Power Maxed Racing·Vauxhall Astra	+31.032s
20	Dan Lloyd (GB)	Triple Eight Racing·MG6	+31.493s
21	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing·Honda Civic Type R	+32.640s
22	Josh Price (GB)	Team BMR·Subaru Levorg	+34.783s
23	James Cole (GB)	Team BMR·Subaru Levorg	+35.365s
24	Dave Newsham (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing·Chevrolet Cruze	+35.530s
25	Will Burns (GB)	Team Hard·Volkswagen CC	+44.478s
26	Martin Depper (GB)	Motorbase Performance·Ford Focus	+45.087s
27	Ant Whorton-Eales (GB)	AmD Tuning·Audi S3 Saloon	+45.912s
28	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport·Mercedes A-Class	+48.900s
29	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR·BMW 125i M Sport	+52.479s
NC	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing·Chevrolet Cruze	-3 laps
R	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport·Toyota Avensis	11 laps-accident damage
R	Matt Simpson (GB)	Team Dynamics·Honda Civic Type R	0 laps-steering damage

Winner's average speed 91.26mph. **Fastest lap** Neal 1m26.811s, 92.31mph.



Fire brought Adam Morgan's weekend to an early close



Neal (left) was the weekend's top scorer

QUALIFYING

1 Neal 1m26.151s; 2 Jordan 1m26.277s; 3 Moffat 1m26.400s; 4 Turkington 1m26.609s; 5 Shedden 1m26.612s; 6 Sutton 1m26.662s; 7 M Jackson 1m26.700s; 8 Cook 1m26.722s; 9 Collard 1m26.738s; 10 Hill 1m26.801s; 11 Ingram 1m26.819s; 12 Goff 1m26.840s; 13 Epps 1m26.879s; 14 Austin 1m26.942s; 15 Simpson 1m26.963s; 16 Proctor 1m26.970s; 17 Plato 1m26.974s; 18 Smith 1m27.045s; 19 Whorton-Eales 1m27.131s; 20 Morgan 1m27.147s; 21 Cole 1m27.153s; 22 O Jackson 1m27.156s; 23 Jelley 1m27.168s; 24 Davenport 1m27.240s; 25 Taylor-Smith 1m27.266s; 26 Lloyd 1m27.332s; 27 Burns 1m27.393s; 28 Newsham 1m27.439s; 29 Smiley 1m27.602s; 30 Chilton 1m27.616s; 31 Price 1m27.820s; 32 Depper 1m27.948s.

RACE 2 (14 LAPS – 31.164 MILES)

1 Sutton 20m31.536s; 2 Collard +1.066s; 3 Neal +9.795s; 4 Shedden +10.096s; 5 Jordan +10.443s; 6 Cook +10.863s; 7 M Jackson +12.560s; 8 Austin +13.196s; 9 Hill +13.966s; 10 Epps +14.596s; 11 Plato +14.765s; 12 Taylor-Smith +15.943s; 13 Turkington +21.590s; 14 Moffat +22.040s; 15 Price +22.195s; 16 Goff +22.607s; 17 Davenport +22.968s; 18 Proctor +23.309s; 19 Newsham +24.547s; 20 Depper +25.174s; 21 Smith +25.481s; 22 Lloyd +25.678s; 23 Jelley +26.711s; 24 Chilton +27.018s; 25 Simpson +27.814s; 26 O Jackson +29.249s; 27 Smiley +30.618s; 28 Whorton-Eales -1 lap; 29 Burns -2 laps; R Ingram 7 laps-accident damage; R Cole 6 laps-accident; R Morgan 0 laps-fire.

Winner's average speed 91.09mph.

Fastest lap Sutton; 1m26.902s, 92.21mph.

GRID RACE 2

Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 3 (18 LAPS – 40.068 MILES)

1 Shedden 29m41.142s; 2 Neal +0.279s; 3 Jordan +1.722s; 4 Sutton +4.272s; 5 Turkington +4.375s; 6 Collard +4.590s; 7 Austin +5.509s; 8 Epps +7.045s; 9 Hill +8.418s; 10 Davenport +8.736s; 11 Plato +9.077s; 12 Lloyd +9.414s; 13 Newsham +9.789s; 14 Simpson +10.248s; 15 Goff +10.605s; 16 Proctor +11.412s; 17 Jelley +12.041s; 18 O Jackson +12.099s; 19 Chilton +12.505s; 20 Smiley +13.958s; 21 Whorton-Eales +15.882s; 22 Burns +16.786s; 23 Depper +19.397s; 24 Smith +19.419s; 25 Taylor-Smith +27.750s; 26 Ingram +33.920s; 27 Price -1 lap; NC Cole -5 laps; R Moffat 7 laps-accident; R Cook 3 laps-accident damage; R M Jackson 0 laps-engine; NS Morgan.

Winner's average speed 80.98mph.

Fastest lap Ingram 1m26.911s, 92.20mph.

GRID RACE 3

Decided by result of Race 2, with top six reversed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Shedden 157; 2 Collard 141; 3 Ingram 132; 4 Turkington 126; 5 Neal 124; 6 Sutton 112; 7 Jordan 98; 8 Morgan 96; 9 Goff 90; 10 Austin 83.



Buemi's redemption

Another Buemi/Renault win made it feel like the same old Formula E story in Paris, but this was a very sweet and important victory for the championship leader and his team

By Scott Mitchell, Formula E Correspondent

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Redemption, to butcher a line from *Anchorman*, was spelled S-e-b in Paris. It's odd to think of the reigning champion requiring redemption of any kind, especially given that this champion had won four of the opening five races of the 2016-17 Formula E season. There are, though, two elements to this particular Parisian story: last season Renault e.dams was nowhere on home turf, and this team Buemi's

spin in Mexico City meant he had made a difficult task a little tougher.

In 2016 Renault was the worst-affected by racing in Paris in April, and Buemi struggled to deal with the uncharacteristically cold (by Formula E standards) temperatures. He qualified eighth and had a helping hand to salvage third in the race, but the team was beaten soundly by Lucas di Grassi and Abt Audi Sport in its own back yard. This season, with those four wins from five, the expectation was much greater than a year ago – and so too was the pressure.

The other side of this double-edged sword is this year's title battle. The win scoreboard reads Buemi 4-1 di Grassi,

Renault e.dams *really* wanted to win on home turf, and Buemi delivered in spades

but only 15 points separated them after five of eight events – not much at all given Buemi's comparative on-track superiority. The remaining three rounds are double-headers – and crucially Buemi will miss one of them.

The spectre of the World Endurance Championship lingers over Buemi and Renault e.dams, which is frustrating for all concerned given that talk of the clash first started what feels like a lifetime ago (although it feels not far off that thanks to this bizarrely spaced-out Formula E calendar). Buemi's Toyota LMP1 commitments mean he'll be at the Nurburgring, not the New York double-header, subject to an unlikely



“favour”, as Buemi called it, from the Japanese manufacturer.

This means a huge points lead is essential for any sensible hope of back-to-back titles for the Swiss driver. And that’s why the spin in Mexico, where a di Grassi win hacked Buemi’s lead right back, was so costly.

So, Buemi had two objectives: atone for last year’s difficult home race, and keep trying to rebuild the advantage that had been beginning to look unassailable (even if Buemi does miss two of the year’s 12 races) but had now become vulnerable. Easy to write, tough to do. Buemi admitted after the race that “I was never expecting to be competitive here” because “in the past we’ve struggled massively” – so the ghosts of 2016 were clearly in the minds of all in blue last weekend.

As it turns out, those ghosts were banished rather emphatically. After di Grassi threatened to continue his harassment of Buemi by setting the fastest time in practice, Buemi responded by beating Jean-Eric Vergne in a nailbiting superpole shootout by just 0.006 seconds – the smallest margin in Formula E history. Never have six thousandths of a second been so crucial,

especially as di Grassi toiled in a struggle for grip that left him 13th on the grid.

When Buemi is leading from the front, if all works as it should he is metronomic in his execution – fast, consistent and efficient. We’ve seen it when he’s started at the front, we’ve seen it when he’s needed to pick his way through from the second, third or fourth row of the grid. In Paris we saw it from pole – for the second race in a row.

Buemi on pole is a dagger to the heart of hopes for an entertaining Formula E race. Like di Grassi did in Monaco, Vergne gave chase to Buemi here, but was outclassed in the opening stint. When di Grassi and Antonio Felix da Costa crashed in clumsy (at best) fashion at Turn 7 on lap 20 of 49, sparking a full-course yellow, Buemi had extended his lead to a race-high 3.2s. Vergne reckoned his first car was “a long way off the pace”, and that tallied considering his long-run speed in practice was actually fractionally better than Buemi’s.

Buemi was annoyed to lose a bit of time under the yellow despite pitting on the same lap as Vergne, but once racing resumed with the drivers in their second cars Buemi took control once more. It >>

THE OTHER PARIS STARS



JOSE MARIA LOPEZ’S START TO FORMULA E life had not gone well: contact with team-mate Sam Bird in Hong Kong, hitting the walls in Marrakech and Buenos Aires, and spinning out while challenging for the win in Mexico City. Then he came to Paris against the backdrop of a difficult start to life as an LMP1 driver, crashing at Silverstone and missing Spa thanks to the injury he picked up as a result.

But Lopez (both pictures) is a three-time world champion for a reason. A sublime third on the grid and a run to second in the race – third on merit, as Jean-Eric Vergne’s retirement promoted him to the runner-up spot – was just reward for plenty of perseverance and self-analysis, and the first convincing sign that his discipline transition is gathering pace.

Lopez was not the only non-Buemi to impress. Robin Frijns was due to drop from fifth to out of the points entirely, but Daniel Abt, who had driven superbly to rise from 15th to seventh, suffered a problem and his battery shut down on the final lap. This sparked confusion behind as Esteban Gutierrez and the rest of the field effectively parked for fear of overtaking under the safety car.

The 30 or so seconds this cost Gutierrez and co allowed a relieved Frijns to only lose out to Nicolas Prost and finish sixth once his 5s penalty, picked up for speeding under a full-course yellow, was applied. It meant he scored his and Andretti’s first points since the Hong Kong opener.

Abt deserved more than that late heartbreak, but it did mean Mitch Evans bagged his third top-10 finish in a row for a Jaguar team that is still the slowest on out-and-out pace. That’s a testimony to the quality of the New Zealander and the work the team has done in providing a car Evans can take to the limit in qualifying, and pick up the pieces as others fluff their lines. It should have been a top-six finish for Evans, not ninth, but he lost a huge amount of time with a “problem” on his second car during the pitstops.



IN THE HEADLINES



GUTIERREZ FADES

Ex-Formula 1 driver Esteban Gutierrez (above) made the superpole for the first time in his three-race Formula E career, but his brief 100% scoring record ended in the race. The Mexican struggled for efficiency early on but looked to have salvaged a top-10 finish before a five-second penalty for speeding under the full-course yellow – and the traffic jam sparked by Daniel Abt – dropped him to 11th.

TURVEY UNREWARDED

NextEV changed Oliver Turvey's motor for the second race in a row, sparking a grid penalty for the Briton in Paris. After using his free swap in Monaco, Turvey had to take a hit in Paris, which ruined a race that could have been so different – he had qualified fourth, banking NextEV's eighth successive superpole appearance.

CONWAY'S RETURN

Faraday Future Dragon Racing's bizarre strategy call ruined any chance of Mike Conway scoring his first Formula E points on his return. The British driver replaced DTM-obliged Loic Duval and outqualified team-mate Jerome d'Ambrosio, but was the only man not to pit during the full-course yellow. He led briefly, but tumbled down the order when he finally swapped cars.

DILLMANN'S DEBUT

Reigning Formula V8 3.5 champion Tom Dillmann impressed on his Formula E debut, finishing eighth. The Frenchman, standing in for Maro Engel – like Duval absent on DTM duty – at Venturi, qualified 15th and raced well to run 10th before Gutierrez's penalty and Abt's retirement gave him a final-lap boost.

BIRD FLIES AGAIN

For the second time in two weeks Sam Bird's ePrix boiled down to a race for fastest lap. A poor qualifying performance left the Briton (below) perplexed, but he switched focus in the race and narrowly beat Lucas di Grassi to ensure a second consecutive point.



was a similar story to Monaco, though – he didn't edge clear to the same degree as the first stint. Vergne was kept at arm's length, never quite two seconds behind, but the Techeetah man reckoned he was saving more energy and priming himself for a late attack.

"It was absolutely going to come back to me," reckoned Vergne. "The second car was so much better, I was coming back at him, managing the gap and consuming little energy.

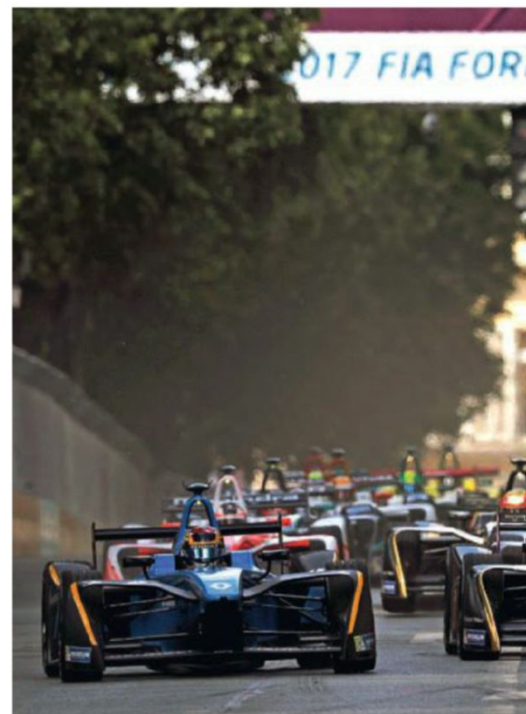
"I knew I was faster, I could see he was lifting way earlier. I was preparing my attack for later on."

And then he crashed. Cameras cut to the Techeetah crumpled against the wall exiting Turn 13. It was an odd shunt, one that looked like it was driver error initially before further replays (and several slo-mo shots) revealed Vergne was applying more steering once he realised he was running wide, but the front wheels weren't following his command. The team suspected it was a broken steering rack, although the jury's out on whether this was caused by Vergne clipping a wall earlier, or a failure in the system itself.

Whatever, it put Buemi in the clear. "I thought I could breathe a little bit," he said, and he could – for about half a lap. The safety car emerged, and the pack was closed up. Now Buemi's pursuer was Toyota LMP1 team-mate Jose Maria Lopez. The DS Virgin Racing driver was having a breakthrough race, surviving a lurid slide in the first half to run comfortably in third, and gleefully moved into second at Vergne's expense. He, like Buemi, had a Mexican mistake to atone for, having spun out of the lead seconds before Buemi rotated in the same place. Fortunately for Buemi, there was no Lopez attack in the final dozen laps, and the win was finally secured when di Grassi, chasing fastest lap after a drive-through penalty for stopping under the minimum pitstop time, crashed out for good with three laps remaining.

"To be able to have two poles in a row like this and win two races, it's amazing, I can't comprehend it so far," said Buemi. "I try to enjoy that as much as I can."

Renault's desire to win in Paris was so intense that, according to Buemi,



the team "tested the cars on the bench" back at the Viry headquarters, after his concerns over the performance of his second car in Monaco. That was no easy task with back-to-back races, and Buemi also used what he feared would be the "weaker" car first just in case.

"Honestly, I would really like to thank my team," said Buemi. "They have done an amazing job, especially the mechanics and engineers. That was a massive job to rebuild it last-minute.

"And also they worked very hard in trying to find solutions to what happened last year when we couldn't get the tyres to work. They came here with a big toolbox in case we had problems and it worked out perfectly.

"They worked hard – they deserved the win more than me."

Objective number one complete, then: a big tick next to Renault and e.dams's home race. But what about the championship? The picture is always bigger than one race, but this one could have huge significance. Di Grassi's retirement means Buemi's points lead balloons to 43. Save for missing out on the point for fastest lap, which went to



...when he crashed out with suspected broken steering



Sam Bird, Buemi had the perfect Saturday. Any talk of building a big enough margin to afford to miss New York was quickly swatted aside, though.

“First I need to do Berlin because I can leave Berlin being second in the championship,” he pointed out, as the German round at the Tempelhof airport is also a double-header.

“Let’s do Berlin and after that we’ll discuss. The lead looks good now, of course it is, but with someone like Lucas it can be quickly brought down.”

Di Grassi admitted he and his team needed to “reset” after a Parisian “disaster”, but if anyone can regroup and retaliate it’s the Brazilian. He’s done it before, and he’ll need to again after an ePrix that started so promisingly and ended so badly.

“Formula E can be so frustrating sometimes,” he said. “If you asked somebody and they say di Grassi did the fastest lap of the day by a good couple of tenths, it doesn’t seem like it because qualifying was horrible and then the race was a disaster. We went from fastest in FP2 to a poor qualifying lap, just had low grip everywhere, then the race went from bad to worse.”

Da Costa and di Grassi crashed when di Grassi tried to pass the Andretti driver around the outside at Turn 7, then turned in for the corner with the Portuguese still with a wheel on the inside. Unsurprisingly they had differing views, di Grassi claiming “he crashed into the inside wall and then into me”, and da Costa retaliating that di Grassi “turned in so early I crashed into the wall before the corner was even there – I was a passenger and had nowhere to go”.

Da Costa was annoyed, although he made a salient point: “It’s going to cost him a lot more – he’s the one fighting for a championship.” ❄

Vergne led the pursuit of polesitter Buemi from the off, and was primed to attack...



Buemi now has a 43-point lead in the championship

RESULTS ROUND 6/9, PARIS (F), MAY 20 (49 LAPS – 58.459 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault.e.dams · Renault Z.E.16	59m41.125s
2	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	DS Virgin Racing · Virgin DSV02	+0.707s
3	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra · Mahindra M3ELECTRO	+2.043s
4	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra · Mahindra M3ELECTRO	+2.621s
5	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault.e.dams · Renault Z.E.16	+3.521s
6	Robin Frijns (NL)	Andretti · Andretti ATEC02	+7.999s
7	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	NextEV · NextEV TCR002	+32.420s
8	Tom Dillmann (F)	Venturi · Venturi VM200FE02	+32.929s
9	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar Racing · Jaguar I-type 1	+33.369s
10	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	Venturi · Venturi VM200FE02	+34.051s
11	Esteban Gutierrez (MEX)	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.16	+36.197s
12	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NextEV · NextEV TCR002	+40.082s
13	Daniel Abt (D)	Abt Audi Sport · Abt Schaeffler FE02	48 laps-battery
14	Mike Conway (GB)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing · Penske 701EV	-1 lap
15	Adam Carroll (GB)	Jaguar Racing · Jaguar I-type 1	-1 lap
16	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing · Virgin DSV02	-2 laps
R	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Abt Audi Sport · Abt Schaeffler FE02	38 laps-accident
R	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Faraday Future Dragon Racing · Penske 701EV	35 laps-withdrawn
R	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah · Renault Z.E.16	33 laps-accident
R	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti · Andretti ATEC02	18 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 58.766mph. **Fastest lap** Bird 1m02.422s, 68.804mph.

SUPERPOLE

1 Buemi 1m02.319s; 2 Vergne 1m02.325s; 3 Lopez 1m02.640s; 4 Gutierrez 1m13.287s; 14 Turvey 1m02.910s*.

QUALIFYING

Buemi 1m02.171s; Vergne 1m02.274s; Turvey 1m02.384s; Lopez 1m02.459s; Gutierrez 1m02.597s; 5 Heidfeld 1m02.611s; 6 Rosenqvist 1m02.617s; 7 Frijns 1m02.654s; 8 Evans 1m02.687s; 9 Prost 1m02.746s; 10 Conway 1m02.808s; 11 Piquet 1m02.810s; 12 d'Ambrosio 1m02.814s; 13 di Grassi 1m02.840s; 15 Dillmann 1m03.024s; 16 Abt 1m03.071s; 17 da Costa 1m03.268s; 18 Bird 1m03.573s; 19 Carroll 1m03.771s; 20 Sarrazin 1m06.121s. *10-place grid penalty for electric-motor change.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Buemi 132; 2 di Grassi 89; 3 Prost 58; 4 Heidfeld 47; 5 Vergne 40; 6 Rosenqvist 40; 7 Bird 35; 8 Piquet 33; 9 Lopez 28; 10 Abt 26.

Gunther's triumph as Norris shunts

Suspension failure caused heartbreak for the Brit, and joy for Mercedes' young protege

By Marcus Simmons, Deputy Editor

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Motor racing can be cruel, and nowhere is this better illustrated in the

Formula 3 European Championship than at Pau. The sinuous street circuit in the shadow of the Pyrenees last weekend served up crashes while leading for Brits Callum Iloft and Lando Norris, and a shunt for Joel Eriksson that briefly cost the Swede his points advantage.

Norris's accident, like Eriksson's caused by suspension failure, cost the 17-year-old McLaren-Honda protege the prestigious Pau Grand Prix, which as usual was awarded to the winner of the third and final race of the weekend. He was nine and a half laps away from being feted by the 36,000-strong Basco-Bearnais audience when the left-front suspension snapped as he apexed the left-handed element of the daunting Foch chicane, and his Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen got

launched into the wall on the outside of the right-handed follow-up.

That handed victory to Maximilian Gunther, who was rarely the fastest driver of the weekend but has had an affinity with Pau since he scored an eye-opening maiden F3 podium here in his rookie season of 2015. But crucially, Gunther was always fast enough to be in contention, and scored a massive haul of points by winning both races on Sunday and taking a podium finish in Saturday's encounter. This has lifted him right into the championship hunt, just two points behind the tied Eriksson and Norris.

The Saturday race had been won by Eriksson, who lacked frontrunning pace last weekend. The Motopark man admitted to struggling through the daunting, blind, narrow and ultra-fast Parc Beaumont right-hander in qualifying, and this left him a distant second behind the Prema Powerteam car of Iloft in his group – with the field split into two here.

In the other group, Norris had pipped Gunther and Jake Dennis – all three were comfortably slower than the stunning, sideways and ever-flamboyant Iloft, but



Gunther leads Norris at the Gare corner in race two, then (below) celebrates third-race Pau GP victory

quicker than Eriksson. But with the grid formed by taking alternate positions from the two groups, fifth-fastest Eriksson was promoted to third.

When Norris made his trademark not-very-good getaway – “It’s the best one I’ve done!” he quipped – Eriksson was able to round him at the opening Gare corner and claim the inside line up the hill to Pont Oscar, moving into second place. A few corners further on, Iloft crashed out of the lead at Foch. “I saw Callum was pushing a lot and for me the grip was not there to push like he did,” said Eriksson. For his part, Iloft was mystified: “It felt like I had the grip. I didn’t even take much of the second kerb [apex] – I just bounced and went into the wall.”

Norris spent the race chasing Eriksson: “I tried to pressure Joel as much as possible, but he didn’t seem to make any mistakes.” Meanwhile, Gunther picked his way through the debris of a double Joey Mawson/Dennis crash at Parc Beaumont, which included a complete 360-degree spin for the Bavarian at Foch, to take third.

This all preceded qualifying for the historic Pau GP and the weekend’s second race, both grids for which would be decided in one session on Saturday afternoon. And this is where Norris



provided the weekend's most extraordinary display of driving.

This was his first visit to Pau, and his build-up wasn't helped when rain disrupted much of the 80 minutes of free practice. As a result of this loss of track time, Norris felt that he wasn't quite yet in the groove in Friday afternoon's qualifying session, and that he was losing time through the crucial Parc Beaumont/Foch section – this was illustrated in the corresponding sector-two times, where Prema pair Iloft and Gunther looked supreme, visually and on the timesheets.

But the pursuit of Eriksson in race one had helped him find his groove, and the following qualifying performance was superb. With overtaking so difficult in Pau, Carlin elected to send two of its cars in the first qualifying group – Norris and Jehan Daruvala – out right from the beginning of the session on four new tyres, and then pit after a few laps for two new Hankooks on the left side. It would leave just two more new tyres from the weekend allocation of three sets per car for Sunday's races, but that price was thought worth paying to move up the grid.

The usual F3 strategy is to wait a few minutes at the start of the session and then send the driver out for one run.

This Prema did with Iloft, and he was left well and truly trailing by Norris.

Iloft had done a 1m09.514s in first qualifying and was rightly proud to set what was, at the time, the quickest F3 lap ever recorded around Pau. But 24 hours later this would be decimated by Norris. After his stop, he banged in a couple of 1m09.3s – while Iloft was hammering round in the 1m09.7/8s, and looking unlikely to erode the gap to Norris bearing in mind his only set of tyres was fading.

Then came Norris's tour de force. Due to his unfamiliarity with the track, he'd been reluctant to lay everything on the line in the high-speed stuff. But as the session drew to a close he carried unbelievable speed through Parc Beaumont, then hammered the kerb at Foch – even mowing the grass beyond – and launched himself round to a 1m09.085s. Although Iloft managed to rag a 1m09.609s out of his car, it was a distant defeat. Iloft felt his car wasn't quite as good as it had, and that even on the same tyre strategy as Norris the maximum he could have wrung out of it would have been a 1m09.2s.

Norris had ironically not even improved his sector-two time – incorporating Parc Beaumont and >>



Dennis (21) battles Mawson. Both crashed out

DENNIS WOE; NEWY UP

JAKE DENNIS WAS SUPERB AT PAU ON HIS previous visit in 2015, winning the first two races and only losing the GP due to late-race suspension problems. But his return to the circuit last weekend summed up his F3 cameo with Carlin this season.

In first qualifying, he was on to leapfrog Lando Norris and Maximilian Gunther to get on the front row: "I was two tenths up on my best lap entering the little chicane [at the end of the lap] when there was a red flag." (It was a similar story for Gunther, who was on a Norris-beating lap, although Norris felt more was in the bag).

Then, in race one, a shower of rain caught out top-six runners Dennis, Joey Mawson and Jake Hughes, with Dennis and Mawson crashing simultaneously at Parc Beaumont.

In second qualifying, Dennis was cracking on and looking good to challenge at the front, but a freak problem struck, causing him severe cockpit discomfort and leaving him stranded in midfield, from which there's no escape in Pau.

While Dennis laboured, Harrison Newey (below) provided a tonic for himself and the Van Amersfoort Racing team by taking fourth place in Sunday's two races – therefore taking a Grand Prix result very similar to the ones the F1 cars designed by his dad usually achieve. It was the most impressive day of his F3 career to date, although it nearly went wrong before race two, when Newey's grid girl fainted – clearly overwhelmed by his gentlemanly English charm – and landed awkwardly on his front wing.

Dennis got a couple of points finishes on Sunday, although he was unaware at the time that a further drama would unfold. He'd left his car keys in his hotel room, and after landing at Gatwick he had to stay there overnight and wait for some of the later-travelling Carlin contingent to return them to him!





Eriksson beats Norris to win the weekend's first race on Saturday

Foch – on that final mega-lap. “Obviously we got to look at the data from yesterday and I knew the places I had to improve,” he explained. “A lot of that was places I didn’t have the confidence to know how to push. After the first race I was a lot more confident and natural with being able to push here and there. As I went into the long right [Parc Beaumont] I thought, ‘This is my last lap: I just committed to risk a bit more at Foch and touch the kerbs on the left and the right.’”

“The team had a great strategy, and because it’s so hard to overtake here, having a one-tenth disadvantage in the race on the tyres is no problem at all. That was a very smart move. Everything we did played a part.”

The second group of qualifiers had become smart to this tactic, but Gunther and Eriksson took it a step further. They went for four new tyres at their mid-session stop, meaning they used two complete sets and had no fresh rubber in the bag for Sunday’s races. The fact that Gunther recorded a 1m09.435s to top the group – impressive in itself – reflects even better on Norris’s achievement.

Eriksson, crucially for his title hopes, improved by two tenths on the very last

lap to leap from fifth-row starts to positions on the second rank. His session was almost scuppered when he was called to the weighbridge during his pitstop, and he also needed set-up changes because “the car was really bad as well”. His tyre temperature was only just coming up at the end of the session, but did so in the nick of time.

Norris was again jumped at the start of Sunday morning’s race: “Maxi got a very good start – mine wasn’t bad but it wasn’t ideal.” Norris put incredible pressure on Gunther, whose tyres took some time to get up to temperature, over the opening couple of laps. This included bids to pass at Pont Oscar and the Lycee hairpin, and a thrilling side-by-side run into Parc Beaumont. But once Gunther got into the rhythm he pulled away.

The chasing Ilott, who finished third, said: “I was quite enjoying these two battling. I saw a bit of tyre smoke, a bit of rubbing. It was good racing.” He shook off an early challenge from Eriksson, who later in the race had his suspension fail at Parc, sending him into the barriers at Foch. The yellow flags while Eriksson’s car was craned away caused Gunther to lose more than a second to Norris, “but after that I could breathe a bit,” said the 2016

runner-up after his first win of ’17. “I’m extremely happy to be back in business.”

Finally, Norris banished his starting demons in the finale: the Pau GP. “A good start!” he exclaimed. With his two fresh tyres, Norris scorched away from Gunther and Ilott, building up a 4s lead in eight laps before the safety car emerged. The restart was good too, and again Gunther (on his old rubber) and Ilott (two new tyres) had no answer. Then... disaster.

“The left-front suspension broke basically,” said Norris. “Up until then my car was perfect; it didn’t handle any differently in any corner. Just as I landed [off the Foch chicane kerb] and turned into the right, my left-front wheel went to the left so I couldn’t turn right.”

Gunther, knowing he lacked the pace to challenge, hadn’t been pushing too hard. “I decided not to take too many risks over the kerbs because I’d seen some cars crashing,” he said. “I actually saw my chance at the start because it’s more easy to warm up scrubbed tyres. But unfortunately my revs dropped, and I had to push the clutch again. An exciting moment but I still had P2.”

And that became ‘P1’, Gunther the first German Mercedes-contracted driver to win the Pau GP since Hermann Lang in 1939. Ilott shadowed him, and in turn he was pursued by Ralf Aron, a great drive from the Hitech GP man. “Our aim was a podium,” said the Estonian, “so when Lando crashed and I realised I was P3 and we had a podium... I still wanted to get Callum! But I made a mistake and clipped a kerb and it scared me. I had a vibration and didn’t want to take any more risks.”

Fifth place behind Harrison Newey gave Eriksson back a joint share of the points lead, on wins countback over Norris. He may not have won a race, but there was no doubting the star of the Pau weekend. But this place is so cruel... ❄️



Ilott heads into Parc Beaumont. He claimed a pole but no race wins

RESULTS ROUND 3/10, PAU (F), MAY 20-21 RACE 1 (23 LAPS – 39.445 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Joel Eriksson (S)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	34m59.570s
2	Lando Norris (GB)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F317	+0.243s
3	Maximilian Gunther (D)	Prema Powerteam · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+2.636s
4	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+3.560s
5	Ralf Aron (EST)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+3.970s
6	Harrison Newey (GB)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+4.564s
7	Pedro Piquet (BR)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F316	+5.383s
8	Ferdinand Habsburg (A)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+6.637s
9	Mick Schumacher (D)	Prema Powerteam · Dallara-Mercedes F317	+5.825s*
10	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+7.201s
11	David Beckmann (D)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F317	+8.229s
12	Keyvan Andres Soori (D)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+9.071s
13	Tadasuke Makino (J)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F317	+9.616s
14	Marino Sato (J)	Motopark · Dallara-Volkswagen F314	+10.537s
R	Joey Mawson (AUS)	Van Amersfoort Racing · Dallara-Mercedes F316	17 laps-accident
R	Jake Dennis (GB)	Carlin · Dallara-Volkswagen F316	17 laps-accident
R	Jake Hughes (GB)	Hitech GP · Dallara-Mercedes F315	16 laps-accident
R	Guan Yu Zhou (PRC)	Prema Powerteam · Dallara-Mercedes F315	4 laps-accident
R	Callum Iloft (GB)	Prema Powerteam · Dallara-Mercedes F317	1 lap-accident damage

Winner's average speed 67.633mph. **Fastest lap** Norris 1m10.394s, 87.705mph.

QUALIFYING 1

Group A 1 Iloft 1m09.514s; 2 Eriksson 1m09.882s; 3 Mawson 1m09.907s; 4 Zhou 1m09.942s; 5 Mazepin 1m10.146s; 6 Aron 1m10.258s; 7 Schumacher 1m10.271s; 8 Daruvala 1m10.350s; 9 Soori 1m10.854s; 10 Sato 1m11.819s.
Group B 1 Norris 1m09.724s; 2 Gunther 1m09.753s; 3 Dennis 1m09.856s; 4 Hughes 1m09.959s; 5 Piquet 1m10.439s; 6 Newey 1m10.498s; 7 Habsburg 1m10.634s; 8 Beckmann 1m10.673s; 9 Makino 1m10.981s.

RACE 2 (29 LAPS – 49.735 MILES)

1 Gunther 34m14.016s; 2 Norris +1.953s; 3 Iloft +5.287s; 4 Newey +11.883s; 5 Aron +12.596s; 6 Hughes +13.411s; 7 Mazepin +15.873s; 8 Habsburg +17.371s; 9 Daruvala +18.009s; 10 Dennis +20.084s; 11 Schumacher +24.765s; 12 Makino +26.788s; 13 Piquet +27.824s; 14 Beckmann +28.920s; 15 Soori +1m06.150s; 16 Mawson 26 laps-suspension; R Eriksson 23 laps-suspension/accident; R Zhou 19 laps-steering rack; R Sato 16 laps-suspension.
Winner's average speed 87.167mph.
Fastest lap Gunther 1m09.788s, 88.467mph.



Aron scored a welcome podium for Hitech

QUALIFYING 2

Group A 1 Norris 1m09.085s; 2 Iloft 1m09.609s; 3 Aron 1m09.693s; 4 Newey 1m09.752s; 5 Habsburg 1m09.801s; 6 Daruvala 1m09.828s; 7 Makino 1m09.894s; 8 Piquet 1m09.910s; 9 Beckmann 1m10.055s.
Group B 1 Gunther 1m09.435s; 2 Eriksson 1m09.550s; 3 Mazepin 1m09.610s; 4 Hughes 1m09.689s; 5 Dennis 1m09.703s; 6 Mawson 1m09.746s; 7 Schumacher 1m09.930s; 8 Zhou 1m09.935s; 9 Soori 1m10.444s; 10 Sato 1m10.456s.

RACE 3 (28 LAPS – 48.020 MILES)

1 Gunther 34m23.254s; 2 Iloft +1.952s; 3 Aron +3.237s; 4 Newey +6.786s; 5 Eriksson +8.386s; 6 Habsburg +9.395s; 7 Makino +11.453s; 8 Piquet +11.979s; 9 Dennis +12.272s; 10 Zhou +17.826s; 11 Daruvala +20.756s; 12 Schumacher +21.234s; 13 Sato +27.884s; R Norris 18 laps-suspension/accident; R Mazepin 18 laps-puncture; R Soori 14 laps-accident; R Mawson 11 laps-suspension; R Hughes 10 laps-accident damage; R Beckmann 7 laps-accident.
Winner's average speed 83.785mph.
Fastest lap Norris 1m10.124s, 88.043mph.

GRID FOR RACE 3

1 Norris; 2 Gunther; 3 Iloft; 4 Eriksson; 5 Newey; 6 Mawson; 7 Aron; 8 Mazepin; 9 Habsburg; 10 Hughes; 11 Makino; 12 Dennis; 13 Piquet; 14 Zhou; 15 Beckmann; 16 Schumacher; 17 Daruvala; 18 Soori; 19 Sato.**
 * one-position penalty. ** grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Eriksson 139; 2 Norris 139; 3 Gunther 137; 4 Iloft 109; 5 Habsburg 51; 6 Aron 46; 7 Schumacher 45; 8 Newey 43; 9 Dennis 41; 10 Daruvala 40.

IN THE HEADLINES**VERSTAPPEN VISITS OLD FRIENDS**

Dutch F1 heroes Jos Verstappen (above) and Huub Rothengatter spent much of the Pau weekend with Van Amersfoort Racing, the team with which both started their careers. Team boss Frits van Amersfoort described Verstappen's presence as "confidence-boosting for the team", and both Joey Mawson and Harrison Newey took big steps forward in competitiveness.

F3 SAFETY IMPROVEMENT

A modified rear jacking point was supplied by Dallara to all F3 competitors for Pau as a safety measure. The stewards' bulletin read: "Following several front-to-rear incidents over the past months in various single-seater categories, it should be ensured that rear jacking points cannot act aggressively during such an incident." This comes in the wake of Billy Monger's recent Formula 4 injuries.

PREMA'S MAXI TAXI FARE

Prema Powerteam was fined €2500, with €2000 suspended until the end of the season, for not providing 30 days' notice to the FIA about Pau Grand Prix winner Maximilian Gunther driving the Mercedes 'taxi' at the recent Hockenheim DTM round. New rules preclude drivers from any track time on upcoming F3 circuits unless they are given approval.

MAWSON COPS GRID PENALTY

Joey Mawson qualified on the third row for the Pau GP but ended the race in the pits – and with a three-place grid penalty for the Hungaroring round. The Australian collided with Joel Eriksson at the very end of the safety car period, and the chain reaction also caused race-ending damage for Nikita Mazepin and Jake Hughes. The stewards decreed that Mawson "did not leave a sufficient gap to the car in front and was unable to react quickly enough when speeds changed".

ZHOU INJURES HIS HAND

Ferrari junior Guan Yu Zhou had to race with a swollen hand on Sunday after his first-race safety-car-causing shunt. The Chinese Prema driver scored a point for 10th in the Pau GP.



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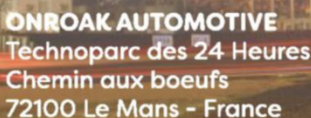
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The position is based in Bicester (UK).

Race Team Garage Technician - ref. "17 - 17"

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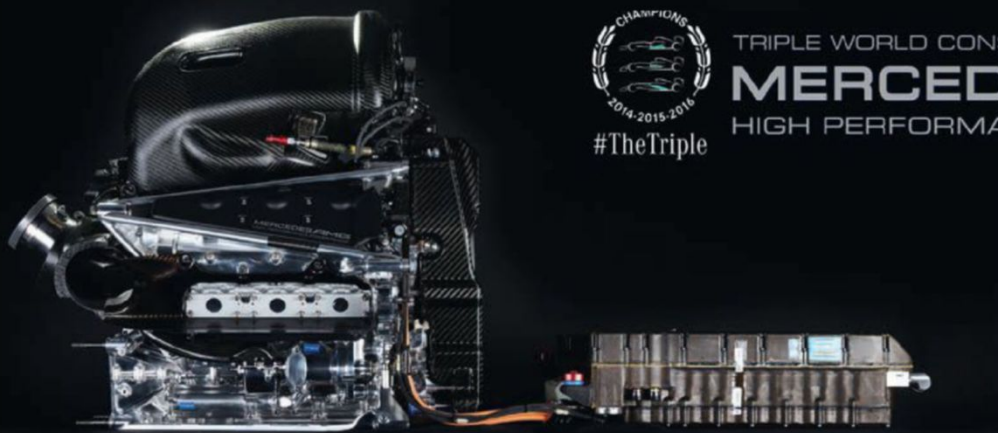
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RENAULT UK CLIO CUP JUNIOR

Clio Cup Junior will launch in 2017 with four rounds

JUST WEEKS AFTER BEING POSTPONED, THE new Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series is back on and will be launched this year, with organisers planning a four-event season starting in September.

Autosport reported (May 11) that the series had been postponed from its original start date of June 3-4 after concerns that the category wasn't ready to begin at that point. Those organisational issues have now been resolved and a shortened season will now begin on September 9-10 at Snetterton.

The series features the same car used in the main BTCC-supporting Renault UK Clio Cup but with modifications to the ECU to restrict its speed. It is open to 14 to 17-year-olds.

A new prize package has been announced, with the champion receiving a free registration to the main series, worth around £18,000, and £2000 and £1000 prizes for the second and third-placed drivers.

Championship manager Will Fewkes said: "Circumstances have changed on an organisational level

and therefore we opted to relaunch the championship for four rounds in 2017. I'm delighted to be able to do that and offer track time for the drivers and teams that have invested in the series.

"It's an acceptable compromise as we only had six rounds originally. Now we've got an even bigger prize package and are offering all the race winners a set of tyres for either the Junior or senior series [for 2018], and it's a real draw for potential customers."

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the category, Fewkes was confident at Oulton Park last weekend that a good number of the 12 drivers who had been set to compete in the original season will still race.

"A few of the drivers have opted to come out in the main series later in the year but we've still got quite a few drivers that had invested already," said Fewkes. "The number of enquiries we have had this weekend has been very positive. It's looking like the concept will take off and, as we created the idea in the first place, we would like to lead the way."

REVISED CALENDAR 2017 RENAULT UK CLIO CUP JUNIOR

DATE	CIRCUIT
September 9-10	Snetterton
September 23-24	Brands Hatch
October 14-15	Pembrey
November 18-19	Brands Hatch

IN BRIEF

GINETTA SCHOLARSHIP

Entries have opened for the Ginetta Junior Scholarship shootout, which takes place from October 23-25. The scholarship is open to young drivers who will vie for the prize of a fully-funded season in the category for 2018, and will take place at the Ginetta-owned Blyton Park Circuit.

DUD CANDLER 1946-2017

Autosport is sad to report the recent death of long-standing national racing contributor Dud Candler at his West Sussex home. Candler reported on many events over the south of England since joining the roster of contributors for both Autosport and Motorsport News in the mid-1970s.

DE SADELEER WINS IN RADICAL

Jerome de Sadeleer, brother of LMP2 racer Hugo, won with 360 Racing on his Radical SR1 Cup debut last weekend at Brands Hatch, and claimed both pole positions. The Swiss' only car-racing experience was a stint in the opening round of the Fun Cup at Silverstone.

ZAMPARELLI ANGRY AT PENALTY

Dino Zamparelli (below) has branded his two-point penalty at Oulton Park as "farcical" after stewards considered him at fault for a clash with Charlie Eastwood in the first Porsche Carrera Cup GB race. On the rolling restart the rear of Zamparelli's car made contact with Eastwood at Old Hall. "We have got a penalty - two points in the championship for my right-rear being hit, which is farcical," he said.



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Priaulx (r) won at Oulton but lost Thruxton wins



GINETTA JUNIOR

Priaulx loses Thruxton victories

GINETTA JUNIOR TITLE CONTENDER SEB Priaulx has been excluded from the Thruxton meeting and docked points equivalent to two race wins after an engine infringement was found on his JHR Developments car following the Hampshire weekend.

Technical infringements were found on the cars of JHR trio Priaulx, Harry Dyson and Matt Luff, but the team is appealing the exclusions and points deductions applied to each driver. The matter will now go to the MSA National Court.

Despite winning both races at Oulton Park last weekend, the 126-point hit means Priaulx is now eighth in the standings and 130 points off leader, and fellow JHR driver, Tom Gamble.

In a statement Priaulx, the son of three-time World Touring Car champion Andy, said: "I personally have no bearing on the preparation of the car, and this technical issue is solely a matter between my team, JHR Developments, Ginetta and the governing body, the Motor Sports Association. The team will be appealing the decision.

"Following the post-race scrutineering at Thruxton, I was handed a new engine by Ginetta to use for this weekend at Oulton Park and we were fastest in free practice and qualifying yesterday, which I feel shows the true pace we have this season.

"While the appeal is being resolved, I believe the championship battle remains wide open and

I will continue to try my hardest to secure the best results possible for my sponsors and supporters."

JHR team boss Steve Hunter was baffled by the decision, considering it only affects three of the six cars his team runs.

"All I know is we've got a technical infringement, we're appealing it and will go from there," he said. "We've done everything they've asked us to and had five cars in the top eight in qualifying this weekend."

Hunter also praised Priaulx's ability to put the off-track issues to one side and win both races.

"With all this kicking off, Seb has gone out there and won comfortably and been quickest all weekend, which is a credit to him," he added.

BRDC F3

Cane switches to Douglas for British F3

JORDAN CANE WILL MAKE his BRDC British Formula 3 Championship debut with Douglas Motorsport this weekend after parting company with Hillspeed With Cliff Dempsey Racing.

Cane, who turned 16 on Tuesday, was too young to compete in the first two rounds but had tested extensively with the team.

"You don't leave a team before you've done a race with them unless you've got very valid reasons," said Cane. "However, I'm not going into it publicly."

Hillspeed team

principal Richard Ollerenshaw said: "We were disappointed to part company with Jordan but things weren't working out as envisaged."

Cane will drive Douglas's second car this weekend in place of Petru Florescu, who has a pre-existing clash. It is not clear if the Romanian will return to the squad later this year, despite having previously agreed to contest the five rounds that did not clash with his commitments in Euroformula Open.



LMP3 CUP

Baseball star fails to find first base

FORMER MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYER CJ Wilson had a tough baptism to his first weekend in the LMP3 Cup at Brands Hatch, as a practice crash forced him to miss race one.

Wilson sustained damage to the right-rear corner with a spin at Druids that ruled him and Andrew Evans out of the race.

Wilson qualified seventh for race two and enjoyed an early scrap with Mike Newbould's Douglas Motorsport car, but lost four laps with a spin and was last of the classified finishers.

- More than 100 drivers have applied for a fully-funded prize drive in a third United Autosports Ligier JSP3 at the Donington Park LMP3 Cup season finale. The successful applicant will be chosen by a public vote.

BRITISH F4

Caroline in huge Formula 4 shunt

BRITISH FORMULA 4 CHAMPIONSHIP points leader Jamie Caroline emerged unscathed from a hefty crash at Oulton Park last weekend.

The 18-year-old crashed on lap eight of the second race of the weekend after clipping the rear of Carlin team-mate Patrik Pasma when attempting to pass him on the approach to Old Hall. That sent Caroline over the top of Pasma's car and he ended upside down in the tyre wall.

Caroline was taken to the medical centre but was uninjured, suffering soreness.

"He [Pasma] just braked early and there was nothing I could do – I had just gone into sixth gear," said Caroline. "That was the first time I've ever rolled one of these and it was horrible being upside down. I just want to get back out now and will try to do the Croft test this week."



Caroline ended up upside down in the Oulton barriers



HAWKINS

BRITISH GT

Eastwood targets British GT return

GARY EASTWOOD COULD MAKE A British GT comeback in 2018 after making a racing return in the GT Cup last weekend.

Eastwood was a British GT race winner in '14, but stepped away from motorsport after a difficult run of results in '15. He had not competed for 18 months before his outing in the GT Cup with the same

Ferrari 458 GT3, run by G-Cat Racing.

"Coming back to motorsport is lovely, but I don't come to races just to make up numbers, I come to win," he said. "I'll probably look at doing British GT again."

Eastwood finished ninth in race one, and added a podium in race two before taking fourth in the pitstop race with Andy Schulz.

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Oliphant calls for Oulton start change

TOM OLIPHANT HAS CALLED for a review of rolling starts in the Oulton Park round of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB, after he was initially excluded for a first-lap clash that forced nine cars out of race one.

Oliphant was originally deemed responsible for the incident into Old Hall after he caught the rear of Tio Ellinas,

sending him into a spin.

Several drivers behind collected the stranded Ellinas or suffered damage trying to avoid him, causing nine to retire and a lengthy red flag.

"There's a big bump in the middle of the turn and a rolling start adds about 50mph to the first corner," Oliphant explained. "It needs

to be looked at as to whether or not rolling starts work for this race. At other tracks it is fine, and it does help protect the clutches, but it's much narrower here."

Double winner Dan Cammish added: "It's unfortunate what happened, that wasn't great. I've seen it so many times here."



Ellinas's car was in bad shape after race-one shunt

EBREY/LAT

LMP3 CUP

Silver-Silver LMP3 pairs considered

THE LMP3 CUP COULD INTRODUCE A NEW CLASS for Silver driver pairings following an eight-car entry for the second round at Brands Hatch.

The sporting regulations for the ACO-approved championship require all teams to field at least one Bronze-graded driver in each car. But some teams have struggled to find funded Bronzes, with both T-Sport and 360 Racing absent after appearing at the first round at Donington Park last month.

Several paddock figures have welcomed the opportunity for greater flexibility.

"Finding a Bronze driver for every car is a challenge," said Nielsen Racing chief engineer Gavin Wills. "If they can find a way to keep it fair and give the Pro-Am racers the opportunity to compete evenly, then it's got to be a good thing."

A statement from series organiser Bute Motorsport said: "In order to change the regulations part-way through the season, we would need unanimous approval from all the competitors, therefore if Silver-Silver is a way to enhance the championship and has this support then we will clearly consider it for the future."

MSA

Insurance threat review delayed

A REVIEW INTO VNUK, A EUROPEAN Court judgement that would require all motorsport vehicles to have compulsory third-party motor insurance, has been delayed.

The Motor Sports Association has submitted its response to a review launched by the UK government in December 2016, considering changes to the Road Traffic Act.

An excerpt from the MSA newsletter

read: "The MSA has now entered its response as the four-wheel governing body.

"The MSA's preferred solution is for motorsport to be excluded from the EU's motor insurance directive. This is also the UK government's preferred option.

"Unfortunately the EU has further delays to its review, and so the government may be forced to bring in the insurance requirements, with devastating effect on motorsport."



Flewitt debuted McLaren M4A, seen here in Bruce McLaren's hands at Crystal Palace

HSCC

McLaren M4A back in action

A McLAREN M4A/2, THE SECOND OF 27 BUILT TO Robin Herd's design and the marque's first single-seater to win a major international race, returned to the circuits at Silverstone last weekend in the hands of owner Mike Flewitt, CEO of McLaren Automotive.

Flewitt elected not to race the car, despite qualifying it, due to the poor weather conditions at the Silverstone circuit and his relative inexperience in the car. But he still plans to race the car this season.

"The plan is that I'll do a couple of races and Michael [O'Brien, SpeedSport] a couple – starting at Cadwell Park – then I'll put it in the Boulevard at McLaren [factory] over the winter," explained Flewitt. "Silverstone was my first HSCC event. I liked the people and loved the cars. I'm looking forward to doing more."

Flewitt is a keen Lotus Elan and Elite racer, but decided last year to step up to a fully-fledged single-seater.

"My passion is historic cars, completely different to what I do in my day job," added Flewitt. "I fancied

a single-seater and my thoughts were towards a Lotus 22 [Formula Junior]. When, by chance through Mike [O'Brien], the McLaren came up I jumped at the opportunity. It's a real honour to own such a significant piece of company history.

"My first drive was on the Stowe Circuit last year, and since then Mike's team has rebuilt it. It's much quicker than I am. With a powerful engine [240bhp] in a light [435kg] car it can bite. Three or four laps in the wet on the Historic GP circuit last Friday and two in qualifying were not sufficient experience to go into a wet race."

The car won the torrential 1967-68 Tasman series finale at Longford, Tasmania, in the hands of the late Piers Courage. Longford's South Pacific Trophy race was on a road course featuring a viaduct and a bridge.

Courage and the 1600cc Cosworth FVA-engined F2 McLaren were too fleet for 'Tasman Formula' rivals. Pedro Rodriguez (BRM P261) and Frank Gardner (Brabham-Alfa Romeo BT23D) placed second and third, Jim Clark fifth in a 2.5-litre Cosworth 'DFW'-powered Lotus 49.

HSCC

FLUX'S 750TH RACE DELAYED BY CAR GLITCH

EVERGREEN NATIONAL racer Ian Flux has vowed to contest his 750th career race at Brands Hatch in early July in a Formula 3 March, after the car's blown head gasket in qualifying at Silverstone prevented him hitting the landmark last weekend.

Flux was due to race the March 783, owned by his old friend Sean Walker, but was sidelined during Saturday's qualifying session.

"This is my 44th consecutive season of racing," said Flux, who celebrated his 61st birthday this month. "I had just turned 17 when I started racing in Formula Vee in 1974. Last year I only did four races but in the good old days I did 40 races a year.

"I've raced in just about everything and I've tested and raced over 600 different race cars. I still love it and I still do a lot of one-to-one coaching at Silverstone."

- Austrian Andreas Floth towed his Sports 2000 Lola T492 the 1300 miles from Vienna to Silverstone, taking two days to do it, in order to race in the Pre '80 Endurance race on Sunday. He finished fourth in class.

FIA MASTERS HISTORIC F1

De Tomaso set for Brands appearance in FIA Historic Masters

THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE A Formula 1 De Tomaso 308/505 racing at Brands Hatch – a sight enthusiasts were denied by the tragic death of Piers Courage in a sister car entered by Frank Williams at Zandvoort two races before the 1970 British Grand Prix – promises to be one of the highlights of this weekend's Masters Historic Festival at Brands.

Veteran Belgian racer/dealer Paul Grant, principal of Brussels-based Automobiles Vanderveken, has been invited to run the Cosworth DFV-powered car, designed by Italian-domiciled Argentinian Alejandro de Tomaso, in round two of the FIA Masters Historic F1 Championship, which opened at Barcelona last month.

The race is also due to mark Australian F2 and FJunior racer Martin Bullock's Historic F1 debut in a Williams FW06, which he shook down recently. Former Team Lotus F1 star Martin Donnelly is guest co-driver, meanwhile, in American Rick Carlino's Snetterton Speedshop-run Lotus Elan in the Gentlemen Drivers GT enduro.





Wet but wonderful Trophy weekend

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

[@autosport](#)

GREAT CARS, SHARED INTEREST, CAMARADERIE AND mutual respect are as much hallmarks of the Historic Sports Car Club as fierce competition on track.

For 10 years now the organisation's International Trophy homage – which the home of British motor racing now brands the Silverstone Historic Festival I noticed – has been run with this ethos at its core. Against the rise of bigger global events it is becoming more popular for its family friendly atmosphere and accessibility. If getting up close to the diverse machinery of yore, from obscure to mighty Formula 1 and F5000 sluggers, is what you crave its open paddock welcome is unbeatable.

As ever, there was no shortage of superb driving across the spectrum of classes. Interestingly, if perhaps unsurprisingly, the Historic GP circuit – with its 'modern iteration' stop-go at Vale/Club replaced by a deceptive sweeper that completely alters the dynamic of Club corner, one of the real balls-out challenges of the 'traditional' GP layout that survived into the late 1980s – is much preferred by drivers also engaged in British Touring Car or British GT championship work.

Among many stellar performances, for me one of the most eye-catching was that of Scottish dad and lad Robert and Dan Bremner, who shared their self-prepared AC Cobra in the GT & Sports Car Cup race with Anthony Reid, a Silverstone regular since his Formula Ford days of the late 1970s.

That Bremner Sr, who has been racing for five years in the Cobra (I recall his baptism of fire) coolly passed British GT points leader Phil Keen – in John Clark's Jaguar E-type – must go down as a red letter day for him.

Son Dan was no less impressive in only his second race!

Having been terrified at Donington where "it was like trying to hang on to a bull", he was far from overawed in close proximity to Simon Hadfield (in Leo Voyazides' Cobra), indeed hung on for a lap or two and doubtless learned a lot.

There was not a lot left in the tyre and brake departments, and the Ford V8 engine's ignition was retarding when Reid leapt aboard, but to discover that Voyazides/Hadfield had been penalised because Hadfield's pit crew called him in a lap over the time limit, thus be accorded victory, brought amazement and joy in equal measure.

Historic Formula Ford goes from strength to strength in its 50th anniversary season, 61 entries being a record for an HSCC (Pre-'72) championship round. It was such a pity that a storm torpedoed the race, but for those with pro pit crews – including eventual winner Richard Tarling, whose guys changed brake balance, anti-roll bar and damper settings on the grid, which was awash – the delay advantaged them. The 1999 Formula Palmer Audi champion and Michael O'Brien, who led most of the way, went well clear.

That 47 of the 54 starters (some of the reserves got a run by joining the CRC field) finished in treacherous conditions spoke volumes for the HFF committee's efforts to police driving standards. That a second race wasn't available was a travesty.

• News of my old colleague Dud Candler's untimely passing has shocked me. With his lumbering gait, trademark cardigan and wire wool hair, the former mechanic was part of the south's club racing fraternity and missed little over decades writing for the weeklies. RIP Dud. 🍷



BOSSON DEBUTS GUNNARSSON BT28

With his ex-Ulf Svensson 1000cc Historic F3 Brabham awaiting repair, Swede Leif Bosson debuted his second BT28 – Sten Gunnarsson's Gullringshus AB car, fifth at Cadwell Park when Svensson won in 1970 – at Silverstone last weekend. "It's been on the project list for five years," said the former HSCC champion.



LAMPLOUGH'S LOLA Mk1 FLYER

The second production Lola-Climax Mk1 raced for the first time in decades at Silverstone last Sunday. Originally US importer Allan Ross' car, 1216cc BY-2 showed excellent speed in the GT&SCC enduro with owner Robs Lamplough, his car manager James Lovett and restoration team boss Neil Fowler up.



CAINE ON POLE IN TVR 3000M

Former British GT champion Michael Caine's HSCC 70s Road Sports debut in pal Jason Brooks' TVR 3000M lasted less than a lap in the wet at Silverstone last Saturday. Despite the car "falling over itself in the corners" in qualifying, Caine demonstrated its dry weather potential by qualifying on pole by almost 2.8 seconds.

ALL PICS: WALKER

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP MAY 20-21

Joy for Hibbert after eventful GT4 weekend

ON THE SURFACE IT SEEMED LIKE Tom Hibbert was unstoppable at Oulton Park with a double win. But in reality it was a lot more complicated than that as the privateer driver endured a rollercoaster of emotions during the weekend.

It all began in qualifying when Hibbert managed to set the second-fastest time in atrocious weather. But on the very next lap he crashed at Old Hall, meaning his Ginetta G55 needed a repair before the first race.

“There was a lot of standing water,” he explained. “I got a good lap and thought I could be quicker... We had to change the whole front.”

Then at the start of the first race Hibbert shot into the lead after poleman Jack Mitchell made a sluggish getaway on the now-dry track. He continued to lead until a safety car caused by both Charlie Ladell and Declan Jones hitting the tyre stack and then barriers at Knickerbrook.

Hibbert continued to lead until lap 12 of 15 when he suddenly slowed into Hislops with a driveshaft problem, his hopes of taking a first win of the year seemingly in tatters. But incredibly a red flag had been shown moments before as Ben Green was stranded at Druids.

Therefore, after an incredible turnaround in fortunes, Hibbert was declared the winner from Mitchell and points leader Callum Pointon.

“I got a really good start but the



differential bolts went on the second lap – I could hear it on the downshift,” said Hibbert. “I managed to nurse it through the safety-car period but then with two laps to go the CV joint broke. I stopped seven seconds after the red flag – I was unlucky the car broke but lucky to win! I’ve been doing a lot of endurance racing [with a Ginetta in the GT4 European Series] and that has really helped me with my driving.”

His second race was much more straightforward as Hibbert was able to lead throughout to claim his second win of the weekend.

Behind, Laser Tools Racing’s Mitchell again lost out at the start – this time to HHC driver Pointon. Pointon latched onto Hibbert’s tail after a safety car but was unable to make a move, and in the end he had to fend off the ever-present Mitchell.

Red flag in the opener ensured victory for Hibbert and he doubled up in race two

The results mean Pointon has extended his advantage at the top to 49, but it’s now Hibbert who is chasing him after George Gamble endured a frustrating weekend following a difficult qualifying.

With those two wins now under his belt, Hibbert has firmly established himself as a serious contender as the season approaches mid-distance.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

RESULTS

RACE 1 (11 LAPS) 1 Tom Hibbert; 2 Jack Mitchell +1.246s; 3 Callum Pointon; 4 Carl Boardley; 5 George Gamble; 6 Adam Higgins. **Fastest lap** Boardley 1m26.203s (92.96mph). **Pole** Mitchell. **Starters** 20.

RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Hibbert; 2 Pointon +1.481s; 3 Mitchell; 4 Ben Green; 5 Gamble; 6 Reece Somerfield. **FL** Pointon 1m26.737s (92.39mph). **P** Hibbert. **S** 20.

POINTS 1 Pointon 215; 2 Hibbert 166; 3 Gamble 150; 4 Mitchell 132; 5 Green 131; 6 Declan Jones 126.

GINETTA JUNIOR MAY 20-21

Priaulx wins after penalty woe

IN A WEEKEND BOOKENDED BY fraught GCSE exams, Seb Priaulx emerged as the A-grade pupil of the Ginetta Junior round at Oulton Park, scoring two wins from two.

But the weekend began with the type of adversity that has begun to plague the Winter Series champion’s season, after it emerged he had been excluded from the Thruxton results last time out alongside rookie Harry Dyson for a technical infringement.

Having plummeted to 17th in the championship standings, the JHR driver had something to prove.

Priaulx made a decent start from pole while chaos ensued around him.

Front-row starter Daniel Harper bogged down and was squeezed by Adam Smalley and Dyson, propelling the front of his car off the ground and spearing Smalley into the tyres at Old Hall. That allowed the fast-starting Kiern Jewiss and Tom Wood into second and third, with Wood being hounded by rookie Jewiss while Priaulx stormed to victory by 4.5s.

Racing with everything to prove, one victory wasn’t enough for Priaulx, who went on to win again in a similarly dominant fashion in race two.

“I am over the moon – it feels even better after what’s happened this weekend,” he said.

JASON NOBLE



Priaulx leads Jewiss on his way to double win

RESULTS

RACE 1 (8 LAPS) 1 Seb Priaulx; 2 Tom Wood +4.455s; 3 Kiern Jewiss; 4 Connor Grady; 5 Tom Gamble; 6 Jordan Collard. **FL** Wood 1m44.106s (76.97mph). **P** Priaulx. **S** 19. **RACE 2 (8 LAPS)**

1 Priaulx; 2 Wood +5.347s; 3 Jewiss; 4 Harry Dyson; 5 Daniel Harper; 6 Adam Smalley. **FL** Priaulx 1m44.458s (76.72mph). **P** Harper. **S** 19. **POINTS 1 Gamble 226;** 2 Harper 204; 3 Wood 197; 4 Harry King 165; 5 Jewiss 161; 6 Grady 122.

Bushell prevented from double

THERE ARE SOME COMMON THEMES developing in this year's Clio Cup. One is 2014 champion Mike Bushell leading the way and the other is the shocking number of red flags, with another two at Oulton.

Bushell was unstoppable in the opener, resisting the pressure from Pyro team-mate Nathan Harrison and DRM driver Daniel Rowbottom, both claiming their maiden podiums in the process.

But after the tame first race, the second only lasted two laps. At the first attempt, Harrison and Thruxton star James Dorlin collided out of Old Hall and did extensive damage to the tyre wall, requiring a red flag.

When the race actually got under way James Colburn made a move on Bushell at Cascades on lap two to take the lead. The Pyro driver then retaliated at Island, forcing Colburn out of the way. But just when we were set for a great scrap between the two, there was a huge shunt for Jack McCarthy at Druids as he clipped the slowing car of Jade

Edwards and rolled into the barriers.

"Jade had a steering problem and there was nothing I could do to avoid her," said the uninjured McCarthy. "It's such a fast corner and it all happened so quickly."

Once again, the on-the-road winner wasn't the eventual victor as Bushell was penalised for his Island move and was relegated to second.

"That might teach me to be a little bit less firm!" Bushell said. "I've still got a huge lead and no one's gained on me."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

RESULTS

RACE 1 (12 LAPS) 1 Mike Bushell; 2 Nathan Harrison +0.699s; 3 Daniel Rowbottom; 4 Paul Rivett; 5 Jack McCarthy; 6 Max Coates. **FL** Bushell 1m34.188s (85.08mph). **P** Bushell. **S** 19. **RACE 2 (2 LAPS) 1 James Colburn;** 2 Bushell +0.032s; 3 Rowbottom; 4 Dan Zelos; 5 Coates; 6 Lee Pattison. **FL** Sam Osborne 1m35.146s (84.22mph). **P** Bushell. **S** 19. **POINTS 1 Bushell 234;** 2 Rivett 173; 3 Pattison 162; 4 Coates 148; 5 Rowbottom 139; 6 Colburn 134.



Bushell resisted pressure in race one to win

Victory and a crash for Caroline

JAMIE CAROLINE MADE THE British Formula 4 headlines for a slightly different reason at Oulton Park. After his history-making treble at Thruxton, Caroline ended his Cheshire weekend upside down in the barriers at Old Hall after a scary crash.

Race two had already been a struggle for Caroline after tangling with Alex Quinn and Linus Lundqvist. He was then running in fourth when he rolled after hitting team-mate Patrik Pasma.

Thankfully he emerged uninjured and his points lead remains at 90.5.

With the red flags out, it was Arden's Oscar Piastri who claimed his maiden win in the series after holding off Carlin driver Logan Sargeant in the early stages.

The first race featured no such drama

for Caroline as he picked up another lights-to-flag victory, proving unbeatable in drying conditions.

The third race had to be canned after lengthy delays following a Porsche Carrera Cup GB pile-up and is now due to take place at Knockhill in August.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

RESULTS

RACE 1 (13 LAPS) 1 Jamie Caroline; 2 Alex Quinn +3.833s; 3 Linus Lundqvist; 4 Patrik Pasma; 5 Logan Sargeant; 6 Oscar Piastri. **FL** Lundqvist 1m33.561s (85.65mph). **P** Caroline. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Piastri;** 2 Sargeant +0.308s; 3 Pasma; 4 Harry Webb; 5 Lundqvist; 6 Ayrton Simmons. **FL** Quinn 1m23.329s (96.17mph). **P** Piastri. **S** 14. **POINTS 1 Caroline 210;** 2 Piastri 119.5; 3 Sargeant 96; 4 Pasma 94.5; 5 Lundqvist 90.5; 6 Quinn 86.

Back to normal for winner Cammish

DAN CAMMISH MARCHED BACK INTO the lead of the Carrera Cup GB standings at Oulton Park, easing to two comfortable wins while his rivals struck problems.

The first encounter was marred by a collision at Old Hall on the rolling start, when Tio Ellinas and Tom Oliphant came together. Ellinas spun, and that resulted in nearly half of the field being collected.

Nine retirements and a red flag finished the afternoon for much of the field, but on the restart Cammish led away Dino Zamparelli.

While the restart was better, a touch involving Zamparelli and Charlie Eastwood in second and third, again at Old Hall, plummeted Eastwood down the order and left Zamparelli nursing rear damage and a car imbalance.

That allowed Cammish to open up a comfortable lead to cross the line 3.2 seconds ahead of Zamparelli, with Lewis Plato third. Eastwood recovered to seventh.

The standing start for race two meant it was a much cleaner affair on the Sunday, minus a handful of cars that couldn't be repaired in time – including Ellinas.

Cammish sped off into the distance once again, leaving Zamparelli to perform a masterclass in defending from the chasing Eastwood. Zamparelli was hounded throughout by the Irish Redline Racing driver, and even a wide moment at Knickerbook on lap 12 didn't allow Eastwood past.

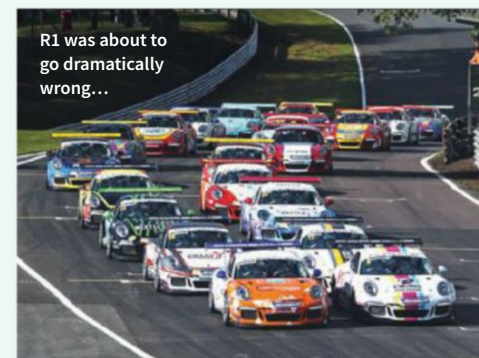
A clumsy clash on the Hilltop straight for David Fairbrother and Iain Dockerill caused a red-flag finish to the afternoon.

"We have had two wins, two tests topped and I'm back in the lead of the championship," said Cammish. "We've been the fastest car here and did a good job throughout."

JASON NOBLE

RESULTS

RACE 1 (16 LAPS) 1 Dan Cammish; 2 Dino Zamparelli +3.249s; 3 Lewis Plato; 4 Tom Oliphant; 5 Daniel McKay; 6 Ross Wylie. **FL** Cammish 1m23.040s (96.50mph). **P** Cammish. **S** 21. **RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Cammish;** 2 Zamparelli +3.400s; 3 Charlie Eastwood; 4 Plato; 5 Oliphant; 6 Euan McKay. **FL** Cammish 1m22.878s (96.69mph). **P** Cammish. **S** 18. **POINTS 1 Cammish 112;** 2 Eastwood 101; 3 Zamparelli 80; 4 Oliphant 73; 5 Plato 64; 6 E McKay 61.



R1 was about to go dramatically wrong...

ALL PICS: EBREVILAT

SILVERSTONE
HSCC MAY 20-21

Barter wins as Attwood shines in Road Sports

SPECTACULAR OR SUBLIME, CLASS is unmistakable; last weekend's HSCC International Trophy event illustrated that.

Richard Evans's "flat-out all the way" panache in his giant-killing Formula 2 March, and past masters Richard Trott, Andrew Kirkaldy, Jon Milicevic and Sam Wilson, wowed onlookers.

But those who braved Saturday's monsoon will contend that 1970 Le Mans victor Richard Attwood trumped them, floating a barely-ried Porsche 928 from ninth to third behind 70s Road Sports champions Julian and Charles Barter in five magnificent laps of the Historic GP circuit.

Julian (Lotus Elan) and Charles (Datsun 240Z) made the running after runaway poleman Michael Caine (debuting Jason Brooks's immaculately-rebuilt TVR 3000M) hit first-lap problems – fulfilling 3000M convert Barter Jr's prophecy – and John Williams (911) had a moment at Club. All eyes, though, were on 77-year-old Attwood, who tore up the lap charts, harassed by Williams. "Father and Richard were coming up fast, so I was getting a bit nervous," admitted Julian.

John Davison's Elan broke having eked a tenuous HRS advantage over Will Plant (Morgan +8), who repeated his Donington Historic Road Sports victory, this time over Kevin Kivlochan's Moggie. Peter Shaw (Elan) thwarted a Malvern marque monopoly, with Robin Pearce breathing down his neck.

The predicted storm arrived early, lashing winds and horizontal rain delaying a capacity grid of 54 (from 61 qualifiers!) Historic Formula Fordsters until it abated. While it defused the anticipated contest – particularly for Donington winner Callum Grant, unable to soften his Merlyn's suspension before the off – Michael O'Brien, Richard Tarling, Benn Simms, Sam Mitchell, Grant and Benn Tilley detached themselves from the peloton as sunshine returned. Tarling struck for Jamun, passing O'Brien before Stowe on the final lap. O'Brien takes the points lead to Cadwell Park as Grant finished fourth behind Simms. Mitchell and Tilley, in his first full wet race, traded places in their wake. Amazingly, 47 competitors finished.

Wet and dry, Richard Evans trounced Derek Bell Trophy opposition. Martyn Donn climbed to second on Saturday, squeezing his unique FAtlantic Lola T760 past Jamie Brashaw's F5000 March. Despite his F2 March 752 having hit the



Wing pitwall, triggering red flags, Phil Hall kept fourth. Evans let rip on Sunday, averaging 110.1mph in outrunning Brashaw and Max Smith-Hilliard's F1 Fittipaldi F5A, in which Emmo finished second to 1978 International Trophy winner Keke Rosberg's Theodore. Max repassed Mark Dwyer (F5000 Lola T332), who started ballistically from the back and beat Hall. James Hadfield (FA Modus) dived past series champion Donn before Simon Taylor's wide F5000 Chevron blunted his momentum.

Classic Racing Cars joined Historic F3 for Saturday's foreshortened finale, in which Jon Milicevic and Andrew Hibberd screamed their 1000cc Brabhams past poleman Nick Pancisi (March 712) at the lights. As former hillclimber Mark Goodyear (ex-Craig Hill Lotus 59) and Robs Lamplough (Winkelman) muscled to the front, Julian Stokes (Tecno-BDA) hurtled from the back to sixth. Goodyear was elated with his first win over veteran Lamplough as Pancisi split the MAE aces.

Milicevic won Sunday's F3 race, but Hibberd shot back to chase him having slid wildly at Brooklands on lap one. Peter Thompson completed a Brabham clean sweep ahead of James Claridge (Tecno) and Francois Derossi (Chevron).

New Avon tyres helped period F3 racer Richard Trott annex two-litre Classic F3 pole, but champion Simon Jackson in a sister Chevron B43 and David Shaw (ex-Nelson Piquet Ralt RT1) were within 0.508 seconds. Saturday's race was rescheduled for Sunday facilitating single-day groups to race, but a warm and dry day was worth the wait. Trott escaped from the Jackson/Shaw duel to spray the morning bubbly as Simon rued letting David through on the last lap.

Shaw pushed Trott relentlessly in the sequel before spinning at Brooklands, promoting Jackson. Angry with himself, Shaw cut a phenomenal 2m08.973s final lap – 1.6s quicker than anybody else – to finish in Jackson's slipstream. Behind Keith White (RT1), Paul Smith emerged best of the RT3s again. Mark Mercer and Adrian Langridge secured ballsy URS FF2000 and 1600cc CF3 doubles.

Leo Voyazides (AC Cobra) comfortably took Sunday's GT & Sports Car Cup enduro chequer, but co-driver Simon Hadfield was signalled in a lap too late, which attracted a 90s penalty. Scottish dad and lad Robert and Dan Bremner, with compatriot Anthony Reid, were overjoyed to be declared victors having driven their Cobra superbly. Early leader Phil Keen, soloing in John Clark's Jaguar E-type, was third when its throttle linkage broke a lap from home, benefiting Fred Wakeman/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Lister Coupe).

In Sandy Watson's 1600cc Cosworth FVA-engined Chevron B8 for the first time, Andrew Kirkaldy dropped the Guards Trophy pack, handing 'Le Patron' a lead the impressive Steve Boulton Brooks/Rob Beebee could not erase

Evans mastered wet and dry conditions to win both DBT races





Barter ended up winner in 70s Road Sports classic

in their BMW-powered version. The GT fight was frenetic; Mike Whitaker (TVR Griffith) almost caught James Schryver (B8) for third, a calling card on the Shelby Daytona Cobra of Hadfield matching one from Mike Gardner's Griffith at the start. John Davison pipped Paul Tooms in a great Elan scrap.

Kirkaldy also claimed Pre-80 Endurance gold in Watson's Chevron-FVC B19, after John Burton's B26-BDG ("engine stopped") and the Voyazides/Hadfield Lola-DFV T282 (oil pump) expired. Almost half the field fell, including the Smith-Hilliard/Nick Padmore B19, but Phil Hall (Lola T212) earned second despite a drivethrough for a short stop. After Robert Parker in the surviving Osella-BMW and Sports 2000 leader Jonathan Loader (Tiga SC80) touched at Becketts on the final lap, Andrew Schryver (B26) demoted a hobbled Parker from third a corner from home.

Ahead of Mark Pangborn, who salvaged seventh after a poor first lap, Saturday's fragmented Formula Junior opener's order was atypically static. Poleman Sam Wilson outran Mark Woodhouse, Richard Smeeton downed Andrew Garside and Michael Hibberd repelled Simon Diffey. Sunday's leg followed a similar pattern until Woodhouse's fuel pump died, promoting Hibberd to second. Saturday's front-engined victor Justin Fleming's Lola Mk2 shed a wheel at Becketts on the opening lap.

Polesitter Jack Drury fishtailed his Ford Falcon past Rob Fenn's Mustang to win the thin Touring Car curtain-closer. After Ben Winrow pitted his misfiring Lotus Cortina, Julian Thomas (Falcon) fended off Pete Hallford (Mustang) for third.

MARCUS PYE

RESULTS

70s ROAD SPORTS (5 LAPS)

1 Julian Barter (Lotus Elan); 2 Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z) +9.359s; 3 Richard Attwood (Porsche 928); 4 John Williams (Porsche 911SC); 5 Charlie Ugo (Ferrari 308GTB); 6 Howard Payne (Lotus Europa). **Class winners** C Barter; Attwood; Brian Jarvis (Porsche 924); David Tomkinson (Triumph Spitfire); Lawrence Alexander (Alfa Romeo GTV).

Fastest lap Williams 3m03.900s (71.24mph). **Pole** Michael Caine (TVR 3000M). **Starters** 35.

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

(8 LAPS) 1 William Plant

(Morgan +8); 2 Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8) +8.620s; 3 Peter Shaw (Lotus Elan); 4 Robin Pearce (Morgan +8); 5 Ian Burford (Ginetta G4); 6 Rob Fenn (Ford Mustang).

CW Shaw; Fenn; Johan Denekamp (TVR Tuscan); Dick Coffey (Turner Mk1); Paul Brown (MGB); Richard Owen (Triumph TR2). **FL** John Davison (Lotus Elan) 2m28.697s (88.11mph). **P** Davison. **S** 25.

HISTORIC FF1600 (6 LAPS)

1 Richard Tarling (Jamun T2);

2 Michael O'Brien (Merlyn Mk20) +0.430s; 3 Benn Simms (Jomo JMR7); 4 Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A); 5 Sam Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20); 6 Benn Tilley (Merlyn Mk20). **FL** Tarling 2m47.916s (78.03mph). **P** Grant. **S** 54.

DEREK BELL TROPHY (4 LAPS)

1 Richard Evans (March 742);

2 Martyn Donn (Lola T760) +37.284s; 3 Jamie Brashaw (March 73A); 4 Philip Hall (March 752); 5 Max Smith-Hilliard (Fittipaldi F5A); 6 Neil Glover (Chevron B37).

CW Donn; Brashaw; Smith-Hilliard. **FL** Evans 2m31.747s (86.34mph). **P** Evans. **S** 15.

RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Evans;

2 Brashaw +12.701s; 3 Smith-Hilliard; 4 Mark Dwyer (Lola T332); 5 Hall; 6 Glover. **CW** Donn; Brashaw; Smith-Hilliard. **FL** Evans 1m57.480s (111.52mph). **P** Evans. **S** 14.

HISTORIC F3/CLASSIC RACING

CARS (5 LAPS) 1 Mark Goodyear

(Lotus 59); 2 Robs Lamplough (Winkelmann WDB2) +9.902s; 3 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B); 4 Nick Pancisi (March 712); 5 Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18); 6 Julian Stokes (Tecno).

CW Lamplough; Milicevic; John Murphy (Merlyn Mk20A); Mark Shaw (Brabham BT6); Chris Helliwell (Cooper T75).

FL Stokes 2m50.444s (76.87mph). **P** Milicevic. **S** 31.

HISTORIC F3 (9 LAPS)

1 Milicevic; 2 Hibberd +9.272s; 3 Peter Thompson (Brabham BT21); 4 James Claridge (Tecno);

5 Francois Derossi (Chevron B17); 6 Jim Blockley (Brabham BT21B).

FL Milicevic 2m18.069s (94.89mph). **P** Milicevic. **S** 21.

CLASSIC F3/URS CLASSIC

FF2000 (9 LAPS) 1 Richard Trott

(Chevron B43); 2 David Shaw (Ralt RT1) +4.136s; 3 Simon Jackson (Chevron B43); 4 Keith White (Ralt RT1); 5 Paul Smith (Ralt RT3); 6 Gaius Ghinn (Ralt RT3).

CW Adrian Langridge (Dastle Mk10); Marc Mercer (Van Diemen RF82); Tom Smith (Royale RP27).

FL Shaw 2m10.201s (100.63mph).

P Trott. S 28. RACE 2 (10 LAPS)

1 Trott;

2 Jackson +3.337s; 3 Shaw; 4 White; 5 Smith; 6 Mercer. **CW** Mercer; Paul Tonkin (Brabham BT41); Jeremy Caine (Lola T580). **FL** Shaw 2m08.973s (101.59mph). **P** Trott. **S** 25.

GT AND SPORTS CAR CUP (36

LAPS) 1 Robert Bremner/Daniel

Bremner/Anthony Reid (AC

Cobra); 2 Leo Voyazides/Simon

Hadfield (AC Cobra) +56.971s;

3 Fred Wakeman/Patrick

Blakeney-Edwards (Lister Jaguar

Coupe); 4 Martin Hunt/Andrew

Hall (Jaguar E-type); 5 Read

Gomm/Andrew Keith-Lucas

(Jaguar E-type); 6 Nils Nyblaeus/

Jeremy Welch (Austin-Healey

3000). **CW** Nyblaeus/Welch;

Malcolm Paul/Rick Bourne (TVR

Grantura); Rick Haythornthwaite/

Andrew Keith-Lucas (Lotus 11);

Paul Bason/Ewan Bason (Lotus

Elite). **FL** Hadfield 2m26.092s

(89.68mph). **P** Phil Keen

(Jaguar E-type). **S** 39.

GUARDS TROPHY (17 LAPS)

1 Andrew Kirkaldy/Sandy

Watson (Chevron B8); 2 Steve

Brooks/Robert Beebee (Chevron

B8) +9.903s; 3 James Schryver

(Chevron B8); 4 Mike Whitaker

(TVR Griffith); 5 Simon Hadfield

(Shelby Daytona Cobra); 6 Michael

Schryver/Will Schryver (Chevron

B6). **CW** Whitaker; Michael

Hibberd/Andrew Hibberd (Lotus

23B); Goncalo Gomes/James

Claridge (Lotus 47); John Davison

(Lotus Elan 26R); Andrew Sharp

(Elva Mk7S); Bob Binfield (Jaguar E-type); Grant Gibson/Nicholas Daunt (Lotus 19). **FL** Kirkaldy 2m15.827s (96.46mph).

P Kirkaldy/Watson. **S** 38.

PRE-80 ENDURANCE (28 LAPS)

1 Andrew Kirkaldy (Chevron

B19); 2 Philip Hall (Lola T212)

+1m19.155s; 3 James Schryver/

Andrew Schryver (Chevron B26);

4 Robert Parker (Osella P4S);

5 Kevin Cooke (Royale RP17);

6 Steve Brooks/Robert Beebee

(Chevron B8). **CW** Schryver/

Schryver; Peter Hallford

(Chevrolet Corvette); Jonathan

Loader (Tiga SC80); Anthony

Taylor/Andrew Wareing (McLaren

M6B). **FL** Kirkaldy 2m05.300s

(104.56mph). **P** Leo Voyazides/

Simon Hadfield (Lola T282). **S** 26.

FORMULA JUNIOR (9 LAPS)

1 Sam Wilson (Lotus 20/22);

2 Mark Woodhouse (Lotus 20/22)

+22.118s; 3 Richard Smeeton

(Wainer); 4 Andrew Garside (Lotus

20/22); 5 Michael Hibberd (Lotus

20/22); 6 Simon Diffey (Lotus 20).

CW John Chisholm (Gemini Mk3a);

Crispian Besley (Cooper T56);

Justin Fleming (Lola Mk2); Simon

Durling (Lotus 18); Peter Barclay

(Brabham BT15); Nicholas Daunt

(Taraschi). **FL** Wilson 2m22.740s

(91.79mph). **P** Wilson. **S** 32.

RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Wilson;

2 Hibberd +22.368s; 3 Smeeton;

4 Mark Pangborn (Lotus 20B);

5 Garside; 6 Woodhouse.

CW Chisholm; Besley; Barclay;

William Grimshaw (Moorland

Mk1); Durling; Daunt. **FL** Wilson

2m21.756s (92.42mph).

P Wilson. **S** 32.

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

(8 LAPS) 1 Jack Drury (Ford

Falcon); 2 Rob Fenn (Ford

Mustang) +8.874s; 3 Julian

Thomas (Ford Falcon); 4 Peter

Hallford (Ford Mustang); 5 Richard

Belcher (Ford Lotus Cortina);

6 John Spiers (Ford Lotus Cortina).

CW Belcher; Spiers; Simon Benoy

(Hillman Imp); Bob Bullen (Ford

Anglia). **FL** Drury 2m31.494s

(86.48mph). **P** Drury. **S** 17.



O'Brien leads the massive FF1600 field

ALL PICS: WALKER



BRANDS HATCH
MSVR MAY 20-21

Noble and McCaig reinforce title lead as Spence goes it alone

Noble/McCaig car (leading) benefited from retirement of Spence (chasing)

ECURIE ECOSSE PAIR COLIN NOBLE and Alasdair McCaig extended their LMP3 Cup championship lead with their third win from four starts at Brands Hatch, after Nielsen Racing team-mate Jamie Spence was denied by a puncture in race two.

Driving solo as a family emergency forced co-driver Jason Rishover to skip the race, 1992 British Formula Ford champion Spence dominated the early stages from pole position and was managing a seven-second lead when he made contact with the lapped car of Paul Bailey at Surtees with six minutes to go, eventually leading to his retirement and a red flag as he was beached in the gravel.

Noble and McCaig were the grateful beneficiaries ahead of Tony Wells and Matt Bell, who were left to rue a slightly slower stop that allowed Noble ahead.

The United Autosports pair were comfortable victors in race one after a stunning pole lap from Wells. Neither McCaig nor Noble could mount a firm challenge for the lead. Spence and Rishover completed the podium in third.

Graham Davidson continued his perfect start to the GT Cup season with another hat-trick of wins in his McLaren, overcoming a 45-second success penalty to take victory in the pitstop race. The Scot prevailed in race one after a thrilling battle with Richard Chamberlain's Porsche, then controlled the remaining two from pole when his adversary was forced to withdraw with clutch problems.

James Little took two GTC group wins on his championship debut in an FF Corse Ferrari but was punted out of race three by team-mate Bonamy Grimes, allowing Jake Rattenbury's Lamborghini

to take the honours despite a flat tyre.

Ashley Dibden made it two wins out of three in the Dallara-dominated Mono 2.0-litre classes. Race one featured a terrific duel for the honours after Ben Cater and Dibden had ousted polesitter Chris Davison from the early lead. Dibden got a nose alongside a couple of times, but Cater just held on to win, with Neil Harrison a distant third.

Dibden snatched the lead of the second race at Paddock Hill Bend on the second lap from Simon Tate. Chris Hodgen sealed second and Harrison third again.

Despite having an early lead eradicated by the safety car, Dibden was dominant in race three, with Hodgen and Harrison once again completing podium.

Jeremy Timms won all three smaller Mono races, the first of which was earned when his Dallara ousted Bradley Hobday's Jedi through Stirlings. Richard Gittings's similar Jedi snatched third.

Despite a spin at Druids, Timms retained a massive race-two lead over Gittings, with Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke's Dallara a late third.

The safety car bunched the pack up at the end of race three, but it was still Timms from Gordon-Colebrooke and Gittings at the finish.

Nigel Innes's BMW M3 won the first Racing Saloons race, but engine woes cost him a second success, leaving Stuart Voyce (M3) to take the honours.

Rob Ellice just held off Richard Baxter to win the first Radical SR1 Cup race. After stalling on pole in race one, Jerome de Sadeleer held off Baxter in race two after the two exchanged places through Sheene Curve.

The Production BMW races were split between Will Davison and Matt Swaffer, with each claiming a win and a second.

JAMES NEWBOLD AND PETER SCHERER

RESULTS

LMP3 CUP (41 LAPS) 1 Tony Wells/ Matt Bell (Ligier JSP3); 2 Alasdair McCaig/Colin Noble (Ligier) +5.649s; 3 Jason Rishover/Jamie Spence (Ligier); 4 Mike Newbould/Thomas Randle (Ligier); 5 Andy Schulz/Paul Bailey (Ligier); 6 Dean Gibbs/Jack Butel (Ligier). **Fastest lap** Noble 1m21.997s (106.83mph). **Pole** Wells. **Starters** 7. **RACE 2 (35 LAPS)**

1 McCaig/Noble; 2 Wells/Bell +1.905s; 3 Newbould/Randle; 4 Richard Dean/Sarah Moore (Ligier); 5 Gibbs/Butel; 6 Schulz/Bailey. **FL** Randle 1m22.282s (106.46mph). **P** Spence. **S** 8.

GT CUP (13 LAPS) 1 Graham Davidson (McLaren MP4-12C GT3); 2 Richard Chamberlain (Porsche 935) +3.678s; 3 James Little (Ferrari 458 Challenge); 4 Nigel Hudson (Aston Martin Vantage GT3); 5 Gareth Downing (Lotus Evora GTE); 6 Tom Webb (BMW M3 E46 GTR). **Class winners** Little; Webb; Dominic Paul

(Ginetta G50). **FL** Davidson 1m26.975s (100.71mph). **P** Chamberlain. **S** 26.

RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 Davidson; 2 Hudson +10.702s; 3 Gary Eastwood (Ferrari 458 GT3); 4 Downing; 5 Little; 6 Bonamy Grimes (458 Challenge).

CW Little; Webb; Paul. **FL** Davidson 1m28.413s (99.07mph). **P** Davidson.

S 25. **RACE 3 (31 LAPS) 1 Davidson;** 2 Hudson/Adam Wilcox +27.562s; 3 Downing/Kevin Riley; 4 Eastwood/Andy Schulz; 5 Paul; 6 Jake Rattenbury (Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo). **CW** Paul; Rattenbury; Neil Huggins (Lamborghini Gallardo Super Trofeo LP570-4). **FL** Davidson 1m27.312s (100.32mph). **P** Davidson. **S** 22.

MONO F3/2000/FR2000/CLASSIC 2000 (11 LAPS) 1 Ben Cater (Dallara F301); 2 Ashley Dibden (Dallara F301) +0.237s; 3 Neil Harrison (Dallara F302); 4 Lee Cunningham (Dallara F398); 5 Chris Hodgen (Dallara F304); 6 Chris Davison (Dallara F301). **CW** Bryn Tootell (Van Diemen RF01); James Densley (Tatuus Formula

Renault); Jared Wood (Formula Vauxhall Lotus). **FL** Cater 1m25.499s (102.45mph). **P** Davison. **S** 30. **RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Dibden;** 2 Hodgen +14.058s; 3 Harrison; 4 Cater; 5 Simon Tate (Dallara F302/4); 6 Cunningham.

CW Tootell; Peter Venn (Anson S44); Hayden Edmonds (Formula Renault).

FL Dibden 1m25.162s (102.86mph). **P** Cater. **S** 28. **RACE 3 (9 LAPS)**

1 Dibden; 2 Hodgen +6.944s; 3 Harrison; 4 Cunningham; 5 Tate; 6 Davison. **CW** Tootell; Venn; Edmonds. **FL** Dibden 1m25.171s (102.85mph). **P** Dibden. **S** 28.

MONO 1800/1600/1400/1000 (11 LAPS) 1 Jeremy Timms (Dallara F301); 2 Bradley Hobday (Jedi Mk6) +17.671s; 3 Richard Gittings (Jedi Mk6); 4 Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke (Dallara); 5 Richard Moorcroft (Jedi Mk6); 6 Craig Hurran (Jedi Mk6). **CW** Hobday; Matthew Walters (Mygale); Geoff Fern (Van Diemen RF89). **FL** Timms 1m24.786s (103.31mph). **P** Hobday. **S** 25. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS)**

1 Timms; 2 Gittings +23.547s; 3 Gordon-Colebrooke; 4 Moorcroft; 5 Mick Kinghorn (JKS JR01); 6 Walters. **CW** Gittings; Walters; Fern. **FL** Timms 1m24.526s (103.63mph). **P** Hobday.

S 25. **RACE 3 (8 LAPS) 1 Timms;** 2 Gordon-Colebrooke +2.776s; 3 Gittings; 4 Dan Levy (Jedi Mk6); 5 Moorcroft; 6 Hurran. **CW** Gittings; Walters; Eddie Guest (Lola T640).

FL Timms 1m24.215s (104.01mph). **P** Timms. **S** 24.

RACING SALOONS (12 LAPS) 1 Nigel Innes (BMW E36 M3); 2 Stuart Voyce (BMW E36 M3) +12.003s; 3 Barnaby Davies (Toyota Starlet); 4 Darren Stamp (BMW E36 M3); 5 Don Hughes (Peugeot 306 S16); 6 Robert Sadler (VW Golf Mk5). **CW** Hughes; Andy Baylie (VW Golf GTI); Jason Dzenis (Peugeot 205 GTI); Steve Allen (Honda Civic); Will Davison (BMW 320i). **FL** Innes 1m42.291s (85.63mph). **P** Innes. **S** 36. **RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Voyce;** 2 Stamp +0.886s; 3 Davies; 4 Roger Kneebone (BMW E36 M3); 5 Peter

Osborne (Vauxhall Astra VXR); 6 Cliff Pellin (Ford Fiesta ST150). **CW** Osborne; Pellin; Dzenis; Davison; Allen. **FL** Stamp 1m42.989s (85.05mph). **P** Innes. **S** 35.

RADICAL SR1 CUP (9 LAPS) 1 Rob Ellice; 2 Richard Baxter +0.611s; 3 Andy Chittenden; 4 Rob Courtneidge; 5 James Pinkerton; 6 Jerome de Sadeleer. **FL** de Sadeleer 1m35.867s (91.37mph). **P** de Sadeleer. **S** 11.

RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 de Sadeleer; 2 Baxter +1.048s; 3 Ellice; 4 Pinkerton; 5 Courtneidge; 6 David Tagg.

FL de Sadeleer 1m36.690s (90.59mph). **P** de Sadeleer. **S** 11.

PRODUCTION BMW (11 LAPS)

1 Will Davison; 2 Matt Swaffer +1.540s; 3 Andy Gay; 4 David Graves; 5 Sam Strong; 6 Ross Stoner.

FL Swaffer 1m51.169s (78.79mph). **P** Swaffer. **S** 24. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS)**

1 Swaffer; 2 Davison +0.449s; 3 Graves; 4 Gay; 5 Mark Palmer;

6 Rob Cooper. **FL** Davison 1m50.474s (79.29mph). **P** Swaffer. **S** 21.

GT Lights steal Pembrey show

IRISH CHAMPIONSHIPS VISITED Wales as Pembrey played host to what was billed as the Celtic Festival.

Stealing the show were the Global GT Lights runners, who impressed in the South Wales sunshine with four stunning races, Peter Drennan and Conor Farrell scoring two wins apiece.

The first went the way of Farrell, who narrowly held off a late charge from Michael Conway after early leader Drennan was forced to retire with a blocked fuel filter. Blackrock-based Farrell also went on to take the race-two win ahead of Conway and Drennan.

It wasn't until the third event that a race-long battle between series leaders Drennan and Farrell finally came to fruition. The two were joined by London-based James Thompson and exchanged the top three places at almost every corner. As the race went on, Drennan managed to break away from the chasing duo, securing his first win of the meeting ahead of Thompson, who held off an insistent Farrell. The three drivers continued into race four, completing the podium in the same positions.

Robert Savage was a double victor with his Honda Integra thanks to the misfortunes of others in the Irish Touring Cars. Qualifying had set the scene for a scrap between Shane Rabbitt (Mazda RX7) and Ulick Burke (Integra) in race one, but Burke retired with a burst brake pipe and Rabbitt, who looked to be cruising to his second win of the season, ran out of fuel and trailed home behind Savage. "I'm used to racing at Mondello; consumption is so much higher here," said Rabbitt.

The same problem struck Rabbitt in race two, where he was fourth behind Savage, 2016 champion Jay O'Reilly's

Civic and Gareth Hayden's Integra.

David Parks was a double winner in Formula Sheane after two defensive drives, holding off Kevin Sheane and Brian Hearty respectively. He couldn't make it three from three though. After carving into the lead from the back of the reversed race-three grid, he was forced to retire with a stuck throttle. The on-track winner was Richard Kearney, but a five-second track-limits penalty gave the victory to Niall O'Flynn, his first of the season.

Father-and-son duo Martin and Jason Davies gifted the Welsh Sports & Saloons opening race win to the Mitsubishi of Bradley John after both Sierra Cosworths suffered mechanical issues while duelling at the front.

While Davies Sr couldn't make it to the grid in time for the second race, Jr could, his race-one woes narrowed down to a failed clip that had held up a water pipe. Despite having to start from the back of the grid, Jason managed to navigate his way to first with relative ease, taking his tally to three wins from four.

Mike Evans celebrated a brace of victories ahead of 2016 champion Peter Richings in the Clubmans championship, but a hat-trick eluded him. Failing brakes meant Evans was much slower in race three as he nursed his Mallock Mk27 around the circuit into third behind Richings's Mallock Mk30. The win instead went to 17-year-old James Clarke, who landed his second success of the season in his Mk18 Mallock after a weekend of mixed fortune.

Bernard Foley scored a hat-trick to make it five from five this season in the HRCA field with his MGB GTV8.

DOM D'ANGELILLO



Conor Farrell took a narrow win in race two



Rabbitt took a second and a fourth place

RESULTS

IRISH GLOBAL GT LIGHTS (13 LAPS)

1 Conor Farrell; 2 Michael Conway +0.373s; 3 Richard Finlay; 4 James Thompson; 5 John Conway; 6 Anthony Thompson. **Fastest lap** J Thompson 1m08.781s (77.98mph). **Pole** Farrell.

Starters 11. RACE 2 (9 LAPS)

1 Farrell; 2 Conway +0.531s; 3 Peter Drennan; 4 J Thompson; 5 Finlay; 6 Mark Braden. **FL** J Thompson 1m07.665s (79.27mph). **P** Farrell.

S 11. RACE 3 (14 LAPS) 1 Drennan;

2 J Thompson +2.155s; 3 Farrell; 4 M Conway; 5 Braden; 6 Ivor Miller. **FL** Drennan 1m07.763s (79.15mph).

P Farrell. S 11. RACE 4 (10 LAPS)

1 Drennan; 2 J Thompson +0.346s; 3 Farrell; 4 M Conway; 5 Braden; 6 Miller. **FL** J Thompson 1m08.043s (78.83mph). **P** Drennan. **S 11.**

IRISH TOURING CARS (13 LAPS)

1 Robert Savage (Honda Integra); 2 Shane Rabbitt (Mazda RX7) +15.023s; 3 Gareth Hayden (Honda Integra DCZ); 4 Brian Sexton (Mazda MX6); 5 Pa Hudson (Honda Integra); 6 Gary Miller (Fiat Punto).

Class winner Hudson. **FL** Rabbitt 1m07.901s (78.99mph). **P** Rabbitt.

S 10. RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Savage; 2 Jay O'Reilly (Honda Civic) +10.950s;

3 Hayden; 4 Rabbitt; 5 Sexton; 6 Hudson. **CW** Hudson. **FL** Savage 1m09.537s (77.13mph). **P** Sexton. **S 9.**

FORMULA SHEANE (14 LAPS)

1 David Parks; 2 Kevin Sheane +0.714s; 3 Mark Dunleary; 4 Richard Kearney; 5 Brian Hearty; 6 Chris McCabe. **FL** Parks 1m06.184s (81.04mph). **P** Hearty. **S 12. RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Parks;** 2 Hearty +5.763s; 3 Kearney; 4 Niall O'Flynn; 5 McCabe; 6 Charlie Linnane. **FL** Parks 1m06.334s (80.86mph). **P** Hearty. **S 7.**

RACE 3 (15 LAPS) 1 O'Flynn; 2 Kearney +4.408s; 3 McCabe; 4 Leslie Shaw; 5 Raymond McKenna; no other finishers. **FL** Kearney 1m06.603s (80.53mph). **P** McKenna. **S 9.**

WELSH SPORTS & SALOONS (14 LAPS) 1 Bradley John (Mitsubishi

Lancer); 2 Nick Crompton (Mitsubishi Evo) +7.740s; 3 Fabio Luffarelli (Volkswagen Corrado);

4 Damian Longotano (Westfield SE); 5 Ken James (Loco Hornet); 6 Andy Williams (Ford Sierra Sapphire).

CW F Luffarelli; Adam Jones (Honda Civic); Dave Scaramanga (VW Scirocco); Tyrone Luffarelli (Peugeot 106 GTI); Tony Gallagher (Honda Accord); Richard Francis (Citroen Saxo VTR); Ellis Wiggins (Vauxhall Nova); Alan Smith (Ford KA Sport). **FL** Martin Davies (Ford Sierra Cosworth) 1m08.502s (78.30mph). **P** Jason Davies (Ford Sierra Cosworth). **S 25.**

RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 J Davies; 2 Crompton +12.098s; 3 F Luffarelli; 4 John; 5 James; 6 Longotano.

CW F Luffarelli; Scaramanga; Daryl Radford (Honda Civic); T Luffarelli; Gareth Haycock (VW Golf); Francis; Smith. **FL** J Davies 1m07.146s (79.88mph). **P** John. **S 23.**

CLUBMANS CUP (ALL 15 LAPS)

1 Mike Evans (Mallock Mk27); 2 Peter Richings (Mallock Mk30PR) +2.826s; 3 Rodney Player (Gem Mk2); 4 Barry Webb (Delapena Mallock Mk16BW); 5 Brian Jordan (Mallock Mk27/30SG); 6 David Barnett (Mallock Mk18). **CW** Richings; Webb. **FL** Evans 1m05.427s (81.98mph). **P** Evans. **S 12.**

RACE 2 1 Evans; 2 Richings +1.275s; 3 James Clarke (Mallock Mk18); 4 Webb; 5 Player; 6 Barnett. **CW** Richings; Webb. **FL** Clarke 1m04.996s (82.52mph). **P** Evans. **S 11. RACE 3 1 Clarke;** 2 Richings +6.345s; 3 Evans; 4 Webb; 5 Player; 6 Steve Everson (Mallock Mk20B). **FL** Clarke 1m05.347s (82.08mph). **P** Evans. **S 11.**

IRISH HRCA (13 LAPS) 1 Bernard Foley (MGB GTV8); 2 Val Thompson (TMC Costin) +19.964s; 3 Clive Brandon (Lotus Europa Type 47); 4 Wolfgang Schnitger (MG Midget); 5 Noel Kavanagh (MGB Roadster); no other starters. **FL** Foley 1m13.990s (72.49mph). **P** Foley. **S 5. RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Foley;** 2 Thompson +14.439s; 3 Brandon; 4 Schnitger; 5 Kavanagh; no other starters. **FL** Foley 1m13.337s (73.10mph).

P Foley. **S 5. RACE 3 (12 LAPS) 1 Foley;** 2 Thompson +13.829s; 3 Brandon; 4 Schnitger; 5 Kavanagh; no other starters. **FL** Foley 1m12.178s (74.31mph). **P** Schnitger. **S 5.**

WHAT'S ON

Bruce McLaren The man behind the legend

SOME FORMULA 1 STORIES SEEM so familiar as to need no retelling. The legend of Bruce McLaren is surely one of them: the burning-ambitious Kiwi who became the youngest ever grand prix winner in 1959, at the age of 22, and went on to found a motorsport empire that continues proudly under his name to this day, before his untimely death in a testing accident at Goodwood in 1970.

But all great tales are worthy of a reboot and, in the case of *McLaren*, that equates to the full biopic treatment and a cinema release.

The new documentary film of Bruce's life is due to be screened in the UK from today (Thursday) and any fan with a feel for F1 history, or even just with an interest in an intense, briefly brilliant life is in for a treat.

“Thick slabs of petrolhead satisfaction”

As with *Senna* – a film with which McLaren shares a narrative arc – the possible burdensome knowledge of impending tragedy and the mortality of the protagonist is suspended by the joyful recollections of friends and family of an exceptionally well-loved man.

We meet the late Patty McLaren, Bruce's widow, whose zest and humour radiate from the screen as she recounts early married life and partnering a man whose rise was meteoric and seemingly unstoppable. Patty, one of many interviewed at length for the film, recalls their marriage in Christchurch, relocation to England and the arrival of success – both on and off-track.

Others, including the late Chris Amon, Sir Jackie Stewart, Dan Gurney, Emerson Fittipaldi and Mario Andretti, speak of the respected peer and fierce rival they raced against, building a picture of a man blessed with huge energy and focused intent to succeed. It is here that *McLaren*

truly shines, as it rounds previously incomplete impressions of a great name from the history of motorsport, whose simple humanity has been hidden by subsequent growth of his legend.

Colleagues and friends including Alastair Caldwell and the late Eoin Young leave no doubt that while Bruce was their leader and inspiration, he was above all their mate – a man for whom they would do anything. No matter that the crazy notion of finding a factory in which to build racing cars would find form in a dusty Surrey barn without a concrete floor. That simply gave Bruce the chance to pick up a broom and sweep it clean so that work could begin. Cashflow was initially so strained that the company's early growth was supported almost entirely by prize money from US race wins, but if that's what it took, that's what Bruce and his team of rag-tag loyalists would do.

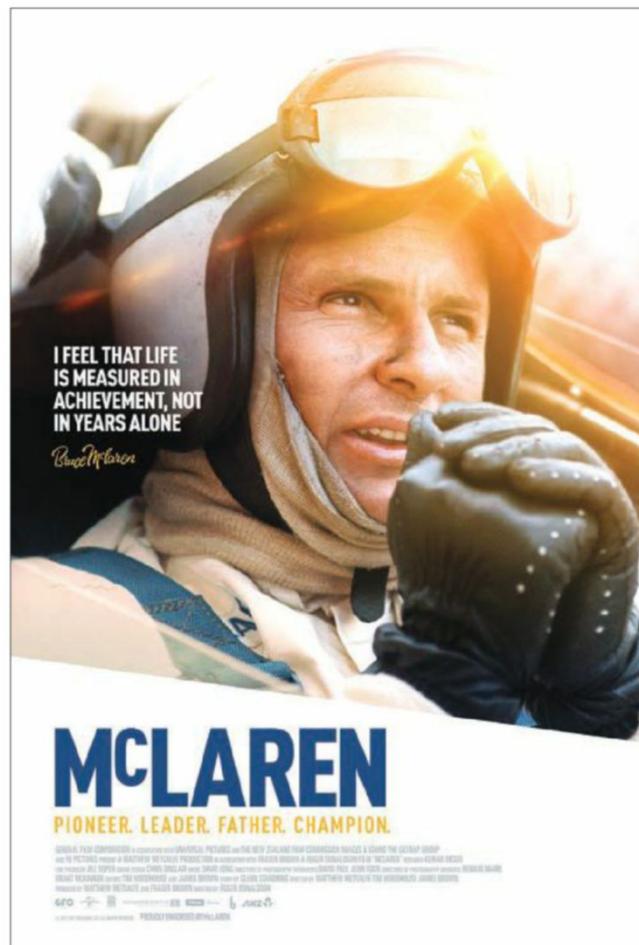
Footage of Bruce and his compatriot Denny Hulme tearing through the Can-Am series in their retina-searing orange M8s are the film's most thrilling sequences and provide thick slabs of petrolhead satisfaction for the corps of hardcore race fans attracted to the movie.

McLaren has no hesitation in viewing Bruce's resolve through the prism of his near-lifelong struggle with Perthes Disease. This degenerative condition damaged his right hip-joint aged nine and left him with one leg shorter than the other. It also condemned him to two years strapped to a medical bed frame in a New Zealand children's hospital. Is it any wonder, we're left to conclude, that a child who already had petrol in his veins, thanks to his father's ownership of a garage, would explode into his early adulthood in a burst of pent-up energy?

That surging ambition carried him to significant success as a driver (four grand prix wins, victories at Le Mans and Sebring, twice Can-Am champion) and even greater heights as a team founder whose empire has grown to a scale even he might not have envisioned.

It propelled him, alas, too fast for his guardian angels.

ANTHONY ROWLINSON



McLaren was third in his last full season of 1969, here taking fourth at the French GP

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HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube **SKODA OVER AND OVER AND OUT**

Search for: WRC 2 – Vodafone Rally de Portugal 2017: CRASH Quentin Gilbert

The Skoda WRC 2 crew of Quentin Gilbert and co-driver Renaud Jamoul escaped unhurt after their Fabia R5 took off from a jump but landed on its nose, flipping over multiple times.

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

MONACO GRAND PRIX FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 6/20

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 28

WATCH ON TV

Live Channel 4, Sunday 1235.

Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1230.

Radio BBC Radio 5 Live, Sunday 1300. **Highlights**

Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1730

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

Rd 2/8

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 28

WATCH ON TV

Live Eurosport 2, Sunday 0830

INDIANAPOLIS 500 INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 6/16

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

May 28

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport ESPN,

Sunday 1600

INDY LIGHTS

Rd 4/10

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

May 26

NURBURGRING 24 HOURS

Nurburgring, Germany

May 27-28

WORLD TOURING CARS

Rd 4/10

Nurburgring, Germany

May 27

WATCH ON TV

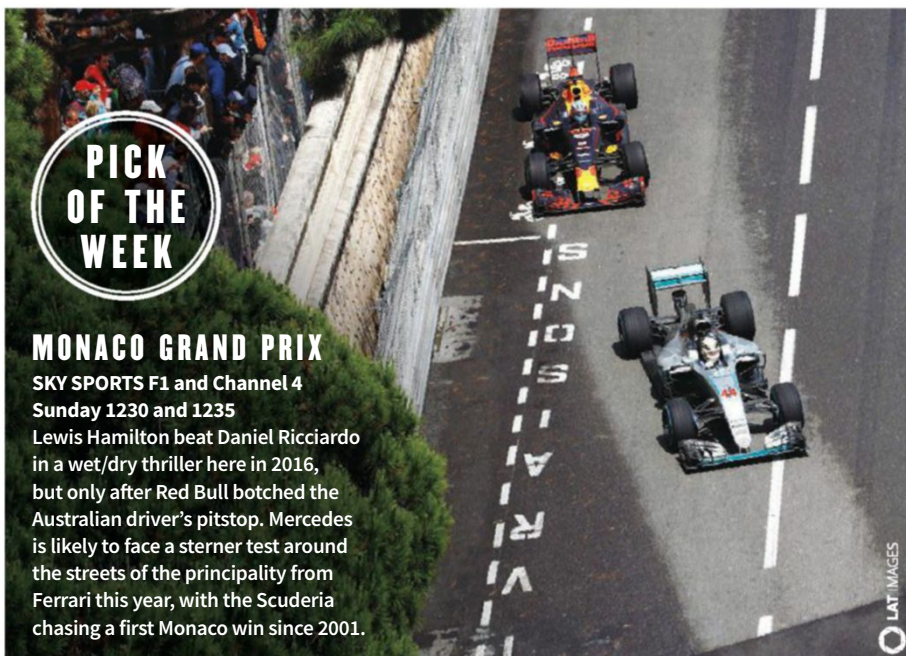
Live Eurosport 1, Saturday 1015

SUPER FORMULA

Rd 2/7

Okayama, Japan

May 28



PICK OF THE WEEK

MONACO GRAND PRIX

SKY SPORTS F1 and Channel 4 Sunday 1230 and 1235

Lewis Hamilton beat Daniel Ricciardo in a wet/dry thriller here in 2016, but only after Red Bull botched the Australian driver's pitstop. Mercedes is likely to face a sterner test around the streets of the principality from Ferrari this year, with the Scuderia chasing a first Monaco win since 2001.

FORMULA 2

Rd 3/11

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 26-27

WATCH ON TV

Live Sky Sports F1, Friday 1000,

Saturday 1500

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

Rd 4/10

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 27-28



INDY 500

WILLIAMS

JAPANESE FORMULA 3

Rd 4/9

Okayama, Japan

May 27-28

NASCAR CUP

Rd 12/36

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

May 28

WATCH ON TV

Live Premier Sports,

Sunday 2230

WORLD SERIES FORMULA V8 3.5

Rd 4/9

Jerez, Spain

May 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport 3, Saturday 1230.

BT Sport 2, Sunday 1200

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Rd 2/8

Spa, Belgium

May 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport 3, Saturday 1345,

Sunday 1200

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

Rd 2/7

Spa, Belgium

May 27-28

WATCH ON TV

Live BT Sport 3, Saturday 1430,

Sunday 1300

UK MOTORSPORT

OULTON PARK MSVR

May 27

Sports 2000, Allcomers,

Toyo Tires 7 Series, Nippon

Challenge/Tricolore Trophy

KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI

May 27

Road Sports, Ford Fiestas,

FF1600, Supercars, Formula Vee

BRANDS HATCH MASTERS FESTIVAL

May 27-28

Historic F1, Masters Sports,

Gentleman Drivers, Pre-'66

Touring Cars, Classic FF1600,

Woodcote Trophy, Stirling

Moss Trophy, Historic

Touring Car Challenge

SNETTERTON BRITISH GT

May 27-28

British F3, VWs, Ginettas, Mini

Challenge, VAG Trophy

SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL CSCC

May 27-28

Jaguar Saloon/GTs, Tin Tops,

Swinging Sixties, Future

Classics, Magnificent 7s,

Modern Classics, Special

Saloon and Modsports,

Classic K, New Millennium,

Open Series

SILVERSTONE NATIONAL BRSCC

May 27-28

Open Sports, Mazda MX5s,

Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors,

Production GTIs, Touring Greats/

TC63 Touring Cars, HRDC Allstars,

HRDC Academy, HRDC A Series

CROFT 750MC

May 27-28

BCV8s, Clio 182s, Formula Vee,

Locost, RGB, 750 Formula,

Civic Cup, Sport Specials,

Classic Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch

CASTLE COMBE CCRC

May 29



BRITISH GT SNETTERTON

EBREY

FF1600, GTs, Saloons, Hot

Hatch, Max5, Toyota MR2s,

Dave Allan Trophy

BRANDS HATCH MSCC

May 29

Morgans, Modified Saloons,

FISCAR

LYDDEN HILL WRX

May 27-28

World Rallycross Championship,

RX2, Classic/Historic Rallycross

WATCH ON TV

Live Motorsport.tv, Sunday 1400

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Bjorn Waldegard doesn't spare the horses on the recce for his first Safari Rally in 1971. Waldegard and co-driver Lars Helmer failed to make the finish after crashing out early in their Porsche 911, but the Swede went on to become a Safari legend, winning the rally four times and twice in its Classic incarnation.

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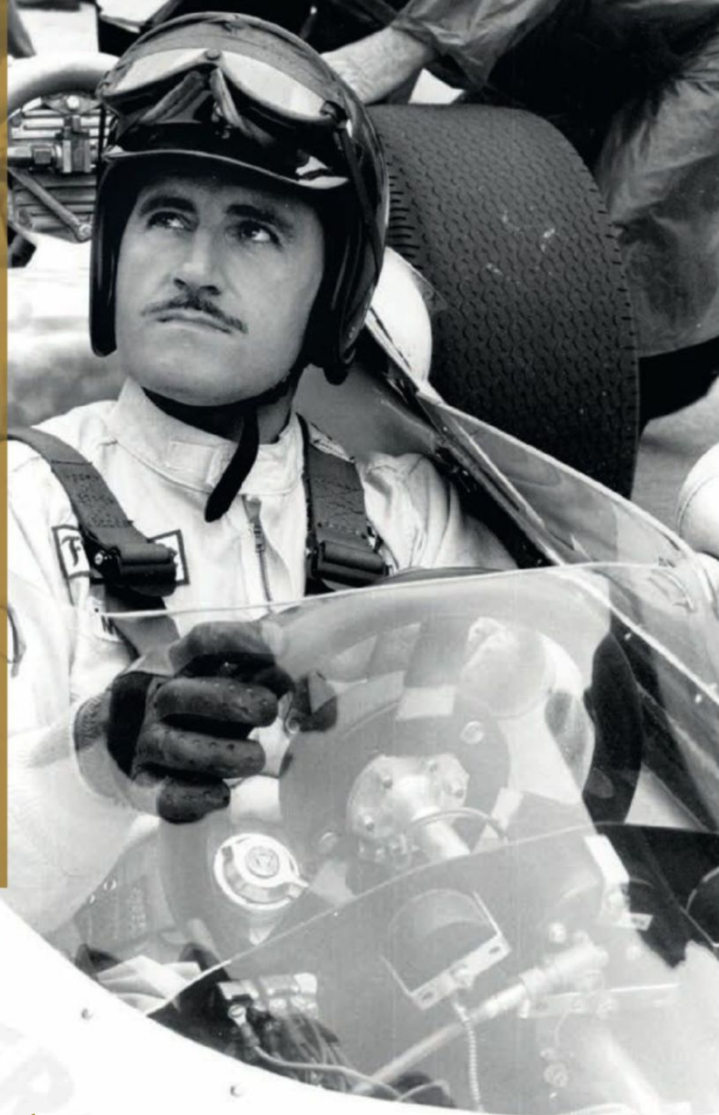




TOP FIVE

INDY 500 ROOKIES

Depending on your precise definition, either nine or 10 drivers have done what Fernando Alonso will attempt to do this weekend and win the Indianapolis 500 as a rookie (Louis Meyer, who was the first to drink the celebratory milk in Victory Lane after winning in 1928, competed as a relief driver the year before). Here's our pick of the top five rookie-victory stories.



1 GRAHAM HILL (1966)

Hill admitted he was fortunate to win driving the George Bignotti-run American Red Ball Special Lola T90 in 1966, with the caveat that he was at a mileage disadvantage having missed the first week of practice. Jim Clark spun twice and finished second – controversially, as there was a suspicion, but no protest from Team Lotus, that he was actually ahead of Hill. Lloyd Ruby and Jackie Stewart also both retired from the lead.



2 JULES GOUX (1913)

Think the first European invasion of Indy was in the 1960s? Well, it actually happened in 1913, with the arrival of Peugeot and Mercedes and a small contingent of European drivers. Goux was one of these and, fuelled by a swig of Champagne at each of his pitstops (sometimes it was only used as mouthwash), he became the first non-American winner of the 'International 500-mile Sweepstakes'.

3 JUAN PABLO MONTOYA (2000)

Chip Ganassi Racing became the first active CART team to 'cross the floor' to the Indy Racing League for a one-off Indy 500 assault. That's what made Montoya's crushing victory – leading 167 laps – so significant, as it was a key first step in the rapprochement between the two sides of the American open-wheel divide. Other than the first 26 laps, when polesitter Greg Ray led, Montoya had the race in his pocket.



4 ALEXANDER ROSSI (2016)

The Indy 500 was only Rossi's sixth IndyCar start after switching from GP2 and five Formula 1 races for Manor. He qualified 11th and ran solidly in that vicinity through much of the race, but after stopping with 36 laps to go he eked out his fuel load to the end. That meant he picked up places as others pitted, crossing the line to take a shock win. As he put it over the radio, "Oh my God!"

5 FRANK LOCKHART (1926)

A 23-year-old at Indy as a relief driver, Lockhart got his chance when Peter Kreis apparently declared, "Put the kid in the car" from hospital after being struck with flu. Lockhart was an established hot-shot and had set a record pace when given a chance in the Miller, and quickly worked his way up to the top five. He was leading comfortably when the race stopped because of rain after 160 laps.



INDY ARCHIVE

INDY ARCHIVE

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CHAMPIONSHIP**

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VSCC FORMULA VINTAGE

20-21 MAY
**SILVERSTONE HISTORIC
FESTIVAL FEATURING THE
INTERNATIONAL TROPHY**

10-11 JUNE
**SILVERSTONE 500
FEATURING SUPERCAR
SUNDAY**

13 JULY
TRAVIS CONCERT

14-16 JULY
**2017 FORMULA ONE
BRITISH GRAND PRIX**

28-30 JULY
SILVERSTONE CLASSIC

25-27 AUGUST
**2017 OCTO BRITISH
GRAND PRIX (MOTOGP™)**

8-10 SEPTEMBER
**MCE INSURANCE
BRITISH SUPERBIKE
CHAMPIONSHIP**

16-17 SEPTEMBER
**DUNLOP MSA
BRITISH TOURING CAR
CHAMPIONSHIP**

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VISIONSPORT AGENCY

GT RACING HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN

associated with drivers who are long past their best, but those perceptions are gradually changing. Sparked by the explosion of manufacturer involvement in GT3, drivers are increasingly recognising GTs as a viable career option, and the manufacturers themselves are starting to acknowledge the increased demand by offering comprehensive driver-development programmes.

McLaren GT has taken this concept further than anybody else. After winning the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup title with its in-house Garage 59 team last year, the reins were passed on to Strakka Racing, which has installed a formalised structure comprising data analysis, fitness and simulation to help young drivers smooth their learning curve.

With the likes of Rob Bell, Alvaro Parente and Strakka veteran Jonny Kane on hand to glean advice from, single-seater converts Ben Barnicoat, Lewis Williamson and Dean Stoneman have found the Academy set-up invaluable to ease their acclimatisation to GTs. Barnicoat's lively performance in an otherwise stale Sprint Cup round at Brands Hatch showed that the approach is already paying dividends.

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The secrets of balance**

Our expert voice explains how understeer and oversteer can be countered to find a balance



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Every driver has a different definition of a balanced car



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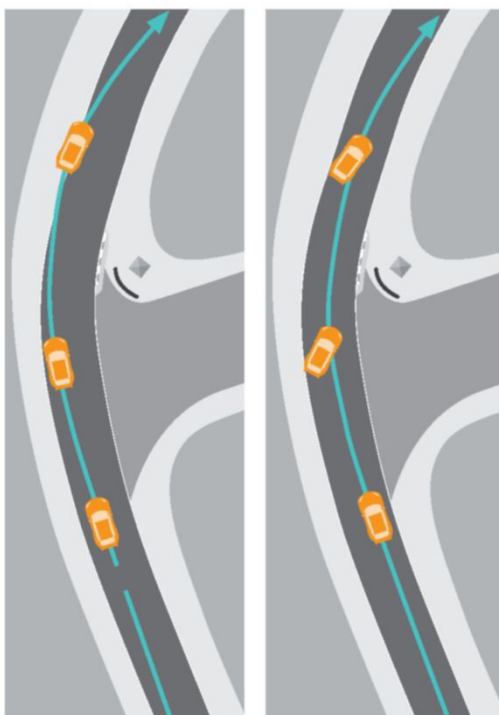
alance is a term you will hear drivers talk about endlessly, they're obsessed with it. They'll complain "we haven't got a balance" and I think that's fair for them to say, in the sense that cars do become unbalanced. Some even start out that way!

But there are many things which constitute balance, and you'll never get a car set-up which is perfect for every corner. If you were racing at Spa for example, you wouldn't set it up purely for La Source hairpin. Another example is Mugello in Italy. You can spend days testing there and not realise you have a traction problem until you arrive at Monaco.

One trick is to nail down a particular corner where you need balance, not just "sector two" or "sector three". Which corner in "sector two"? The 90-degree right-hander or the long, heavy-loaded left-hander that follows it? The process of breaking down race circuits into sectors can, in its digital fashion, often miss things.

You may get two 90-degree right-handers that follow each other but both have a completely different feel to them – there could be a slight camber on one and maybe some bumps on the approach to another. You'll have the car set up for one corner and have understeer midway through the other. If corner one is followed by a short straight and corner two by a long straight, then it is corner two that is probably the most important, as the benefit of a good exit will accrue for a longer period.

What drivers mean when they talk about balance is that



UNDERSTEER

OVERSTEER

they're looking for neutrality. They want to be able to turn toward the apex and have the car follow its nose, with no need for corrections to the steering, brake or throttle (remember, you drive the car as much with your feet as you do with your hands). They'll then want to complete that corner on as much throttle as possible without having to worry about understeer (frontwards into the barrier), oversteer (backwards into the barrier), or wheelspin (backwards down the starting grid).

Some drivers increase brake pressure as they get towards the substance of the corner because things aren't slowing down enough. This often encourages front wheel lock-up and usually results in understeer – not to mention a potentially flat-spotted tyre, making it feel as though you are driving on a 50-pence piece.

You shouldn't be increasing the brake pressure as you get near the end of your braking area. Rather, you should be decreasing it because it's also the point where you are starting to turn the steering wheel. You will always get some under rotation of the wheels if you are braking hard – probably between 3-5% slower than the car.

If you are increasing the brake pressure as you begin to turn the wheel, the 3% under rotation will quickly become 8% and it all turns to smoke.

But let's say we're running a slightly soft rear end to aid traction. This can also contribute to understeer. To decrease it, a very subtle reduction in brake pressure as you apply additional steering into the corner can



Flamboyant Peterson drove around balance issues



F1 returnee Button has a famous disdain for oversteer

“There are many things which constitute balance, and you’ll never get a car set-up which is perfect for every corner”

restrict the front under rotation (lock-up) to under 3%. This gives extra bite to the front end and helps create mid-corner rotation. This driver-manipulated direction change means that the car is pointed better for the following straight, while still benefiting from the extra traction from the softer rear end.

Hence, understeer equals traction as long as the driver completes the aforementioned tasks. And thus, we have a balance, though to another driver who requires a car to follow its nose very positively, it will be an understeerer...

Kimi Raikkonen, Nigel Mansell and Indy 500 winner Johnny Rutherford all wanted a car that would lead into the corner. They would call a car that achieved that “balanced”, whereas others would be put off by what would appear to be too aggressive a direction change.

Four-time Indy 500 winner AJ Foyt didn’t like to sit too low in a car. He would say, “let me see the corner and I’ll take care of the rest”.

Balance is what everyone wants, but is not particularly descriptive on its own. Engineers and drivers need to be very specific with what exactly they are trying to fix and why. Balance needs to be sub-divided many times over, and so do sectors.

There are many ways to reduce understeer: stiffen the rear bar or springs, or the bump setting on the rear damper; perhaps increase the rake. But this can create a new car, which then can create a traction/oversteer problem that unsettles drivers.

Jenson Button famously hates oversteer, and even great car control people like Raikkonen are the first to complain when grip is lost at the rear. Lewis Hamilton, too, as he did in the Russian Grand Prix.

When a car doesn’t have balance, sometimes you can visually appreciate what is going on. You can see drivers expressing to themselves more when things aren’t perfect or conditions aren’t great. Forty years ago or more, you would look for drivers who had great car control and would take dangerous corners flat out regardless.

Ronnie Peterson was a good example of that.

Nowadays, virtually every ‘fast’ corner is flat out and

you’re just accelerating, so there’s little difference between a merely good driver and a great driver. Perversely, you don’t look for great car control drivers as much these days because they tend to be harder on the tyres. All the same, these drivers are always good to find, but you just need to ‘square’ their driving style up a bit.

It’s incidental but it still can show up in the rain – like Max Verstappen in Brazil last year.

Ultimately, balance is a personal thing. It’s about finding what you need from a car to do your best work. It’s not always easy to find, but when you do, you’ll never want to let it go.



Verstappen showed his car control skills at a soaking Interlagos

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INSIDE LINE

JOSE MARIA LOPEZ

HOW RETURNING HOME HELPED THE ARGENTINIAN TO FIND HIS FOCUS AND CLIMB TO THE TOP IN WTCC, WEC AND FORMULA E

CAREER Highlights

- 2017** FIA World Endurance Championship (Toyota)
- 2016-17** 14th in FIA Formula E Championship after 5 races (DS Virgin Racing)
- 2016** Champion WTCC (Citroen) 8 wins, 11 podiums
- 2015** Champion WTCC (Citroen) 10 wins, 19 podiums
- 2014** Champion WTCC (Citroen) 10 wins, 17 podiums
- 2013** 5th in Super TC2000 (Fiat) 2 races in WTCC (BMW) 1 win
- 2012** Champion TC2000 (Fiat)
- 2011** 5th in TC2000 (Fiat)
- 2010** 6th in TC2000 (Honda); FIA GT1 with Young Driver AMR
- 2009** Champion TC2000 (Honda)
- 2008** Champion TC2000 (Honda); FIA GT with Escuderia ACA Argentina
- 2007** 5th in TC2000 (Honda)
- 2005-06** GP2 (DAMS and Super Nova) 1 win, 6 podiums
- 2004** 6th in Formula 3000 (CMS Performance) 2 podiums
- 2003** Champion Formula Renault V6 (DAMS) 5 wins, 12 podiums
- 2002** Champion Italian Formula Renault (Cram) 4 wins, 7 podiums

When Renault told me at the end of 2006 that they were not going to have me in the Formula 1 development programme anymore, Formula 1 was finished for me. I'd spent 10 years in Europe thanks to good results in the beginning because I always had someone supporting me, but I had no option: I had to go back to Argentina. I was frustrated, and with the pressure to do well I kind of stopped enjoying what I was doing.

So I went home and stopped racing for a few months. A friend of mine who ran a Super TC2000 touring car team said I needed to race and we put that together – I started to race there and win, but most important was that I started to enjoy racing again. I found there was life after Formula 1. That opened my mind.

I was happy in Argentina, but I always felt like something was missing. My whole career I did everything in Europe, so when I was in Argentina it was not the same. If there was a little programme or opportunity, I was always trying to do it. The first opportunity was with the automobile club of Argentina. We did four races in FIA GT in 2008. Then, in 2010, the FIA GT1 World Championship came to Potrero de los Funes and I did a race there with Aston Martin.

I had an F1 opportunity with the USF1 project, which didn't come out in 2010. But there was a chance in the WTCC in 2013: two races in Argentina in an independent



received me – they treated me as one of them from the start. Maybe you would think if you arrive at a big team like this with Yvan Muller and Loeb, 100% French, then you're the third guy, but it was never like this. It was a big family.

I felt really comfortable in WTCC and I could have stayed there and tried to win more championships. But it was not enough for me; I felt like something was missing. To do Le Mans and drive an LMP1 car was something that could fill up the empty space left by Formula 1, like a new dream, but being a touring car driver it was very difficult.

Then when Citroen was leaving the WTCC, I had the opportunity. I did a shootout with Toyota, and they chose me. Many people asked me, 'Why are you doing this? You are comfortable, you're professional, you're at the top.' But

“It was about never giving up and always trying. I really wanted to be in the high level of motorsports”

BMW, and it went well [Lopez won the second race from pole position]. Citroen was looking for a driver for 2014, I did a few tests and then came the opportunity to return to Europe.

It was about never giving up and always trying. I really wanted to come back and be in the high level of motorsports. Even if it was hard trying to get it, it came out in a good way and I finally ended up back in Europe.

When I knew Citroen was coming and Sebastien Loeb was involved, for me it was like, 'Wow'. I'm a big rally fan because I'm from Cordoba, where they have the rally in Argentina. For me, being part of such a team like Citroen, always watching as a fan, it was big. The objective in the first year was to be good enough to get a second year and stay for good. It went better than anyone expected, even me. I had an amazing three years. It was a surprise how the team

I'm not in motor racing for the money. Yes I earn my living here, but I want to drive different cars, achieve different things, set new goals and fight drivers at a greater level.

I'm really looking forward to driving the LMP1 car again because unfortunately I've only done four laps! I'm not going to make excuses. In terms of speed I'm OK, I'm competitive, I have the speed to win races, but I cannot avoid that I'm lacking experience. I'm driving it fast, but the guys with me have been in the series for many years.

I'm not desperate; I know how racing works [Lopez has been moved to Toyota's third car at Le Mans due to his minimal mileage]. Sometimes you have good times and bad times. I've had a lot of bad times in my career so I'm enjoying a lot what I'm doing.

At the moment it's hard for me. I'm working hard to get to the same level in Formula E and LMP1 but I'm fighting against the best drivers in the world. I'm in a place now where I'm not looking for anything else. I was a little bit unknown again in Europe; everybody had lost track of me. Thanks to Citroen I came back and got back to where I was maybe in 2005 or 2006 – after that a lot of opportunities came. The things I have today are because of that.



MCLAREN'S GT MISSION

HOW MCLAREN GT AND STRAKKA HAVE COMBINED TO FORGE THE
LEADING YOUNG-DRIVER GT PROGRAMME. BY SCOTT MITCHELL



EBREY/LAT

THE McLAREN MAN

ANDREW KIRKALDY

Why McLaren is investing in young GT talent

We're pushing it more than anyone else, because it's genuinely so difficult to do things in single-seaters – it's a tough ask to get into any paid seat. We were doing a young driver programme anyway, but what is quite clear is you need more cars on the grid in Blancpain with how competitive it is. We had our in-house Garage 59 team involved, but it was taking resources away from McLaren GT. People would work for us during the week then go run a race team at the weekend – that's hard at the level Blancpain is. You need a dedicated team of people.

It's expanded, we're bigger in GT3 and we've got a step lower than that in GT4 too, but it's given us more time to analyse it. Nick [Leventis] is very invested in trying to help train young drivers, so it's a good fit for everyone. They do quite a bit with Strakka, but we supply a lot of information to help them. It's important they realise that they have to do a good job, that they are being monitored. We're looking for professional drivers for the future and they have to be proving their worth.

Andrew [Watson] has been a good example as a young driver; if you take him and Ben [Barnicoat] as a comparison, then Ben did karting a very high level for a long time, he was built up to be professional. Andrew has never done that, he came from a very different angle and in British GT it wasn't as serious as it needed to be – but he's learned how to take it seriously, he's put a lot of effort into his fitness and he's going to the sim and through preparation a lot. Ben has a lot of that grounding already – he's always been doing everything to be the best he can achieve. They are both learning a lot, and very quickly.

Ben did the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award and he was very impressive in the GT car. I always wanted to get him involved, but I never anticipated he would. Then I saw him driving the WRT Audi so I called him straight away! He didn't have a great Bathurst with us, but the kid is good – he was outstanding at Brands Hatch.

It's actually quite good for us as a GT manufacturer to be involved in the Award because you see a lot of the young guys come through. A lot of them are looking at GT racing as a serious career option – before, a GT driver was a driver who had given up on everything. So it makes more sense for us to be involved, and it makes the car more relevant to the Award.

One of the big areas they struggle with is almost taking away that competitive streak within them. When you're in a car with two or three drivers, it doesn't matter if you're quickest, you've got to do the best job over a weekend. You might be a second off the pace all weekend because you don't get the new-tyre runs or something. Young drivers tend to have a very, very competitive streak and find that quite difficult to change. It can be very challenging to start with, but that's where the professionals are good in that sense, they are comfortable in their ability – not in an egotistical way, but knowing the whole culture is very different. Even with things like Balance of Performance, you just have to understand you might not be competitive one weekend, but you've got to go and do the best job you can.

Leventis has invested in a private gym for McLaren Academy drivers



THE TEAM OWNER

NICK LEVENTIS

Where Strakka comes into the equation

My passion is helping people who I think deserve a chance in motorsport, who would be in a lot better position if they had the opportunity. Driving with Danny Watts and Jonny Kane for so many years, they are two people who should have gone all the way, and talking to them about their experience got me more heavily involved in helping people out. We want to give them the platform to shine.

As far as I can see, there aren't too many organisations helping people out – what they do is all really short-term. The Formula 1 programmes will drop them if they haven't met the criteria [Strakka driver Lewis Williamson was released by Red Bull in 2012]. What we're trying to do is create a platform that can help drivers and grow Strakka at the same time.

We've done LMP and single-seaters, but this is a step up because the level of competition is so intense. The GT platform in general is a very good place to be. World Endurance budgets are high, especially in terms of young drivers, but Blancpain is more where it should be.



McLaren is keen on young Academy drivers coming through and we can help them do that.

Rob [Bell] has a load of experience with GT cars and Alvaro [Parente] as well – the young guys are learning a lot from them. Likewise Jonny Kane – he’s done a lot of sportscars with us and there was no doubt in my mind he’d be quick. There’s a big age gap between some drivers, the young guys call the older ones ‘uncle’ and things like that, but the older guys keep them humble and grounded, so there’s a lot of value to having those experienced drivers in the car.

At the moment we’re focusing on the McLaren young drivers. We’ve got a great bunch of guys who are willing to put the effort in – Ben’s the only guy who has thrown up in the gym, which shows how hard he’s trying! They can come and put a morning/evening session in the gym whenever they go to the factory. McLaren’s quite early on in structuring this programme, but it’s all beneficial for them because their drivers are performing at a better level. We’re trying to put something on together, not just for McLaren but to help more people benefit from the facilities we have. ▶



Strakka has taken over the McLaren GT programme in Blancpain

THE TEAM MANAGER

JAY DAVENPORT

What Strakka does to work with the drivers

We do a lot of work to prepare the drivers before the event, it gives them a lot of information on each corner – the entry, the braking markers, the apex, the kerbs. It's all backed up by data, we try to give it to them before they come into the workshop so we can work through it together on the simulator to implement the best driving style. That way, the drivers know what a good lap looks like in their head before they get out there, so they know what to try to reproduce in the car.

Everyone has to buy into the methodology of how we look at data, being briefed and debriefed. We have to be quite regimented with the timetables so all the drivers treat it the same. But depending on the experience they've got, you change what you need to talk to them about. Ben [Barnicoat] is a good example, he doesn't know the championship at all – the sporting side is all very new to him. Jaz [Jaafar] has done it last year in Blancpain with HTP, so he's pushing us on stuff because he's like, 'We could do this better', and he comes with good experience. He's a clever guy, he's taken a lot on board from driving with HTP and brings that with him.

There's a lot more to a GT car than to a single-seater in terms of all the systems and controls you're accustomed to, a lot more electronics to play with while driving round. Ben's done a lot of work on that and spent a lot of time on the simulator to get ready and to help us validate our sim model, so it's more realistic.

Making sure the quality of preparation you're giving the driver is so important – you don't want to become a sim king and find it different when you're at the track. That's something where as a team we do a good job. On the fitness side, Nick's gym is pretty mega! You'd do well to find something better than what he's got in there. In terms of what we have in-house, the damper dyno and the flat plate, it's not going to enhance the driver performance, but it does enhance the car performance.

We've also got a good bunch of engineers within the team that have worked in GT racing and with junior drivers from two-litre to GP2 and Formula Renault 3.5. They are used to dealing with guys on a steep learning curve and helping them move forward.



Drivers can do altitude training at Leventis's gym

EBREY/LAT

THE YOUNG GT CONVERT

BEN BARNICOAT

The transition from single-seaters and how the programme is helping

To jump straight in with a manufacturer and be on the young driver programme was a very good option to build the foundations for my future. McLaren put me with Strakka for Blancpain but also gave me the opportunity to race in America [in Pirelli World Challenge SprintX], which is a dream come true. It's my first year in GTs but I'm doing stuff people do when they are quite experienced.

You usually start close to home and as you prove yourself you go elsewhere, but I'm very lucky to get this opportunity straight out of the box. I've been very fortunate throughout my single-seater career to have great support from the Racing Steps Foundation and be a member of the McLaren young driver programme on the F1 side. I've had great guidance all the way through to make sure I'm fit and ready for races. To be able to come

across to GTs and still have the support just makes things that bit easier so I can learn faster.

It's absolutely great we're linked with Strakka because between the two of them, it covers all areas of becoming a professional GT racer. Strakka has got great facilities, you cover every aspect for a race event. The simulator to learn the tracks – there are a lot of tracks I've never been to or driven in a GT – and there's Nick's gym, which is extremely impressive. I've been with Porsche Human Performance for quite a few years, but Nick and his trainer have a different take on fitness, which means I'm not doing all the same stuff. My race engineer in Blancpain is a McLaren engineer – all the stuff to work on the sim comes from him, and we use the Strakka facilities to implement it.

When you're in single-seaters you get more laps to really fine-tune the car to how you want it to be, and you gear everything up for qualifying. What I'm figuring out now is it's not always about that. You want to be as fast as you can, but you want the right balance to suit you and

Strakka has a simulator at its base; it puts a lot of work into modelling



EBREV/LAT

“You want to be fast, but you want the right balance to suit you and your team-mate”

your team-mate. You need a car that's going to last the whole race, so qualifying isn't the be-all and end-all like it is in single-seaters. At Monza, we had an incident on lap one and dropped to 35th, but still finished in the top 10.

When you're up against team-mates, if you learn something about the track or unlock something in the car you want to keep it to yourself, but when you're sharing a car it's a lot more open. You throw ideas around and try to help everyone, which benefits you in the bigger picture. ■

RISK OR REWARD? HOW TO OFFSET INEXPERIENCE

WHEN IT COMES TO McLAREN'S input to the Strakka Blancpain effort, McLaren GT chief Andrew Kirkaldy says “one of the biggest factors is the drivers”. Jonny Kane has been brought into the McLaren GT factory driver fold for 2017, joining experienced hands Alvaro Parente and Rob Bell. In the Endurance Cup Ben Barnicoat races alongside Bell and Come Ledogar, Andrew Watson has Jazeman Jaafar and Dean Stoneman, while Lewis Williamson and team owner Nick Leventis benefit from Parente.

In the Sprint category, Parente drives with Barnicoat, while Bell mentors Watson, and Kane runs with Loris Hezemans. Platinum-rated Parente and Bell are as classy a presence as it gets, and that benefit is not understated by those in the McLaren/Strakka alliance.

“That's probably the biggest help they get, from very experienced, professional guys,” says Kirkaldy. “They know the car and the events. In Rob and Alvaro, the young drivers have team-mates as good as anyone in the world, so if they can match them, they can match anyone. The youngsters thrive in having trust put in them – they know they need to step up to the plate if they are team-mates to drivers like that.”

Barnicoat agrees. “I share with Alvaro in Blancpain and America, so 10 races, and Rob for the other five in Endurance,” he says. “I really enjoy sharing with Alvaro because we both seem to like the car in a similar kind of set-up, so it works really well for getting speed out of the car. He's one of the best

GT drivers around and he's really taken me under his wing, which has really helped me.

“Rob is also really keen to answer questions and help me in any way possible, and it's the same with Jonny Kane – he's now a McLaren factory driver and he hasn't got much experience with the car, but that's helping us because I travel to events with Jonny and we're learning things together about the car and the championship, and as you're travelling you chat about it.

“Between those three, I've learned massive amounts. I'm still only a few months in, but I've got a great relationship with them already and I'm very fortunate to have those kinds of people around me.”

Team manager Jay Davenport says a combination of the preparation Strakka puts in and the calming influence of the experienced guys helps “mitigate the risks of running young drivers”.

“There isn't anything that's a major problem running young guys – if anything it's a positive because they are hungry and they want to beat the more established guys within the teams,” he explains.

“They are always pushing and that moves the others forwards. There's always data for them to learn from and they are embracing that really well. There's always more time to come from driving the car differently and following others' leads than searching for time with set-up of the car; especially when the engineers have done their homework properly, the cars are fairly close.”

Kane's experience is a vital asset to young drivers



VISION SPORT AGENCY

GUADIX

THE BEST TEST TRACK YOU MAY NOT KNOW...

THE SOUTH SPAIN CIRCUIT IS A POPULAR DESTINATION FOR MANUFACTURERS LOOKING FOR SUNSHINE AND PRIVACY TO DEVELOP THEIR LATEST MACHINERY

Nestled deep in the rural Spanish region of Andalusia lies possibly the best testing circuit you might not have heard of. With four 1.86-mile track layouts, Circuito Mike G Guadix isn't some Nurburgring-lite, nor does it have an illustrious racing heritage to fall back on. In fact, Guadix stages race events around four times a year, mostly regional Spanish championships and the occasional 24-hour race, but all that is of little consequence to the manufacturers that routinely choose the circuit to develop their latest machinery before unveiling it to the world at Geneva.

"We're able to virtually guarantee confidentiality on about a 5km radius," explains circuit owner Clive Greenhalgh, a former motor trader and multi-championship-winning race team owner.

"We're in a stunning plateau surrounded by four mountain ranges including the Sierra Nevada and a forest inhabited by magpies, with a single entrance road from the

motorway 3km away. All the birds squawk if someone comes through the forest, so you know if somebody is there without having to resort to binoculars!"

So perhaps it shouldn't come as a surprise that Guadix isn't as widely known as many of its contemporaries. But it's not just the privacy afforded by the natural surroundings that manufacturers crave.

Renamed in honour of Greenhalgh's late son Michael, a former FIA GT3 racer, the circuit is run to international standards by a small, dedicated team of staff, with state-of-the-art facilities including a recently-completed €500,000 paddock improvement programme, featuring a new paddock complex and engineering offices. The track has a new LED computer-operated safety light system operated from a central control tower, allowing immediate response from a 600bhp Nissan GTR safety car.

Following Greenhalgh's takeover in 2005, the track was dug up and the layouts re-imagined and resurfaced with a medium-abrasion tarmac designed to withstand



Guadix has a new state-of-the-art paddock complex

the enormous range of temperatures between winter and summer. The result has been met with favourable responses from tyre manufacturers and other clients alike.

"Apart from the tarmac being poor quality – it was too bumpy and made from the wrong material – there was no drainage, the camber wasn't right and there were too many hairpins," said Greenhalgh. "As soon as I bought it, I re-designed the whole circuit, dug it up and started again."

The layouts pose a challenge for drivers and engineers alike, with a mix of long corners and double-apex hairpins that require patient throttle application, while natural gradient changes add character and improve drainage.

Uniquely, the two different configurations can each be run in reverse, with the anti-clockwise 'Corkscrew' layout adding extra value to week-long tests.

"Everyone who comes here says it's a very technical circuit, which is ideal for car set-up and driver improvement," continues Greenhalgh, who raced in International Supersports and TVR Tuscons.

"We've got a couple of double-apex hairpins which are always hard because you've got weight transfer on the brakes and there are quite a few corners that are critical for exit speed and good lap times, which is good for teaching drivers to get on the power early. It's a balancing

act for the engineers too, because we've got tight corners and quick corners and you have to prioritise one or the other for a quick time. "We've got safety in



Hamilton tested a Formula Renault at Guadix in his early career



CIRCUITO MIKE G GUADIX
(0034) 660 32 90 70

place to run the circuit in both directions. So if someone is here for a week testing, they can run in the opposite direction for the last two days or so and they've got a completely different circuit to start from scratch again."

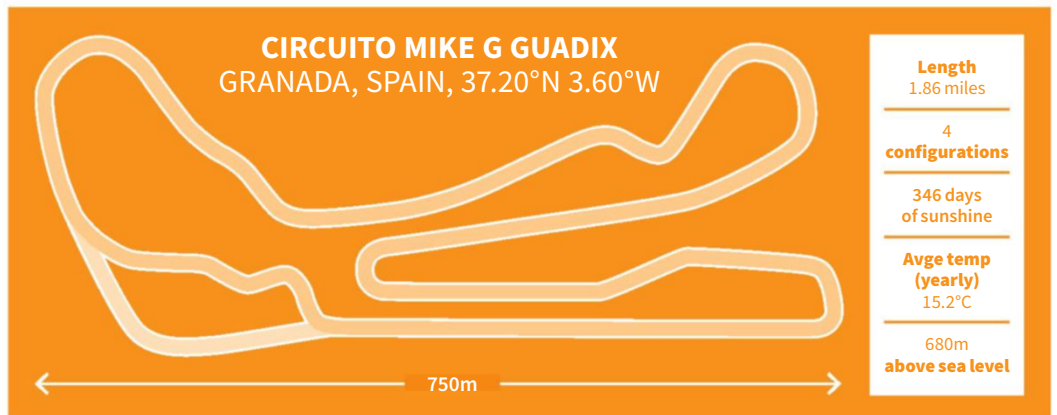
There's a common perception that testing is only useful on circuits which drivers will race at, but for drivers at all levels, honing the ability to quickly master new circuits is enormously valuable. When options for winter testing in Britain are often reduced by poor weather, Guadix makes for an attractive and affordable alternative, with exclusive testing from €3250 per day.

"It makes sense to go to different circuits because you've got a fresh challenge – practise makes you perfect," says Greenhalgh.

"In motorsport, success comes from knowing and getting the best from the car, your engineers and your set-up. But that's not always easy to do when you go to UK circuits for general testing and it's freezing cold, or it's raining and there are so many red flags.

"When teams come out here and run on their own for a few days, it's a really good bonding exercise for them and, from our side, nothing is too much trouble. If they need help getting any parts or equipment, we try and find them as fast as we can. Or if they want to keep the track open a little bit longer, then they just have to ask. The track is pre-cleaned every day, we always try to make our clients feel that they are important to us."

The secluded location also ensures there are no noise restrictions, opening the door for manufacturers to conduct night testing in preparation for major endurance races at Le Mans and Spa. Plenty have jumped at the chance to simulate the issues they will face over 24 hours, including TCR outfits racing in the Creventic 24H Series.



"At night, they can get the lights right, practise in the demanding light of sunset and sunrise, they can find out how to change a hot exhaust that might be exceeding noise limits, how to change a hot turbo, how to keep the driver cool, all sorts of things," Greenhalgh explains.

"Things change quite a bit at night. The temperature drops, the traction goes, but if they get something wrong, they don't have the whole world watching them. Problems found in testing could eliminate failures in races."

That certainly comes in handy when famous faces drop by and Guadix has seen a fair few in its time. Lewis Hamilton had his first Formula Renault test at the circuit, while Tom Kristensen, Alain Prost and Walter Rohrl have assisted with development work for Audi, Renault and Porsche respectively. Greenhalgh was so impressed by

Rohrl's pace in the wet that he recently named the final corner in the two-time WRC champion's honour.

But his favourite story comes from 2008, when Jos Verstappen, very much on the limit in a brand new Porsche RS Spyder, set a sportscar lap record on the outer circuit. Together with Jeroen Bleekemolen and team owner Peter Van Merksteijn, the Dutchman took victory in the LMP2 class in that year's Le Mans 24 Hours, but only after a cautionary word from Van Merksteijn...

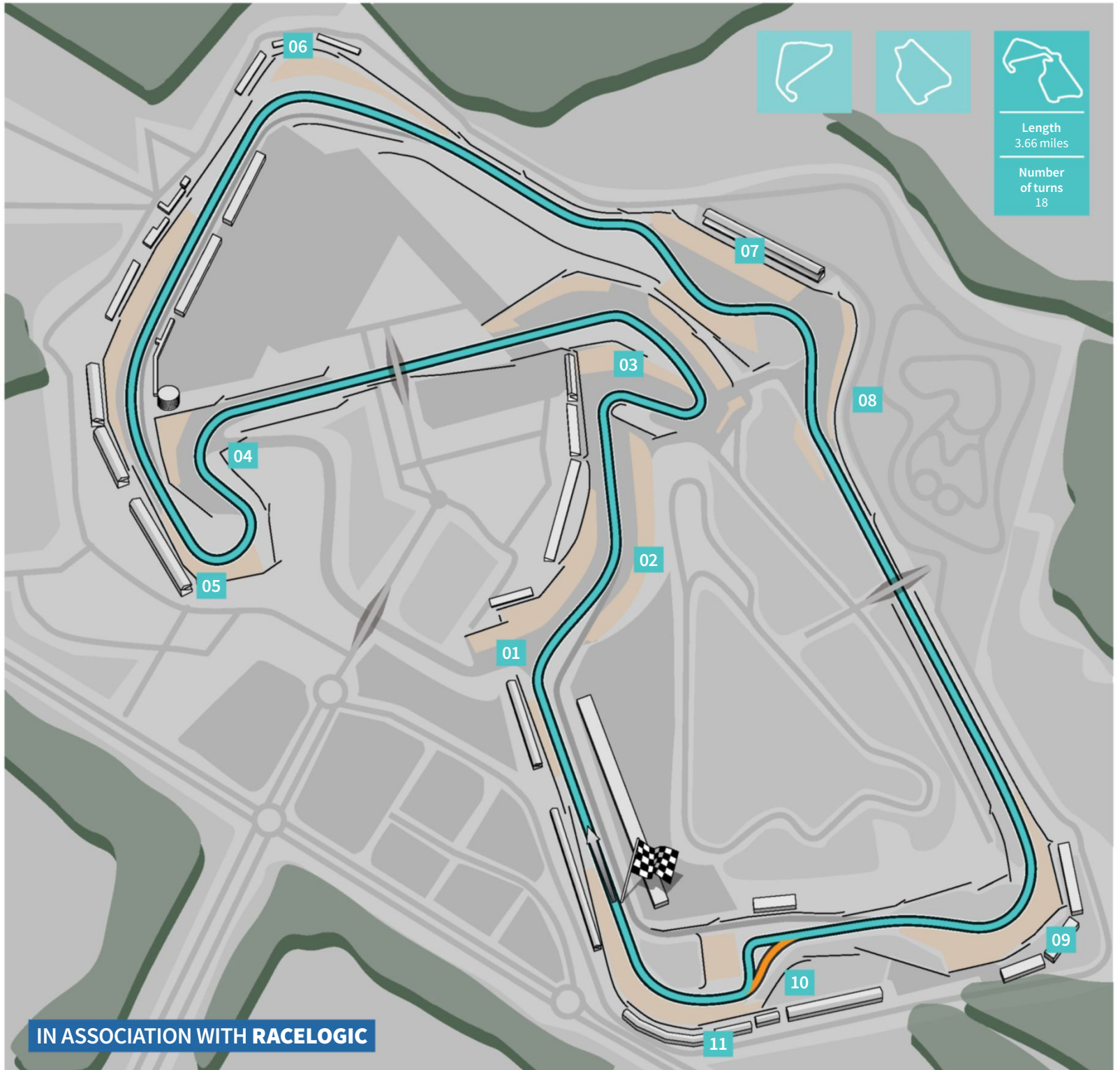
"The boss called him in after about four laps and he said, 'You look too fast on the first corner, you're hardly braking! I've just paid a million for the car plus the bits, so can you just calm it? If we do win, I'll give you a big bonus.' Of course, that's exactly what happened and, since then, nobody has got near his sportscar lap record."



SILVERSTONE GP

JOE OSBORNE

THE GT ACE SHARES HIS KEY INGREDIENTS FOR A COMPETITIVE LAPTIME AT THE UK'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS CIRCUIT

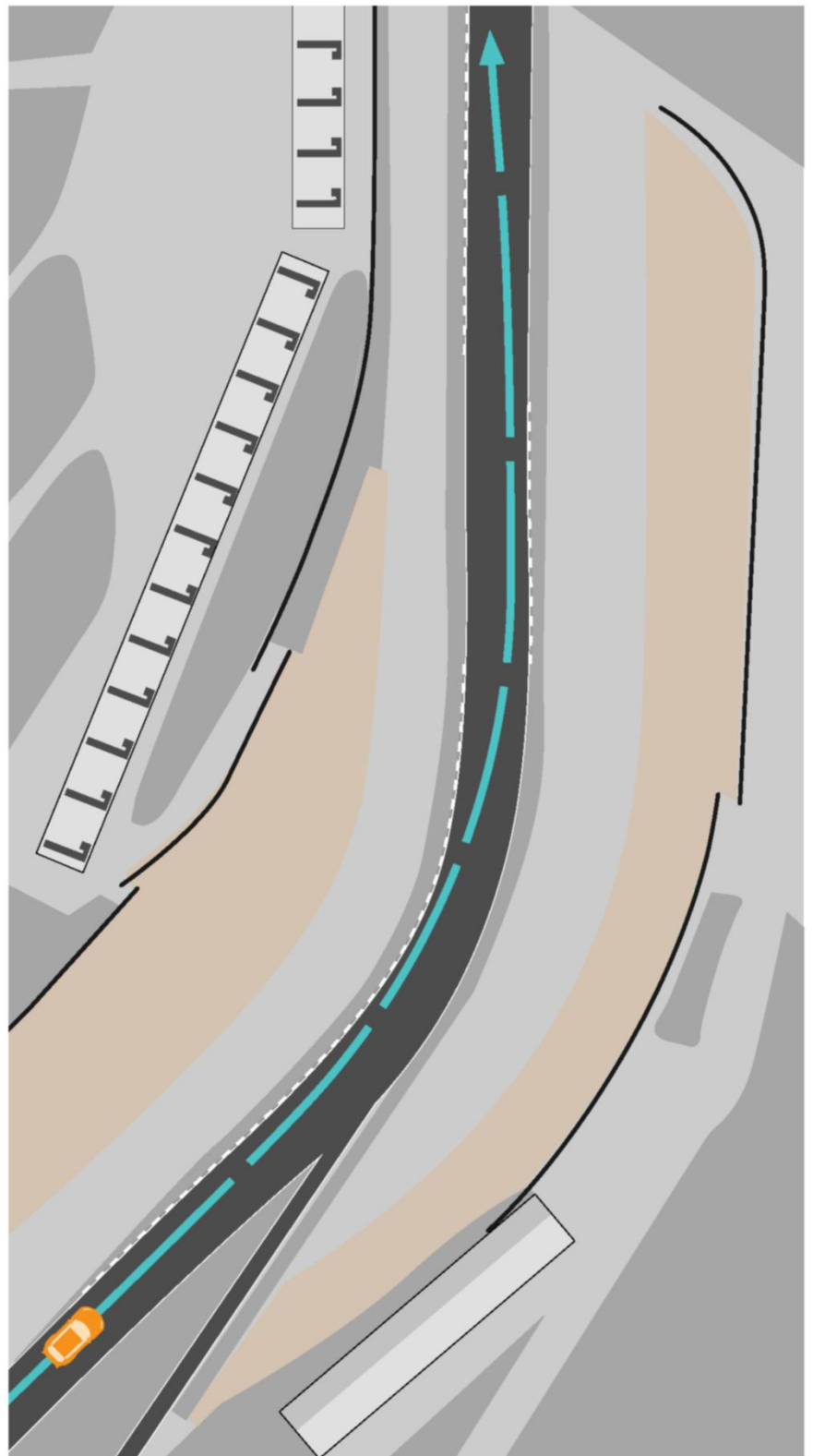
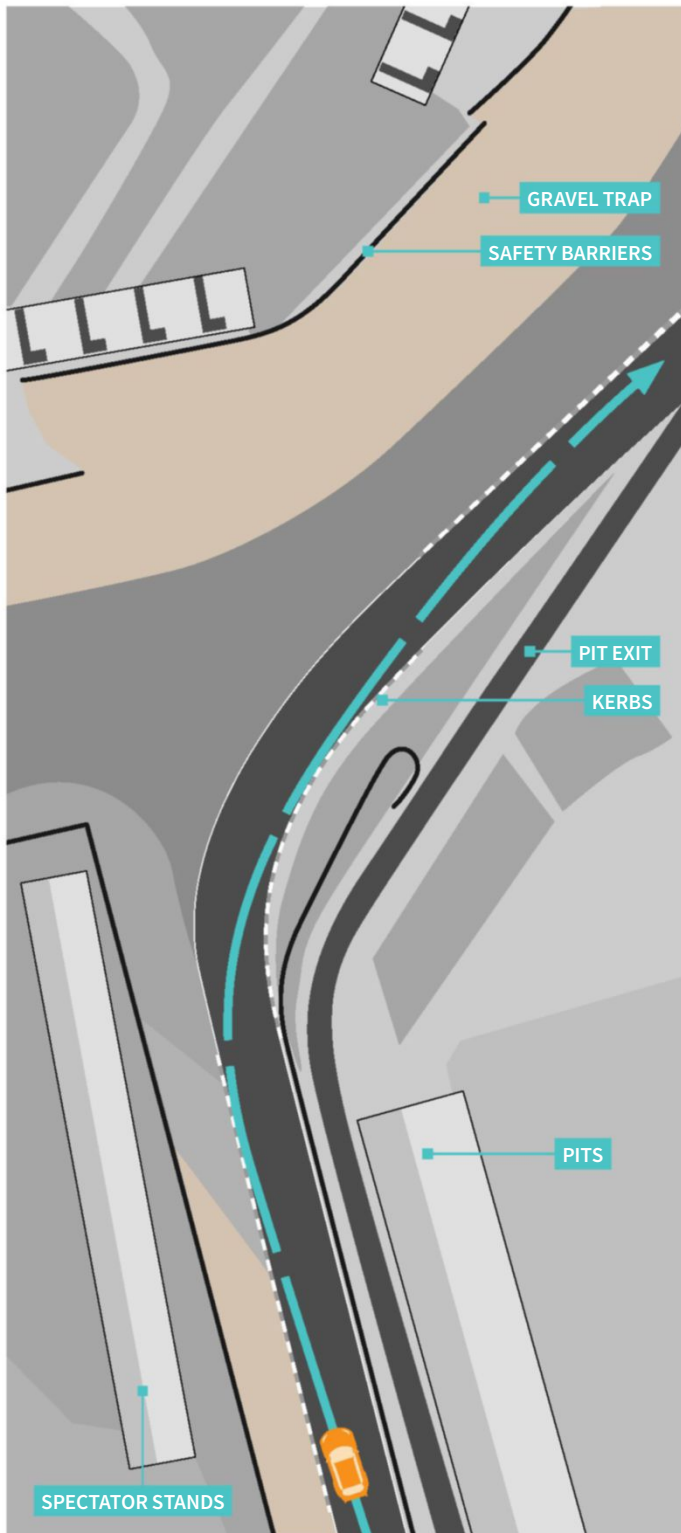


01 ABBEY

Turn 1

Abbey in most people's minds turned left. So now that it goes right (after the circuit redevelopment in 2010), most people call it 'new Turn 1'.

It depends on the car, but typically you're in fifth gear there. It's one of the highest-commitment corners on the lap, blind on entry because of the pitwall, so you have to remember where everything needs to happen. There's always a little bit to be gained on entry, because the kerb on your left is actually painted Tarmac for a few feet, so you can pinch a bit of space before you get to the corner. Then it really depends on how the car takes the kerb – you can actually take a lot of apex kerb, which feels a bit perverse considering you're doing 125-130mph and you usually don't want to rock the boat in that scenario. Then the car tends to understeer towards the exit. There's normally a solitary bollard, which only lasts for a few laps; then it's a bit clearer if you run wide.



02 FARM

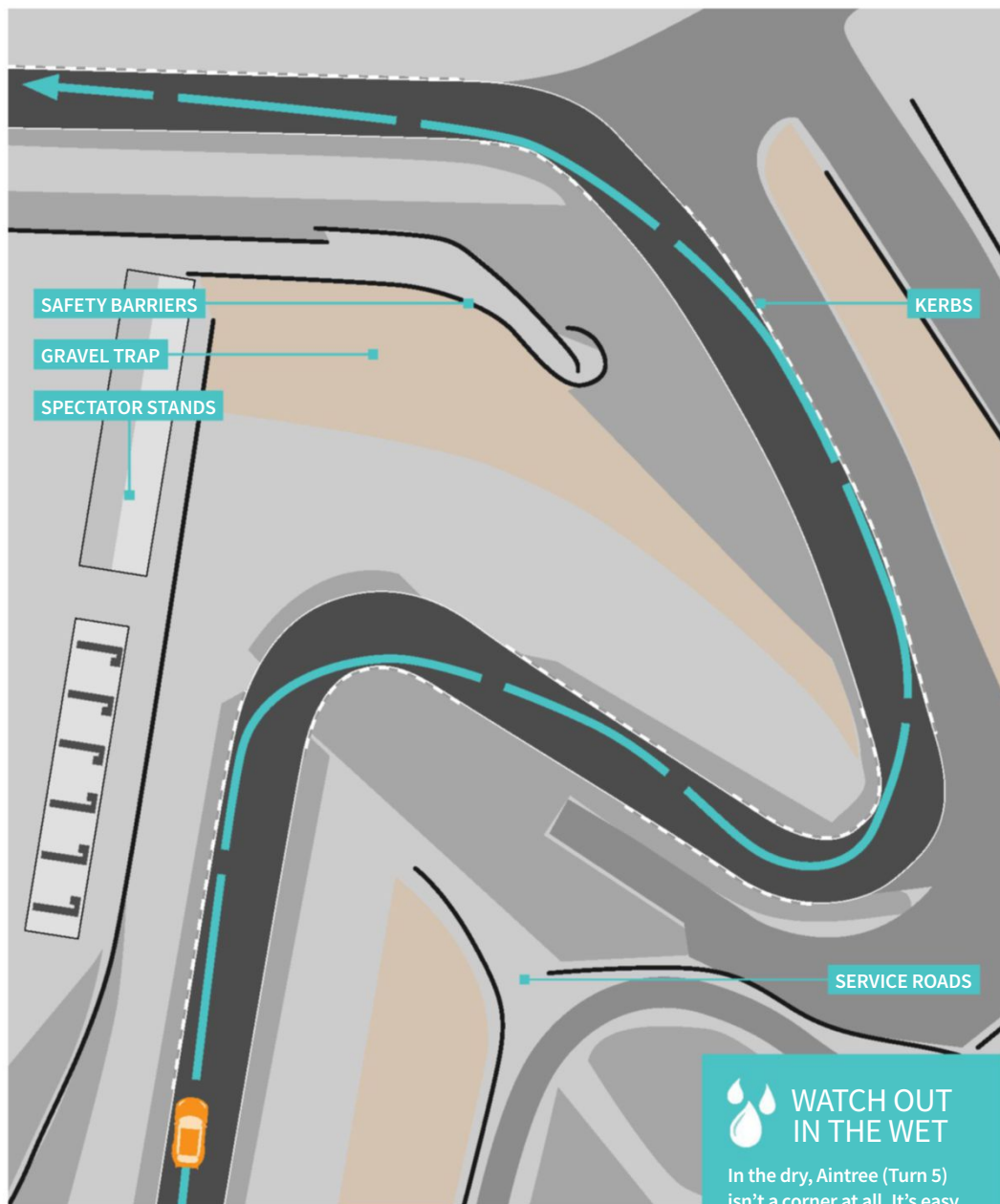
Turn 2

It's a flat-out corner these days in anything with a hint of downforce. As fast as you can go around Abbey, you can still do Farm flat even if you approach it from the left-hand side of the track. Again, you can take as much kerb as you want – there's probably two feet of kerb you can get launched over. My little trick towards the end of a stint, if I'm starting to understeer too much, is I will hook an inside wheel over the back of the kerb and just try and get it to grip round with the edge of the tyre. It isn't the best thing for the tyre, but I would rather do that than lift! If you can, then try to get over to the left before braking for the Loop.

VBOX
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RACELOGIC

The right lines and references are a great starting point, but driver improvement can yield the biggest performance gains. Combine these tips with Racelogic's variety of motorsport equipment to help maximise your development.
www.vboxmotorsport.co.uk



03 VILLAGE & THE LOOP Turns 3,4

There's just one particular gripe I think drivers have with the new arena versus the old Bridge layout. Village is an overtaking zone because you're slowing the car from fifth gear down to second, you're decelerating by 100mph, but because the corner comes up so quickly it's very easy to defend. You literally just stay over to the right and you've covered the corner off.

It's a big braking zone, so it's very easy to get it wrong and go in too deep on the brakes. It's actually one of the worst corners to instruct around because people look ahead to the runoff and they never look for the corner because it's over 90 degrees – it actually goes back on itself.

The left-hander is a strange corner because you never bother to go all the way over to the right. You kind of just stay in the middle of the track, fling it into the left, and from there it's all about momentum down the Wellington Straight. You're trying to get the car as straight as possible for when you get on the throttle, because the next time you get off the gas is under braking into Brooklands in about 500 metres' time. It's only a few metres shorter than Hangar Straight from throttle to brake-point.

I would say it's probably one of the best slow-in, fast-out corners there is in the UK. It's an interesting one when the tyre is used, too, because it's physically demanding of the car and the tyre; you've got so much lock on and so much load on the car that when you add the throttle, the car is always trying to snap out. I imagine if you went there as a photographer, you would see a lot of sideways action because it is hugely loaded. There's a bit of exit kerb and a bit of extra track that you can use, which helps with exit speed there.

WATCH OUT IN THE WET

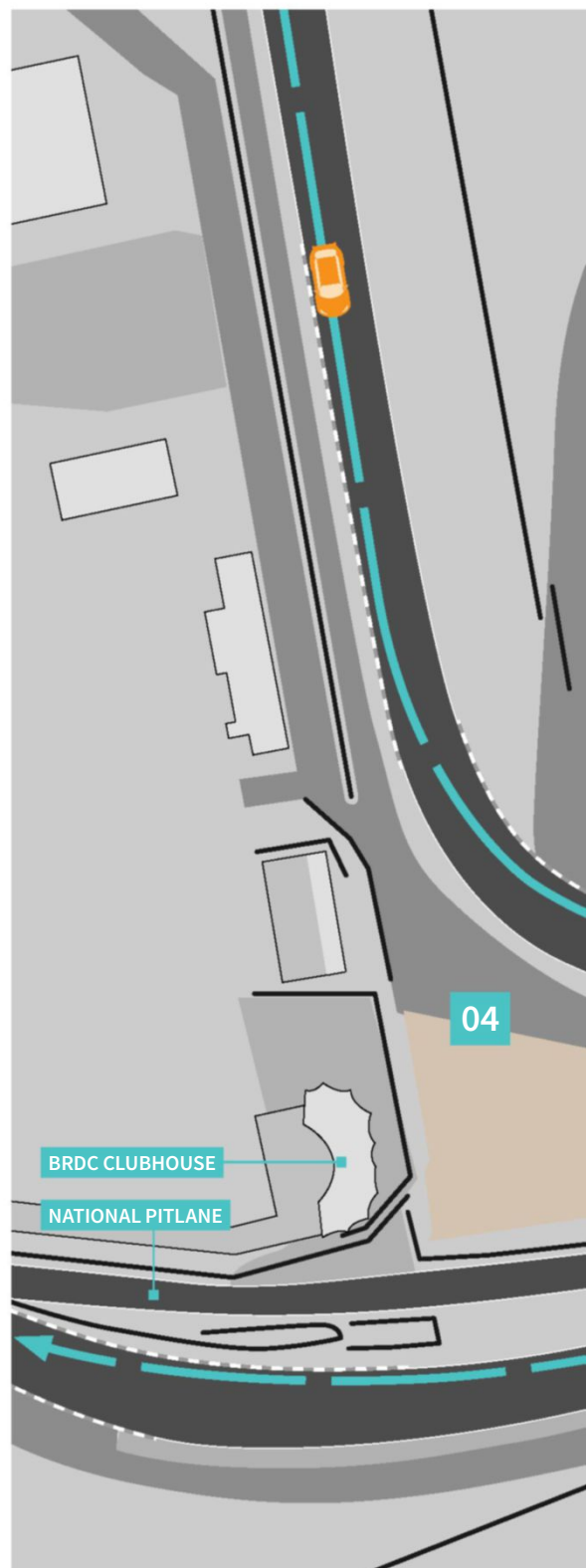
In the dry, Aintree (Turn 5) isn't a corner at all. It's easy flat. But in the wet it's a bit lairy. It's all about trying to be as smooth as possible, so you're not scrubbing speed through excess steering lock.

You've got a two-foot kerb on the exit, like everywhere else on the lap, and then you've got about another three feet of asphalt, then it goes to grass and back to a Tarmac run-off. If you were to turn in too early or be side-by-side with someone through there and haven't got the perfect line, then it's a bit of a chance on the exit.

We've seen Formula 1 drivers get it wrong there over the years, including Kimi Raikkonen in 2014. He ran wide, tried to keep it flat, but lost it on the re-entry and bounced into the Bridge a bit further down the straight.

04 BROOKLANDS Turn 6

Brooklands is my favourite corner of the lap. It's a long, lazy corner on entry, so there are many ways to do it, although there never really is a way that seems to stand out any better than the rest. In whatever I've raced there, I'll always get into the corner super early, hit the brakes and make for the apex. My logic is I'm just trying to do the shortest distance possible – the exit isn't very important because it's such a short run, basically the opposite of trying to be fast in and slow out. It's quite an easy place to gain time if the car is good. If the car is bad there and you've got too much oversteer, then you're always fighting an uphill battle.

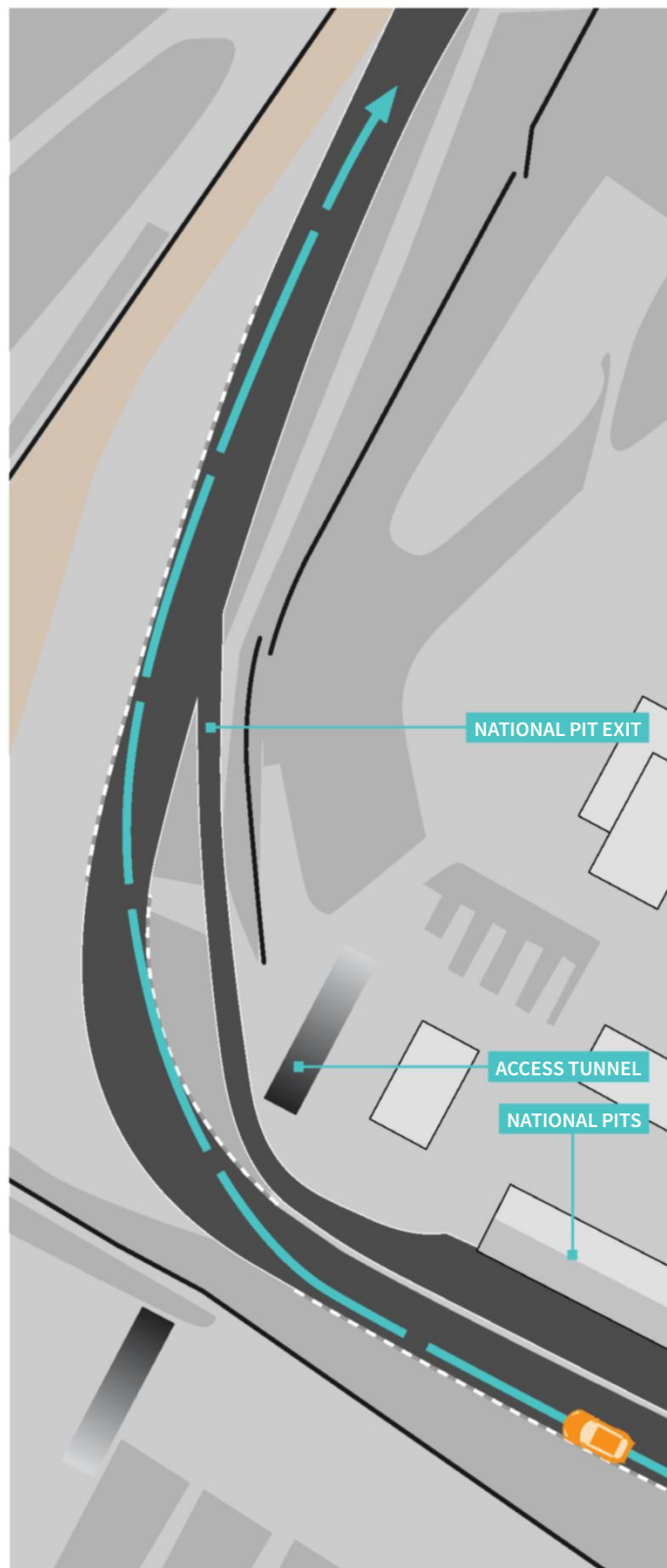
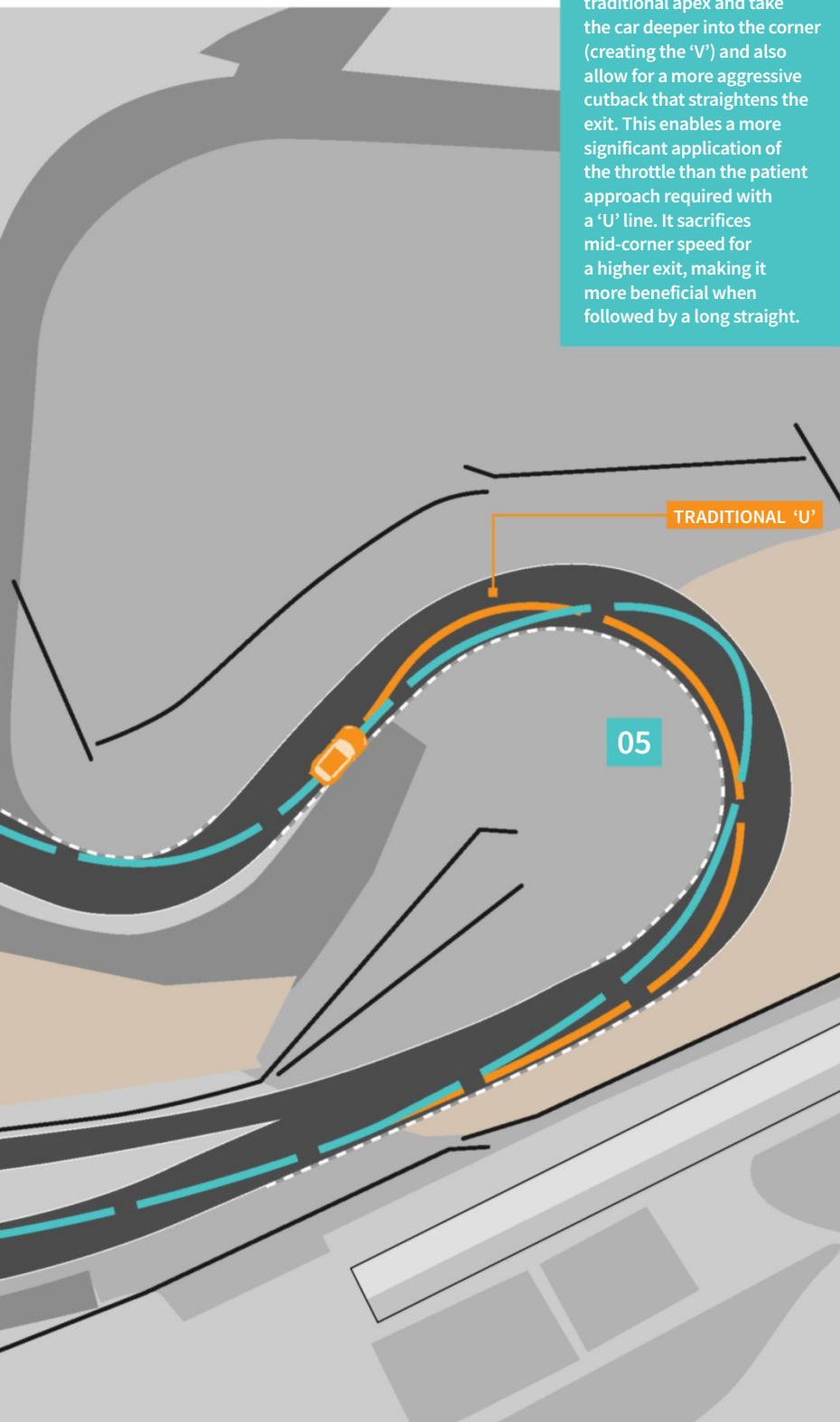


05 LUFFIELD Turn 7

You've lost all the aerodynamics here because it's a slow, long hairpin, so you're just trying to keep yourself occupied. I will tend to make it into two apexes. You hit the first apex under braking, let the car run out wide, and then rotate it round before jumping on the gas and drifting it all the way around. It's not a corner people are inclined to write home about, but there's enough to do there to keep it relatively interesting. It's not really a passing place unless it's wet and you can carry the speed around the outside, but it's a good one to set people up down the straight into the old Turn 1 at Copse.

AUTOSPORT SAYS

Luffield is a classic example of the 'traditional U' versus the 'soft V' approach. As a driver approaches the corner and begins to turn, they can decide whether or not to apply one or two degrees more lock onto the steering. This will cut across the traditional apex and take the car deeper into the corner (creating the 'V') and also allow for a more aggressive cutback that straightens the exit. This enables a more significant application of the throttle than the patient approach required with a 'U' line. It sacrifices mid-corner speed for a higher exit, making it more beneficial when followed by a long straight.



06 COPSE Turn 9

You can be amazingly late on the brakes there. The similarity between Copse and Abbey, the old and new Turn 1, is scary, although Abbey is maybe just a fraction quicker, maybe five degrees less of a corner than Copse. They are both high-commitment: Copse is normally just about fourth gear, whereas Abbey is fifth – that's the main difference there. Again, it's a blind entry because of the pitwall, so you have to commit to it. How I teach people to drive Copse from a coaching point is to drive it at 110%, go in too quick, run wide and then bring it back – with the Tarmac runoff, that's a quicker way of learning it rather than going 80%, then 81%, 82%, and slowly edging up to it. For me, that's the way to maximise the opportunity you've been given by the circuit.

KEY CORNERS

07 MAGGOTTS/BECKETTS
Turns 10, 11, 12, 13

It's an ever-decreasing apex speed all the way through Maggotts and Becketts. You're easy-flat through the first left and then the second right is just a dab on the brake - I always leave it in the gear I'm in. The feeling I want from the car is that it's going to run wide and put me on the grass, and on the perfect lap you can just about hang on.

Then you have another little dab on the brakes, slightly harder than the first one as you take a gear down (to fourth in a GT), hit the kerb on the left, which helps rotate the car and hold it over to the left, then the last right which is another brake and one more downshift (to third).

Then you need to force yourself to get your eyes up and look as far as you can see out to give yourself the confidence to jump back on the throttle and get the thing going again as you exit through Chapel onto the Hangar Straight.

It's a shame that they never seem to be able to make the F1 TV camera angles work to make it look as impressive as it must be. It feels impressive in a heavy GT car, so to be doing it with four times more g-force in an F1 car must be incredible.

08 CHAPEL
Turn 14

In the middle of Maggotts and Becketts, you need to work out where you're going to catch that traffic, because probably the worst place for it is on the exit there. If you have to brake there or even lift, then it can be disastrous for your laptime and you'll lose seconds rather than tenths. The actual speed difference is all aero grip, it doesn't really matter about the power - the aero you're carrying will decide the closing speed coming on to the Hangar Straight. You need to be a little bit smart and work out where you think you're going to get them. Either you try to do the old switchback on the slower car straight away, or let it run out wide and hopefully they then move over to the left, letting you go down the right.

09 STOWE
Turn 15

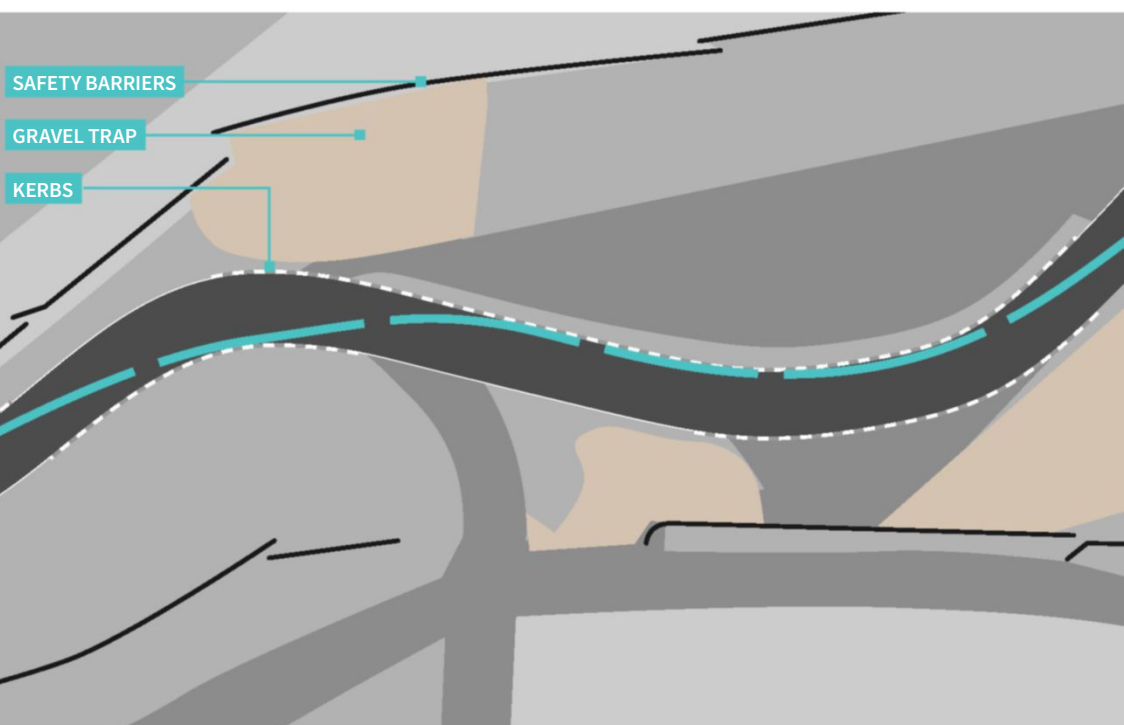
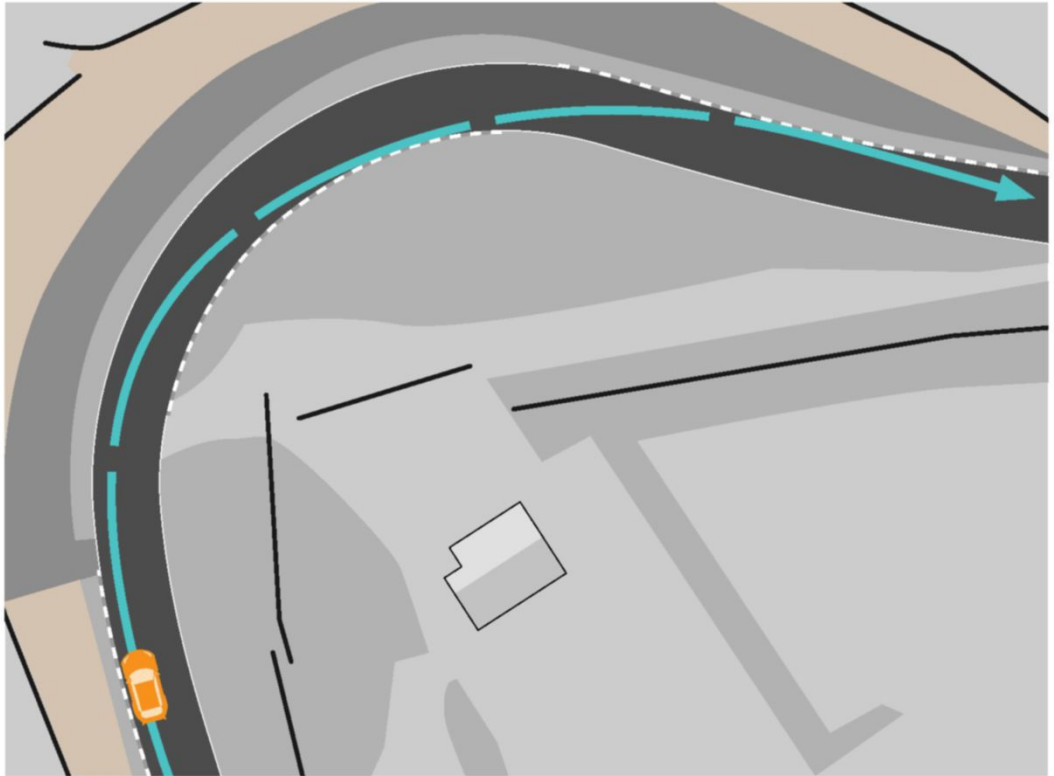
It's a fairly long straight into Stowe and there is an uphill braking zone, whereas the rest of the lap is very flat. Normally you feel like you braked a touch too early and left something on the table, so the general mindset is, 'I need to make that time back up'. It's easy to get greedy on the throttle and pick up too hard or too early.

There's not a huge amount of camber, so once you get a hint of understeer that sets the tone for the rest of the corner and you tend to run a little bit wide. The exit of the circuit almost has a bit of a dog-leg in it, which forces you to come back a bit tighter and hurts even more.

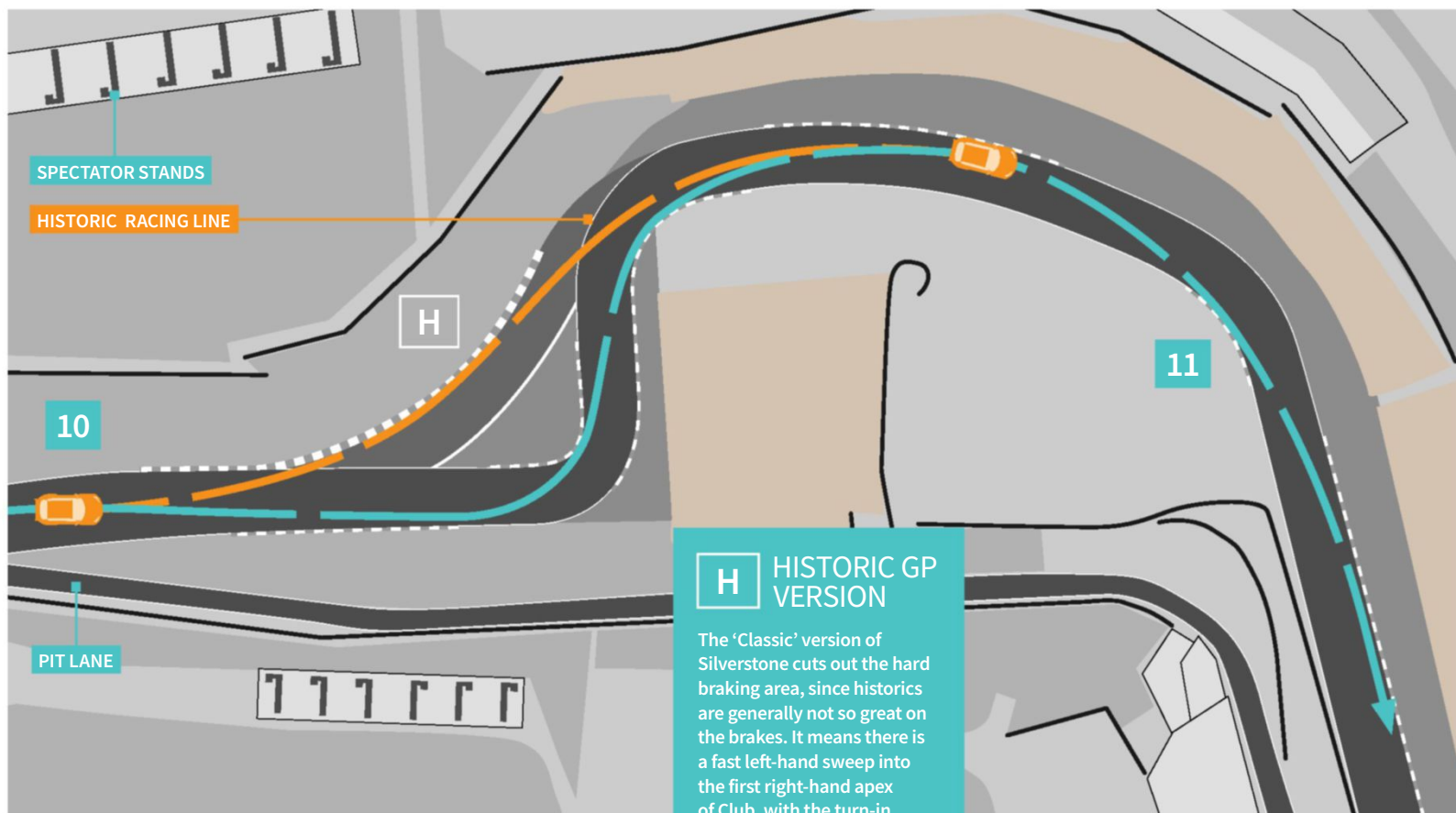
Sometimes you don't want to brake any later than it

feels, because if you go off the racing line there's a huge amount of detritus. The worst thing you can do is run wide and pick up a load of marbles on your tyres. There really is a big time loss there, which can affect your preparation for the next lap through Vale and Club.

With the way the weather comes in at Silverstone, Stowe is generally the first corner that gets wet. It's a low-grip corner as well so, when you add water to it, it gets very interesting! When it's wet, you just have to hang it all the way around the outside, where it's a slightly rougher asphalt surface that hasn't been worn by traffic as much as the racing line. That's where all the grip is.



07



10 VALE/CLUB IN Turns 16,17

The left-hander is a great overtaking point – it's probably the easiest corner of the lap to get an overtake done. Once you're down the inside, it's your corner. You can run in deep because they can't turn in, and you can just dictate the corner. It's a big braking zone and also relatively bumpy for an F1-spec track.

The kerbs are very flat and I will use them to help rotate the car; I want disruption in the car to help me get it round the corner there. Once on the throttle, all being well, you're then flat around Club all the way back to the braking point for Abbey, so it's a long run out of it.

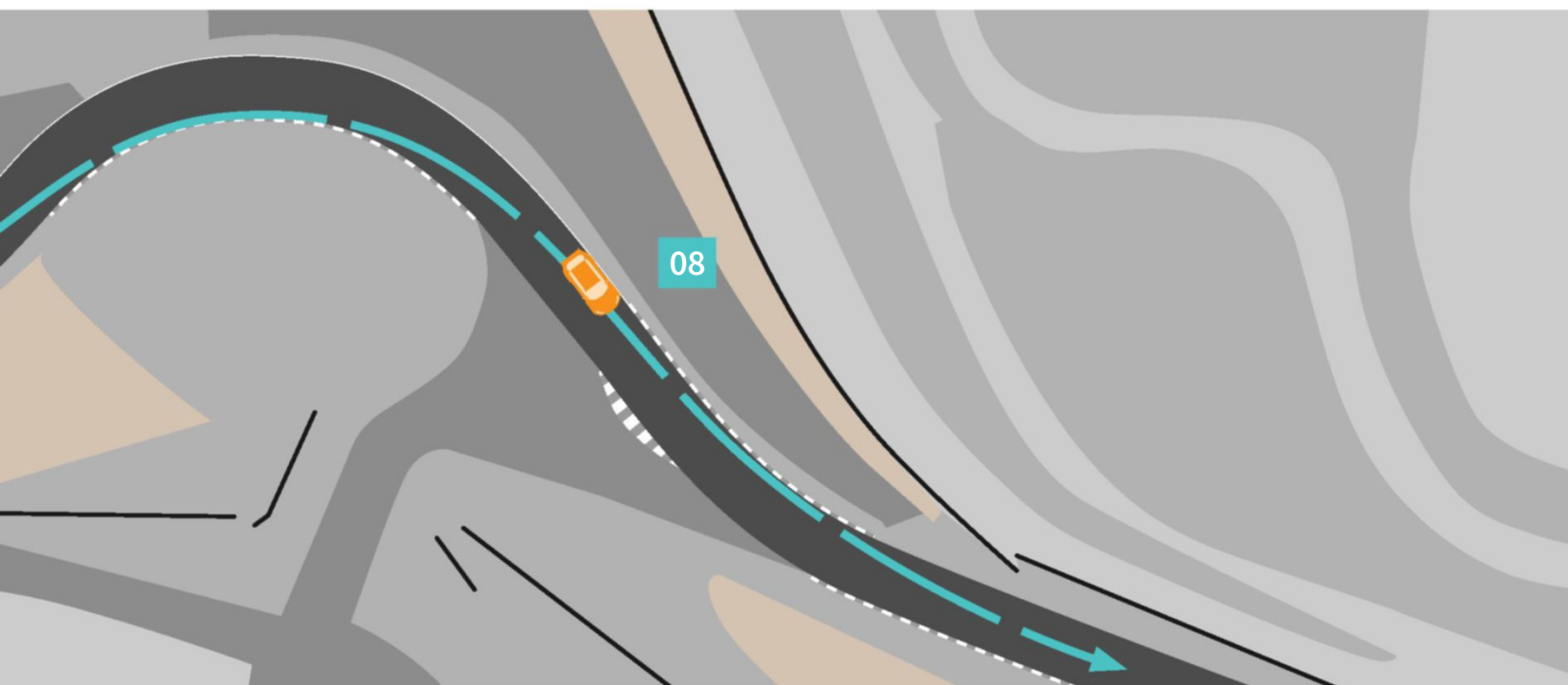
H HISTORIC GP VERSION

The 'Classic' version of Silverstone cuts out the hard braking area, since historics are generally not so great on the brakes. It means there is a fast left-hand sweep into the first right-hand apex of Club, with the turn-in around the gantry. Last year in Julian Thomas's low-drag lightweight E-type, we were nearly flat – it's pretty exciting! The turn-in to Club proper is the same. This all means the lap is a fraction shorter and hence the lap time a little lower.

CALUM LOCKIE

11 CLUB OUT Turn 18

If you're in a car that's set up well, it's relatively easy to keep your foot flat the whole way, but if it's on old boots then it can be very difficult. It's a corner that gentleman drivers really struggle with, because it's all about feel. If a car has got understeer through there, you've almost got to disrupt the car with an unorthodox amount of steering to bring the rear round so you can keep your foot flat. Club is a one-line, one-steering-angle corner, so it's pretty technical.





HOW TO USE A SIMULATOR TO

PREPARE FOR A NEW CHAMPIONSHIP

WITH TESTING RESTRICTED, SIMULATION IS A VITAL TOOL FOR DRIVERS TO GET AHEAD

The founding father of America's most famous racing dynasty, 1978 Formula 1 World Champion and winner of the Indianapolis 500 in '69, Mario Andretti is one of motorsport's most legendary figures, transcending the sport to such an extent that his words are often cited as a mantra for success by self-improvement authors and life coaches. "Prepare yourself in every way you can by increasing your knowledge and adding to your experience," he says, "so that you can make the most of opportunity when it occurs."

Andretti rarely misses an opportunity to extol the virtues of good preparation, and for good reason. A key factor in Michael Schumacher's and Sebastian Vettel's sustained periods of dominance in Formula 1 was the long hours they spent laying the groundwork with Bridgestone and Pirelli engineers during pre-season. With private testing increasingly limited, greater emphasis is placed on drivers to make up the difference in much the same way, but how should they prepare for a new championship without any references to fall back on?

To that end, Andretti will be a vital pillar of support for Fernando Alonso as he prepares to make his oval racing debut in the Indianapolis 500 this weekend with Andretti Autosport. As you might expect, Alonso has done it properly, watching onboard footage and spending time on the Honda Racing Development simulator before taking to the Speedway for real, gradually gaining confidence in traffic and qualifying an excellent fifth.

Granted, the 500 is a statistical outlier by virtue of the practice time afforded to drivers, but that's not to say that other tools in Alonso's armoury – simulation included –



Norris used Pro-Sim to get a headstart in F3

can't be adopted to help drivers get ahead.

That is the stated belief of former GP2 racer Adrian Quaife-Hobbs, who launched his own company, Pro-Sim, in 2012. For a price roughly equivalent to a one-day test in a single-seater, Pro-Sim offers a bespoke home sim unit that can model any car on any track at any time, making driver-improvement more accessible than ever before.

Quaife-Hobbs also coaches drivers on a state-of-the-art training sim, based on a Lola F3000 tub, that can be linked up to a home sim to give karting graduates experience of the slipstream effect and understeer induced by

running behind another car.

In his view however, simulation can have a limited impact if used reactively, on a circuit-by-circuit basis. "People think, 'I'm going to Barcelona, I need to learn it', but if you're always taking it one track at a time then you aren't learning the characteristics of the car," says Quaife-Hobbs.

"With the younger drivers, you can then work on techniques that you can apply at any track, rather than saying, 'You need to brake at that slip road'. That approach will get you through the weekend, but laying vehicle-specific foundations will help throughout the year."



DEVELOPING A NEW DRIVING TOOL

During Adrian Quaife-Hobbs' ascent up the single-seater ladder, he was exposed to all manner of simulators to suit every budget, but frequently came away unsatisfied with the product on offer. Inspired to develop the most relevant simulator for driver training that he could, Quaife-Hobbs embarked on a painstaking process of testing various components before he had a product he was happy with.

Retailing at £30,000, his range of Evolution Simulators comes equipped with an XAP paddleshift steering wheel as used in GP2, accurate force-feedback steering system, hydraulic brakes and an adjustable gas-spring throttle, all packaged around a fully adjustable aluminium

frame built by Quaife Engineering in the UK.

"Why people like the feel of our sim is because I've done it from a driver's point of view," said Quaife-Hobbs. "If you do everything out of a textbook, the sims all come to a similar point, which I was disappointed with because the engineers who are writing it have never driven a car.

"I just wanted to make something that was realistic and achieved the goals that any driver should be aiming for. Every component has gone through a long process to be selected, there's nothing on that sim that we've just put on it because we ran out of time. Every single part is there for a specific purpose."



As if to prove his point during a short session on the Brands Hatch GP loop, Autosport struggled with the weight of the McLaren 570S GT4 and inevitably ended up backwards in the gravel trap at Sheene.

"It's about just knowing the car and learning what you need to do to be fast in that car. Whether it's push on the entry, exit or mid-corner, you just need to know what makes that car respond," Quaife-Hobbs adds.

"From car to car, it's nothing revolutionary and even from karts to cars, it's often something small that has a big influence. It's just a matter of pushing in a slightly different area. If you push a lot on entry in the GT4, the car will start to slide, but if you brake earlier and roll through the corner, the car is stable and you'll be 10km/h [6mph] quicker."

Time invested behind the scenes on the simulator is even more visible at early rounds of the season, when the stringent testing limitations will have the greatest effect. In European F3, only six official and six private test days are permitted, with teams prohibited to run at any track where a championship round is scheduled later in the year.

But despite his rookie status, Pro-Sim regular Lando Norris is well-placed for a title challenge, after winning two of the first six races and taking a further three podiums. Norris hasn't been short of seat time. He's been testing F3 cars since 2015 and won races in BRDC F3 last year. But even after topping the first day of official pre-season testing at the Hungaroring, it was expected that the natural order would reassert itself at the Silverstone opener with Prema on top. Not so. The McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner secured victory from pole, with a fastest lap to boot.

"Adrian sets data for me that I have to try and beat," says Norris. "He's always very fast on the sim and a good reference, so it's definitely a help that you're not driving against yourself all the time. Obviously with him also being a driver, he's able to describe a similar feeling for what another driver has. If I say something, he understands it."

In his quest for maximum real-life relevance, Quaife-Hobbs wrote the software himself and, where possible, based each car model on direct experience, collaborating with Charlie Robertson to create the Ginetta LMP3 when

the Scot embarked on his maiden European Le Mans Series campaign in 2015.

"We made the car model between us. Back then the P3 was very new and there wasn't much data," says Robertson, who went on to win the title with Chris Hoy.

"The feel was very similar and Adrian and I worked hard to get within a very fine margin of real lap times. It's a great tool and a lot cheaper than real track time."

Quaife-Hobbs admits the technology available now would have been an enormous help to him in his junior career, but is content that drivers like Norris and Robertson can avoid the same pitfalls that affected him.

"I won the championship in my first season of T-Cars in 2005, then I drove exactly the same way in Formula BMW and came 10th. In that scenario it's easy to get frustrated and end up stuck in a circle of pushing too hard," he says.

"It takes that much longer when you're trying to find it out for yourself, but now all the information is there and you know what you need to achieve, you just have to do it."

JAMES NEWBOLD

"It's often something small that has a big influence. It's just a matter of pushing in a slightly different area"



Quaife-Hobbs had a tough graduation to single-seaters

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

VALETPRO: CLEAN SMART WITH PH NEUTRAL FOAM

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE AS SATISFYING as turning out a glistening-clean race car, but using the wrong cleaning materials can inadvertently cause discolouration of the paintwork and even result in component damage. When the cost of replacing them can equate to a new set of tyres or an additional track day, it pays to think twice about which cleaning products you use.

"The choice of exterior cleaner should really boil down to whether you are going to damage an aluminium or stainless steel surface," ValetPRO managing director Greg Spink explains. "Different cleaners will have varying effects on those sorts of surfaces. But it's not just the metalwork; it's the paint surface too. If you're using harsh cleaners, it's going to cause that paintwork to oxidise or maybe dull it down, so it can have a long-term effect.

"Making sure you're not using something that's going to reduce the look is quite important, but behind those panels you've got aluminium components or magnesium components, which are quite sensitive and reactive to stronger



alkaline or acidic cleaners. Generally speaking, of course, you're not going to use an acidic cleaner on the paintwork, but you will use an alkaline cleaner. They're great because they're searching and powerful but, once you rinse them down, they're still working at a low dilution ratio and they may be sitting in a pocket somewhere that could reduce the lifespan of a damper or a spring.

"Of course, components do wear out naturally in a racing environment, but it is important to look after things. That's not to say that you spend absurd money on cleaners, but I would advise that you think about what you're buying. If you use a pH neutral, you can potentially make things last longer and save money down the line, while still getting great results."

ValetPRO Advanced Neutral Snow Foam retails at £7.80.

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WALERO: HOW TO MAKE LE MANS MORE BEARABLE

THE LE MANS 24 HOURS IS HELD UP TO be the toughest race in the world bar none. Quite apart from the full-on mental assault that is the Porsche Curves at 3am with LMP1 headlights bearing down on you, temperatures in and out of the cockpit can fluctuate wildly, putting enormous stress on the drivers.

Porsche GT specialist Ben Barker has to keep cool in 30C heat for several hours at a time during a stint, then, at the other extreme, stay warm readying for the graveyard shift in the dead of night, when temperatures in the garage can plummet to single digits.

To make the experience more comfortable, Barker wears Walero base layers, which use NASA-inspired technology to reduce perspiration and regulate his core temperature.

"Le Mans is a very long race and you end up spending long periods of time in the car, so you want to make it as

comfortable as possible in order to be as efficient a driver as possible," says Barker.

"You can look at diet and nutrition – all that stuff is very important – but also your gear and what you wear can really help keep your temperature in check. Walero has spent a lot of time and energy developing the materials and it really pays off. Last year I did three stints of three hours and that was quite intense, but I actually felt pretty good.

"You ultimately end up waiting around a long time in a 24-hour race, but the Walero gear is like wearing your pyjamas at home, so it's very comfortable. That's really important to ensure that you're at your optimum for when you do jump in the car and things start to get hot."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON OUR PRODUCE RANGE, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.walero.uk OR CALL US ON 01223 847617



SCHROTH

SHR FLEX

AS A MANUFACTURER OF THE world's most popular frontal-head restraint, SCHROTH knows a thing or two about making top-end safety devices. The release of the SHR Flex last year was the latest example.

Designed to pass the US-standard SFI Spec 38.1, the device is eligible for competition in the States and non-competition use in the UK – meaning for now it's a track-day product on these shores. SCHROTH will submit the device to the FIA once the governing body defines how new devices are homologated.

Back to the Flex, which is designed to be used in virtually any vehicle that uses two FIA or SFI shoulder belts as part of the driver-restraint harness. It is available in medium and large sizing, which is based on body size and shape and, at \$575 (£438), the SHR Flex falls into the middle of the price range for the SCHROTH-produced HANS device – which, by the nature of their design, are restricted to specific types of racing.

Autosport Performance has showcased the Flex before, but has now been able to trial the product on-track with multiple GT champion and track-day guru Calum Lockie. The dynamic articulating collar and angle-independent low-collar design means it is not restricted to a specific type of car or seating position, which makes the Flex appropriate for track-day applications.

Lockie reports that he would be interested in using the Flex regularly for track-day coaching, citing its comfort and ease of use.

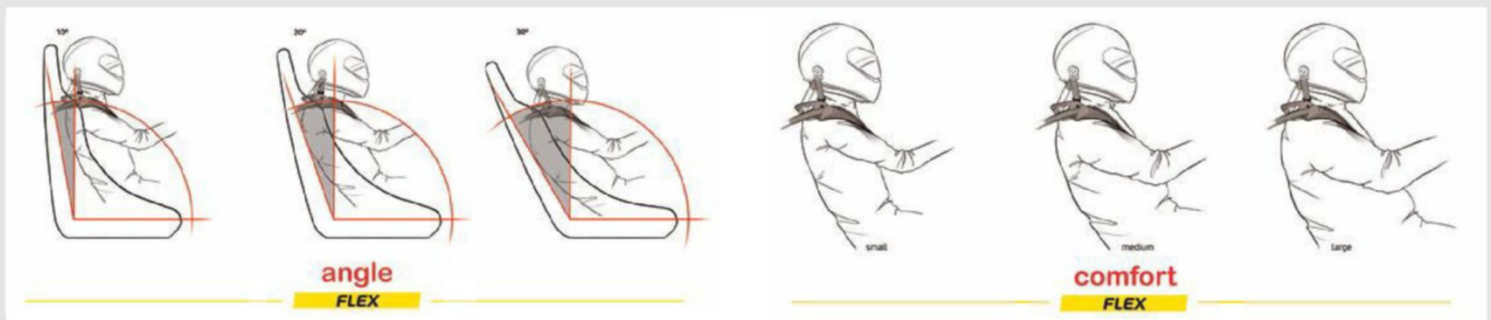
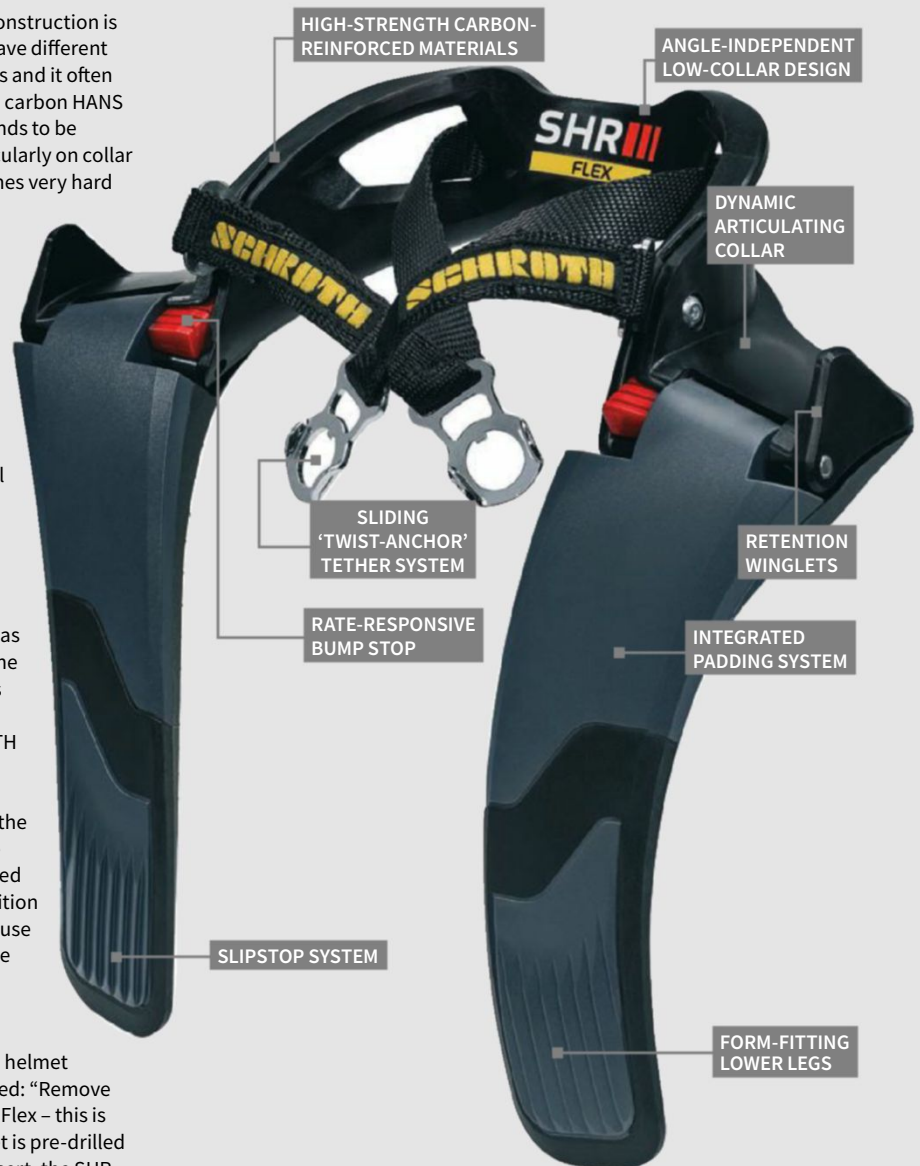
"It is light and, owing to rubberised construction, good for jumping in and out of customers' cars without scratching or bashing trim," says

Lockie. "The hinged construction is great. Different cars have different seatbelt arrangements and it often happens that the rigid carbon HANS doesn't fit well and tends to be uncomfortable, particularly on collar bones, and is sometimes very hard to get properly tight."

Lockie also notes that the twin-web system allows for easier head movement, another plus point for its use on track days, and adds that "the Flex has narrow shoulder-strap flats with a small upright to hold the belts in place, which is excellent for narrow-belted cars".

Lockie uses a HANS device normally and has those posts fitted to the crash helmet, which is different to what the Flex requires. SCHROTH explains that this is because the HANS clips are patented, so the Flex attachments "are designed to be mounted to the exact same position as the HANS clips and use an M6 thread, as do the HANS clips".

The user guide highlights the change required if the driver's helmet has HANS clips attached: "Remove and screw on the SHR Flex – this is allowed. If your helmet is pre-drilled without a threaded insert, the SHR Flex also comes with an M6 insert to slide into the helmet."



FURTHER DETAILS AT WEBSITE www.schrothracing.com/shrflex OR VIA EMAIL AT flex@schrothracing.com

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RSRNURBURG YOUR WAY TO LEARN THE 'RING

RSRNURBURG PROVIDES EXPERT GUIDANCE AND CAR RENTAL SERVICES ON THE ULTIMATE DRIVING TRACK, THE NORDSCHLEIFE. WE SENT **JASON HARDY** TO TRY IT.

EXPERT VIEW: HOW JASON GOT ON

"He had an idea of how to drive on track, but he can still improve his progressive learning, which is something I always say, even to racing drivers. It doesn't matter how much experience you have, this track changes all the rules. Knowing a track from the simulator is just a reference to know where the track is going, but driving and doing laps is where you can start to really learn."



Heralding from Mexico, RSRNurburg instructor Luis Ramirez, 27, has coached at the Green Hell since 2015.

where you can gain the most time; by braking earlier and approaching the corners with more caution, I was able to get on-power sooner. Even things like moving the seat nearer to the steering wheel so I could apply more braking pressure was a really helpful tip that I can call on next time.

The Green Hell is the most terrifying yet rewarding experience I've ever had in a car, an adrenaline rush the likes of which I've never had on any UK circuit. Knowing that you're on a track where so many great names have raced and many have lost their lives necessitates that you pay it maximum respect. Just being in that environment as a car enthusiast is very special and no matter how many track days you do, I don't think you could find anything that compares.

But as much as I could feel myself getting more confident, I know I've still got a long way to go before I'm race-ready. Next for me is a trip to RSR's Driving Academy at Spa-Francorchamps, before hopefully returning to tame the 'Ring later in the year. Wish me luck...

My instructor's final words to me were simple: "Don't crash." I've done my fair share of track days, but as a Nordschleife novice, I was absolutely bricking it.

Normally I take a morning to learn a circuit I've never driven before, but the Nordschleife would probably take a year to master properly. It requires a different approach because you can't go out and take

everything in at once. You have to break it down section by section and learn a little part at a time, but at least I wasn't completely in the dark.

For my first of four laps, I had RSR instructor Luis Ramirez alongside me to deliver a constant feed of instructions; braking and turn-in markers, together with general rules of the 'Ring. But with a steady stream of cars and bikes in the mirrors, you can never just concentrate on the bit of road you're on. You have to look as far down the track as possible to anticipate what's coming up and be aware of everything happening around you at the same time.

I did some preparation by driving the track on PlayStation, but it really doesn't do the place justice. It's good for knowing when to turn left or right, but it can't show you the elevation changes or give you the same sensations. The Karussell is more like a wall of death than a regular corner, my arms were shaking as I tried to grip the wheel. This was no picnic!

If you're not on the ball, the place will bite. On my first lap driving solo, I lost my bearings approaching Adenauer Forst and didn't brake because I was too busy looking in the mirror. Fortunately I gathered it up, but it was definitely an eye-opener as I didn't want my beautifully-prepared Porsche Cayman GT4 S rental to star in a YouTube crash compilation...

For the next two laps, I backed it down and I actually went quicker as a result. It's often the smallest details

Jason was out of his comfort zone on the Nordschleife



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