

McLaren ace wins Macau Grand Prix

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21 NOVEMBER 2024

AUTOSPORT

F1 2025

Britain's next F1 star

Ollie Bearman and his big chance at Haas

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a serious competitor
in the years to come'

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Can Bearman make his F1 mark with Haas in 2025?

Haas and Ollie Bearman have been two of the surprise packages of 2024. The American Formula 1 squad has bounced back from a dismal campaign last season to be a strong contender in the midfield, while former Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award finalist Bearman has shown his mettle on three grand prix appearances despite a tricky second F2 campaign with Prema.

Both Haas and Bearman suffered a tough time at the recent Brazilian Grand Prix but, as Alex Kalinauckas shows on page 20, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future. Bearman became the 148th Briton to start a world championship GP when he raced for Ferrari in March's Saudi Arabian event. How he compares to new team-mate Esteban Ocon at Haas in 2025 will go a long way to deciding on whether he becomes one of F1's regulars, but he has already shown that he is ready to be part of the paddock.

The World Endurance Championship paddock has grown a lot recently, at least in terms of the size of the top class. Gary Watkins is your guide in our 10-page season review (p32) and picks out the top 10 Hypercar drivers (p41), while Stephen Lickorish reports from a Macau GP that had rather too much drama in its first year with Formula Regional machinery (p18 and p48).

- It's time for you to have your say about the best performers of the 2024 motorsport season. Turn to page 12 to see the nominees for six Autosport Awards and find out how to vote for your favourites.



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Simon Galloway/Motorsport Images/Haas F1 Team

PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 FIA ousts Wittich as F1 race director
- 6 Monaco GP gets six more years
- 8 Button to join Cadillac WEC attack
- 10 WRC drops hybrid for 2025
- 11 Las Vegas Grand Prix preview
- 12 **Autosport Awards: have your say**
- 17 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 18 Opinion: Stephen Lickorish
- 19 Guest column: Arvid Lindblad

FEATURES

- 20 Bearman's big F1 chance
- 24 The recent rise of Haas
- 28 How the Las Vegas GP happens
- 32 World Endurance Championship review
- 42 Maserati 250F at 70

RACE CENTRE

- 48 McLaren junior wins chaotic Macau GP
- 52 Macau supports: GT World Cup; TCR
- 55 World of Sport: Australian Supercars; MotoGP

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 65 BRSCC launches DS3 Cup
- 66 Equipe to run new prototype series
- 69 BTCC drivers head to stock cars
- 70 A remarkable racing quadruple
- 74 Star club car: Aston Martin V8 Vantage

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 76 What's on this week
- 79 Introducing: Matthew Richard Bell
- 80 From the archive: 1997 Laguna Seca
- 82 My favourite car: Oliver Turvey

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PIT + PADDOCK

FIA under spotlight with ousting of race director Wittich

FORMULA 1

The spotlight is back on the FIA after it emerged that the governing body's Formula 1 race director Niels Wittich has been removed from his role with three races left to run in the 2024 season.

The FIA announced last week that Wittich had stepped down with immediate effect to "pursue new opportunities", with F2 and F3 race director Rui Marques replacing him from this weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix onwards. As suggested by the sudden timing of his departure, it soon emerged that Wittich did not step down voluntarily, and senior sources with knowledge of the situation confirmed to Autosport that Wittich was removed from his position. Wittich is understood to have had disagreements with FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem, which came to a head in the wake of this month's Brazilian Grand Prix.

Race control caught flak at Interlagos, with Red Bull unhappy with the timing of a red flag in qualifying that it felt cost Max Verstappen, and questions raised over the late virtual safety car call in the sprint race for a stricken Nico Hulkenberg. But generally, Wittich has been well regarded and uncontroversial, and acknowledged by many as doing a very difficult job relatively well under challenging circumstances, returning some stability to the role after Michael Masi's fraught spell at the helm. There has also been unease over the consistency of judging incidents and handing out penalties, but that does not fall under race control, which can only refer incidents to the stewards for their evaluation.

Wittich's replacement Marques, who has been with the FIA since 2014, has been dropped into the hot seat for what is operationally one of the most challenging circuits to manage. The race around the Las Vegas Strip eventually made a successful debut last year, but not before several teething issues in practice, the most spectacular being Carlos Sainz suffering a heavy crash after his Ferrari dislodged a water valve cover at high speed.

The sudden departure of Wittich caught the F1 paddock by surprise, including some within the FIA itself, and is leaving the beleaguered governing body with questions to answer. The 52-year-old German's shock exit comes off the back of a string of high-profile departures under Ben Sulayem's presidency.

In October, the FIA parted ways with its director of



communications Luke Skipper and secretary general of mobility Jacob Bangsgaard. Late last year, sporting director Steve Nielsen and single-seater technical director Tim Goss resigned, while head of the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission Deborah Mayer also left. The FIA's first CEO, Natalie Robyn, also quit the organisation in May after less than two years in the role.

Following Wittich's departure, it emerged that the FIA's compliance officer Paolo Basarri had left after a disagreement with its leadership. Ben Sulayem has also frustrated F1's driver corps through clampdowns on the use of jewellery and swearing, the latter netting Verstappen and Charles Leclerc punishments at recent races. Last week the GPDA drivers union called on Ben Sulayem to treat drivers as adults and reconsider his approach.

The latest high-profile departure, in a department that Ben Sulayem has admitted is a pinch point for the organisation, will not ease calls from F1 teams clamouring for more stability.

FILIP CLEEREN





MAUGER

Technical chief leaves amid Aston fallow period

FORMULA 1

The Aston Martin Formula 1 team has parted with technical director Dan Fallows in the wake of the team's disappointing form over the past 18 months.

Fallows joined Aston Martin in April 2022, taking up the job of technical director after a long stint with Red Bull, where he rose through the ranks to become chief engineer –

aerodynamics. Under his watch, Aston Martin enjoyed a brief spurt in 2023, taking eight podiums with Fernando Alonso aboard the AMR23, but Aston's form then tailed off as rival teams caught up.

This year it has been stuck in fifth place in the constructors' standings as it struggled to develop the AMR24, which led to group CEO Andy Cowell's call for a change to try to turn

around its fortunes. Fallows will remain active within the wider Aston Martin group in a yet to be announced capacity. "I would like to thank Dan for his contribution to Aston Martin in the last two years," said Cowell. "Dan led the team to the success of the AMR23."

Fallows was set to report to Ferrari hire Enrico Cardile, who will join as chief technical officer, and on an interim basis

his responsibilities will be absorbed by Aston's current technical leadership, which includes deputy technical director Eric Blandin and executive director Bob Bell. Aston has hired Adrian Newey, who starts next March, and it has moved into a brand-new headquarters in Silverstone, with a state-of-the-art wind tunnel on the way.

FILIP CLEEREN

Liberty boss Maffei departs, but no sale

FORMULA 1

Greg Maffei, the CEO and president of Formula 1 owner Liberty Media, has announced that he will step down from his role by the end of this year.

Maffei, who joined the American investment firm in 2005 and became its CEO in February 2006, has opted not to renew his expiring contract. He will be replaced on an interim basis by Liberty Media chairman John Malone, and according to the company will stay on as a senior advisor to help smoothen the management transition.

Maffei was a driving force behind the firm's acquisition of F1 in 2017, helping transform the series into a global and modern entertainment powerhouse. Earlier this year, Liberty announced that it would acquire MotoGP. "The almost 20 years I have



MAUGER

Norris hopes to rule F1; Maffei (right) will no longer do so

spent at the helm of Liberty Media have been incredibly rewarding, stimulating and endlessly eventful," Maffei said.

Autosport understands that Maffei's departure is not related to any impending sale of F1, which Liberty has always denied is on the

table. Neither is it thought to be linked to the US Department of Justice's investigation into Liberty's rejection of Andretti's bid to join F1. Instead, it is understood that Maffei felt his remit at Liberty was narrowing, making his expiring contract a natural exit point.

FILIP CLEEREN

Sainz to get Williams test in December

FORMULA 1

Carlos Sainz will make his first Williams appearance in Formula 1's Abu Dhabi tyre test next month after securing permission from Ferrari to join up early with his new squad for 2025, but Lewis Hamilton will have to wait for the new year to get his first taste of a Ferrari.

While Sainz remains contracted to Ferrari until the end of the calendar year, the Maranello squad has given its blessing for the Spaniard to jump straight into the Williams FW46 for the test on the Yas Marina circuit two days after the season finale, as he begins his preparation for his 2025 campaign alongside Alex Albon.

Seven-time world champion Hamilton, who similarly remains contracted to Mercedes for the same period, will not be able to take Sainz's place at Ferrari for the test. Mercedes had already arranged end-of-year



promotional commitments for the Briton after the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Instead, Hamilton will get his first taste of Ferrari F1 machinery in a Testing of Previous Cars run on a yet-to-be-confirmed date in early 2025.

The Abu Dhabi test is run by Pirelli, with teams running two cars; one filled by one of its regular drivers or a new signing, and one driven by a rookie.

Esteban Ocon will get his first outing with Haas, while the man he replaces, Nico Hulkenberg, is set to run for Sauber. It is unclear who Williams will run in its other car alongside Sainz. Since he replaced Logan Sargeant after the Dutch GP, Franco Colapinto has completed more than the maximum two races to qualify as a rookie.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Monaco extends its GP deal for another six seasons

FORMULA 1

The Monaco Grand Prix will remain on the Formula 1 calendar for six more years after F1 and the Automobile Club of Monaco (ACM) signed a contract extension up to and including 2031.

Monaco's deal, which is understood to incorporate a significantly higher sanctioning fee, was up for renewal after 2025. The new agreement secures the race's future on an annual basis amid F1 boss Stefano Domenicali's recent assurances that European races would be subject to rotation due to the crowded calendar and the extensive interest from potential new venues.

As part of the fresh terms the race will move from its traditional end-of-May date to the first weekend of June from 2026 onwards. That helps create



space on F1's congested calendar for the Miami and Montreal rounds to be paired, which had been a long-time sustainability-driven goal of the series. The Canadian GP will move to the third or fourth weekend of May from 2026.

Meanwhile, Argentina's bid to return to the calendar with a

race at the historic Autodromo Oscar y Juan Galvez in Buenos Aires is subject to "a lot of hard work in order to reach the objective," according to the country's tourism minister Daniel Scioli. "We have to work on the race track, on all the requirements of an event as sophisticated as this," he added.

Scioli confirmed to Autosport that, in line with the austerity measures of president Javier Milei's libertarian government, the project will rely exclusively on private funding.

While several Argentinian sponsors such as Mercado Libre and Globant have swiftly followed Franco Colapinto into F1, a GP will require a big hike in corporate interest to shoulder the burden of the renovation project required to bring the circuit up to modern F1 standards. With Colapinto yet to find a long-term drive, there are no guarantees that he will even be on the grid by the time his nation is ready to host a race.

Ideally, the track would incorporate part of its longer loop so that modern F1 cars can stretch their legs, rather than the cramped and unpopular layout used in the 1990s.

FILIP CLEEREN



P48 ALL THE MACAU ACTION

MACAU GUIA Rob Huff was out of luck in his bid for an 11th Macau Guia victory – and 12th in Macau in total – last weekend in the TCR World Tour finale. Red flags and traffic in qualifying consigned the 2012 World Touring Car champion and 2024 BTCC returnee to 15th on the grid in his Volcano Motorsport Audi RS3 LMS. He charged through the field in the first race to finish sixth, right on the tail of the works BRC Hyundai of fifth-placed Nestor Girolami. He made the right call for slick tyres in the wet-but-drying second race, but never got a chance to capitalise on the gamble. While slick-shod Hondas went on to finish 1-2-3, Huff was eliminated by damage caused from a clash with the Hyundai of TCR Asia champion Zhang Zhen Dong. **Photograph by WSC/Jun Qian Motorsport**

Penske adds Long Beach race to his portfolio

INDYCAR

US motorsport titan Roger Penske has added yet another string to his bow, after Penske Entertainment bought the Grand Prix Association of Long Beach from longtime owner Gerald Forsythe.

The Grand Prix of Long Beach in Southern California now joins the IndyCar Series, Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Detroit Grand Prix as part of the portfolio of Penske Entertainment, a subsidiary of Penske Corporation. Next year's running of the historic event will be the 50th edition since it started as a Formula 5000 race in 1975.

"This is the most historic and prestigious street circuit race in North America, and we're excited to work with [Grand Prix of Long Beach CEO] Jim Michaelian and his great team in Long Beach to ensure continued success and growth over the long term," said Roger Penske. "This race and its loyal fans matter so much to everyone across the IndyCar community."

Michaelian added: "Roger and the team at Penske Entertainment understand the special history and



unique qualities that give us such a strong foundation and will be ideal partners as we continue to deliver an exceptional race weekend for our fans. I also want to acknowledge the significant contribution that the previous owners, Jerry Forsythe and the late Kevin Kalkhoven, made to the success of our event over the past 19 years."

The 1.968-mile circuit, which wraps around the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, typically hosts

crowds of over 190,000 people across its three-day weekend. Additionally, the Grand Prix Foundation of Long Beach, a charity organisation, has donated more than \$4.2million to those in need within the Long Beach community.

"Penske Entertainment will be a committed and energetic partner for the future that seeks to preserve and enhance this event's rich history," said Long Beach mayor Rex Richardson.

JOEY BARNES



Button named in Cadillac line-up for 2025 season

WEC

Jenson Button will extend his career into a second full season in the World Endurance Championship in 2025 – as a factory Cadillac driver. The 2009 Formula 1 title winner is moving across to the American marque with the British Jota team.

There were no surprises when Cadillac and Jota took the wraps off their WEC driver roster for the two factory V-Series.R LMDh Hypercar class entries. It is a mixture in equal measure of Jota regulars from its 2024 line-up with a pair of customer Porsche 963 LMDhs, and Caddy stalwarts.

Button has switched over to Caddy along with Will Stevens and Norman Nato. Earl Bamber and Alex Lynn continue in the

WEC with the General Motors marque after driving Chip Ganassi Racing's solo entry in 2023 and 2024, while Sebastien Bourdais crosses the Pond from the American team's IMSA SportsCar Championship squad for which he has driven since 2022. It will be the four-time Champ Car title winner's first full programme outside of North America since his season and a half in F1 with Toro Rosso in 2008-09.

How the six will line up in the two cars has not been revealed as yet.

Button was widely expected to stay with Jota, having revealed at the start of this season that he saw his time in Hypercar as at least a two-year venture. He had, however, refused to confirm his plans and whether he would continue racing ahead

of the announcement last Thursday.

"I'm delighted to be continuing my journey with Hertz Team Jota as they form their new partnership with such an iconic brand as Cadillac," said the 44-year-old. "Racing with Jota this season has been such a privilege as they're a team steeped in success in endurance racing and an operation I've long admired.

"Those achievements and hard work have now led to this exciting next chapter seeing them partner with Cadillac, a marque which has already impressed with what it has achieved to date in both WEC and IMSA."

Jota was due shake down its V-Series.R chassis at the Anneau du Rhin circuit close to the German border in France this week.

GARY WATKINS

Toyota pins faith on 'team spirit and cooperation'



WEC

It will be business as usual at Toyota in the World Endurance Championship for 2025, with an unchanged driver line-up in its pair of GR010 HYBRID Le Mans Hypercars.

The status quo was confirmed when the Japanese manufacturer announced that the #7 Toyota Gazoo Racing entry will be driven by Kamui

Kobayashi, Mike Conway and Nyck de Vries for a second year, with Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa (left) remaining together in #8 for a fourth straight season.

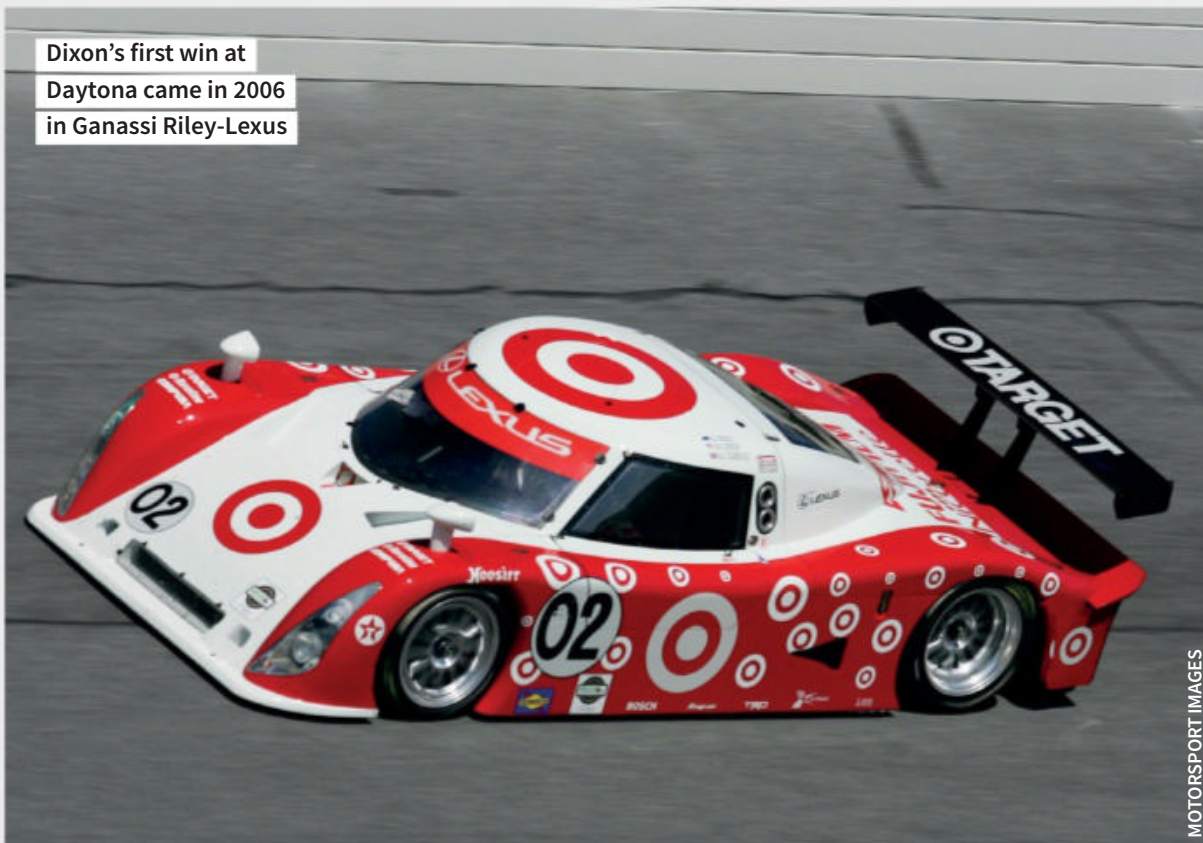
Kobayashi, who also acts as team principal, stressed the importance of what he described as "a consistent line-up of drivers who understand how to work together".

"We have a top driver

line-up in both cars, and I am happy to be part of it again in 2025," he said. "The team spirit and cooperation among all the drivers, and the team in general, grows with every race."

The last change at Toyota came when de Vries replaced Jose Maria Lopez for 2024. The Dutchman had been due to replace the Argentinian for 2023 before landing a Formula 1 drive.

GARY WATKINS



Dixon's first win at
Daytona came in 2006
in Ganassi Riley-Lexus

PRIAULX JR JOINS FACTORY FORD SQUAD FOR IMSA

IMSA

Seb Priaulx has joined Ford's factory line-up for the 2025 IMSA SportsCar Championship. The Briton, 23, will race one of the Mustang GT3s fielded by Multimatic Motorsports in the GT Daytona Pro class.

The son of three-time World Touring Car champion Andy Priaulx moves into a works Ford role after six-years on the books at Multimatic and a half-season campaign in the AO Racing Porsche 911 GT3-R that went on to win the GTD Pro title with Laurin Heinrich this season. His drive was announced last week when Ford took the wraps off a new-look line-up for its second IMSA campaign with the Mustang.

Priaulx (below) will share with Mike Rockenfeller, who retains his place in the GTD Pro roster. Christopher Mies and Frederic Vervisch will be full-season drivers in the second car after racing in the IMSA enduros this year. Ben Barker will join Priaulx and Rockenfeller for the long-distance races, with Dennis Olsen racing the other car in the enduros.

Joey Hand is leaving the IMSA squad but retains his position as a Ford factory driver. Harry Tincknell and Dirk Muller remain contracted to Multimatic.

GARY WATKINS



Dixon to race Meyer Shank Acura

DAYTONA 24 HOURS

Scott Dixon will return to the Daytona 24 Hours in January for a 22nd consecutive appearance. And for only the second time he will not be driving for Chip Ganassi Racing.

The six-time IndyCar title winner has joined the Meyer Shank Racing Acura squad for the IMSA SportsCar Championship long-distance events after the end of Ganassi's relationship with Cadillac left it without an endurance programme in 2025. Dixon's deal with the team was announced last week along with those of Alex Palou and Felix Rosenqvist.

Dixon, whose only previous Daytona appearance away from his long-time employer in IndyCar came in 2020 with Wayne Taylor Racing, will share one of the two MSR Acura ARX-06 LMDhs with Tom Blomqvist and Colin Braun. They will be joined at Daytona by MSR IndyCar driver Rosenqvist, who will be racing in the top class for the first time in his fourth attempt on the big race.

Reigning IndyCar champion Palou will fulfil the same role as Dixon, his teammate in open-wheelers, in the Acura in which Nick Yelloly and Renger van der Zande will contest the full season.

Team boss Mike Shank said of Dixon: "It's really cool to finally have him come on board after all these years. It's a no-brainer – Scott knows what he's doing in the IMSA endurance events."

Dixon, a three-time overall winner at Daytona, revealed that he had "almost joined MSR a couple of times in the past".

Palou's deal means he will do more than a single IMSA race for the first time: his previous outings were at Daytona in Ganassi Cadillacs in 2022 and 2024.

GARY WATKINS



First GTP/Hypercar
shot for Rosenqvist



No ads.
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CORVETTE TEAM IN LMP2

The Pratt Miller team, Chevrolet's long-time partner in GT racing, will expand into the LMP2 class of the IMSA Sports Car Championship with an ORECA-Gibson 07 next year. It will be its first involvement in prototype racing since it built the Intrepid RM-1 GTP for the 1991 season. Pietro Fittipaldi and Irishman James Roe, nephew of 1984 Can-Am champion Michael Roe, have been named as the first two drivers.

WINFIELD RETURNS

The Winfield Racing School – famed for its Volant Shell and Elf prizes that launched the careers of most top-line French drivers from the 1960s to the 1990s – is to re-enter competition. The Winfield Middle East team is to compete in the region's F4 championship in January and February, while in Europe there will be Winfield teams in the Ultimate Cup Series for Formula Regional cars and the Ligier JS Cup France.

HILL GETS DUBAI FERRARI

British Touring Car champion Jake Hill is to make his Dubai 24 Hours debut in January at the wheel of a Ferrari 296 GT3. Hill has joined the line-up of Era Motorsport, the team of Kyle Tilley with which he has made several appearances in historic racing and is attacking the full 24H Series. Hill and Tilley will be joined in Dubai by US-domiciled Scottish sportscar veteran Ryan Dalziel, historic ace Olly Bryant and Dwight Merriman.

ENGSTLER'S BIG ONE

DTM race winner Luca Engstler was hospitalised with possible concussion and leg injuries when he crashed his Grasser Lamborghini (below) heavily at the high-speed Mandarin kink in qualifying for the FIA GT World Cup race in Macau. The German was back at the Guia circuit to watch Sunday's race. "It's a one-hit wonder this event – I took a massive risk and went all in," he said.



STEPHEN LICKORISH



LAMBORGHINI WORLD FINALS Egor Orudzhev took victory in the Lamborghini Super Trofeo World Finals at Jerez last weekend – but only just. The Russian, an ace in Formula Renault 3.5 in the mid 2010s, won the second race of the double-header, and nicked the title from fourth-placed Hampus Ericsson, winner of race one, on a tiebreak of getting fastest lap. Orudzhev also enjoyed a smattering of luck – he was given a drive-through penalty for jumping the start, but a full-course yellow was called while he was in the pits serving it. **Photo by Maggi/Lamborghini**

WRC bins hybrid for 2025 season

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Hybrid power has been axed from the World Rally Championship's flagship Rally1 class for 2025.

As predicted by Autosport, the 100kW plug-in hybrid system, introduced in 2022 along with the new Rally1 cars, has fallen victim to rising costs. The decision was ratified by the FIA World Motor Sport Council following an e-vote, and will result in Rally1 cars being powered entirely by 1.6-litre turbocharged engines running on 100% sustainable fuel.

The cost of hybrid units has increased since control supplier Compact Dynamics introduced new safety guidelines at the Acropolis Rally in Greece in September. The company stipulated that all units had to be stripped and sent back to its factory for full repair if they suffered three shock errors over 15G or one over 25G, rather than reset on site during a rally.

M-Sport, the only non full-factory team in the top class, subsequently raised concerns about the feasibility of running a Rally1 programme.

"Following extensive dialogue with key stakeholders, it became clear that continuing to use the plug-in hybrid units provided under the existing supplier



MCKLEIN

agreement was no longer in the best interests of the WRC," said FIA chief technical and safety officer Xavier Mestelan-Pinon. "Once again, we have highlighted the championship's ability to adapt without diluting the sporting spectacle, while responsibly embracing the challenges of our times."

To maintain the same power-to-weight ratio as 2024, the minimum weight of Rally1 cars will be lowered from 1260kg to 1180kg, and air restrictor size reduced from 36mm to 35mm.

TOM HOWARD

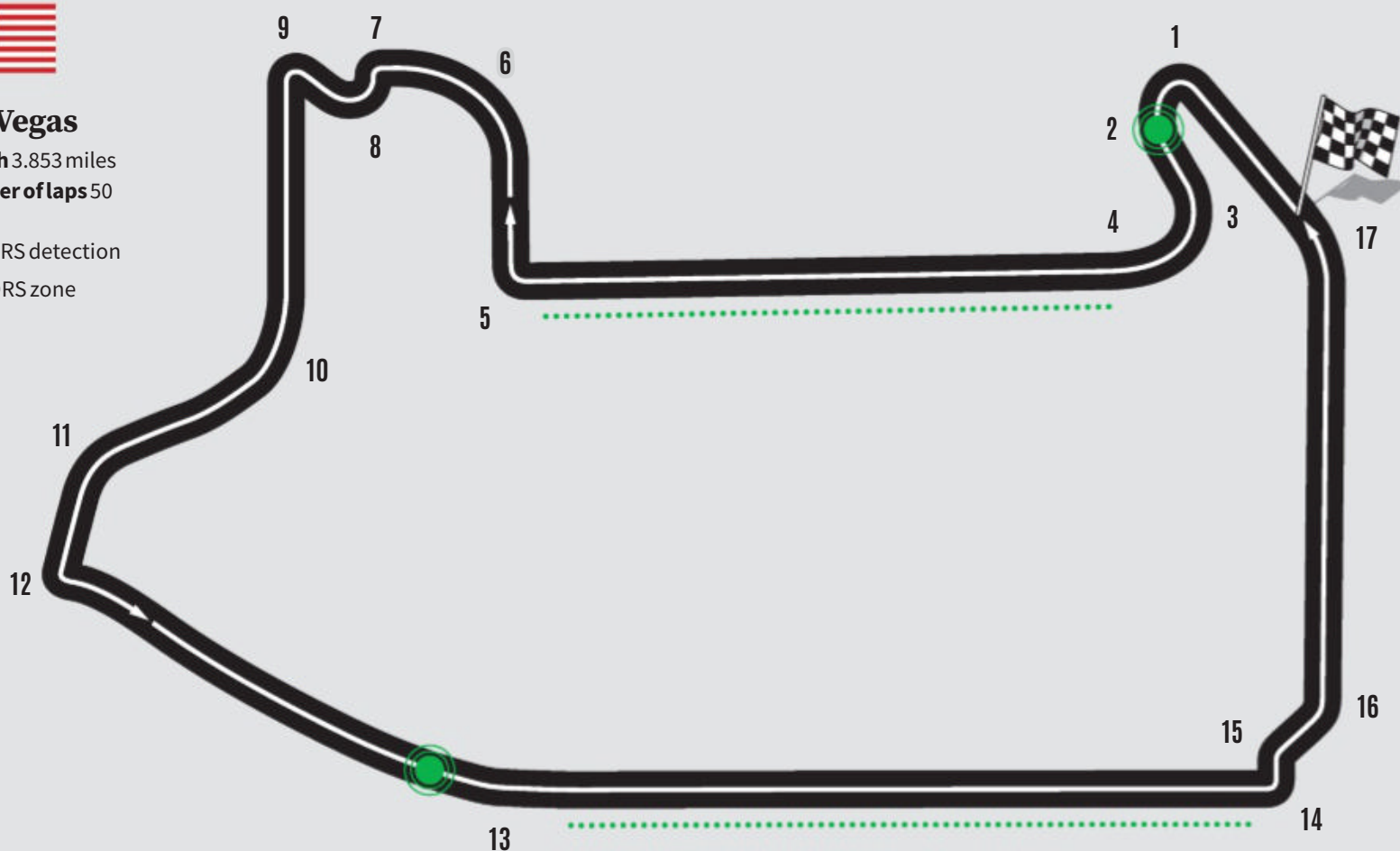
F1 LAS VEGAS GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



Las Vegas

Length 3.853 miles
Number of laps 50

DRS detection
 DRS zone



UK START TIMES

Friday 22 November
FP1 0230 FP2 0600

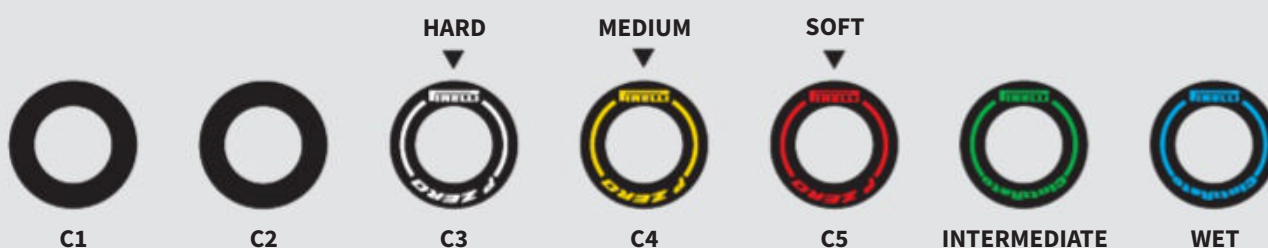
Saturday 23 November
FP3 0230
QUALIFYING 0600

Sunday 24 November
RACE 0600

CATCH THE RACE LIVE
SKY SPORTS F1
BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

TV Highlights
CHANNEL 4 1230

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	393
2	Norris	331
3	Leclerc	307
4	Piastri	262
5	Sainz	244

Constructors

1	McLaren	593
2	Ferrari	557
3	Red Bull	544
4	Mercedes	382
5	Aston Martin	86



LAS VEGAS STATS

Previous winners

2023	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
1982	Michele Alboreto	Tyrrell
1981	Alan Jones	Williams



2023 POLE POSITION

Charles Leclerc
1m32.726s

POLE LAP RECORD

Charles Leclerc
1m32.726s (2023)

RACE LAP RECORD

Oscar Piastri
1m35.490s (2023)



Las Vegas podiums

Michele Alboreto	1
Alan Jones	1
Max Verstappen	1
Alain Prost	1
John Watson	1
Charles Leclerc	1
Bruno Giacomelli	1
Eddie Cheever	1
Sergio Perez	1

2025

AUTOSPORT

A W A R D S



The new-look Autosport Awards will take place at a fresh venue and move from December to January for the next edition, and it's time for you to vote on some of the major categories.

Our writers have had plenty to say about the motorsport events of 2024 and now it's your turn. Over the following pages you will see the nominees for International Racing Driver of the Year, British Competition Driver of the Year, International Competition Car of the Year,

International Rally Driver of the Year and National Driver of the Year. You'll also find the nominations for Moment of the Year, which for the first time will be decided by Autosport readers instead of a judging panel.

You can vote for the candidate you think performed best in each category during the season. The winners will be announced across multiple digital platforms, including [autosport.com](https://www.autosport.com), as well as on a special night as

Autosport begins its 75th birthday celebrations at the Roundhouse on 29 January 2025.

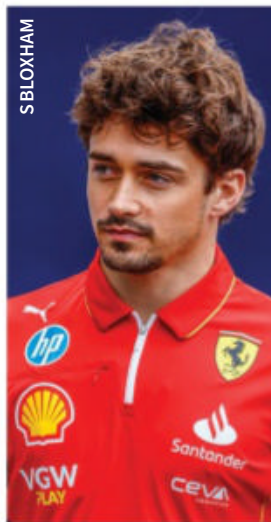
It's a huge extravaganza that is attended by key figures from the sport, including Formula 1 champions and team bosses. And it's not just about the reader votes. The Silverstone Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award is one of the most prestigious in all of motorsport, with David Coulthard, Jenson Button, George Russell and Lando



INTERNATIONAL RACING DRIVER

PRESENTED BY PIRELLI

Open to professional racing drivers competing at an international level



SBLOXHAM

Charles Leclerc

Ferrari's revival continued in 2024 and Leclerc led the charge more often than not. He finally banished his hometown misfortune with a fine win at the Monaco GP, and Leclerc's drive to snatch victory away from McLaren at Monza was beautifully executed.



NELSON

Alex Palou

A third IndyCar title in four seasons with Chip Ganassi Racing demonstrated the Spaniard's pre-eminence at the top of American single-seater racing. Palou wasn't as dominant as he had been in 2023, but two points-paying wins and four other podiums were enough.



MAUGER

Max Verstappen

Thanks to Red Bull's struggles, Verstappen was tested more in 2024 than he had been over the previous couple of campaigns. He built up a big lead early on and, after a couple of wobbles mid-season, underlined his authority with arguably his greatest drive at a wet Interlagos.



ROMNEY

Pascal Wehrlein

Jaguar's Nick Cassidy and Mitch Evans seemed set to take Formula E honours, but consistent Porsche man Wehrlein kept himself in contention after winning the opening round. A first and a second at the London finale were enough to snatch the crown.

BRITISH COMPETITION DRIVER

OF THE YEAR

Open to British drivers competing at an international level



SBLOXHAM

Ollie Bearman

A tricky F2 season with Prema was overshadowed by an excellent F1 debut – for Ferrari! – in the Saudi Arabian GP. Bearman's seventh place enhanced his reputation and helped him into a Haas F1 seat for 2025. He also scored a point for the US team in a Baku cameo.



MAUGER

Lewis Hamilton

The year was always going to be a strange one for the seven-time F1 world champion after his pre-season decision to head to Ferrari for 2025. There were times when he struggled with the Mercedes W15, but his British GP victory was one of several reminders of his class.



SBLOXHAM

Lando Norris

After knocking on the door for a few years, Norris had his big F1 breakthrough this season. Not only did he take his maiden win in Miami but, armed with a fully competitive McLaren, he became Verstappen's biggest threat and an F1 title contender for the first time.



TEE

George Russell

At the recent Brazilian Grand Prix, Russell overtook team-mate Hamilton in the F1 points standings. It was no less than he deserved, having battled hard with the difficult Mercedes W15. Russell picked up the pieces to win in Austria and was unlucky to lose victory in Belgium.

Norris among the contest's previous winners. The 2024 winner will be announced at the Autosport Awards.

The new Volunteer of the Year Award will add an extra dimension, celebrating the crucial efforts of those who support motorsport at all levels, and there are always special awards for those who have made major contributions to our favourite sport.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION CAR OF THE YEAR

Open to cars competing in any class of international circuit racing or rallying



Hyundai i20 N Rally1

After coming so close in recent years, Hyundai has finally ended Toyota's run of drivers' titles in 2024. As they head to the Rally Japan finale, only Hyundai team-mates Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak can take the crown. Hyundai also narrowly leads Toyota in the manufacturers' contest.



McLaren MCL38

McLaren's best F1 car for more than a decade launched the squad into a surprise title challenge. The line-up of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri has so far scored five GP victories, and McLaren leads Ferrari and Red Bull in the constructors' championship with three rounds to go.



Porsche 963

Sportscar racing is enjoying a resurgence as the Hypercar era really gets into its stride. Suspension tweaks boosted Porsche's 963 LMDh for 2024 and the car took drivers' titles on both sides of the Atlantic, in the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar series.



Red Bull RB20

The last Red Bull under Adrian Newey before his departure to Aston Martin, the RB20 won seven of the first 10 GPs this year. Developments didn't go as planned and the opposition has caught up, but Max Verstappen is now within touching distance of his fourth consecutive F1 crown.

INTERNATIONAL RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Open to professional or semi-professional rally drivers in international events



Thierry Neuville

The perennial bridesmaid looks set to take his first WRC title this year, with a 25-point lead heading into the final round. Key to the Hyundai driver's campaign has been his consistency, with seven top-fives as well as his two wins, scored in Monte Carlo and Greece.



Sebastien Ogier

A part-time campaign almost became a title challenge before errors and misfortune in recent rounds removed Ogier from contention. But three wins and three seconds in his first six outings for Toyota demonstrated the eight-time champion's undiminished ability.



Kalle Rovanpera

The reigning world champion caused some consternation when he decided to only commit to selected rounds this year. But four victories means he will end the season with more wins than any Hyundai driver whatever happens in Japan.



Ott Tanak

His campaign has been a mixed bag but victories on the Italian and Central European rounds, combined with four other podiums, have kept the 2019 champion in title contention. He'll need some good fortune to overturn Hyundai team-mate Neuville's advantage in the finale.

MOMENT OF THE YEAR PRESENTED BY BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT

Open to the standout moments from international-level motorsport



Norris gets his first GP win in Miami

Upgrades to McLaren's MCL38 allowed Lando Norris to demonstrate Red Bull-challenging race pace as he charged from fifth on the grid in Miami. He took advantage of a safety car period to jump early leader Max Verstappen and secure his first world championship grand prix win.



Ferrari wins epic Le Mans

Porsche arrived at the world's greatest endurance race as the narrow favourite, but a brilliant contest eventually boiled down to a fight between Ferrari and Toyota. In the end, the 499P of Antonio Fuoco, Miguel Molina and Nicklas Nielsen took victory by 14 seconds after 24 hours of tough racing.



Hamilton takes victory in British GP

Lewis Hamilton ended his win drought in a thrilling rain-affected British GP at Silverstone. Hamilton jumped to the front by stopping at the right time for slick tyres, then looked after his soft-compound rubber to hold off Max Verstappen and take a record-breaking ninth home victory.



Verstappen's masterclass in Brazil

After a mid-season barren spell, Max Verstappen bounced back with a masterclass in the Interlagos rain. After qualifying 17th, he charged up the field, benefiting as others pitted before a red flag gave him a free tyre stop. He then passed and drove away from Esteban Ocon to win by 19s.

NATIONAL DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Open to drivers racing in the BTCC, British GT or support categories and equivalent



Deagen Fairclough

An incredible season from the Hitech driver meant Fairclough secured the British F4 title by more than 200 points. His record tally of 14 wins – all from non-reversed-grid races – also earned him a place on the Silverstone Autosport BRDC Young Driver Award.



Jake Hill

Hill has been one of the class acts of the BTCC for several seasons and clinched his first title after some sensational and respectful racing with rival Ingram. Hill scored more wins (eight) than anyone else with his WSR BMW, and also starred whenever he appeared in historic machinery.



Tom Ingram

Like Hill, Ingram was superb during 2024 and could point to moments of misfortune that cost him more than the eight points by which he lost the crown. Always rapid in the Excelr8 Hyundai, Ingram also took a TVR victory in Goodwood's RAC TT Celebration.



Sandy Mitchell

The Lamborghini ace was the undoubted star of British GT this year, often setting the pace and winning more times than anyone else, alongside Alex Martin. Mitchell narrowly lost the drivers' crown for reasons outside of his control but helped Barwell to the teams' title.

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Glimmer of light amid turmoil

As the governing body is again the focus of negative publicity, news that it's taking strides in an area of Formula 1 driver safety deserves credit

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Formula 1 heads to Las Vegas this week under yet another cloud of bizarre FIA decision-making. The championship's race director, Niels Wittich, is gone three races from the end of a season that is still mathematically alive for the drivers' championship, and has the potential for a whopping-sized portion of controversy should any of the remaining players bet big on something novel in Sin City.

The track, with its 1.4-mile straight down the city's Strip, is perfect territory for a cunning understanding of aeroelasticity...

The pressure this week is amped up by Formula One Management, too. As the race promoter, it understandably wants this event to grab attention – although that came at the cost of alienating some fans last year. But as the championship rights holder's most important race, one that took in embarrassing scenes of the track breaking and spectators being hauled out of the venue for its inaugural running, F1 executives really don't want anything else going wrong on the sporting side. This is the one area it cannot control.

There's no suggestion that Rui Marques, Wittich's replacement, will not be able to handle things effectively. He has recent experience from Formula 2 and F3, plus the chaos of last weekend's Macau GP (see page 18). And the Vegas organisers have made a point of saying the water valve covers – one of which wrecked

“Messaging has been a consistent issue under Mohammed Ben Sulayem's FIA presidency”

Carlos Sainz's Ferrari just eight minutes into Vegas FP1 last year – have undergone special treatment to try to avoid a repeat.

The timing of the change is the needless problem here. And it chimes with so many other things that the FIA has got wrong this year. On Wittich's exit, communications again have gone awry. The governing body's statement says he “stepped down” to “pursue new opportunities”, yet he claims he was fired.

Messaging has been a consistent issue under Mohammed Ben Sulayem's FIA presidency. Poor explanations damaged a laudable push – with some sources saying this mainly came from Wittich and his experience of working with junior drivers before getting the F1 race director role full-time in 2022 – on wearing jewellery in race cars. The sensible effort to try to make drivers aware of how their words can unleash a torrent of social media abuse towards

officials in our polarised societies and their turbocharging of nonsense on internet platforms was likewise knocked off course.

Here, Ben Sulayem has no one else to blame given it was his comments on driver swearing on F1 broadcasts that meant the initiative got incorrectly recast as a clampdown on competitor expression. The Grand Prix Drivers' Association's recent letter regarding Ben Sulayem's messages and tone makes their position starkly clear. And, overall, the drivers feel they're not being listened to as important F1 stakeholders.

But as they and hundreds of other F1 staff head into another exhausting triple-header, at least the FIA has made one important step in a difficult year. And, although there's inevitable snarking from some quarters about power steering and cruise control, it's one that covers the irrefragable realm of driver safety.

After the F1 Commission meeting last week, the FIA announced that, from 2025, driver cooling kits the governing body has been developing over the past year will be mandatory when extreme heat temperatures are reached. This point hasn't yet been codified in the rules but, given the 2023 Qatar GP ran through 31-32C (with cockpit temperatures reaching north of 50C), this is a logical expectation for the rule to kick in. In Qatar, Williams driver Logan Sargeant withdrew with heatstroke, Alpine driver Esteban Ocon vomited in his helmet, and Aston Martin racer Lance Stroll briefly passed out. The temperature issue was compounded by the track's high-speed and technical layout, with none of the slight respite that the drivers can grab on the Singapore circuit.

When the new rule does apply, the teams will be required to fit the new cooling devices to each car. Autosport understands that, as things stand, they will be able to produce their own versions of an FIA prototype that was tested at last month's Mexican GP. That system involved a block of ice providing a heat exchange to fluid that was pumped around the vest in a so-far-unnamed driver's overalls via a piping system during FP1.

The teams appear to have the option of running this device, or developing alternative methods via a refrigeration tank containing an already cooled substance that's pumped through pipes to a driver's cooling vest, instead of using the ice block method already tested. Or they could instead feed cooled air into a driver's race suit via a fan system. Whichever method is chosen, the device will have to be placed in either the cockpit side structure and bodywork or in the cockpit itself. The FIA expects it to weigh no more than 5kg.

Further tests over the remaining 2024 F1 events are planned. But the fact that the word “freezing” has come up from Autosport sources after the Mexico test suggests the device works in principle. Its unveiling doesn't ease the pressure on the FIA. But it shows it can work to solve awkward F1 problems. Much more is now needed elsewhere. ✨



A different kind of safety problem

The incident-strewn Macau Grand Prix vividly demonstrated the pressing need to crack down on declining driving standards across junior formulas

STEPHEN LICKORISH

The contrast could not have been greater. While the FIA GT World Cup race in Macau last weekend was a thriller and ran without stoppage in challenging wet conditions, once the safety car had peeled in after the first five laps, the same could certainly not be said of the 71st Macau Grand Prix itself. Yes, there were a couple of controversial clashes in the GT contest, but nothing more than could be expected when many of the world's greatest sportscar drivers ferociously battle around the tight and twisty Guia circuit.

The Formula Regional World Cup finale, however, was sadly anything but a thriller. Held on a far drier track, there were far more incidents. Five safety cars and a red flag meant the most consecutive proper racing laps achieved was a paltry three. And the qualification race the day before was little better, although it was effectively shortened amid a downpour. These almost literal damp squibs were in keeping with the pattern of an event where red flag followed red flag in the single-seater sessions. After 12 such stoppages were tallied across the two qualifying segments, the entire field was summoned to an additional drivers' briefing to be told the continual errors and bad driving had to stop.

Such a course of action is indicative of FIA Single Seater Commission president Emanuele Pirro's desire to tackle poor driving standards across the junior formulas. "Motorsport has made huge progress in passive safety, in protecting a driver during an accident," Pirro told Autosport last Thursday. "It can still be improved, but I see very little margin. On the contrary, in active safety – in making sure an accident doesn't happen – we have gone backwards. Because the feeling of safety for drivers made them dare drive beyond what they should do. And I think it's the responsibility of the FIA to make sure this active safety is the focus to make sure less crashes happen. You know the number of our safety cars and it's not the fault of the race director that he calls too many safety cars, it's the fault of drivers who crash too much."

Given Pirro's impressive racing CV – which includes wins around Macau's streets – those words really mean something. This is not just someone sitting at a desk commenting from afar; he fundamentally gets it and recognises the size of the problem. After the qualifying chaos, he added: "For me, where we all should work is to change the mindset of the drivers, and this is a very broad problem. Motorsport now is a sport where, just giving an example, if you drive occasionally at 101% or 102%, you get away with it. Sometimes you lose a little bit of time. Sometimes you get a track-limit penalty. Sometimes you even gain a little bit somehow. And if you do 101% here, you bang the wall. I think the mindset of today's drivers, because of how motorsport is shaped, especially its circuits, is you cannot

accept not to give 100% every single time."

That attitude of constantly going all-out can obviously create problems around more unforgiving tracks like in Macau. And Pirro's sentiments are echoed by Prema's Alex Dunne, who innocently got caught up in the first of the Q2 crashes, depriving him a chance of potentially starring at the front. "Surprisingly, the best session we had was FP1 and I think it's because, at the end of FP1, all of the drivers who maybe were lacking a bit of

"In active safety – making sure an accident doesn't happen – we have gone backwards"

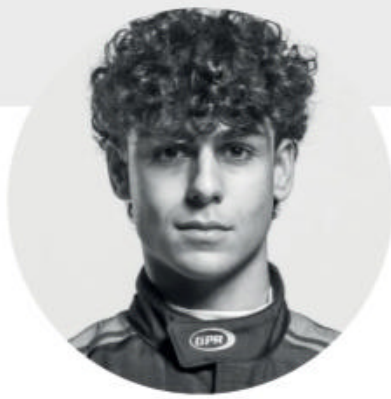
confidence come in and realise how far they are off the pace," he said. "They go out in the next session and try to make up all of that time in one corner and it's just not going to happen. Every driver that's been to Macau, they should know Macau is a place where you have to build up – you don't go out and try to set the world alight on your first lap, you have to build into it."

It is important to point out that there were some mitigating factors – a "perfect storm", as Pirro puts it – that contributed to the sheer volume of incidents last weekend. It was the first time Formula Regional machinery had tackled the Guia circuit, so there were no banks of previous data for teams and drivers to reference. And the unusually wet weather meant the first time the drivers experienced the track in the dry was the all-important (and much interrupted) final qualifying session.

Does that mean the decision to run the GP for FRegional instead of FIA F3 was the wrong one? Certainly not. The event returned to its traditional roots of assembling a crop of racers from a kaleidoscope of different series instead of effectively being a non-championship round for one. That drivers in F3 or even F2 were prepared to step back demonstrates the unique appeal of this wonderful event.

And the chaos of last weekend certainly does not mean the Guia track is now unsuitable for modern single-seaters. Accidents are inevitable, but just look at last year, where there were fewer incidents in the GP-supporting F4 race despite these drivers coming from another rung down the ladder. Instead, it is now down to the FIA, drivers, teams and coaches to ensure the 72nd edition of the Macau GP is remembered for the right reasons. ✨

 P48 MACAU GP REPORT



Looking back, focusing ahead

A standout Formula 3 driver and Red Bull junior talks about his season and graduation to F2 next year

ARVID LINDBLAD

It was a good season for me in FIA Formula 3. I went in knowing it was going to be really, really challenging, as F4 to F3 is a big jump, I only did one year of F4 in Italy, and then straight into F3 with Prema. I had to make sure that I was giving my absolute everything on all fronts. It wasn't even about winning in the beginning; it was just about trying to be in the top 10 and be competitive. We did a really good job over the winter, we prepared well, I worked hard, and I arrived in Bahrain and won my first race.

Winning on my debut was a special moment, and that filled me with a lot of confidence, especially after a difficult end to the 2023 season. It took a bit of weight off my shoulders, but I knew I still hadn't really achieved anything, because, OK, I'd won on my debut, and I think I was the youngest ever F3 race winner [16 years, six months], but it was a sprint race. It wasn't the proper feature race, so I knew that I still had to improve.

From that point on, there was so much development and learning every time I got in the car. I would say all the way from my first test at Jerez to Silverstone [in July], I was learning, and I was getting better. I broke quite a few records across the season: the youngest F3 race winner, winning the 100th race of the current era, tied for the most wins in a single season, and the highest F3 win percentage.

It was a very good year and I'm happy with how it went. It was a big challenge going in, and I dealt with it, and I was able to make it work. I'm very grateful to everyone at Red Bull, everyone at Prema, and all my support team who helped me, because it was a big challenge.

I worked a lot with Red Bull this year. The head of the Driver Academy at Red Bull Racing is Guillaume Rocquelin – 'Rocky', who was Sebastian Vettel's race engineer when he won four world championships. He's extremely experienced in motorsport, he knows what it takes to be a winner, and what characteristics you need. He taught me a lot on and off track, so I have to give a lot of thanks to him because, while everyone this year played a huge part, he was one of the most important people.

To come in and have enough seat time to be competitive in the first place is not easy. You really have to learn as much as you can, every time you're in the car. There are so many more factors you have to look into and so many different variables compared to F4. I think F3 is unique, with 30 cars and the tyres arguably have the shortest lifespan. There were so many sessions this year where it was literally one lap, and it was pointless even doing a second, because they were gone. You try to maximise every opportunity to learn, and the preparation is super-important.



I am really happy to be part of the BRDC SuperStars programme. The whole of the British Racing Drivers' Club is amazing. They have the SuperStars as part of it, which gives opportunities to us young drivers. It's great to feed on that knowledge and expertise and learn from other people in the club who have achieved so much. There are many world champions across all disciplines, so it's been a fantastic opportunity, and it's helped me a lot this season being able to talk to them.

I really enjoyed my time at Prema Racing. I was very happy with the team and the environment, and I didn't really want to leave. In the end, like all of us, I'm trying to get to Formula 1, and F2 and F3 are categories that you need to perform in. If you don't, you won't get that opportunity.

Red Bull have had a very good collaboration with Campos Racing this year and I'm excited to be working with them in F2 next year. They're a really strong team and everything I've seen and everything they're doing so far is impressive, and I think that's being translated onto the race track. With Isack Hadjar, they've won the most feature races this season and he's fighting for the title with two rounds to go, so I'm really looking forward to next year. I know I'm in a good place and I've got a really good team around me.

It's going to be an interesting dynamic, because I've been in an Italian team since the end of 2019 in karting. It'll be my first Spanish team, so I'm looking forward to a different culture and a different atmosphere, but in the end, from what I've seen so far, they're really hungry to win, and that's all that matters. It doesn't matter what race, nationality or what gender you are. I want to win, and I want to have that shared interest and passion with the people I work with – that's what excites me most. ✨

Lessons learned before full-time graduation

Three 'supersub' appearances as a Ferrari junior in 2024 suggest that the new Haas recruit will hit the ground running in his first full season next year

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

“I

t's tough because I didn't deliver a very good race and made a lot of mistakes. I made too many. It was definitely tough conditions, but I still wasn't good enough...” A Ferrari driver spoke those words after the recent Brazilian Grand Prix. And, for anyone thinking such relentless self-criticism must be the work of Scuderia

superstar Charles Leclerc rather than team junior Ollie Bearman, the comparison between the two goes handily further.

Like Leclerc, Bearman is a product of the Ferrari Driver Academy. And also like Leclerc, he's shown a searing turn of qualifying speed in both his substitute appearances for Haas this term, after he'd taken over Carlos Sainz's Ferrari mid-way through the Jeddah round towards the start of the year. In that appearance, where he finished a creditable seventh, Bearman became the 148th British driver to start a world championship grand prix. He will carry on that journey full-time with Haas in 2025, as part of a fully refreshed driver line-up for the American squad, alongside Esteban Ocon.

Bearman's unassuming, self-deprecating nature has already gone down well with Haas insiders. And they were already very impressed by his free practice efforts at the 2023 Mexican GP. There, his immediate understanding of his assignment – to do well enough to help the team work through its weekend set-up

checklist without trying too hard in showcasing his own abilities and so risking a shunt – went a long way to propelling him into consideration for the race seat he's now secured.

Even so, the fact that Haas has been able to get to know Bearman well enough to start properly understanding his character is actually something of a problem. By stepping in when Kevin Magnussen was ruled out with sudden illness on the eve of the Brazil weekend – with such short notice that Bearman was awoken by a call to action from Haas team principal Ayao Komatsu at 6.30am on the first day of Interlagos track action – the 19-year-old has now started three F1 races.

This means he will be unavailable to take part in the season-ending Abu Dhabi Pirelli tyre test, where rookies must be fielded in one car for each team, with a regular racer in the other. Haas is still deciding which rookie it will slot in alongside Esteban Ocon, who, unlike Ferrari-bound Lewis Hamilton at Mercedes,

has been given permission from his current Alpine squad. In theory, Bearman could still turn out at this event for Ferrari.

But, speaking after he'd finished 12th in that wet and wild race at Interlagos last time out, Bearman was unbothered by the latest twist in his rapid rise to full-time F1 life.

“Racing, with other cars and stuff, is much more useful than a test,” he explains. “And [in Brazil] I got to learn the track, which I wasn't going to be able to do without this race.” >>

“Bearman's self-deprecating nature has already gone down well with Haas insiders”



Parallels with Leclerc's rise (left); Saudi cameo for Ferrari impressed

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES

S BLOXHAM

MAUGER

Bearman's appearances in F1 mean he doesn't qualify as a rookie for end-of-season tyre test



After shining when he replaced Magnussen in Baku, on this occasion due to the Dane's penalty points ban, Bearman's Brazil weekend was rather more challenging. He did show well against the clock in the dry sprint qualifying, where he made SQ3 and temporary team-mate Nico Hulkenberg failed. A mistake in the Senna S cost him any chance of improving upon 10th in that session, although Komatsu claimed that a "control box failure" that impacted his tyre warm-up when still in blankets back in the garage was behind the slide. "He should have been fighting for P6," Komatsu asserts of Bearman's SQ3 appearance – a stage of qualifying he'd missed by just 0.13s back in Baku.

But that was really as good as it got at Interlagos. The sprint, which also took place in dry conditions, featured Bearman initially holding his ground before fading badly in the closing stages. Alex Albon, Hamilton, Franco Colapinto and Ocon tore past. His issue: severe tyre degradation. "At the end we were just lacking pace, so we've got a lot of work to do," is Bearman's assessment of that result.

Hulkenberg, however, was also sliding down the order even before his gearbox problem put him out with five laps to go. This suggests it wasn't specific to Bearman's driving, and evokes memories of Haas's problem with race tyre management throughout 2023. Generally, this has been banished in 2024, and the ensuing wet weather in Brazil stopped the team from seeing how its subsequent adjustments would have transformed a dry GP distance at Interlagos.

And, while he can claim some comfort from Hulkenberg's unforced error that led to his exit from the GP, Bearman's travails in this race were also difficult. He tagged Colapinto in the opening phase and spun – a mistake compounded by a subsequent 10s penalty for causing the collision.

Afterwards, Bearman rallied to catch back up with and get past the Williams – a charge that included a bolshy pass on Hamilton. But he slid off solo at the restart after the first race stoppage, and later spun again while chasing Sainz, eventually beating only the two Saubers and an off-key Fernando Alonso. "I feel a bit less confident in the car on inters," he reflected. "Especially in high speed, the car is a bit less predictable, which is never a nice feeling in slippery conditions."

Bearman was unafraid to voice his opinion on his penalty for the Colapinto clash, calling it "really harsh". This does, however, miss the point made by Williams that the Argentinian was subsequently left dealing with diffuser damage.

"It was a crazy weekend, that's for sure," Bearman says of his overall experience in Brazil. "Especially, with the weather, with a different format [this was Bearman's first time competing in a sprint weekend schedule], it's been impressively strange.

"It's been impressively strange. But you know, that's good for me to learn new things"



Tough times in Brazil, but Bearman also sees it as a lot of useful data logged

ASENOV



Komatsu extols the benefits of young drivers getting more F1 seat time

But you know, that's good for me to learn new things. And doing a race in the wet is very rare in F1 so I need to make the most of all of them and take all of the laps. It was great experience."

Like Leclerc when he made his F1 debut with Sauber in 2018, Bearman will retain his Ferrari links in 2025. His preparation has already included considerable time on the manufacturer's simulator at its Maranello base, which Haas is hoping will provide a benefit when new partner Toyota gets its first such piece of kit up and running. "Ollie has been driving the Maranello simulator for our aero development as well," Komatsu explained on the day Haas's Toyota deal was announced. "So, to keep some consistency there, Ollie is keeping what he's been doing, but is

going to drive the simulator in Banbury as well."

Looking back to 2016, when he was racing towards that year's GP3 crown and Bearman was 11 and karting, Leclerc made four F1 practice appearances for Haas. Come 2025, in a tweak

to the rules, it will be mandatory to field a rookie driver in four sessions, double the current requirement. But it will still be fewer than the six FP1 outings Haas had planned to put Bearman through in 2024 to assess his potential for a full-time drive, before circumstances meant it got to see what he could do in real racing scenarios anyway. "People like Ollie and people like Colapinto, they're doing great job right when they get into the Formula 1 car," Komatsu says of this rule change. "So, I think it's very important as an F1 community to make sure we provide that kind of opportunity for young drivers to drive F1 cars. I was all in favour of increasing the FP1s for young drivers."

Boosting Bearman's preparations for the 2025 campaign is Haas's new Toyota deal meaning it will also be able to run its first Testing of Previous Cars (TPC) programme. He and Ocon will get two days in this from the newly created maximum of 20 permitted under the rules, with Haas's plan understood to be starting from early 2025. After that, there will be just the 1.5 days for each driver of Bahrain pre-season testing in Haas's 2025 challenger before the new campaign gets under way.

Avoiding any further tyre management dramas will be a must, but helpfully Haas is now well drilled in adopting a testing plan to iron out that exact issue (see page 24). The team will also be just four years on from getting two rookies up to speed in the forms of Mick Schumacher and Nikita Mazepin back in 2021. Their relations exploded swiftly that year, and Ocon also has quite a reputation for intra-team battling. How Bearman navigates that challenge will be a key theme to watch in his first full F1 season. But that is where his unexpected cameos will be of considerable benefit, as he seeks to emulate Leclerc in making himself the star of a Ferrari-powered team against well-established opposition. ❄

Haas had planned six free practice outings in 2024 as part of its assessment of Bearman



HONE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES/HAAS F1 TEAM

Haas's silver lining to Brazilian rain clouds

There were clear winners from Alpine's shock double podium in the 2024 Brazilian GP. The Enstone squad and its publicity-hungry celebrity farmer neighbour, obviously, plus drivers Esteban Ocon and Pierre Gasly. But for Haas, its rival's result meant being shuffled down from sixth in the constructors' championship.

This was just when the American squad looked to have made a decisive shift in its year-long battle for that spot with RB, the team riding a breakthrough on its braking system that had elevated Kevin Magnussen to points-securing form alongside regular scorer Nico Hulkenberg in Mexico. Seventh would still bring a \$30million prize money hike for Haas, which finished last in 2023. Alpine stands to gain the same sum if it can hold on to sixth to the end of this year, given its jump from the ninth place it had occupied



since Baku in mid-September.

Before travelling to Brazil, Haas was on a run of five points-scoring finishes, while Alpine had taken just a single point from the same run. That provides handy motivation for what

remains F1's smallest squad but, even if it's unsuccessful in regaining sixth position, Haas team boss Ayao Komatsu is already highlighting a positive amid its unpleasant Brazilian surprise: this is how

good Ocon was in that treacherous race – one he led for 14 laps. In the short phase after early leaders George Russell and Lando Norris had pitted, he was even carving chunks out of eventual winner Max Verstappen.

"I never expected Alpine to score a double podium, but we always knew that anything can happen," Komatsu said in Brazil. "In these kinds of chaotic races, anyone can score 15 points. I wasn't expecting 33 points, but it happened. Congratulations to Alpine, their car was mega in wet conditions, so quick.

"If there is a positive,

"If there is a positive, Esteban, our driver for next year, drove so well"

Esteban, our driver for next year, drove so well. So, I sent a message to congratulate him straight away. You have to respect your opposition – they did a great job, they had the correct car for these conditions."

SBLOXHAM



Keeping faith in the American dream

Haas has made a big step forward in 2024. The task now is to repass Alpine for the top six in the constructors' standings, and crack on next season

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

“H

Haas is going to be a serious competitor in the years to come...” So says Nico Hulkenberg, and he would know. His two seasons in Formula 1 with the American squad have been stuffed full of potential. In the second, Haas really made good on its promise, the team climbing from dead last in 2023 to running solidly in

sixth in the constructors' championship.

Alpine's smash-and-grab double podium last time out in Brazil means it has snuck in ahead of Haas and the RB squad hitherto engaged in a close fight for that top-six position. But there are still three races left in F1's longest-ever season and just a three-point gap to close for Haas, which had been on a run of five consecutive points-scoring races ahead of the Interlagos round.

The fact that Haas is in contention for a possible \$40million prize money swing from 2023 highlights how it's already transformed its fortunes in F1's congested midfield. Securing sixth would still be adrift of the fifth-place high-water mark of 2018, but still a good result for what remains the smallest squad in the pitlane. The improved VF-24 is key to explaining the team's progress.

“Last year's car was inconsistent, it was quite nasty,” explained newly installed team principal Ayao Komatsu back at Bahrain pre-season testing, ahead of which he'd been refusing to consider the team doing any better than the last place in which it ended 2023. “Depending on the conditions – tyre condition, wind condition or track temperature – the car really wasn't behaving in a predictable manner, whereas this year's car is consistent.”

Addressing the previous aerodynamic platform instability was a must heading into 2024. Haas's focus during pre-season testing was to eschew performance running on softer tyres, getting its drivers to buy into new ways of treating the fragile Pirelli rubber for an additional gain on improved in-race tyre management. It did this with 15 long-run stints over the opening two days of action in Bahrain, with Hulkenberg and Kevin Magnussen pushing hard on the tyres at different stages, around changes to their differential, brake bias and engine braking settings (the steering wheel ‘tools’ drivers regularly cite for set-up adjustments). The team then analysed the results and combined these with its understanding of the improved aerodynamic stability on its 2024 challenger.

The results were impressive, with Komatsu left feeling “we can race” after the Bahrain opener. Even so, there remain examples



Smallest team in the pitlane has transformed its fortunes in F1's midfield

TRENTITZ



Hulkenberg reckons there are big things to come from Haas, and Magnussen may have a role to play

SUTTON

of how tyre management remains a challenge for Haas, with substitute Ollie Bearman caught out when the team told him to drive too conservatively when he replaced Magnussen in Baku, when Hulkenberg was bearing down in the other car having realised that the tyres could take more than the team had thought. Then in Brazil, both drivers (with Magnussen again absent, this time due to illness) struggled to keep the medium rubber alive in the sunny sprint race.

But the upshots of Haas's efforts to improve in a critical area of F1 car performance have been impressive overall. And it was the team's early results – such as its double points finish in Australia – that convinced team owner Gene Haas to sign off on additional investment where he'd previously been reluctant. This led to Komatsu kicking off the team's first major hiring spree, as it seeks to expand from its current headcount of 300 by 10%.

For any F1 squad, developments during the season are key. On this front, and highlighted last year when it just couldn't solve its tyre weakness, Haas has typically struggled. But in 2024 it has bucked this trend. McLaren-style sidepods and a reworked floor arrived at Silverstone in July following a stream of comparatively minor parts changes. Then a major package that featured another new floor was unleashed for last month's United States GP.

"This year, all the upgrades, it's not like everything worked completely perfectly, but none of the upgrades made our car slower," Komatsu explained in Mexico last month. "So, every time we put upgrades on the car, we actually made the car faster.

"What's changed, it's really that we've still got the same people, so details about communication, trying to work together as a team, listen to each other, give people freedom. Really those are, let's say, simple fundamental things that we really focused on and I'm really pleased that now you're seeing the result of it."

There have been less obvious improvements elsewhere. Insiders speak of improved morale compared to its tricky recent run since the false dawn of its early 2022 revival. Komatsu confirmed this in Mexico, saying the team "atmosphere is really good". Examples of this manifesting itself include the team's frequent knuckling down on urgent repair work – for example, repairing the damage from Bearman's FP3 crash in Baku, or fitting the upgrade package for Magnussen between the sprint race and GP qualifying at the US GP.

Chief mechanic Toby Brown explains that "one of the problems >>>



Improved morale and staff retention has brought tangible benefits



Efforts were focused on tyre management in pre-season Bahrain test

HAAS XXXX

ASENOV

GALLOWAY

we've had in the past, I think, was a lot of people coming and going'. Improved retention within the pitcrew has resulted in Haas's average pitstop time improving by a second versus 2023. Gene Haas has also committed to buying a new paddock motorhome for European races from 2025 in an effort to improve surroundings for staff at races, as well as impress sponsors and other guests.

As the 2024 season run-in kicked off ahead of the Austin round, Haas revealed another boost: the team has brought Toyota back to the F1 fold with a technical partnership with its Gazoo Racing division. Komatsu's friendship with TGR's general manager of motorsport engineering, Masaya Kaji, was an important part of arranging the new alliance, which brings benefits to each party. For Haas, it views Toyota's expertise and resources as a way to speed up development, with the Japanese giant already building a new F1 simulator at the squad's Banbury facility. In return, Toyota will eventually send its engineers to Haas to acquire F1-level processes and design ideas, while not having to buy its way onto the grid.

Toyota will also fund certain elements of car production for Haas – Komatsu's example is a front wing for which Dallara, the team's other technical partner, would have charged a price – via the branding exposure it is now getting via its logos on the VF-24 and Haas team kit.

Haas is also starting its first Testing of Previous Cars (TPC) programme. Once 2025 drivers Bearman and Esteban Ocon have completed their permitted two days each of running from the maximum 20 in any TPC allocation, it's expected Toyota-contracted candidates will be among the roster. These drivers – such as WEC racer Ryo Hirakawa – could be used as Haas reserve options around the TPC programme. Haas has also bolstered its Ferrari engine customer relationship, extending it to at least the end of 2028. It will also keep its Dallara arrangement alongside Toyota's input.

"Ferrari and Dallara have been amazing partners since day one," Komatsu explained. "Ferrari obviously the PU partner, gearbox, suspension, hydraulics, etc. Those areas, obviously, Toyota's not touching. The area that Toyota's touching is the area that we don't get support from Ferrari and that we've been doing on our own. That really just adds to our capability and then a chance to understand the car better so that we can make our team more competitive."

At last month's Mexican GP, a race where Magnussen successfully repelled Oscar Piastri's recovering McLaren with strong late-race pace, Komatsu was asked to describe the expected length of the Toyota deal, as well as whether it meant the manufacturer might have a first refusal option for buying Haas in the future. While this seems unlikely in the short-to-medium term given Toyota has no plans to build its own F1 engine, he nevertheless replied: "To start with, Gene's not selling the team. Every single time he's asking me,

"Gene's not selling the team. I believe he had so many offers, but refused every single one"



Komatsu has now turned his attention to sorting out strategy issues



Technical partnership with Toyota is very much in the long term

'How can we go better? What can we do to make the car go faster?'

"He's not interested in selling. I believe he had so many offers, actually, but he refused every single one of them. So, the team's not up for sale. And then we haven't even spoken about a first refusal or anything like that. That's not been the topic. It [the Toyota deal] is a long term, very long term."

As it now heads back to its home country for the Las Vegas GP, Haas is hoping it can rely on its recent progress to close the unexpected gap to Alpine in the constructors' standings. This was illustrated by Magnussen's pace in Mexico, which followed his double Q3 outings at Austin. There, he would have joined Hulkenberg in the points in the GP had he not been given a

second pitstop when it was clear that the one-stopper was the better option.

Ironing out such kinks in race strategy decisions is understood to now be in Komatsu's sights as he heads towards the first anniversary of his promotion to leading

Haas in place of the ousted Guenther Steiner. He'll also want Haas to avoid embarrassing operational situations that have crept up this year, such as its double disqualification from Monaco qualifying for an error made in setting the flap gap on its rear wing, or a fuel miscalculation costing Hulkenberg in Jeddah qualifying. This came around Magnussen's early season gripes regarding consistently finding traffic on run plans during qualifying.

Magnussen's uptick in form before his Interlagos absence stemmed from how, alongside the Austin upgrades, he was suddenly feeling much more confidence using the VF-24's brakes. "This year it's been very inconsistent on the brakes and I feel like we hopefully fixed that," he explained in Mexico. "[Before] when I hit the brakes, they sort of have a bit of lag and then they bite a little while after hitting the brakes. It's that initial feeling that I hit the brakes very hard. My peak brake pressure is always way higher than Nico and so I think I just need to feel the brakes switch on immediately, and that's been really hurting my confidence on entries. It upsets you in a bad way when you already feel uncomfortable with the brakes. So that's been a big help. To know that they bite on the same way every time, that's a big thing for me."

As previously reported by Autosport, Haas has now confirmed that it is in discussions with Magnussen for him to stay with the team in a formal role in 2025 – as a possible part-time reserve and TPC driver, plus using his experience as a McLaren simulator driver.

Next year will be another key chapter in Haas's young F1 story, one where it will need to make early decisions on when to switch to development for the championship's new rules era in 2026, alongside needing to keep its constructors' prize money high in the immediate term. But it will certainly be doing so with renewed strength after its impressive 2024. ✨



“A masterpiece
of complexity”

42

Track
openings

140

Staff required
to operate
openings

HOW THE LAS VEGAS GP COMES TOGETHER

Closing some of the busiest streets in the United States to host Formula 1 is not an easy undertaking...

MARK MANN-BRYANS

What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. Unless you are building a temporary circuit to host a Formula 1 grand prix, that is. Even before the first practice session had started at this year's season-opening race in Bahrain, preparations were well under way for this weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix, with the set-up, installation and dismantling of the 3.8-mile track throwing up unique challenges.

With 7.6 miles of track barriers, 3500 track barrier blocks and 1750 temporary light units required, it is a process that began well before the first car takes to the Strip this weekend.

“Every year we have the authority to close down what are the most significant streets and avenues in the city,” explains Las Vegas GP general manager Terry Miller. “That 3.8 miles is right in the heart

of one of the most significant resort and entertainment districts in the world. It goes from in front of the mainstays of MGM and Caesars, and it goes around the new creation of the Sphere, so it captures every moment of the heart of Las Vegas.

“Our process is such that we have to begin somewhere around January, February in what is all the regulatory process, even though we did it the year before. It's a new year and we have to go through and show them all of our engineering information, all of our logistics information. Show all of our safety components that are in for the installation of the track. Then we have to show the same for the actual race event, and then we have to show how we're going to dismantle everything. All three of those are unique.

“Unlike some other F1 races, we can't just shut everything



HORSESHOE.



6
Temporary bridges

BAGNALL/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Music and entertainment venue the Sphere...



...and landmark hotels such as the MGM Grand...



WEFL/AERIAL MEDIA

2
HOURS
Time to prepare track for sessions



3500
Track barrier blocks

...plus lay-it-on-thick Las Vegas branding...

GRANT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

...deliberately front and centre to reinforce venue's identity

GRANT/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

down and do a race, so we have to go through the painstaking process of making sure that we're connecting with everybody that comes around that circuit, making sure that they understand our installation process."

The regulatory process means dialogue between race organisers and the agencies, politicians, community, emergency services and properties regarding what the upcoming strategy is for the track build, and how disruption will be minimalised. Once that stage is complete, assembly of the track can begin across what is a three-month building period. A circuit preparation page has been created on the race's official website, built as a resource tool for the local community and businesses for reference and information on the works taking place.

The unique nature of the Las Vegas Strip Circuit geography means there are 42 locations on the track that open and close each day, between sessions. Three such locations require the extra installation and dismantling of safety protection. Approximately 140 members of staff are needed to open and close the track each day of a race weekend, a process that takes around two hours to complete.

Such an undertaking, with special attention paid to keeping the hotels, casinos and restaurants happy, presents yet another challenge for Miller and his team to overcome. Asked if collaboration is required with the fabled names, Miller says: "Collaboration is a unique word. I would say we take direction from them as to what we have to put in place. We must do everything from an exit analysis that looks at their past history, the amount of volume they have >>



22nd February 2025

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SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Need to keep the city moving in midst of running a GP...

coming in in any given hour of the day so that we can begin to assess what's the worst condition that we have to solve for.

"It doesn't do us any good to look at 4am and say they only need half of that opening when in reality at 2pm they need the whole thing. So we sit with their operations team, we sit with their security team, and, to a property, they have impact on what we do."

The Las Vegas GP is, as CEO Renee Wilm puts it, "a masterpiece of complexity", but the city is not the first or last to host a street race and is one of seven on the current calendar alone. Saudi Arabia, Australia, Miami, Monaco, Baku and Singapore also stage their grands prix on street circuits, while Canada uses some public

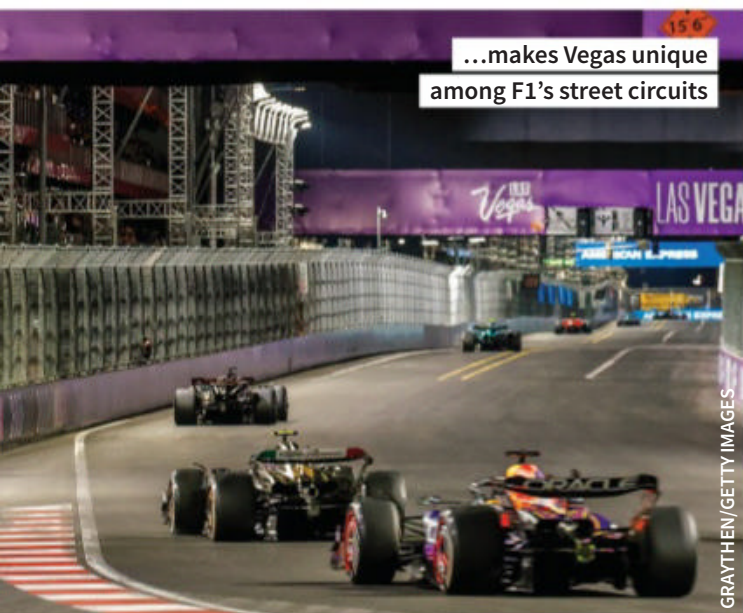
"IT WAS PART OF THE CAVEAT OF COMING TO VEGAS THAT YOU HAVE GOT TO KEEP OPERATIONS GOING"

roads around Notre Dame Island. Similarly, Madrid will make use of streets for part of the circuit when that joins the schedule.

With that plethora of temporary track building, logistical challenges and a need to keep the city moving, surely Las Vegas tapped into the wealth of knowledge from some of those fellow street-race hosts before staging their debuting 2023 event?

"So each of those conversations were, 'Well, we don't have to do any openings and closings, we don't know what you're talking about,'" reveals Miller. "They would say, 'We don't allow people [hotels, casinos etc] to tell us how to build. I don't know what you're talking about.'"

"So we are unique. When you look at Miami, it is obviously all centred on the Hard Rock Stadium property; in Singapore, they shut the city down, basically. We did not have that luxury here and that was part of the caveat of coming to Vegas, that you have got to keep operations going. Nobody has done what



...makes Vegas unique among F1's street circuits

GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES



Huge effort made to avoid repeat of last year's drain cover incident

TREMBLAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



1750
Temporary light units

7.6
MILES
Track barriers

3.8
MILES
Track distance

BRYAN KROTEN

we have done in terms of preparing for the track and then the conditions that happen on race week."

The months of planning and execution meant it was all the more galling when the 2023 Las Vegas GP weekend ground to a halt due to a loose drain cover. After laying a new surface for the track's inaugural race, organisers were caught out when the event got off to an inauspicious start with the first free practice session called off after a cover that broke free was struck by two cars.

No one could have predicted the issue and the ensuing delay, but this time around Miller is determined to make sure there is no repeat. "Those occurrences happen around the globe, there's some little moment of a drain cover or a utility lid that pops, but I can tell you that we had such scrutiny on Vegas," he adds. "The amount of effort that we have gone through just on utility lids alone this year. I doubt that anybody goes through what we have gone through."

"We have been making sure that all of the lids will be bolted down – no welded lids, everything gets bolted down. We went through and checked every one of them the second week in November, we'll check them again a week before the race.

"We'll then check them again the morning of the race and we'll check them during the intermissions between P1, P2, P3, ahead of qualifying and after qualifying. It is front and centre on our whole effort of making sure everything works the way it's supposed to work."

If there is one thing the hundreds of staff, hours of effort and months of planning for such a mammoth enterprise deserves this year it is for just that – everything to work the way it's meant to. 🏁



SEASON REVIEW

HONOURS SHARED AS HYPERCAR ERA STEPS UP A GEAR

Porsche, Toyota and Ferrari all had reasons to cheer as the World Endurance Championship really came of age

GARY WATKINS

The important silverware was split three ways this year for the first time since the 2012 rebirth of the World Endurance Championship. Porsche won the drivers' title, Toyota took a last-gasp victory in the manufacturers' rankings, and Ferrari claimed the big prize at the Le Mans 24 Hours. So was it honours even for three grandee marques, both historically and in the context of the 2024 campaign, competing in Hypercar?

That depends on how you assess the relative values of the trophies on offer. In terms of the championship, the drivers' crown is the one the wider world acknowledges, though the car makers themselves put at least as high a value on the manufacturers' title (one, perhaps more, pays its driver bonuses based upon it). They are still trumped by Le Mans even though, with ever-more major manufacturers – BMW, Alpine and Lamborghini arrived this season – and an increasingly competitive field, a once yawning gap has



Porsche leads the jostling Hypercar pack at Le Mans – but it would be Ferrari’s race



Lotterer, Estre and Vanthoor took drivers’ title with Porsche

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

closed and the 24 Hours is not the be-all and end-all that it once was. Ferrari came into the season with the avowed aim of adding a world title to its 2023 victory at the French enduro.

To win a championship, of course, consistency over the course of the season is required, and from one car if the drivers’ prize is to be taken. The line-up of Laurens Vanthoor, Kevin Estre and Andre Lotterer had that in a way that no other car crew did. The drivers of the #6 Porsche 963 LMDh won twice – in Qatar in March and then at

Fuji in September – and claimed a further three podiums while never finishing out of the top six until the title was all but won.

Toyota and Ferrari couldn’t match that consistency with either of their cars, even if the former did take more wins (three) than any other factory team. Bizarrely or unusually – both are probably applicable – the Japanese manufacturer’s pair of GR010 HYBRID Le Mans Hypercars notched up only a further two podiums. One of them came when double points were on offer at Le Mans: that >>>

Toyota set the pace at Interlagos, though misfortune hit #7, leaving sister car to take victory



Brilliant Buemi stint in Bahrain finale sealed manufacturers' crown

was crucial in its run to the manufacturers' title and for the championship assault from Kamui Kobayashi and Nyck de Vries, who were a close second at the Circuit de la Sarthe along with Jose Maria Lopez, who was back in harness in #7 in place of the injured Mike Conway.

This crew, the fortuitous victors at Imola in April, should have won at Interlagos in July on a day when Toyota had a clear advantage thanks to the GR010's ability to make its tyres last on an abrasive track surface. But a fuel pump sensor issue resulted in them finishing fourth, while the #8 Toyota shared by Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Ryo Hirakawa took the laurels. Nil points for #7 at Fuji were the result of an attack of red mist on Kobayashi's part when he made an opportunistic move on Matt Campbell in the #5 Porsche. The drivers' championship was effectively lost at that moment. It ultimately mattered little that the Japanese driver and his team-mates also registered a DNF at the Bahrain finale with a high-pressure fuel pump issue.

The word 'ultimately' can be used there because Toyota had



“FERRARI SHOULD HAVE CLAIMED 1-2 FINISHES WITH THE 499P LMHs AT IMOLA AND SPA”

the pace at the season finale to steal the drivers' title from under Porsche's noses, just as it did the manufacturers' crown. Buemi proved that in the #8 car over the final 90 minutes to yank that pot out of the German car maker's grasp. Had #7 won, Kobayashi and de Vries would have been champions – for two or three hours. The #6 Porsche initially finished out of the points in 11th thanks to no fewer than three penalties incurred by Vanthoor in the closing stages. It was subsequently promoted into the final points-paying position on the penalisation of the second-place #51 Ferrari driven by Antonio Giovinazzi, James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi.

There's also a hypothetical case for Ferrari winning the title. The drivers of the #50 factory car – Nicklas Nielsen, Antonio Fuoco and Miguel Molina – were Porsche's closest challengers going into the eight-hour race in Bahrain. A distant closest challenger if that's not a contradiction in terms, given that they were 35 points adrift with only 39 up for grabs. Yet they would have been much closer had not Ferrari endured a disastrous spring.

Ferrari should have claimed 1-2 finishes with the two factory AF Corse-run 499P LMHs at Imola and Spa in May. That it didn't in its back yard was down to an inexplicable strategic blunder when the

ROUND BY ROUND

Qatar 1812Km (10 hours)

Hypercar Estre/Vanthoor/Lotterer
LMGT3 Bachler/Sturm/Malykhin
Porsche dominates over a 10-hour boreathon in which Ferrari and Toyota aren't in the game. The #6 car is never headed from late in the second hour and wins by over 30s, even with a late unscheduled stop to deal with some minor damage. Peugeot misses out on second when #93 runs out of fuel with a lap and a half to go. Jota splits the factory Penske cars in a Porsche lockout of the podium positions.

Imola 6 Hours

Hypercar Kobayashi/de Vries/Conway
LMGT3 Farfus/Gelael/Leung
Ferrari dominates on home ground in front of a massive and partisan crowd until leaving all three 499Ps on track in increasingly wet conditions. The gaffe, blamed on a breakdown in communications, allows Toyota to claim an unlikely victory ahead of the #6 Porsche. The factory Ferraris end up third and fourth, #50 ahead of #51. The #8 Toyota's low-key start to its title defence continues with fifth.

Spa 6 Hours

Hypercar Iltott/Stevens
LMGT3 Lietz/Schuring/Shahin
It's Ferrari to the fore again. The factory cars are running 1-2 when red flags fly courtesy of the multi-car accident triggered by Bamber. Barrier repairs stretch beyond the scheduled finish time, but the race restarts to run its full duration. The #12 Jota Porsche and #6 pit just before the reds and, with a safety car restart, move to the front when everyone else stops. Iltott has the measure of Estre on run to the flag.

Le Mans 24 Hours

Hypercar Nielsen/Fuoco/Molina
LMGT3 Lietz/Schuring/Shahin
Nielsen holds on to win after another dramatic Ferrari vs Toyota dogfight. An open door after #50's penultimate stop brings him back into the pits early, which means major fuel saving over the final laps. The Dane hangs on to make it two out of two for the 499P at Le Mans, crossing the line 14s to the good. Ferrari makes it a 1-3 with #51, which is involved in a controversial incident that removes the #8 Toyota from contention.



Ferrari's 499P took its second Le Mans win by just 14.2s

cars were left out on slicks when rain arrived. Three weeks later, the factory Ferraris were 1-2 when the race controversially restarted following a red flag after the original scheduled finish time: the pair of 499Ps ended up only third and fourth behind the #12 Jota Porsche and #6. The eventual top two had pitted just before the red flag and therefore gained back much of the time they lost courtesy of the safety car restart. When Ferrari was a loser, Porsche was a winner with #6. It ended up second in Italy as well as Belgium.

You could say that luck was on their side, but the drivers of the #6 car and the Porsche Penske Motorsport squad always found a way to come back from adversity. The most notable example was perhaps Interlagos in July, the first race after Le Mans. They fought back from an early puncture, the result of a clash between Vanthoor and Will Stevens in the #12 Jota customer car, to finish second.

The upward trajectory of Porsche continued into 2024 after a strong finish to the previous campaign, both with the 963 and within PPM as a team – there were no operational glitches this year. Further steps were made in terms of performance and reliability. The hybrid system reliability issues of 2023 were a thing of the past thanks to winter updates in the Bosch Motorsport-supplied Motor

Generator Unit, so much so that Porsche abandoned plans to introduce a new version of its 4.6-litre twin-turbo V8 that put less vibration into the bellhousing-mounted MGU.

The revised engine would have counted as an evo joker performance upgrade, Porsche said. What we didn't know at the time was that it had taken one of the five tokens available to it over the initial five-year lifecycle of an LMDh ahead of the season. The revisions to sensors and the like of which it talked pre-season, pertinently those to measure front brake pressure, constituted one.

The other factor in PPM's consistency was the Balance of Performance. It always gave the Porsche LMDh a fighting chance, which was not the case for Toyota and Ferrari. There were races when their LMHs were not quite in the game, most notably in Qatar for the pair of them, but also Interlagos for Ferrari and then Fuji for both again.

There was a new, more reactive system of BoP for 2024. In 2023 the BoP was based more on simulation and the potential of what a car could achieve on track rather than what it actually did. There were then flags in the sand on when the BoP could change. This time around the BoP could be altered race by race based on track >>

Sao Paulo (Interlagos) 6 Hrs

Hypercar Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa

LMGT3 Bachler/Sturm/Malykhin

Toyota dominates to take its second win of the year, high temperatures on race day playing to its strengths on tyre degradation. This time the victory goes to #8, though the #7 is the quicker of the Toyotas but ends up fourth after a sensor problem. The Japanese manufacturer's winning margin is over a minute from #6. Ferrari salvages something with fifth and sixth for the two factory cars.

Lone Star (Austin) 6 Hours

Hypercar Kubica/Ye/Shwartzman

LMGT3 Riberas/Mancinelli/James

Ferrari is back in the hunt, though this time with the customer AF entry. It leads for much of the first half of the race but looks like it's going to finish behind the #7 Toyota. A penalty for Kobayashi, who is adjudged to have not slowed sufficiently under waved yellows, swaps the order. The #50 Ferrari takes third on a day when it can't match its yellow sister car or #51, which retires with a driveline issue.

Fuji 6 Hours

Hypercar Estre/Vanthoor/Lotterer

LMGT3 Rigon/Castellacci/Flohr

Estre and his team-mates put one hand on the title with a near-faultless performance on the track that provided Porsche's breakthrough in 2023. BMW takes its only podium of the year, with #15 ahead of the #36 Alpine. Toyota takes home a solitary point for 10th with #8 after a drivethrough. #7 is crashed out by Kobayashi, while Ferrari endures a disaster. Kubica hits Giovinazzi at Turn 1 and #50 fades to ninth.

Bahrain 8 Hours

Hypercar Buemi/Hartley/Hirakawa

LMGT3 Rovera/Mann/Heriau

Porsche takes the drivers' title on a day when its rivals don't trouble the scorers – Estre and his team-mates barely do that. But a stunning drive from Buemi, who goes from 10th to first and on to a winning margin of nearly half a minute, seals Toyota the manufacturers' crown by just two points. Campbell has nothing for him in the closing stages. Peugeot makes it onto the podium for the first time since Monza 2023.



Kubica and co had a special day in the US round

performance of the myriad Hypercar machines.

A full explanation of the philosophy and process of the new protocols was never offered publicly, nor to the manufacturers. What we know is that the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest were trying to get the whole field within 0.4% of each other based on the fastest 20% of race laps, and the quickest LMH and the quickest LMDh within 0.2%. They stated at the start of the season that cars outside of the window at the bottom end would be sped up more slowly than a hauling back of those that were too quick. Ferrari's BoP hit for Interlagos and the time it took for WEC LMDh newcomers BMW and Alpine to be brought up to pace suggests that they stuck to their guns.

There was a new element of the BoP in 2024, which came on stream for Le Mans. The so-called Power Gain was introduced to level the acceleration profiles and top speeds of the cars. Each was given a plus or minus power adjustment above 250km/h (155mph) to that effect.

It was another tool at the disposal of the rulemakers, and one welcomed by the manufacturers. It still needed some fine-tuning on its introduction at Le Mans. A lack of straightline speed on Porsche's part was at least part of the reason why it couldn't take the fight to Ferrari and Toyota when push came to shove at the end of the race, even if #6 did finish less than 40s off the lead.

What in the context of 2024 were the second cars at Porsche, Toyota and Ferrari had disappointing seasons marred by misfortune. The #5 PPM entry shared by Matt Campbell, Michael Christensen and Frederic Makowiecki ended up fifth in the points with a quartet of podiums and no wins, but crucially two retirements. Campbell's assault from the rear at Fuji



Lynn proved Cadillac's pace but Bamber didn't always stay out of trouble

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP/MOTORS/SPORT IMAGES



probably summed up their season.

The #8 Toyota was nowhere in the championship until the Bahrain victory propelled it to fourth in the points. Their season was also characterised by a clash that was no fault of their own. Hartley's late-race coming-together at Le Mans with Pier Guidi robbed them of a shot of victory – the smart money was on #8 at that point – and left them fifth at the finish.

The #51 Ferrari ended up way down the points in eighth. Third place at Le Mans was as good as it got for Giovinazzi, Calado and Pier Guidi, and the five-second stop-and-hold the last-named received for his clash with Hartley didn't affect their result. The loss of second place last time out in Bahrain for a tyre allocation infringement, which followed retirements at Austin and Fuji in September, encapsulates a season in which they were generally a match for the sister car.

“CADILLAC WAS FOURTH IN PERFORMANCE BUT ENDED UP NOWHERE IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP”

Ferrari's 499P finally got a victory on the board away from Le Mans. The satellite entry run on a customer basis by AF triumphed in the hands Robert Kubica, Yifei Ye and Robert Shwartzman at Austin. It was their only podium of the year, though they were genuine contenders at Le Mans before a hybrid system failure in the 20th hour.

The AF car wasn't the first privateer competing in the FIA World Cup to take a victory, of course. The British Jota team had triumphed at Spa with the #12 Porsche driven by Stevens and Callum Iloft as a duo in the absence of regular team-mate Norman



Jota scored a success for the privateers when Iloft and Stevens won at Spa



Alpine got stronger as the year went on and took a podium at Fuji...



...as did BMW with its improving M Hybrid V8

Nato, who was on Formula E duty. There was clearly an element of good fortune, but Jota was a contender on and off through the season. Arguably it was at its most competitive in Bahrain, where it was deprived of a clear shot at victory when Stevens sustained a puncture at the final restart in a clash with an LMGT3 car.

Jota still took 1-2 in the privateers' rankings, #12 finishing ahead of the #38 shared by Jenson Button, Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen. The AF Ferrari was third and Proton Competition's Porsche fourth. The latter's best result was fifth at Spa, a race it could have won with Julien Andlauer and Neel Jani.

Cadillac was the big disappointment of 2023. It was fourth in the performance pecking order but ended up nowhere in both championship classifications. There were a series of strong qualifying showings from Alex Lynn, who followed up on a front row qualification (before a penalty) at Le Mans with pole at Fuji aboard the solo Ganassi-run Caddy V-Series.R. What he and full-season co-driver Earl Bamber didn't do was translate those lofty grid positions into anything better than a fourth-place finish at Austin. (The same result at the Qatar opener was lost due to a homologation infringement.)

Yet the General Motors marque's entry in which Lynn and Bamber drove as a duo in the six-hour races could have achieved much more, including at Le Mans where it was in the mix with Ferrari and Toyota with three or so hours to go. After the final safety car, the regular WEC entry in which Ganassi IndyCar star Alex Palou joined Lynn and Bamber faded to seventh. Ganassi, in its last year with Cadillac, admitted that the car had lost downforce as a result of a gaping hole in the underfloor. It didn't elaborate on the cause.

Elsewhere, Lynn and Bamber might have been on the podium at Spa and Fuji. Both times the Kiwi made mistakes that put the car out of the race, most dramatically in Belgium when an infinitesimal misjudgement resulted in the biggest of accidents on the Kemmel Straight that caused the red flag.

Best of the rest, in terms of points scored, was Alpine on its

return to the top class of the WEC with its new A424 LMDh. It came out on top in a close battle for fourth in the manufacturers' standings with BMW and Peugeot, which like the Renault marque each scored a solitary podium in the closing stages of the campaign.

Alpine made all the normal noises about staying humble in its learning year and the importance of maintaining an upward trajectory through the season. The curve was definitely in the right direction, with the exception of a downward blip at Le Mans when both its Signatech-run cars were out inside six hours with the same valve train issue. It admitted that it was a known problem, that a fix wouldn't come on stream until 2025, and that it could manage the issue in the meantime.

It most definitely did that. Over the final three races Alpine was there or thereabouts, the result of that upward curve and some help from the BoP being a pair of fourths that sandwiched a first podium at Fuji. Mick Schumacher hauled the #36 Alpine he shared with Matthieu Vaxiviere and Nicolas Lapierre into the top three in the closing stages in Japan, though it was the sister #35 entry driven by Charles Milesi, Ferdinand Habsburg and Jules Gounon that was the quicker car. It would have been ahead had not the first-named received a penalty for tapping an LMGT3 car into a spin. A follow-up podium went west in Bahrain when Milesi, now in #36 after Lapierre stepped into a management role, was penalised after hitting the #50 Ferrari.

BMW was pipped to fifth in the points, though its battle with Alpine would have gone the other way but for safety cars in Bahrain. The #15 BMW M Hybrid V8 shared by Dries Vanthoor, Raffaele Marciello and Marco Wittmann was ahead, but the WRT team hadn't gambled on late cautions, unlike Alpine. With more fresh tyres at its disposal, the French car came through.

This wasn't the maiden season of the M Hybrid V8, but it was in the context of the WEC. WRT was still on a learning curve with the car, and so too were the rulemakers as they worked out how much to nibble it up to the performance of the frontrunners.

BMW was nowhere in Qatar, but rebounded with a sixth >>>



Revised Peugeot got onto the podium in Bahrain finale

in concept: there was a more or less conventional rear wing as the weight distribution was pushed back in line with the shift to the narrower front and wider rear tyres. The car had to be learned – and the changes assessed by the rulemakers for the BoP – and wasn't an immediate improvement. It started to come good at the end of the season, the #93 car shared by Mikkel Jensen, Jean-Eric Vergne and Nico Muller twice crossing the line in fourth, the second of those finishes last time out in Bahrain becoming a podium on the penalisation of the #51 Ferrari. Those positions owed much to a strategic gamble by the in-house Peugeot Sport team paying off. It saved tyres for the end of the race in the hope of a safety car. The hope was fulfilled, which explained Jensen's end-of-race ascent of the order both times.

As good as the new Peugeot was at the final races, it wasn't a genuine podium contender. Yet the old car was in Qatar. A machine that generated most of its downforce from the underside of the car worked on the ultra-flat and smooth Losail circuit with a helping hand from the BoP. Peugeot would have been second with #93 but for a late fuelling issue.

Peugeot Sport technical director Olivier Jansonnie talked about being backed into a corner of the BoP with the old car, but the final changes to weights and power figures for Bahrain appeared to push the 9X8 into a similar position: it was up at maximum power of

“THE SUGGESTION IS THAT THE 9X8 NEEDS – AND WILL SURELY BE GIVEN – YET MORE JOKERS”

place for #20 shared by Rene Rast, Robin Frijns and Sheldon van der Linde second time out at Imola. Vanthoor was quickest in opening qualifying at Le Mans, but come the race neither car saw dawn. That was the result of two accidents, one of its own making when Frijns went off at the Ford Chicane, the other when Vanthoor was tagged by Kubica on the Mulsanne Straight. By the end of the season, however, BMW was genuinely in the mix. It was nose-to-tail with the winning Porsche after the final safety car at Fuji, but didn't quite have the pace to give it a run for its money.

Peugeot wasn't far behind BMW in the manufacturers' standings, a disappointing result for a marque entering its second full campaign. There were mitigating circumstances, however, because from round two it had what was effectively a new car. Not in terms of its chassis and powertrain, but in the way it went about its business on the race track. The avant-garde aerodynamics of the original 9X8 LMH were dispensed with when the French manufacturer came to the same conclusion reached by Toyota at the end of its inaugural campaign with the GR010 in 2021: the car was compromised by the equal size wheels and tyres all round.

The new version, known as the 9X8 2024, represented a change

520kW and only 1kg off the minimum weight of 1030kg. That suggests that it needs – and will surely be given – yet more jokers.

Lamborghini was the other new manufacturer to join the LMDh ranks. It fielded a solo car in the WEC with the Iron Lynx squad and then two at Le Mans when the sister entry taking in the IMSA SportsCar Championship enduros (apart from Daytona) joined it, yet barely troubled the scorers. Tenth place for the full-season WEC car driven by Mirko Bortolotti, Daniil Kvyat and Edoardo Mortara after a reliable run was a decent result, but that was as good as it got for the Italian manufacturer. It was never in the game with the overweight SC63.

There was a new garagiste on the grid in 2024. Isotta Fraschini, a relaunch of a marque once synonymous with Hollywood extravagance, had all the right ingredients in terms of technical partners but not the drivers to match. The Tipo 6 Competizione LMH developed by Michelotto Engineering disappeared without showing any form after Interlagos following a split between the manufacturer and the Duqueine team. ❄

➔ P40 CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS AND TOP 10 DRIVERS



Lamborghini was reliable at Le Mans but struggled for pace in first season

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

PORSCHE TOO STRONG FOR LMGT3 RIVALS



Title-winning crew led a comfortable Porsche 1-2 in points

Porsche swept to victory in the new LMGT3 class that took over from GTE Am. Klaus Bachler, Joel Sturm and Alex Malykhin took the title with a round to spare in their Manthey PureRacing 911 GT3-R. Those drivers should really be listed in reverse order to reflect their importance in the championship triumph.

The bronze-rated driver can make the biggest difference in a pro-am category and Malykhin, a Belarusian who races under a licence issued in Saint Kitts & Nevis and lives in Surrey, certainly did that. The 37-year-old emerged as the new Ben Keating, the benchmark amateur in the field. It was difficult to argue that Sturm wasn't the best silver in class, so it was always going to be hard for anyone to match them. (Both, it should be pointed out, have been upgraded for next year). Doubly so, because the Porsche appeared to be consistently the most competitive car in class.

The rivals of Porsche, which ended up taking class honours in four of the eight races, claimed it had an advantage under the

Balance of Performance. That may or may not be a case of sour grapes, though there was a suggestion that the German manufacturer got on top of the driveshaft torque sensors that were introduced onto GT3 machinery quicker than its rivals.

“THE PORSCHE’S CONSISTENCY IN A COMPETITIVE CLASS WAS REMARKABLE”

Malykhin proved his credentials first time out in Qatar when he anchored the PureRacing victory. One more would follow at Interlagos, but there were a further four podiums and the car was never out of the points. It was shades of Porsche's victory in the big class. That consistency in an ultra-competitive class encompassing nine manufacturers and incorporating success ballast was remarkable. Their worst result came when double points were at stake at



Farfus took his chance at Imola

Le Mans courtesy of gearbox problems that cost them a shot at victory and left them 10th. That made the achievement of wrapping up the title at Fuji even more amazing.

Honours at Le Mans went to the sister Manthey EMA Porsche in which Richard Lietz was joined by Morris Schuring and Yasser Shahin. They had also won at Spa and left the Circuit de la Sarthe tied in the lead of the LMGT3 points. There was only one further podium, but they still took the runner-up spot in the championship.

Many of the manufacturers had their day in the sun, though BMW's came in the rain! It claimed victory at Imola, while the other victories went to Aston Martin and, twice, Ferrari. The M4 GT3 came good thanks to some inspired driving from Augusto Farfus, who secured the Italian win by staying out on slicks on a wet track in the WRT-entered car he shared with Sean Gelael and Darren Leung. The Bimmer wasn't the quickest car that day, nor or any other in 2024. There was definitely consternation about the BoP in the BMW camp.

There were times when the Aston Martin Vantage and the Ferrari 296 were competitive, the Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2 and the McLaren 720S GT3 Evo, too. The United Autosports team running the McLarens emerged as a genuine frontrunner late on.



TF Sport Corvette showed pace but never quite pulled off a win

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES



JEP

HYPERCAR WORLD ENDURANCE DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	PTS
1	Andre Lotterer (DEU) Kevin Estre (FRA) Laurens Vanthoor (BEL)	Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963	1	2	2	4	2	6	1	10	152
2	Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Miguel Molina (ESP) Nicklas Nielsen (DNK)	Ferrari AF Corse Ferrari 499P	6	4	3	1	6	3	9	11	115
3	Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Toyota Gazoo Racing Toyota GR010 HYBRID	5	1	7	2	4	2	NC	R	113
4	Brendon Hartley (NZL) Ryo Hirakawa (JPN) Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Toyota Gazoo Racing Toyota GR010 HYBRID	8	5	6	5	1	15	10	1	109
5	Frederic Makowiecki (FRA) Matt Campbell (AUS) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963	3	3	R	6	3	7	R	2	104
6	Mike Conway (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing Toyota GR010 HYBRID	5	1	7	-	4	2	NC	R	77
7	Callum Ilott (GBR) Will Stevens (GBR)	Hertz Team Jota Porsche 963	2	13	1	8	18	R	5	13	70
8	Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA) James Calado (GBR)	Ferrari AF Corse Ferrari 499P	12	7	4	3	5	R	R	14	59
9	Robert Kubica (POL) Robert Shwartzman (ISR) Yifei Ye (CHN)	AF Corse Ferrari 499P	4	8	8	R	11	1	12	8	57
10	Norman Nato (FRA)	Hertz Team Jota Porsche 963	2	13	-	8	18	R	5	13	45

11 **Ferdinand Habsburg** (Alpine Endurance Team (Signatech) Alpine A424) 43; 12 **Mikkel Jensen/Nico Muller** (Peugeot TotalEnergies Peugeot 9X8 2024) 42; 13 **Jean-Eric Vergne** (Peugeot) 41; 14 **Dries Vanthoor/Marco Wittmann/Raffaele Marciello** (BMW M Team WRT BMW M Hybrid V8) 39; 15 **Earl Bamber** (Cadillac Racing (Ganassi) Cadillac V-Series.R) 38; 16 **Jose Maria Lopez** (Toyota) 36; 17 **Charles Milesi** (Alpine) 30; 18 **Paul-Loup Chatin** (Alpine) 29; 19 **Jenson Button/Oliver Rasmussen/Phil Hanson** (Jota Porsche) 28; 20 **Alex Lynn** (Cadillac) 26; 21 **Jules Gounon** (Alpine) 24; 22 **Matthieu Vaxiviere/Mick Schumacher** (Alpine) 21; 23 **Nicolas Lapierre** (Alpine) 18; 24 **Julien Andlauer/Neel Jani** (Proton Competition Porsche 963) 13; 25 **Sebastien Bourdais** (Cadillac) 12; 26 **Alex Palou** (Cadillac) 12; 27 **Rene Rast/Robin Frijns/Sheldon van der Linde** (BMW) 10; 28 **Loic Duval/Paul di Resta** (Peugeot) 4; 29 **Stoffel Vandoorne** (Peugeot) 4; 30 **Harry Tincknell** (Proton Porsche) 3; 31 **Daniil Kvyat/Mirko Bortolotti** (Lamborghini Iron Lynx Lamborghini SC63) 2; 32 **Edoardo Mortara** (Lamborghini) 2; 33 **Antonio Serravalle/Carl Bennett/Jean-Karl Vernay** (Isotta Fraschini Isotta Fraschini Tipo 6 Competizione LMH) 0; 34 **Andrea Caldarelli** (Lamborghini) 0.

Manufacturers' championship 1 Toyota 190; 2 Porsche 188; 3 Ferrari 137; 4 Alpine 70; 5 BMW 64; 6 Peugeot 57; 7 Cadillac 42; 8 Lamborghini 11; 9 Isotta Fraschini 0.

LMGT3 CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	PTS
1	Alex Malykhin (BLR) Joel Sturm (DEU) Klaus Bachler (AUT)	Manthey PureRxcing Porsche 911 GT3-R	1	3	2	14	1	2	2	9	139
2	Morris Schuring (NLD) Richard Lietz (AUT) Yasser Shahin (AUS)	Manthey EMA Porsche 911 GT3-R	15	16	1	1	12	3	14	5	105
3	Alessio Rovera (ITA) Francois Heriau (FRA) Simon Mann (USA)	Vista AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3	7	4	13	6	6	10	6	1	97
4	Augusto Farfus (BRA) Darren Leung (GBR) Sean Gelael (IDN)	Team WRT BMW M4 GT3	6	1	R	2	10	5	10	13	85
5	Alex Riberas (ESP) Daniel Mancinelli (ITA) Ian James (GBR)	Heart of Racing Team Aston Martin Vantage AMR GT3	2	5	11	R	2	1	9	11	83
6	Ahmad Al Harthy (OMN) Maxime Martin (BEL) Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Team WRT BMW M4 GT3	4	2	R	R	5	R	3	14	61
7	Davide Rigon (ITA) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE)	Vista AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3	5	12	6	R	15	R	1	7	57
8	Michelle Gatting (DNK) Sarah Bovy (BEL)	Iron Dames (Iron Lynx) Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2	8	R	5	5	R	13	5	10	54
9	Gregoire Saucy (CHE) James Cottingham (GBR) Nicolas Costa (BRA)	United Autosports McLaren 720S GT3 Evo	14	11	4	R	4	4	8	6	52
10	Charlie Eastwood (GBR) Rui Andrade (PRT) Tom van Rompuy (BEL)	TF Sport Chevrolet Corvette Z06 GT3.R	R	7	R	15	8	R	4	2	50

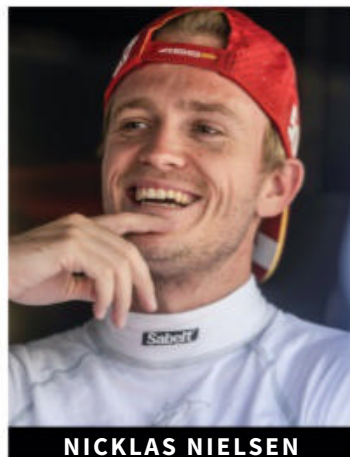
11 **Erwan Bastard/Marco Sorensen** (D'Station Racing (Prodrive) Aston Martin Vantage AMR GT3) 50; 12 **Rahel Frey** (Iron Dames Lamborghini) 48; 13 **Clement Mateu** (D'Station Aston Martin) 38; 14 **Daniel Juncadella/Hiroshi Koizumi/Sebastien Baud** (TF Chevrolet) 37; 15 **Dennis Olsen** (Proton Competition Ford Mustang GT3) 37; 16 **Mikkel Overgaard Pedersen** (Proton Ford) 37; 17 **Giorgio Roda** (Proton Ford) 37; 18 **Josh Caygill/Marino Sato/Nico Pino** (United McLaren) 36; 19 **Claudio Schiavoni/Matteo Cressoni** (Iron Lynx Lamborghini) 33; 20 **Arnold Robin** (AKKODIS ASP Team Lexus RC F GT3) 19; 21 **Matteo Cairoli** (Iron Lynx Lamborghini) 18; 22 **Ben Barker/Ryan Hardwick/Zacharie Robichon** (Proton Ford) 18; 23 **Kelvin van der Linde** (ASP Lexus) 18; 24 **Timur Boguslavskiy** (ASP Lexus) 16; 25 **Franck Perera** (Iron Lynx Lamborghini) 15; 26 **Satoshi Hoshino** (D'Station Aston Martin) 12; 27 **Esteban Masson/Takeshi Kimura** (ASP Lexus) 8; 28 **Jack Hawksworth** (ASP Lexus) 8; 29 **Doriane Pin** (Iron Dames Lamborghini) 6; 30 **Clemens Schmid** (ASP Lexus) 3; 31 **Ritomo Miyata** (ASP Lexus) 1; 32 **Jose Maria Lopez** (ASP Lexus) 0; 33 **Christian Ried** (Proton Ford) 0; 34 **Hiroshi Hamaguchi** (United McLaren) 0; 35 **Ben Keating** (Proton Ford) 0; 36 **Giammarco Levorato** (Proton Ford) 0; 37 **Conrad Laursen** (ASP Lexus RC F GT3) 0.

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 HYPERCAR DRIVERS



KEVIN ESTRE

1 It was a lap of the ages, one pulled out from deep within. Estre didn't have the fastest car around the Circuit de la Sarthe, but he somehow put his Porsche 963 on the pole. To call it the high point of his season, though, would be to diminish a series of impressive performances that helped yield him and his team-mates the Hypercar drivers' title. Interlagos and Bahrain, where he brought the car up through the pack mid-race, were just as significant high points as the victories in Qatar and at Fuji.



NICKLAS NIELSEN

2 No one doubted Nielsen's talents, but he had an impressive campaign over which he emerged from the shadows of team-mate Fuoco, the standout Ferrari driver in 2023. He was perhaps at his best in the final stages at Le Mans to seal Ferrari a second straight victory: he remained cool under pressure, keeping up the pace to stay ahead of the chasing Toyota while saving fuel. Through the season there were examples of his raw pace at just about every race from Qatar through to Bahrain.



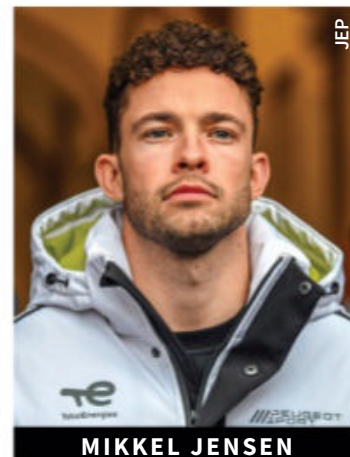
LAURENS VANTHOOR

3 Another strong season for Vanthoor yielded the biggest prize of an already well-decorated career. He retains his spot in the Top 10 from 2023, though there were perhaps fewer standout moments – the Belgian just performed everywhere. There wasn't much to choose between him and Estre, but *that* lap at Le Mans gets the Frenchman the nod as best PPM driver. There's also that sequence of penalties in Bahrain to consider. Given the title was more or less already won, those can be overlooked.



SEBASTIEN BUEMI

4 Memories of his charge to victory to secure Toyota the manufacturers' crown in Bahrain are still fresh, but it's not the only reason why Buemi climbs a couple of places in this ranking on 2023. The Swiss drove at least as well as he did on the way to the title. He was outstanding at Le Mans and among the quickest on the averages. The low point of the season was his move on Estre on the back straight at Austin, which deserved the penalty and the points on his licence that it garnered.



MIKKEL JENSEN

5 The Dane was again the standout driver in the Peugeot roster, and not just in the final races of the season at Fuji and in Bahrain when he flew in the closing stages both times. Jensen had fresh tyres under him on each occasion, but he still had to deliver. And he most definitely did: it was a joy to watch him hustling the car up the order. His performance at Le Mans was every bit as good – probably even better – but went largely unrewarded. It deserved better than 12th.



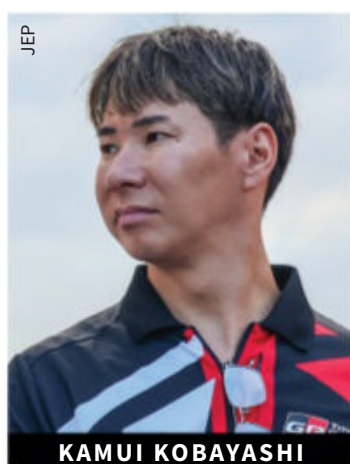
DRIES VANTHOOR

6 The younger of the Vanthoor brothers starred for BMW over his first full season in WEC, taking to prototypes with ease just as his sibling had done 12 months ago. Both had just a handful of starts in such machinery on their graduation to Hypercar. There were any number of strong performances from the 26-year-old, Le Mans included and not just in qualifying. There was also a starring drive at Fuji when he was as near as damn it the fastest of all on the averages.



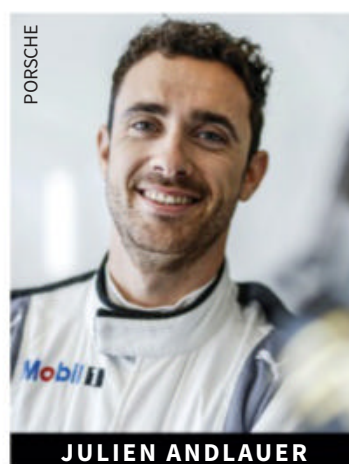
MATT CAMPBELL

7 It was easy to forget that Campbell was racing a prototype in the WEC for the first time after switching from PPM's IMSA squad as he made his mark aboard the #5 entry. The Australian proved his one-lap pace with an out-of-the-box pole in Qatar, a feat he repeated at Spa, and immediately emerged as the standout driver in the car. His performances would have deserved a victory, and the pity for the WEC is that he'll be a part-timer only next year on his return to IMSA.



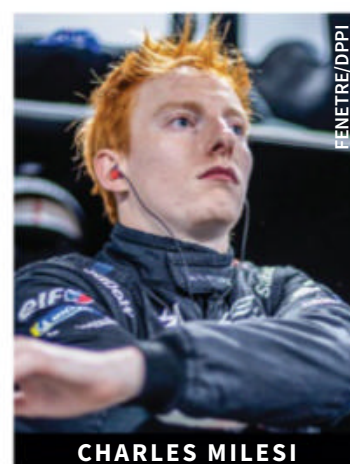
KAMUI KOBAYASHI

8 It was another strong season for Kobayashi. The Japanese was on top of his game for much of it and blindingly quick at Le Mans and Interlagos in particular. That's what you'd expect from a two-time champion even as he approaches 40. But last year, he was fourth in the Top 10 and it would be impossible to rank him so highly this time around after the clash at Fuji. Others have been forgiven mistakes here, but it was a big misjudgement with even bigger implications.



JULIEN ANDLAUER

9 Porsche had clearly seen the Frenchman's potential when it placed one of its factory roster with the Proton customer 963. Andlauer was being given the chance to prove that he was worthy of a factory seat at PPM in the future. He grasped it with both hands and posted a series of stirring drives. He was probably at his best at Spa, where he and team-mate Jani were in contention before the stoppage. But just as good, probably, was his drive in Bahrain.



CHARLES MILESI

10 It should be no surprise that Milesi makes it into the list on his graduation to the WEC's top class: he was outstanding at the end of last year in Alpine's LMP2 squad. The Frenchman repeated that form, starring when the A424 eventually became competitive. He flew at Austin, Fuji and in Bahrain, and would have been rewarded with a couple of podiums but for a penalty each time. They stand as a black mark and mean he can't be higher here.



**250F
F1 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP**

**RACES: 46
WINS: 8
POLES: 8
FASTEST LAPS: 10
PODIUMS: 27**

WHY THE 250F IS ONE OF F1'S LEGENDS

It wasn't a prolific winner and didn't change the game, but Maserati's 250F is still regarded as a classic. Seventy years since it first appeared, we look back at its impact on F1

KEVIN TURNER

Fifty-six drivers raced it in the world championship and 17 made their debuts in it. Both those figures are nearly twice the numbers of the next-highest car on each list. The Maserati 250F was placid enough to introduce more drivers to Formula 1 than any other car, yet good enough to win a title and last throughout an entire regulations cycle.

But it's also something of a contradiction. Often cited as one of the greatest grand prix cars, it was neither particularly groundbreaking nor an F1 dominator. Only Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss won world championship races in it, amassing just eight victories. And it's probably fair to say that those two 1950s aces would have won in pretty much anything they drove during the period. The 250F is an F1 great for slightly different reasons than most legends.

Its origins help explain why. Initially conceived for customer use, for teams with potentially limited resources, the 250F was simple. It was not as complex as the desmodromic Mercedes W196 or as innovative as Lancia's powerful D50 V8 with side-mounted fuel tanks. Maserati simply didn't have the funding to spend what Mercedes splashed out – or what would virtually force Lancia out of existence.

The 250F was largely designed by Gioacchino Colombo – though

he left Maserati before the car got into its stride – and Valerio Colotti. The straight-six engine had its origins in the A6GCM F2 car that ended the Ferrari 500's run in the world championship at the 1953 finale, the Italian GP, thanks to Fangio. The body, which has come to be regarded as *the* 1950s F1 shape despite its many forms, was crafted by Medardo Fantuzzi. Brakes were still the traditional drums – British teams were developing discs, but Maserati's drums were regarded as effective for the time. The chassis frame, rear suspension and gearbox/axle assembly were new for the 250F and represented departures from previous Maserati practice, but the car could not be regarded as one that moved the technical goalposts.

Engineer Giulio Alfieri was head of development and pushed along the 250F's evolution, which extended its life. There were many body changes during the car's career, including a closed-wheel streamlined version, experiments with fuel injection and chassis updates.

Maserati's plan to leave the operation of 250F to privateers did not last long; until just after the Argentinian GP, held in January 1954 at the start of the 2.5-litre era, won by Fangio in his own 250F. Thereafter the works fielded multiple cars until the end of 1957, while myriad customers ran the 250F all the way through to the final year of the 2.5-litre regulations in 1960.

TOP 250F DRIVERS

1 Juan Manuel Fangio

The great Argentinian gave the Maserati its first success in the 1954 Argentinian GP, secured six of its eight world championship victories despite only starting 11 points-paying races in the car, and took the 1957 drivers' crown. Oh yes, and his final victory in the 1957 German GP stands as one of the all-time greatest F1 performances. Not the hardest of our number ones to decide! While the 250F was a fine tool for journeymen, for the all-time greats it could be majestic, witness those famous images of Fangio at Rouen in 1957 (see page 46).

**2 Stirling Moss**

The only driver aside from Fangio to win a world championship GP in the 250F, Moss helped launch his F1 career with standout 1954 performances in his private example. Soon asked to join the factory, Moss would have led Maserati's 1955 challenge had he not gone to Mercedes instead. He *did* head the 250F attack in 1956 and won two GPs, defeating Ferrari driver Fangio at Monaco, but Maserati wasn't quite the organised force it would be in 1957 and Moss took second in the table.

3 Jean Behra

One of the finest drivers never to win a world championship GP, Frenchman Behra made more starts in 250Fs than anyone else. He scored seven points-paying podiums with the car and reached a high of fourth in the 1956 drivers' table. He also won several non-championship F1 races in the car, including two Pau GP successes and the 1957 Moroccan GP against a strong field. The 1957 British GP was perhaps the one that got away, Behra leading with just over 20 laps to go when his clutch exploded.



Six-cylinder Maserati engine gave around 240bhp for works drivers in 1954-55

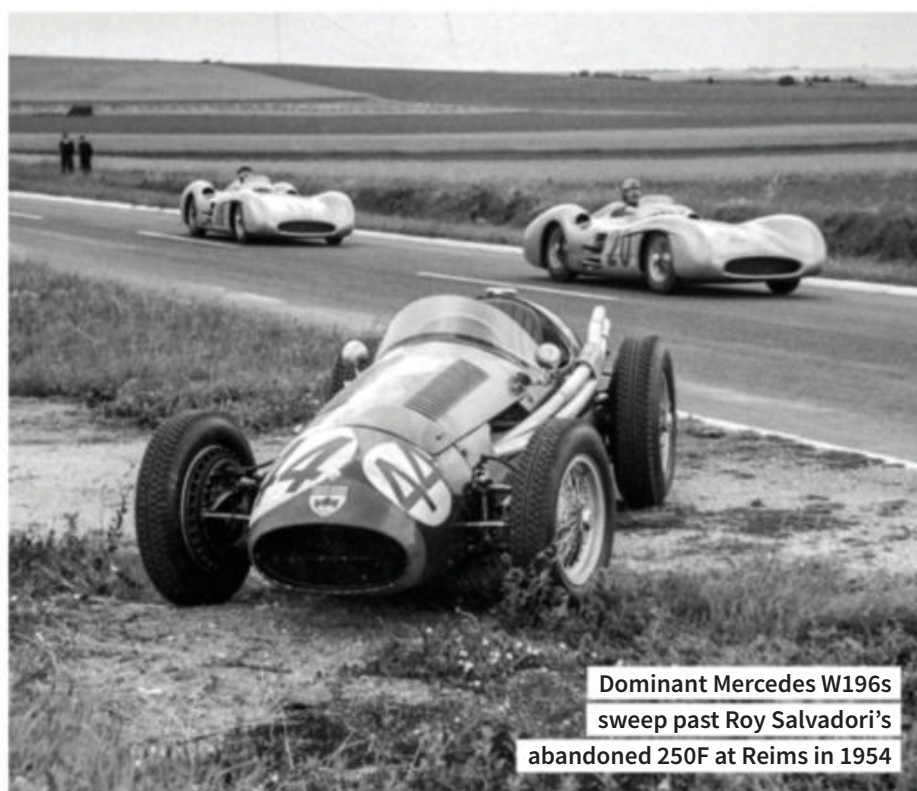
ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Fangio won the 1954 Belgian GP for the factory before leaving for Mercedes. The Argentinian duly took four more world championship race victories for the Silver Arrows to comfortably take the crown. Maserati had played its part, but there was no doubt that it had been overshadowed by Mercedes' return. And both had been outpaced at the Spanish GP finale by the splendid Vittorio Jano-designed D50.

To add to Maserati's factory drama it also lost Moss – who it had hoped to sign to lead its team – when he followed Fangio to Mercedes for 1955. “With Fangio and Moss driving the German cars there was not much hope of anyone else winning important races,” reckoned renowned motorsport journalist Denis Jenkinson.

Moss had begun 1954 as a 250F privateer, famously following Mercedes boss Alfred Neubauer's recommendation that he should buy a proper GP car to show what he could do. Despite Fangio's success – and Moss, who insisted on the throttle pedal being on the right instead of the 250F's usual central position, doing enough to meet Neubauer's goal – the 250F had many teething issues. Oil frothing due to poor cooling, inadequate pipes and weak de Dion suspension tubing caused reliability problems in the first season, and there were constant detail modifications.

There was usually no difference between the privateer and >>



Dominant Mercedes W196s sweep past Roy Salvadori's abandoned 250F at Reims in 1954

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Maserati struggled against Mercedes and Ferrari during a tricky 1955 season with no Fangio or Moss



250F WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GP WINS

EVENT	DRIVER
1954 Argentinian GP	Juan Manuel Fangio
1954 Belgian GP	Juan Manuel Fangio
1956 Monaco GP	Stirling Moss
1956 Italian GP	Stirling Moss
1957 Argentinian GP	Juan Manuel Fangio
1957 Monaco GP	Juan Manuel Fangio
1957 French GP	Juan Manuel Fangio
1957 German GP	Juan Manuel Fangio

factory chassis, the performance advantage for the works cars coming from the engines, which gave more power with more revs. Even so, the 250F produced 240bhp at best during 1954, even with the 8100rpm limit afforded to the factory drivers, as opposed to the 7400rpm/220bhp to which customers were limited. That was roughly on a par with the Ferrari outputs of the time, but a little behind the W196 and D50 that were the outstanding designs to appear that season.

Thanks to its good handling characteristics, the Maserati tended to be more competitive on twisty circuits rather than fast ones. “The 250F was a forgiving car and this made it well suited to privateer use,” wrote Andy Hall in his 1990 book *Maserati 250F: A technical appraisal*. “It was a far more driveable car than either the W196 or the [Ferrari] Squalo. The 250F was an immensely practical racing car rather than a drawing board winner.”

In other words, it was a fine car for drivers to use to join the F1 pack, but to win major races in the 250F you had to be an ace. Fangio and Moss could provide the extra to defeat technically superior machinery, a point underlined by team manager Nello Ugolini offering Moss a place in the works team during 1954 German GP practice. That event was also tinged with tragedy – Fangio’s protege, upcoming Maserati driver Onofre Marimon, died following a crash during practice.

Nevertheless, it was a joy to drive from the start. “At top level it made my name and above all it was a lovely car to drive,” said Moss in *Stirling Moss, my cars, my career*, written with Doug Nye. “It steered

beautifully, and inclined towards stable oversteer, which one could exploit by balancing it against power and steering in long sustained drifts through corners. It rode well on the normal type of relatively smooth-surfaced course, although its small coil springs and leaf spring rear-end would use up available suspension movement over the bumps at Nurburgring.”

The 1955 championship campaign was winless but the 250F was already proving important for F1. In Profile Publications’ *The Maserati 250F Grand Prix Car*, Jenkinson wrote: “If nothing else the 250F was the mainstay of the entry lists, there often being seven or eight cars running.” At the British GP, eight of the 25 starters were Maseratis, and at the Italian GP the figures were seven from 22. In neither event did a 250F reach the podium, but its importance is clear.

After being overshadowed at the front, Maserati secured Moss’s services following the withdrawal of Mercedes. He quickly became the main threat to the D50s, now run by Ferrari and led by Fangio. A five-speed gearbox became standard by 1956 and Moss found that developments had improved the car without sacrificing the handling. Reliability was, in theory, better, but power was still an issue and Moss regarded the 250F as too slow on the straights.

The Briton led the Argentinian opener before engine problems ended his day. He brilliantly beat a ragged Fangio at Monaco, and was running second to the Ferrari team leader in the Belgian GP when a wheel fell off. He took over Cesare Perdisa’s car – not an unusual move for team leaders of the time – and charged to third.

The Maseratis were outclassed at the high-speed Reims circuit for the French GP, but Moss took pole at Silverstone for the British GP, one of 11 250Fs to take the start. Once the initial BRM challenge had (quite literally) gone up in smoke, Moss took command. But he was again thwarted, this time with a broken rear axle.

Moss followed Fangio home at the German GP, which at least kept him in title contention for the Monza finale. By then, fuel injection experiments had been shelved, but chassis changes to reduce frontal area were incorporated into new cars for Moss and Jean Behra in an attempt to address the car’s straightline speed deficit. That was a race Moss won once the rapid D50s had wilted – but only after a helpful push from privateer Luigi Piotti when Moss ran out of fuel thanks to a leak! Fangio’s second place, having been handed Peter Collins’s car after his own had retired, was enough to beat Moss by three points. Ferrari’s final tally was five wins to Maserati’s two, despite the pace shown by Moss and the consistency – five podiums from seven starts – of team-mate Behra.

“There had been too much disorganised experimentation so >>



The classic 250F image: Fangio puts on a masterclass at Rouen in 1957



MOST 250F WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STARTS

DRIVER	STARTS
Jean Behra	25
Stirling Moss	16
Harry Schell	16
Horace Gould	13
Jo Bonnier	12
Paco Godia	12

that the works team cars were seldom properly prepared in time for the races,” was Jenkinson’s summary of 1956.

This would be rectified for 1957, experiments largely kept outside the main team of cars and drivers, and there was also now a separate workshop for customers. And Fangio returned as Moss left for Vanwall.

The result of all this was the 250F’s finest season. For 1957, Maserati significantly lightened the 250F’s chassis and improved the brakes. Power was now in the region of 270bhp. “The series of modifications made the 250F into quite a remarkable F1 car,” reckoned Maurizio Tabucchi in *Maserati: The Grand Prix, Sports and GT cars model by model, 1926-2003*.

It was a sentiment echoed by Fangio, who told Autosport’s Nigel Roebuck the following about the 1957 car: “That 250F was not very powerful, but beautifully balanced, a lovely car to drive. I felt I could do anything with it.”

And so it proved. Though Moss took pole in a ‘one-off’ for Maserati in the absence of Vanwall from the opening round in Argentina, Fangio led a 250F 1-2-3-4. The reigning champion then won in Monaco and dominated the French GP, which Moss missed.

Moss’s famous British GP drive at Aintree, taking over the injured Tony Brooks’s car to storm through to claim Vanwall’s first world championship victory, was a sign of things to come, but there was still time for the 250F’s finest moment – or perhaps Fangio’s.

After a disastrous mid-race fuel stop took far longer than planned, Fangio smashed the Nurburgring lap record repeatedly to catch the

Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Collins and take his 24th and final world championship GP victory. The German GP win, which Fangio would call his greatest, secured his fifth crown before Moss took two victories for Vanwall – with Fangio second – in the last two rounds.

The 250F had finally taken an F1 crown, but Maserati’s financial position was now precarious and it withdrew from running a factory attack. Normal petrol became the mandated fuel for 1958, so Maserati had to adapt the 250F, which had run a methanol fuel with nitro-methane in 1957. A shorter, lighter ‘piccolo’ model was built – and used by Fangio to finish fourth in his final GP in France – but F1 had moved on.

The increasingly obsolete 250F battled on but there were no more podiums. “The Scuderia Centro Sud carried on to the bitter end with 250F cars and, though they never won anything, they did allow



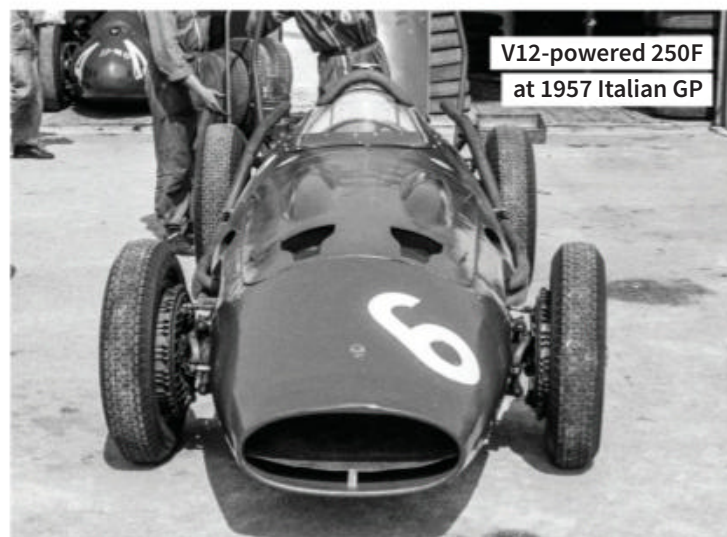
Three Ferraris on the front row but 11 Maseratis are on the 1956 German GP grid!



Phil Hill was seventh on his championship debut in the 1958 French GP



Tec-Mec was not a success in its 1959 US GP outing



V12-powered 250F at 1957 Italian GP

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THE ULTIMATE 250F

Remarkably, given the longevity of the most famous Maserati racer, the 250F could have been competitive even longer. Among the many things tried was a V12...

Giulio Alfieri had been developing a 12-cylinder engine since 1955. "But such a radical change would have required a thoroughly redesigned chassis, something that was considered to be economically unfeasible," reckoned Maurizio Tabucchi in *Maserati: The Grand Prix, Sports and GT cars model by model, 1926-2003*.

Maserati's existence remained precarious even amid on-track success. But a compact 60-degree V12 was tried at the 1957 Italian Grand Prix. This engine produced around 320bhp, but Jean Behra retired at Monza with overheating.

"Without doubt, this remarkable development would have prolonged the 250F's magnificent career had Maserati, sated by its conquest of the world championship but above all afflicted by chronic financial problems, not decided to withdraw from racing," added Tabucchi.

Famous motorsport journalist Denis Jenkinson agreed: "Had the factory team been able to continue with the 12-cylinder version then the 250F could have kept up with the opposition."

As it was, Maserati's V12 would finally get its F1 chance – in three-litre form – nearly a decade later, in the back of Cooper's surprisingly effective T81, winning the 1966 Mexican and 1967 South African GPs.

"HAD THE FACTORY CONTINUED, THE V12 250F COULD HAVE KEPT UP WITH THE OPPOSITION"

numerous drivers to cut their teeth in grand prix racing, and they always swelled the entry lists," wrote Jenkinson.

Even as late as 1958, four drivers made their world championship debuts driving 250Fs, including future world champion Phil Hill. Others who had already done so included Jo Bonnier, who would go on to be a GP winner with BRM, and Masten Gregory, who took his Scuderia Centro Sud Maserati to third place first time out at the 1957 Monaco GP. And that doesn't include Indianapolis 500 winner Troy Ruttman, who had started six points-paying Indy 500 races when he contested the 1958 French GP at the wheel of... a 250F.

The ultimate iteration of the theme, though it didn't show it at the time, was the Tec-Mec, in which Colotti was instrumental. It was lighter and has proved itself in historic competition, but in period its world championship contribution was restricted to a retirement at the 1959 United States GP in the hands of Fritz d'Orey, another driver who had made his big-time debut in a 250F.

Amazingly, Bob Drake drove one of the 1957 lightweight cars in the final world championship race of the 2.5-litre formula, the 1960 US GP, more than six years after the 250F had first appeared. He finished 13th, seven laps down.

Even today, the 250F remains capable of providing highlights in historic motorsport. At August's Silverstone Festival, rain gave 74-year-old John Spiers an opportunity to not only lead the front-engined class in the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association's race for pre-1966 F1 machines, but to defeat much later, rear-engined designs to score an outright victory.

"It is an iconic car and one that means a lot to me," says Spiers. "The chassis is very forgiving and that's one of the reasons the car is very competitive in the wet. I was recently reading an interview with Alfieri, who was saying the chassis lacked torsional rigidity, so even in period they were more competitive than normal when it was wet."

Despite the fact that it spent more of its career *not* winning than leading the pack, the 250F is still rightfully a legend. Its beautiful balance meant it was accessible for the inexperienced as well as rewarding for the true maestros, and it was the mainstay of F1 grids for much of the period, completing more than 11,000 laps in the world championship, not to mention the many non-points-paying events. It was neither the most successful, nor the ultimate expression of the theme, but the Maserati 250F remains the archetypal front-engined grand prix car. ❧



Maserati power: John Surtees heads to victory in Mexico

Ugochukwu stands tall ahead of chaos

The lofty American kept it clean, and was only ever headed by the safety car

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY MACAU GRAND PRIX

Considering there were 26 red flags or safety cars across the Formula Regional World Cup, it was perhaps typical of a chaotic Macau Grand Prix weekend that the main race should finish under caution. The 71st edition of the event certainly was not a classic, and will likely be remembered more for all the crashes than what proved to be a dominant performance by McLaren junior Ugo Ugochukwu to become the first American winner of the Macau GP since Bob Earl in 1981.

But, for all the focus on the somewhat shocking driving standards on display – something the FIA is well aware needs to improve across the junior single-seater scene – it was perhaps unsurprising that the continual top three of Ugochukwu, Red Bull Junior Oliver Goethe and Noel Leon barely put a foot wrong all weekend. While many of those around them seemed to lose their focus, this trio stayed out of trouble and provided a reminder that it is possible to race around the Guia circuit without crashing.

Not that Ugochukwu was necessarily many people's tip to prevail this weekend. And certainly not with the lights-to-flag qualifying race and main event success he achieved. Even the R-ace GP driver admitted he was "definitely not expecting" such a comprehensive result. "Of course, the goal was to come in and win, but to be P1 since Friday is just great," he reckoned.

Yes, Ugochukwu arrived in Macau off the back of a maiden Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine victory at the Monza finale. Even so, a somewhat underwhelming 11th in the final standings did not mark him out as the driver to beat – especially when you consider the theoretical quality among the entry list. A host of FIA F3 winners and podium finishers had stepped back a level to tackle Macau, while James Wharton and Tuukka Taponen – second and third in the FRECA table – were more fancied among



the regular Formula Regional drivers. But that duo spent much of the weekend either crashing into the barriers or other cars and never truly looked like threatening the front.

It must be said that Wharton and Taponen were making their Macau debuts while Ugochukwu was able to call upon experience from last year, when he finished 15th in the F3 contest. "In the F3 the pace was really good, but I wasn't able to show it well," Ugochukwu admitted. "A couple too many mistakes, and I think I just learned from that this year, and just managed to put everything together."

Despite the consistency with which Ugochukwu, Goethe and Leon occupied the top three spots, the disjointed nature of the event meant it was difficult to say definitively that they were the quickest of the field (see panel, p51). Goethe's qualifying session, meanwhile, was hectic for very different reasons. During the third of seven (not a typo!) red-flag periods, he accidentally set off his car's fire extinguisher, dousing both himself and his steed in



Liu one of many to get his car craned...



...but relatively minor off here for Daryanani



Ugochukwu surprised even himself with scale of his weekend's success

“It was very stressful. Thankfully, there was that long red flag that gave us time to fix everything”

foam. His MP Motorsport mechanics hurriedly worked to clean up the mess, dry Goethe's overalls and replace the extinguisher. Considering he was on provisional pole at the time, Goethe feared the worst. “It was very stressful, I didn't know whether my qualifying was over,” he admitted. “But, thankfully, there was that long red flag that gave us time to fix everything, replace everything.”

Nevertheless, it was not ideal preparation for the crucial final runs and, although he improved his time, he was pipped to pole by just 0.014 seconds by Ugochukwu. Goethe immediately tried to make up for that disappointment at the start of the dry qualifying race and unsuccessfully challenged Ugochukwu into the first corner, through Mandarin and had a look at Lisboa. “He had the inside line for braking, so there wasn't much I could do really,” said Goethe. “It was definitely not worth risking it. Maybe tomorrow!”

The race was then neutralised almost immediately after Sota Ogawa crashed at Mandarin. Goethe was unable to launch another attack on the restart, when he was caught napping by Ugochukwu and quickly fell a second behind. But that margin evaporated when the dark clouds that had been threatening finally unleashed their contents at Lisboa and Ugochukwu was cautious as the first on the scene. Others further back skated into the escape road and the red flag was called as the deluge arrived to allow wet weather tyres to be fitted.

The final three laps were then completed behind the safety car. Despite the majority of the track appearing bone dry, the section around Lisboa certainly was not and Goethe was among those supporting the decision. “As much as I wanted to win, for safety



reasons, it was definitely the right call,” he opined. “It was completely wet. I already had so much spray [even though] I was P2 and we were going very slowly.”

The safety car was again used at the start of the GP as a few lingering damp patches, amid the bright sunshine that was now bathing the circuit, meant officials unsurprisingly erred on the side of caution. When things got under way on lap two, Ugochukwu again executed another terrific start to gap Goethe. Further back, there was drama immediately as the familiar pattern of crashes once again began. This time it was Wharton, who tried an ambitious move on Matteo De Palo for sixth around the outside of Lisboa but ran out of road, hit the barriers and triggered a pile-up that also eliminated six others. Cue a red flag.

It was another safety car start following the suspension and another good getaway from Ugochukwu meant Goethe instead had to watch his mirrors for a threatening Leon at Lisboa, but there >>

was no way through for the Mexican. And there was no time for the drivers to get into a rhythm before another safety car was called – Liu Ruiqi the culprit this time. Ugochukwu soon built a two-second lead at the third time of asking but that was eliminated when, you guessed it, a further caution period was needed. Goethe got his best restart yet at the start of the two-lap dash to the flag but still could not quite challenge Ugochukwu, who stroked it home to eventually land the spoils after a truncated affair.

The American knew his safety car restarts were key, and always tried to get on the power early around Fishermen's Bend. "I was trying to keep the tyre temperature and then just try to surprise P2 and get a little bit of a gap," explained Ugochukwu. "I think the last

"It came down to the smallest of margins – one hundredth around a two-minute-whatever track"

two corners came in really handy – we've been good there all weekend – so I was able to push there and get a little bit out of the slipstream, which was just enough to not need to defend into T3."

For his part, Goethe said the dirty air meant it was hard to stay close through Fishermen's and R Bend as Ugochukwu accelerated away, and the German was left wondering what might have been. "It came down to the smallest of margins – one hundredth in qualifying around a two-minute-whatever track," he sighed. "It's incredible and, unfortunately, I was on the wrong side of the hundredth, but it shows how important every little detail is. It's gutting. Who knows how it would have gone if it was a completely dry day and we had a standing start? I had a better launch than him yesterday and maybe today I could have jumped him."

Behind, the palindromic and metronomic Noel Leon occupied third throughout in his Pinnacle Motorsport machine, but faced repeated attacks from Freddie Slater. The Prema Racing-run Italian F4 dominator was racing FRegional machinery for the first time and had a few looks around the outside at Lisboa before sending it up the inside on the final lap. But he was unable to stop the car and went straight into the barriers. "I had to go for it!" Slater professed. "It had been raining so all the grip went away from what it was yesterday and it was also a bit damp so everything was against that overtake. It was one of those, I wanted to go for it and try to finish on the podium."



Slater fell foul of ambitious move for podium on final lap

This meant Enzo Deligny made it two Red Bull Juniors and two R-ace GP drivers among the first four, while De Palo and Rashid Al Dhaheri appeared to complete the top six. But the PHM Racing pair were later disqualified for having a modified stone guard in front of the radiator and intercooler on their cars, promoting Cooper Webster (Evans GP) to fifth.

But that was just a footnote to an event where driving standards were the key topic. With Mattia Colnaghi also hitting the wall at Fishermen's at the end, the race concluded under safety car conditions to provide one further addition to the terrible tally of interruptions on a weekend many described as "embarrassing".



Goethe leads Leon at Melco in fight for second

**IT'S NEVER ALL
OVER AND DUNNE WITH**



Dunne fought back well

The positioning of a team's garage in the pitlane is not normally a critical factor in determining a driver's fortunes. But that proved to be the case in Macau for Alex Dunne and Dino Beganovic.

The pair's Prema squad was second-to-last along the line, determined by the order in which teams placed their entries, and that meant they were first on the scene when Rintaro Sato crashed at Police on the second flying lap of the crucial second qualifying session. With Sato's TGM machine stranded in the track and no time for the pair to avoid it, both Dunne and Beganovic clattered into the stricken car, ending their session and effectively their victory hopes.

Both were likely frontrunners on stepping back from F3, and both had impressed before crashing out last year. Yet, despite the setback, Dunne continued to shine.

He rocketed from 18th on the grid to 12th in the qualifying race, the rain denying the Irishman the chance to progress any further. He then just about avoided getting taken out in the Lisboa melee at the start of the main race, and a move on Theophile Nael at the same corner later netted Dunne eighth, which became sixth when the PHM pair were excluded.

"It was difficult, but I feel like we maximised what was possible," reflected Dunne. "Unfortunately, it was one of those weekends where a lot of the things that went wrong just weren't through our control. The pace was there and to race with Prema was a dream come true. I've always wanted to race with Prema – it's almost like an F1 team in the junior categories. I really enjoyed working with them and hopefully I get to do it again."



Beganovic mired in the midfield

RESULTS MACAU GRAND PRIX, MACAU (CHN), 17 NOVEMBER (15 LAPS – 57.04 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME	QUALIFYING RACE
1	Ugo Ugochukwu (USA)	R-ace GP	1h06m58.505s	(10 LAPS – 38.03 MILES) 1 Ugochukwu 47m40.192s
2	Oliver Goethe (DEU)	MP Motorsport	+0.412s	2 Goethe +0.221s
3	Noel Leon (MEX)	Pinnacle Motorsport	+2.426s	3 Leon +0.445s
4	Enzo Deligny (FRA)	R-ace GP	+2.893s	4 Slater +0.663s
5	Cooper Webster (AUS)	Evans GP	+6.877s	5 Deligny +1.337s
6	Alex Dunne (IRL)	Prema Racing	+7.360s	6 De Palo +2.196s
7	Mari Boya (ESP)	Pinnacle Motorsport	+8.006s	7 Wharton +2.581s
8	Dino Beganovic (SWE)	Prema Racing	+8.589s	8 Al Dhaheri +2.792s
9	Alexander Abkhazava (KZK)	Sainteloc Racing	+9.660s	9 Giltaire +3.051s
10	Tuukka Taponen (FIN)	R-ace GP	+9.914s	10 Beganovic +3.319s
11	Valerio Rinicella (ITA)	MP Motorsport	+10.697s	11 Nael +4.034s
12	Rikuto Kobayashi (JPN)	TOM'S Formula	+24.901s	12 Dunne +4.309s
13	Freddie Slater (GBR)	Prema Racing	14 laps-accident	13 Nakamura +6.214s
14	Mattia Colnaghi (ITA)	MP Motorsport	13 laps-accident	14 Rinicella +6.460s
EX	Matteo De Palo (ITA)	PHM Racing	+3.664s	15 Webster +6.586s
EX	Rashid Al Dhaheri (ARE)	PHM Racing	+3.914s	16 Sato +6.664s
EX	Theophile Nael (FRA)	Sainteloc Racing	+15.115s	17 Rodrigues +6.924s
R	Jin Nakamura (JPN)	TOM'S Formula	12 laps-accident	18 Bowling +7.248s
R	Sota Ogawa (JPN)	TGM Grand Prix	10 laps-accident	19 Le +7.426s
R	Liu Ruiqi (CHN)	PHM Racing	3 laps-accident	20 Daryanani +7.702s
R	James Wharton (AUS)	ART Grand Prix	1 lap-accident	21 Kobayashi +9.869s
R	Evan Giltaire (FRA)	ART Grand Prix	1 lap-accident	22 Liu +9.948s
R	Rintaro Sato (JPN)	TGM Grand Prix	1 lap-accident	23 Abkhazava +10.242s
R	Tiago Rodrigues (CHN)	Evans GP	1 lap-accident	24 Colnaghi 5 laps-accident
R	Jett Bowling (USA)	Kiwi Motorsport	1 lap-accident	R Boya 4 laps-excluded
R	Kanato Le (JPN)	ART Grand Prix	1 lap-accident	R Ogawa 0 laps-accident
R	Kai Daryanani (IND)	Evans GP	1 lap-accident	R Taponen 0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 51.10mph. **Fastest lap** Goethe 2m19.599s, 98.07mph.

QUALIFYING 1 Ugochukwu 2m19.107s; 2 Goethe 2m19.121s; 3 Leon 2m19.298s; 4 Deligny 2m19.756s; 5 Boya 2m19.817s; 6 Webster 2m20.252s; 7 Slater 2m20.286s; 8 Nael 2m20.323s; 9 Giltaire 2m20.677s; 10 De Palo 2m20.813s; 11 Wharton 2m20.842s; 12 Al Dhaheri 2m21.320s; 13 Nakamura 2m21.692s; 14 Colnaghi 2m21.996s; 15 Beganovic 2m22.199s; 16 Rinicella 2m22.291s; 17 Abkhazava 2m22.329s; 18 Dunne 2m22.797s; 19 Ogawa 2m23.508s; 20 Taponen 2m23.720s; 21 Rodrigues 2m23.951s; 22 Liu 2m24.601s; 23 Kobayashi 2m24.631s; 24 Bowling 2m24.985s; 25 Sato 2m25.774s; 26 Daryanani 2m26.893s; 27 Le 2m41.771s.



You don't get a Lion Dance for the FRECA round at Hockenheim



Engel slips through as clash leaves Italians fuming

**FIA GT WORLD CUP
MACAU (CHN)
16-17 NOVEMBER**

Until the final three laps of this year's FIA GT World Cup race, it looked like Macau maestro Raffaele Marciello would continue where he left off and score a third successive clean sweep of pole, qualification race win and victory in the main contest. But Antonio Fuoco had not read that particular script and provided a dramatic end to a thrilling encounter.

That there would be a race at all looked a little doubtful earlier on Sunday morning when the rain that plagued this year's event unexpectedly reappeared with greater force than before. Thankfully, it relented enough to allow the race to begin, albeit the first five of the 16 laps were completed behind the safety car.

The wet weather had created something of a lottery and the pace advantage the BMWs enjoyed earlier in the weekend – even despite a post-qualifying turbo

boost reduction – evaporated. Instead of the M4 GT3s of Marciello and Dries Vanthoor scampering clear as they had in the qualification race, Vanthoor briefly edging ahead of Marciello off the line in that one before running slightly deep at Lisboa and dropping behind again, they faced a battle on their hands.

Well, Vanthoor certainly did. Marciello had pulled a second clear by the end of the first green-flag lap while Vanthoor was struggling more in the wet in his WRT-run machine. He was soon under pressure from Fuoco's charging AF Corse Ferrari 296 GT3, and the Macau GT debutant defied his lack of experience to make a breathtaking move up the inside of Vanthoor at R Bend. Who said GT cars can't overtake around the Guia circuit?

Three-time winner Maro Engel was the next to have a go at passing Vanthoor. But, with the BMW still enjoying a straightline speed advantage, Engel attempted a move through the tight Mountain section. It didn't work, and the Mercedes-AMG GT3

Evo instead clipped Vanthoor, sending him into the barriers.

Meanwhile, up at the front, a flying Fuoco had reduced Marciello's 1.6s advantage to nothing within a lap, and soon it was a three-car train with Engel joining the fun. The trio remained locked together, although in the same order, until lap 14, when Fuoco executed another wonderful move at R Bend to grab the lead.

Marciello was not going to give up without a fight, and attempted to retaliate immediately. He closed on Fuoco approaching Lisboa and, as both tried to brake as late as they dared, Marciello left it too long and nudged into Fuoco, resulting in them both taking to the escape road. "He touched me and he was not even able to stop his car, so imagine where he braked," fumed Fuoco, who slammed the "dirty move". Marciello countered: "I tried to overtake him in Lisboa but, unfortunately, he moved under braking. I had nowhere to go."

While Fuoco continued in ninth, Marciello struck the wall at Teddy Yip further around the lap and retired to the pits with damage. Instead, a gleeful Engel was left with a huge lead. But still the drama was not over – the Mercedes man was given a 5s penalty for the Vanthoor clash. With his radio not working properly and him uncertain of the sanction, Engel continued to press on to cross the line over 11s ahead of Augusto Farfus's BMW. "When I saw it was raining, I felt this was our opportunity," smiled Engel. "In the dry we didn't really have the chance to compete with BMW and the Ferrari so I'm over the moon."

Vanthoor was less enthused: "If you push another car off, you should not be able to win." But with Farfus and Sheldon van der



Marciello won on Saturday and led most of Sunday final

MACAU GP



Engel got round Lisboa on every lap; Marciello and Fuoco didn't

MACAU GP



Joy for Engel and Merc GT chief Stefan Wendl

MERCEDES

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA GT WORLD CUP
MACAU (CHN)

Race 1 Raffaele Marciello
MCG (BMW M4 GT3)

Race 2 Maro Engel
GruppeM Racing (Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo)

TCR WORLD TOUR
MACAU (CHN)

Race 1 Thed Bjork
Cyan Racing (Lynk & Co 03 FL TCR)

Race 2 Dusan Borkovic
GOAT Racing (Honda Civic Type R FL5 TCR)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com

Linde both finishing on the podium, that at least gave BMW something to smile about.

Farfus described it as “one of the most difficult weekends I’ve had in my career”, the changeable weather and the fact that he was driving for the small Macanese KRC team, which he only met last Tuesday, making it another remarkable element of a truly extraordinary race.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Bjork can't deny Michelisz for title behind slick Borkovic

TCR WORLD TOUR
MACAU (CHN)
16-17 NOVEMBER
ROUND 7/7

Norbert Michelisz won his second successive FIA TCR World Tour title with Hyundai at the Macau Guia. That was despite a valiant charge from Lynk & Co Cyan Racing rival Thed Bjork, who secured pole position and the victory in the first race, but in the rain-delayed second heat was unable to score the points needed to topple the 40-year-old Hungarian from his crown.

Bjork scored pole position by just 0.023 seconds from the Hyundai of Mikel Azcona, with Bjork's team-mate Yann Ehrlacher handing the Swede a pair of slipstreams to aid his title bid. At the start of the first race, Ehrlacher got too much wheelspin and dropped behind Michelisz, while Honda man Esteban Guerrieri made a daring lunge at Lisboa to try to pass Ehrlacher, overshooting the corner and nearly clipping Michelisz. With the loss of momentum, Guerrieri tried to aggressively get back on the racing line but collided with his own team-mate Marco Butti and triggered a pile-up, with the race red-flagged. Guerrieri's car was severely damaged and would not make the restart, ending his title challenge.

After the restart, Bjork pulled away while Michelisz and Azcona swapped positions for second, with Azcona defending him from any possible assault from Ehrlacher. Bjork's win brought him to five points adrift of Michelisz, but he'd need to get past him on the road



Michelisz with BRC Hyundai boss Tarquini

WSC/JUN QIAN MOTORSPORT

in the reversed-grid second race to deprive him of the crown.

The circuit was very wet on Sunday morning and the teams all signalled the conditions were too unsafe to attempt a start. The race was delayed until an available slot in the afternoon, right after the FIA GT World Cup race.

The cars went straight out from the pits behind the safety car, with the green flag on lap three. With the circuit now drying, about a third of the field made the gamble to start on slicks. Chinese Hyundai driver Martin Cao led the first phase of the race on wet-weather tyres, matching his own title rival's tyre choice, but his rubber faded on lap three and the three slick-shod Hondas surged through the field, led by Dusan Borkovic, who'd started fourth.

Borkovic took his first World Touring Car win ahead of team-mates Guerrieri and Butti, while Michelisz stayed a safe fifth with his Hyundai team-mates defending him from Bjork to assure him of his title.

NEIL HUDSON



Victory in first race kept Bjork's hopes of the title alive

MACAU GP



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Brown shows his class with charge to title

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
ADELAIDE (AUS)
16-17 NOVEMBER
ROUND 12/12

Anyone who doubted that Will Brown was the best Supercars driver of 2024 had those doubts swept away by two fine performances in the final races of the year around the streets of Adelaide that comfortably clinched the crown for the 26-year-old.

In Saturday's 250km opening race, Brown took second place behind team-mate Broc Feeney who, once again, rode a pit-early strategy to seize track position and head a Triple Eight Chevrolet Camaro 1-2. Any such repeat a day later looked doomed within the first 10 laps of the race. Feeney was beaten away from the start by Chaz Mostert and, try as he might, he could not navigate his way around the Walkinshaw Andretti United Ford Mustang.

Indeed, when he challenged for the lead on lap nine of 78, Feeney fell back into the clutches of the driver immediately behind him, Brown – who did not make it through and then, seconds later, found himself spun out of third place. The driver who had caused that was his former Erebus Motorsport team-mate Brodie Kosteci, the outgoing champion earning himself a 15-second penalty to serve at his first stop.

Brown was now in 23rd place, at the tail of the field and, even in a largely straight car, seemingly with no hope of victory.

Mostert and Feeney carried on their battle at the front through the middle of the race until they made their second pitstop in formation. Mostert was the first to move and claimed the fast lane on exit, Feeney hit him on the way out of his own pitbox and thereby gained a position as the duo re-entered the track, well clear of the rest. Feeney immediately moved aside to redress



Brown stormed from the back to win in a dramatic finale

the gain, but to no avail. He received a 15s penalty, apparently handing the win on a silver platter to Mostert.

That should have been the end of it but Mostert was concerned that Feeney could cover that 15s if he got past. So he defended every Feeney parry until, nearly inevitably, the two made contact. Mostert hit the wall, bending his suspension. Feeney scurried away unharmed, only to get *another* 15s censure.

So now the man in third place on the road was the likely winner – and almost unbelievably, that was Brown, who had navigated his way past 20 cars in just over 50 laps. He picked off Mostert and sped away to the win, leaving the WAU driver as a sitting duck for a queue of cars behind.

Will Davison was the first man in that queue but, as he passed, Mostert retaliated and forced him wide – and Thomas Randle sneaked through the gap. The Tickford




Feeney won race one but penalties and clash ruined his Sunday outing

WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
ADELAIDE (AUS)

Race 1 Broc Feeney
 Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)

Race 2 Will Brown
 Triple Eight (Chevrolet Camaro)

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Ford driver threw everything he had at Mostert but even with a bent car, that is how they finished; Mostert second, confirming third place in the drivers' championship, and Randle third, vaulting him up to fifth for the season. They were split in the standings by Randle's team-mate Cam Waters, who finished down the order after being given a 15s penalty of his own for contact earlier in the race.

There would need to be three-page liftout to list all the penalties semaphored in the 78-lap contest, but none impacted the drivers' or teams' titles, both reclaimed by Triple Eight after Erebus Motorsport swept them a year ago. Brown finished the season on 3060 points, ahead of Feeney on 2838 and Mostert on 2557. Triple Eight scored 5868 points to beat Tickford on 4523.

So, Brown ends the season as champion, the first in 40 years to stand on the podium at every round, and the last before Supercars' controversial (NASCAR-style) Finals system rolls out for 2025...

PHIL BRANAGAN

Martin's title despite Bagnaia brilliance

MOTOGP
BARCELONA (ESP)
17 NOVEMBER
ROUND 20/20

Jorge Martin became the first rider of the MotoGP era to win a world championship on a satellite bike with a pair of third places in the Barcelona finale. The Pramac rider arrived at the Catalan circuit with a healthy 24-point lead in the standings, and took no major risks over the course of the weekend to beat Francesco Bagnaia by 10 points in an all-Ducati battle for the title.

In a way, the Barcelona round perfectly encapsulated the essence of the title fight between Bagnaia and Martin. The factory Ducati rider brought his A-game to Spain, something he needed to do in order to have any chance of overcoming the points deficit he faced to Martin. The Spaniard, on the other hand, held his nerve and prioritised a podium finish over going all out for victory. It meant that the rider who won a whopping 11 of the 20 grands prix over the course of the season ended up runner-up in the standings, but world championships are won on consistency and there was no rider who finished on the podium week-in and week-out like Martin.

The weekend began with Bagnaia taking top honours in practice on Friday, and he built on that speed in qualifying to clinch his sixth pole position of 2024. Martin, meanwhile, couldn't even qualify on the front row, ending up fourth behind the Aprilia of Aleix Espargaro and Gresini Ducati rider Marc Marquez.

Bagnaia didn't get the best launch later on Saturday when the sprint began, but was able to fend off title rival Martin and pass his team-mate Enea Bastianini on the



Martin celebrates his first MotoGP crown after a consistent campaign

opening lap to regain the lead. With the initial threats dissipated, Bagnaia slowly carved out an advantage for himself on the works GP24, winning the race by a margin of just under one second. It was his seventh success in a sprint in 2024, bringing him level with Martin. More importantly, Bastianini was able to dispatch Martin for second place on the final lap, taking two more points away from him in the title run-in. It meant Martin's lead over Bagnaia was cut to 19 points going into the final race of the year, although Martin still only needed a top-nine finish to be crowned.

Unlike in the sprint, Bagnaia pulled away cleanly from pole position in the main race to grab the holeshot into Turn 1, with Martin slotting into second place ahead of Marquez. But a repeat of the Malaysia

battle between the championship protagonists wasn't to be, with Martin having to turn his attention immediately towards the rider chasing him. Marquez, engaged in his own fight for third place in the championship with Bastianini, continued to pile pressure on Martin for the rest of the lap, before diving past him into Turn 1 at the start of the next tour.

The six-time champion then set about chasing Bagnaia, closing to within half a second of the factory Ducati at one stage. But, despite the Italian running slightly wide at Turn 5 on lap 10, Marquez was never in a position to make the move. Bagnaia eventually won the race by a comfortable margin of 1.5s, capping off his incredible – if error-prone – 2024 campaign with another fine victory.



Bagnaia did all he could and scored his 11th GP win of the year



Espargaro's Aprilia was top non-Ducati home in fifth spot



Zarco finished as top Honda - down in 14th

But the day and the season belonged to Martin, who came home a safe third to score his first title in any category since his Moto3 crown in 2018. The 26-year-old didn't chase after Bagnaia and Marquez after dropping to third on lap two of 24, preferring to do his own race with Espargaro acting as his rear-gunner. The Aprilia rider, on his final outing in MotoGP as a full-time competitor, was overtaken on the penultimate lap by the other Gresini bike of Alex Marquez, but he still finished as the top non-Ducati contender in fifth.

Brad Binder pulled off an incredible comeback for KTM from 18th on the grid to finish sixth, demoting Bastianini - who'd had to take the escape road earlier after a mistake at Turn 2 - on the final lap. Franco Morbidelli was eighth for Pramac, while VR46 Ducati rider Marco Bezzecchi snatched ninth place from the Tech3 KTM of Pedro Acosta, who dropped away from the frontrunners with brake problems.

Yamaha won the intra-Japanese manufacturer battle with Honda, courtesy of Fabio Quartararo's run to 11th. Johann Zarco was once again the lead finisher for Honda, ending up 14th.

It still seems a long way back for the hitherto dominant manufacturer in MotoGP but, for Martin, Barcelona was the end of a tough story. "It's been a long journey, a lot of crashes, big injuries and finally we are back here," he said. "In the last laps I couldn't even ride, I started crying a bit. It was a really emotional race. Thanks to my people, it's for them, completely for them."

RACHIT THUKRAL

RESULTS MOTOGP ROUND 20/20, BARCELONA (ESP), 17 NOV (24 LAPS - 69.449 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	40m24.740s
2	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+1.474s
3	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+3.810s
4	Alex Marquez (ESP)	Gresini Ducati	+5.322s
5	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+5.753s
6	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+7.081s
7	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Ducati	+7.393s
8	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+8.709s
9	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+10.484s
10	Pedro Acosta (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+10.618s
11	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+10.756s
12	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+13.464s
13	Jack Miller (AUS)	KTM	+14.560s
14	Johann Zarco (FRA)	LCR Honda	+19.469s
15	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Aprilia	+22.195s
16	Luca Marini (ITA)	Honda	+23.890s
17	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+23.960s
18	Raul Fernandez (ESP)	Trackhouse Aprilia	+29.001s
19	Augusto Fernandez (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+29.145s
20	Michele Pirro (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+37.295s
21	Alex Rins (ESP)	Yamaha	+39.138s
22	Stefan Bradl (DEU)	Honda	+47.654s
R	Joan Mir (ESP)	Honda	6 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 103.111mph. Fastest lap M Marquez 1m40.088s, 104.082mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Bagnaia 1m38.641s; 2 Espargaro 1m38.696s; 3 M Marquez 1m38.798s; 4 Martin 1m38.849s; 5 Morbidelli 1m38.886s; 6 Acosta 1m38.949s; 7 Vinales 1m38.992s; 8 Bastianini 1m39.078s; 9 Bezzecchi 1m39.121s; 10 Quartararo 1m39.209s; 11 A Marquez 1m39.252s; 12 Zarco 1m39.494s.

QUALIFYING 1 Morbidelli 1m39.145s; Quartararo 1m39.404s; 13 Mir 1m39.432s; 14 Oliveira 1m39.487s; 15 Rins 1m39.559s; 16 Marini 1m39.619s; 17 R Fernandez 1m39.645s; 18 Binder 1m39.678s; 19 Miller 1m39.749s; 20 Nakagami 1m39.793s; 21 A Fernandez 1m40.166s; 22 Pirro 1m40.252s; 23 Bradl 1m40.423s.

SPRINT RACE (12 LAPS - 34.725 MILES)

1 Bagnaia 20m03.173s; 2 Bastianini +0.942s; 3 Martin +1.270s; 4 Espargaro +1.857s; 5 A Marquez +1.942s; 6 Morbidelli +5.263s; 7 M Marquez +5.303s; 8 Bezzecchi +5.507s; 9 Binder +5.573s; 10 Quartararo +5.937s; 11 Zarco +7.413s; 12 Vinales +8.344s; 13 Mir +9.387s; 14 R Fernandez +9.652s; 15 Marini +11.838s; 16 Rins +13.217s; 17 Nakagami +17.017s; 18 Oliveira +17.746s; 19 Miller +18.533s; 20 A Fernandez +20.153s; 21 Pirro +20.547s; 22 Bradl +24.604s; R Acosta 1 lap-accident damage.

Winner's average speed 103.899mph. Fastest lap Bagnaia 1m39.171s, 105.044mph.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Martin 508; 2 Bagnaia 498; 3 M Marquez 392; 4 Bastianini 386; 5 Binder 217; 6 Acosta 215; 7 Vinales 190; 8 A Marquez 173; 9 Morbidelli 173; 10 Fabio Di Giannantonio 165.

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Ducati 722; 2 KTM 327; 3 Aprilia 302; 4 Yamaha 124; 5 Honda 75.



Home heroes the Marquez brothers both made the top four

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MRL announces plans for more overseas rounds

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BRSCC launches
DS3 Cup for 2025



The story behind a
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Entry-level DS3 Cup announced for 2025

BRSCC

The British Racing & Sports Car Club has launched a new series for the Citroen DS3 next year.

The DS3 Cup has been created as an entry-level point above the BRSCC's CityCar Cup, which was introduced in 2020 for Citroen C1, Toyota Aygo and Peugeot 107 machines.

The DS3 will use a 1.6-litre engine with an output of 135bhp via a controlled engine map, air intake and exhaust system to ensure parity throughout the grid.

A full build kit from club partner SW Motorsports will cost £7000, with a donor car on top expected to keep

overall costs below the £9000 threshold.

The new car made its debut at Silverstone last weekend for the BRSCC's Driven by Racing event, allowing prospective drivers to try it out.

"The CityCar Cup is our entry-level product and when people get involved with it they realise how much fun it can be and it's a really good learning platform," Greg Graham, the BRSCC's head of formulae development, told Autosport.

"But what we do get is a little bit of reticence from some people to join it, because it's low powered, because it's such a slow car. By giving that sector of the market another entry-level product that's a little bit of a step up in performance

we can cater for that customer."

For its maiden season, the DS3 Cup will race as a class within the BRSCC's Production Cup, but Graham is already hopeful that it will become a standalone series by 2026 given the interest expressed so far.

"Based on the weekend and the level of interest since we launched a few days ago, I'd be really disappointed if we didn't start the season with 10 or 12 cars," he said.

"We've done it before in partnership with SW Motorsports with CityCar Cup, with the Audi TT Cup, and the BMW 1 Series, again that's starting to gather real momentum. This hopefully will be the same."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Hitech signs Red Bull junior McLaughlin

BRITISH F4

Hitech will run Red Bull Academy driver Fionn McLaughlin in the British Formula 4 Championship next season.

The 17-year-old joined Red Bull's junior programme this summer. His success in karting includes finishing sixth in the 2024 FIA Karting World Championship,

having won heats the previous year before missing out in the final due to an engine failure.

"My goal in racing is to be a Formula 1 world champion and joining Hitech is the next step in my development path," said the Northern Irishman.

"I never give up and work hard until I'm at the top, and this is why Hitech is the perfect step, because watching them over the



last few years they are always winning and I look forward to that being me."

Also joining Hitech will be 15-year-old Leo Robinson, who returns for a second season in British F4 after

finishing sixth overall in his maiden campaign with JHR.

He said: "It will be my GCSE year, which gives me a lot to focus on – but I know which challenge I am looking forward to most!"

Equipe acquires and merges prototype series

EQUIPE

The Sports Prototype Cup and Zeo Prototype series have both been acquired by Equipe Classic Racing and will be merged into one category for next year.

While the Sports Prototype Cup has primarily focused on overseas events in recent years, the two series have previously collaborated at a couple of UK club meetings. Now they will be permanently brought together to create a mixed grid of prototypes that Equipe partner Rob Cull says will span “one-offs put together in a garage” through to the likes of Radicals.

Revolution and Praga are both set to support the new Equipe Sports Prototypes series, which has a six-event calendar that features rounds at Brands Hatch, both the National and Grand Prix Silverstone layouts, Donington Park, Oulton Park and Snetterton.

“We’re excited to bring these two together and create a bigger and better offering for the drivers,” said Cull. “With us upping the ante with hospitality, it’s a good fit.”



Cull has been encouraged by the interest in the series already, with one American driver already expressing interest in contesting the full season.

The move into modern prototypes is the latest example of Equipe diversifying from historic sportscars, and Cull said he considered launching a classic Radical series before the coronavirus pandemic. “I spent a bit of time taking a dive into the prototype world,” he added. “We don’t want to get into the guest market

[where other organisers would buy track time off Equipe]; we want all of our own content. So we looked at what else can we do that creates a really interesting platform? We see there’s a void for people doing club-level prototype races.”

Equipe had already revealed plans for a new six-hour historic sportscar race at Donington Park in 2025 and has further proposals that are due to be announced in the coming weeks.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Douglas Motorsport returns to racing in GB4



GB4

Douglas Motorsport will return to racing next season in the GB4 Championship, with the team’s drivers set to be announced in due course.

The squad previously raced in Ginetta Junior and GB3, but stepped back

from the Ginetta in 2020 and from GB3 last season.

Its return in the entry-level GB4 category, a rung below GB3, coincides with the introduction to the series of the previous-spec GB3 car, which has been downgraded and has already been used in testing by Douglas.

Team principal Wayne Douglas said: “It’s really GB3 and a half because we’re not having to buy anything, we’re just running what we did before. For us it’s not really a downgrade, it’s just a different front and rear wing, it’s the same thing.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

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MRL races at Spa but will look to expand its roster of overseas venues



RED WATER IMAGES

Portimao and Navarra Historic events headline new calendar

MRL

Motor Racing Legends has unveiled its 2025 calendar, with a greater emphasis placed on overseas rounds next year.

Seven race meetings have been outlined for the club, four of which are in the UK, including the Donington Park Historic Festival (2-4 May), Snetterton Classic (27-29 June), Silverstone Festival (22-24 August) and end-of-season races at Silverstone (18-19 October).

While there will be the traditional trip to the Spa Six Hours on 26-28 September, MRL has also scheduled a race meeting in Portimao (4-6 April) as well as a new Navarra Historic event on 10-12 October.

MRL chief executive Pierre-Antoine Lecoutour, who took on the role earlier

this month after leaving Peter Auto, said: “2025 will be a transition year and the idea is to get bigger and bigger in the years to come.

“I think for the moment MRL is mostly UK-based competitors and so the idea is to give them some improvement with better services, but obviously trying to expand the portfolio with the new competitors coming from Europe and try to attract them, to show there is an opportunity to race in Europe with MRL.

“Navarra is good because it’s quite central in Europe, it’s really close to the French border so you can attract a lot of people from Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany. It made sense and I think for the first year in Europe on a different track it was the perfect site to do that.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

Xcel Motorsport joins GB3 roster

GB3

United Arab Emirates-based team Xcel Motorsport will join the GB3 Championship next season, with plans to field two of the category’s new Tatuus MSV GB3-025 machines.

The squad has had success in karting and has been a mainstay of the UAE F4 scene, claiming the teams’ title between 2019 and 2021, as well as the drivers’ title with Matteo Nannini in

2019 and Francesco Pizzi in 2020. Last season the team joined the British F4 fray, taking a podium in its fourth race with Zack Scouler.

Team manager Paul Hardy said: “We’re very pleased to be making the move into GB3 for next season, as we expand our team further into the UK racing scene.

“We’re uniquely placed to take talented drivers through from grassroots

and international-level karting, through F4 in the Middle East and UK, and then into GB3, providing a ladder of opportunity that few teams can rival at this level.

“It’s a great time to join the series too. GB3’s new car is a very exciting one, and levels the playing field for all teams, with everyone getting used to it at the same time. We can’t wait to get going and take delivery of our new cars.”

ISLIN PICKS 20TEN RACING

Lewis Islin, the Fiesta Junior Scholarship winner for 2025, has chosen to run with 20Ten Racing in next year’s campaign. Team principal Simon Hunt said: “We’re thrilled that Lewis has chosen 20Ten as his team for 2025, and we’re looking forward to seeing how we can help him develop through next season. We will give him the best possible chance to hit the ground running and eventually become a race winner next season.”

MINSHAW SET FOR FUN CUP

After making his Fun Cup Endurance debut this season as part of Mark Burton’s Wave 9 team, Jason Minshaw has bought his own car to contest the 2025 championship. Mainly a historic racer now, Minshaw’s Demon Tweaks line-up will continue a family theme, with brother Guy and son Jack due to share the car.

DISCOUNTED ENTRY FEES

Drivers in the Historic Sports Car Club’s Classic Formula Ford championship will receive discounted entry fees due to the continued support of sponsor SDC. Competitors will receive a £90 discount for each race entry fee across the six double-header weekends. Stuart Kestenbaum, chair of the Classic FF1600 Championship, said: “The discount on the entry fees makes a big difference to our racers, most of whom are running on a limited budget.”

RADICAL WORLD FINALS

Dubai-based Alim Geshev became the Radical World Champion at Yas Marina last weekend. Three heat wins gave the SR10 driver (below) pole for the final, which had to be restarted after a multiple opening lap shunt before finishing under the safety car following another pile-up. Le Mans Cup and European Ligier racer Ian Aguilera was Pro 1500 champion in a RAW Motorsports SR3. He finished third overall in the final, behind Geshev and Oscar Joyce.



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Thompson passes Cook and Edwards to book a spot in the main event

PAUL TULLY

GRIFFITHS AND MORRISON WIN AT CADWELL PARK

CIRCUIT RALLY

Victory on last weekend's Cadwell Park Stages went to 2022-23 Circuit Rally champions John Griffiths and Emma Morrison by 23 seconds.

Reigning champions Michael Igoe/Will Atkins led after stage two in their Citroen C3 Rally2 after the opening test was cancelled. But Griffiths's Skoda Fabia R5 was only one second behind, and from the next stage became the new leader by seven seconds. Igoe had complained of a lack of power and handling issues, but managed to reduce the lead by half distance of the rescheduled seven stages.

Kiaran Hankin/James Swallow had already suffered a spectacular off on stage three, their Citroen coming to rest alongside the paddock toilet block, and on stage five Igoe was off too. "I hit standing water flat in fifth, spun twice and hit the barrier backwards," he said after retiring from the rally.

After Griffiths had stalled at a hairpin, the Darrian of Josh and Tamsyn Davey was only five seconds off the lead on the dark, wet penultimate stage, only for their hopes to be dashed with an off at Hall Bends.

PETER SCHERER



PETER SCHERER

Thompson stars as BTCC drivers tackle BriSCA F1 at Skegness

BRISCA F1

Bobby Thompson scored his second BriSCA F1 BTCC Challenge Trophy win in three years at Skegness Raceway's Gala meeting last Saturday, before taking on the BriSCA F1 elite during the rest of the night's racing.

Thompson was competing alongside seven current or former British Touring Car Championship drivers, including Josh Cook, Mikey Doble, Ricky Collard, Jade Edwards and Paul O'Neill, in the 750bhp V8 Chevrolet-powered BriSCA F1 stock cars during the 16-lap event.

Thompson hit the front with four laps to go from long-time leader O'Neill to take the flag, with Doble finishing third. The 28-year-old then took up the challenge of driving the multiple championship-winning car owned by J Davidson Scrap during the remainder of the meeting on the quarter-mile oval, where he would go up against some of the leading names in BriSCA F1, including five-time world champion Tom Harris.

"I treated the BTCC race as a bit of a test session, and to win it was a good start to the night," said Thompson. "But to go up against the BriSCA F1 big guns is the scariest thing I have ever done."

After racing in two heats of 28 cars before the main race of the night, Thompson started at the back of the grid alongside the sport's star names before finishing eighth in his first heat, and then an excellent fourth in heat two.

Thompson looked set for a potential top-five finish in the 20-lap final, until he was on the end of a huge hit from ex-BTCC driver and current BriSCA F1 leading light Ant Whorton-Eales, which sent him clattering into the sheet metal fence at speed. Whorton-Eales would go on to finish second behind Harris.

"There's so much to learn," said Thompson afterwards. "These cars are insane to drive, with huge amounts of power. I would love to do it again."

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THE CRAZY STORY BEHIND A REMARKABLE QUADRUPLE

Nigel Greensall and John Spiers were victorious in four races in a row at Silverstone last month, and there's a surprising secret method aiding the duo's success

DAMIEN SMITH

“See you at tea-time,” quipped Nigel Greensall to his driving partner John Spiers as they finished lunch one Sunday at Silverstone last month. The duo were about to embark on an epic quadruple stint for the afternoon: four consecutive two-driver races, four cars from three decades, run by three different teams. Spiers started each, they were ships passing at the pitstops, then Greensall finished them.

When they did properly meet again it was indeed tea-time, and on the podium's top step – which Greensall had already occupied alone three times. Yes, they'd won all four races. Spiers only got to experience the celebration for that last one because, for the others, he'd been busy strapping himself in the next car to start another race.

For those who witnessed the feat at Motor Racing Legends' season finale, it felt special. Four races in a day is always a decent effort, but hardly uncommon at this level. But to win them all, and

consecutively too... Now that's something else.

Stirling Moss won three in a day at his first-ever race meeting at Goodwood in 1948. Roy Salvadori scooped four twice, at Snetterton in 1954, then at Crystal Palace on Whit Monday 1961. But were they consecutive? Autosport can't confirm. Perhaps a speedway rider or short oval hot-rodder has managed it. Whatever, Greensall and Spiers have every right to be proud of an epic afternoon's work.

The win roster, for the record, was as follows: Pre-63 GTs in a Shelby Cobra; Gerry Marshall Trophy in a Hermetite Ford Capri – the only one where they lucked in, when a dominant Jack Moody in a Rover SD1 picked up a drive-through for a daft pitstop infringement; Stirling Moss Trophy in a Lister Knobbly; and Jack Sears Trophy in a Ford Mustang. Not bad, especially since Spiers is 74 years old.

“Three different teams running the cars – Historic Automobiles for the Cobra and Mustang, TT Motors for the Capri and CKL for the Lister, and they all ran absolutely faultlessly,” nods Spiers. “That's not

#1

Shelby Cobra
victorious in
Pre-63 GTs



JEFF BLOXHAM/MRL



#2

Gerry Marshall
Trophy won
in Ford Capri

MICK WALKER

easy to achieve. It's been a brilliant end to the season and it's just a shame we have to wait five months before it kicks off again. I've won more races this year than ever before, I think. So I'm still getting better. When I'm at 80 maybe I can go for Formula 1..."

"Maybe you're the next one for Red Bull's junior scheme," suggests Greensall. "Sergio Perez is looking a bit shaky..."

Spiers adds: "When the track's slippery like it has been today and the car is sliding around all the time it suits me. When it's dry, it's fast and scary!" Was he tired? He didn't look it. "When you break it up like

"We hadn't taken on board what we had actually done because we'd been so busy doing it!"

we did and you have time out of the car it's not a problem," he says. "And in the wet you are not subject to so much g-force, so I find it much less tiring. It's a shame there's not another race, actually."

Later, Autosport catches up with Greensall for some reflections on that day. "We were excited and really thrilled, but we hadn't taken on board what we had actually done because we'd been so busy doing it!" he points out. "We should have gone out for dinner afterwards, but we didn't have a chance on a Sunday night. Now it has sunk in, to a degree, and a lot of people have spoken about it."

The premise was one neither could resist. "I've been working with John for a number of years and he has a real sense of adventure and is always up for a challenge," relates Greensall. "That's why previously we've run two of his Listers in the same race and swapped cars halfway through. We talked about that afternoon. John had four



JEFF BLOXHAM/MRL

Greensall an advocate
for being more relaxed
to improve your racing

eligible cars run by three teams that specialise in those specific areas and eras of expertise, so we decided to do them, without knowing the timetable. It happened to be four back-to-back races and we were completely relaxed about it. John started all four and I finished all four, which is typically how we try and do it. John gets to enjoy the early stages of the race, then I pick it up from the pitstops, see what we've got and go flat out to find what result we can achieve."

Greensall is one of an increasing number of professional drivers who build their careers around coaching and racing alongside wealthy amateurs with ambitions to make the most of the cars they are lucky enough to own. Spiers is by no means Greensall's only client, but he's a good case in point on how such relationships work.

"What's been interesting over the years I've worked with John is how I've encouraged him to become more relaxed with his racing, >>

#3

Stirling Moss
Trophy taken in
Lister Knobbly



JEFF BLOXHAM/MRL

in terms of getting ready but also when you're in the car and how you drive," explains Greensall. "By being more relaxed you get a better feel for the car and a better understanding what it's capable of doing, and you've got more time and capacity to be aware of what's going on around you. It then takes less energy from you and that enables the driver to adapt from car to car, which was certainly crucial that afternoon."

Greensall is probably the most cheerful chap in motorsport, and has been for more than 30 years. But he takes his craft as a coach deadly seriously. What else does he focus on? "First of all, John was always a very good driver, so he was starting from a good base, plus he's worked with others including Tiff Needell," he says. "Beyond being more relaxed, I've worked with him to drive with more precision. I talk about millimetre precision and how to get that on every corner of every lap. When you go into a lap, you don't

worry about the whole lap, only the corner that's coming up. Once you've conquered that corner, you think about the next one. If I see someone miss an apex by, say, two feet I know that's cost them 0.3-0.4s, time they will never get back."

But how does he tutor them? Unlike contemporary racing, not many historic operations have reams of data to pore over in debriefs. "I use onboard video for all of the cars I race," explains Greensall. "That's a crucial tool for all of my racing. We watch it back together. John and I will sit down over a cup of tea, overlay my video with his and go through corner by corner. It's just as you see on TV with F1 when they overlay two drivers' laps. We have two cameras: one looking out the front of the car so we can see the track positioning, as the driver would see it. The second camera looks across at the driver so I can see their steering inputs, how much lock is used and how fast are the hands on the wheel. From that you can also see where the driver is looking."

Greensall and Spiers also have another unlikely secret weapon. It only emerges when Autosport asks whether it's true that Spiers is also an international croquet player. "That's right, and a very successful one too," Greensall replies. "More than that, he's into crazy golf."

Come again? "When we are planning our racing season me and John look for a crazy golf course near race tracks," Greensall reveals. "He's very competitive and really good! You must come and join us... At Zandvoort last year the way the schedule worked out we had qualifying in the morning, then about a four-hour gap to the race. So we all went and found a fabulous crazy golf course near the circuit, played, then went back to the circuit and won the race. It's good preparation."

There you go, free advice. Working out how to negotiate that tricky windmill on the seventh hole is the answer when it comes to taking the stress out of motorsport. You're welcome. ❄️



Greensall (left) and Spiers get a buzz out of their racing partnership

JEFF BLOXHAM/MRL

DOUBLE TON DELIGHT FOR GREENSALL

As well as being motorsport's happiest racing driver, Nigel Greensall probably has a claim as its most prolific too. A couple of weeks after Silverstone, he headed to Daytona for the classic 24 Hours, drove three sportscars from different eras and, for the second consecutive season, notched up his 100th race start in a calendar year.

"I was in a Corvette C6R GT2 and a Chevron B19 with John Emberson, then with Gary Ball in a Ligier LMP3," he reports. It was in the Corvette that he clocked up his latest ton. "What a track for my 100th race with fastest lap and third place," he says with glee.

Barely a day goes by without Greensall sliding into one car or another, not just on the circuits but also on rally stages. And he doesn't limit himself to old racing cars either. A week before Daytona, he joined another regular partner, Harry Barton, in a Mercedes-AMG GT4 at Portimao. Citing Ronnie Peterson and Hans Stuck as his all-rounder racing heroes – his helmet colours combine those



of both – Greensall just can't get enough of his never-ending racing odyssey. "The same weekend I raced with Matt Walton in his Jaguar E-type – a total contrast, 60 years between the cars and three great races in one weekend," he grins.

The official numbers for 2023 were: 102 races and three rallies; 34 cars raced, with 21 co-drivers; races on 23 circuits in nine countries; 30 wins (including class as well as overall), 63 podiums, 33 pole positions and

47 fastest laps. He'll hope to top some of those numbers this year by the time he's done. The Classic Sebring 12 Hours is next at the start of next month, then he'll complete his season on 29 December on the Rixy Stages rally at the Stanford British Army training area in Norfolk.

Next year? More of the same, but with the promise of some exciting add-ons – including the Nurburgring Langstrecken-Serie with Barton in his Toyota Supra GT4. What a racing life.



#4

Feat completed
by Mustang's Jack
Sears Trophy win



RICHARD STYLES



HOW SECOND HAND ROSE IS NOW ON SONG

Rikki Cann's Aston Martin V8 Vantage began its life as one of the world's fastest production cars and has achieved plenty of success on the tracks since

MARK PAULSON

When he's not at the helm of his Aston Martin specialist garage in Essex, Rikki Cann is tearing up the tracks in one of Newport Pagnell's finest. Cann's heavily modified Series 2 V8 Vantage has become a regular sight on circuits over its 15-year racing life and currently competes in Bernie's V8s, the Classic Sports Car Club's Special Saloons and Modsports series, and the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's Historic Thunder championship. Indeed, in one-time Caterham Graduates champion Sam Wilson's hands, it topped the Historic Thunder standings in 2023, taking three overall wins and falling just one point short of winning Classic Thunder outright.

The shell started life as a 1979 Oscar India model, an update of Bill Towns's original 1977 design that was recognised by Guinness World Records as the world's fastest production car, capable of 170mph. "It had a very, very large accident as a road car," explains Cann. "The insurance company said it wasn't worth repairing, so I took it off the insurance company and we turned it into a race car."

It replaced an earlier DBS V8 that had met its demise at Brands Hatch with Cann's younger brother Joe at the wheel. "That was

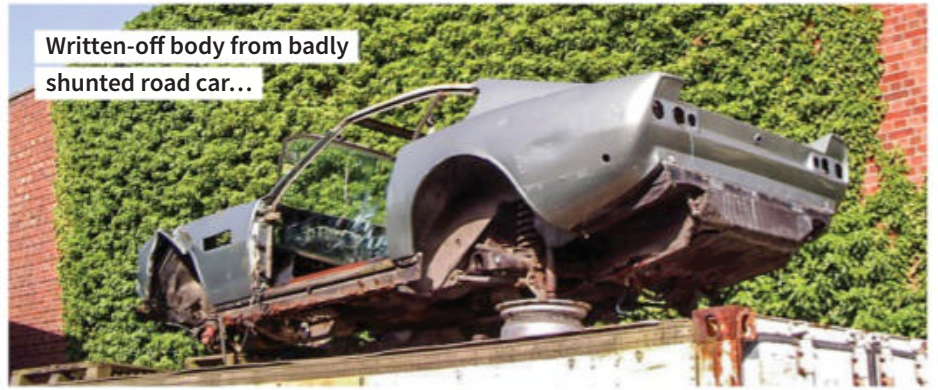
a heavy, heavy one on the front," recalls the elder sibling, who in the meantime won the 2008 Aston Martin Owners' Club Classic title aboard Phil Williams's similar DBS V8. "So that's still at work, and all the bits off that car went on to the one we're talking about. So it's called Rose because it's all *Second Hand Rose* [Barbra Streisand's 1965 hit]."

Wins followed in CSCC Future Classics and the car was also a frontrunner in AMOC Intermarque and Bernie's V8s. But development in recent years, with the help of ace engineers Bob Buck and former racer Graham Hathaway, has taken it to another level. With mapped ignition and electronic throttle bodies, the 5.3-litre V8 has been stretched to 5.7 litres, dry-sumped and mated to a four-speed Jerico gearbox. It runs a standard Jaguar rear axle and Salisbury limited-slip differential, and has gone from 15-inch to 18-inch wheels, which accommodate six-pot brakes.

"And the last two seasons we've been developing the aero on it, which has made quite a big difference to the handling," adds Cann. "It involved a different splitter on the front, we've flat-bottomed some of the car, we've put a rear wing [from a Ford Escort RSR]

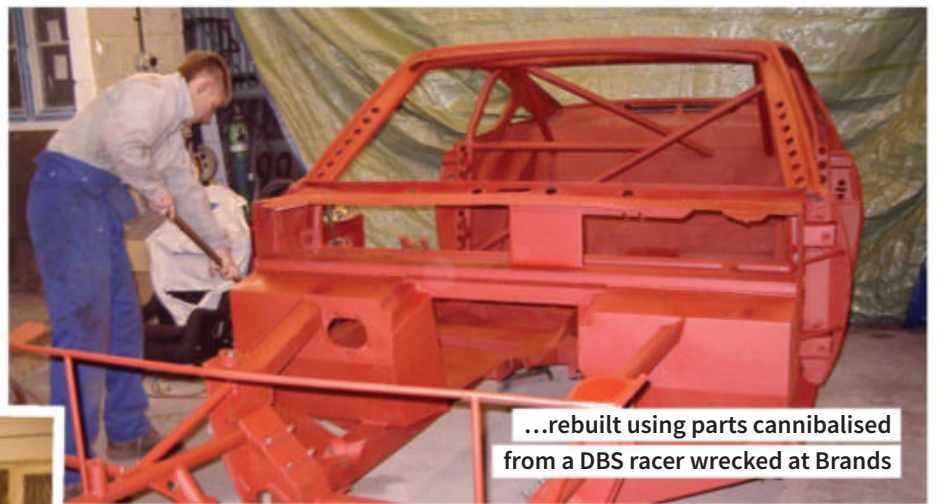


Crowd-favourite Aston's evolution is constant – recent aero tweaks have been transformative

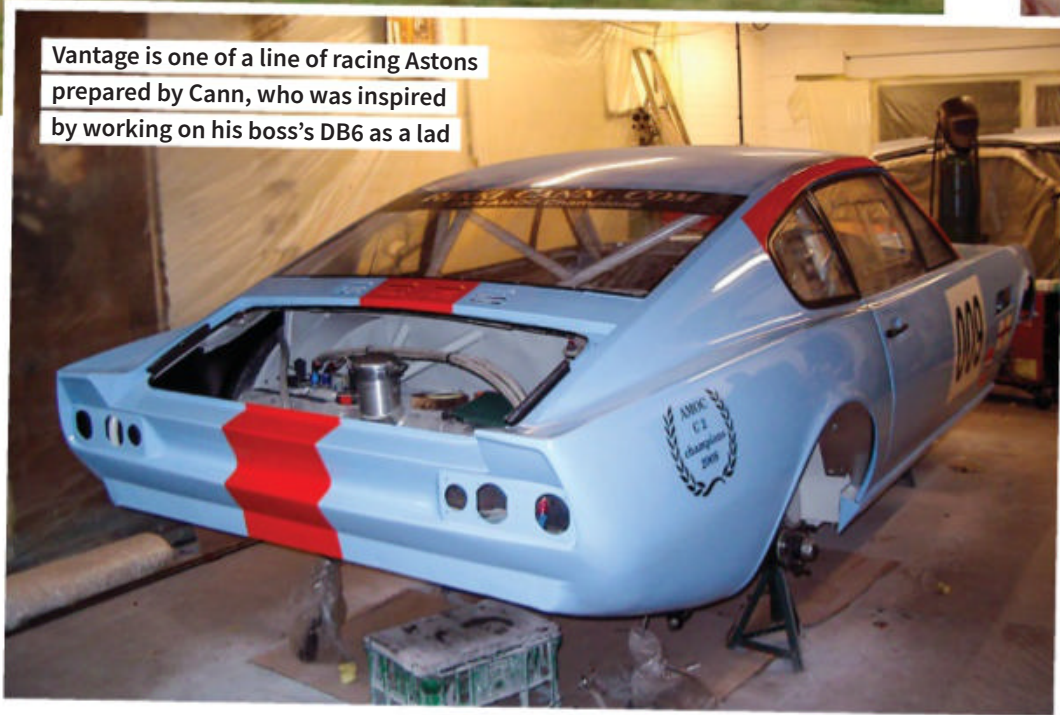


Written-off body from badly shunted road car...

“Peter Brock was in what you and I’d call a Vauxhall Viva. And he crashed in the end, so we actually beat him”



...rebuilt using parts cannibalised from a DBS racer wrecked at Brands



Vantage is one of a line of racing Astons prepared by Cann, who was inspired by working on his boss’s DB6 as a lad

on it if it's in the Thunder championships, and it just transformed the car. It just turns in like a go-kart. We have to take it [the rear wing] off for Bernie's V8s – we just have the rear lip round the boot instead, which works.”

Having entered it as a V8 Vantage X-Pack, which was Newport Pagnell's highest-spec iteration of the model in the late 1980s, Cann admits, “It's beyond X-Pack spec now, that's for sure!”

In competition against far more modern machinery in Classic Thunder and silhouette specials in Special Saloons and Modsports, the Aston has taken overall wins in both categories over the past few years. “The car is 1400kg,” reckons Cann, “and, when we go up against the Special Saloons, who are a great bunch of guys, I can't live with them because they all weigh about 700kg! They come whizzing past me under braking as I'm trying to stop this tank. But it's amazing how when you actually look at the lap times – big engines, big bodies, small engines, small bodies – and they're all about the same. It just works.”

It's a far cry from racing Ford Anglia Hot Rods at venues such as Harringay in the 1970s, then rallying a Lotus Cortina and Rover P4

in the 1980s. Cann followed his father Arthur and cousin Brian into racing on London's short ovals and developed his love for hand-built Astons nearby. “I worked in a garage in Walthamstow as a youngster,” he recounts, “and my boss there had an Aston. I used to love working on it because you get a bit bored with mundane servicing of Jags and whatever there was at the time. I loved working on the Aston – he had a DB6 – because nothing fitted and nothing was straightforward. It was more of a challenge and I enjoyed that. Then I got offered a job at Hyde Vale Garage, which was the main service dealer in South London.”

Hyde Vale's closure prompted Cann to set up on his own. “The first time we opened was the first day of the first Gulf War, and not a job came in for three months,” he remembers. But, over 30 years later, the firm is still going strong and Rose is the latest of a line of racing Astons prepared in Shoeburyness. Cann has even contested the Land's End to John O'Groats reliability trial (LeJog) in a DB2/4 and co-driven Bob White's DBS V8 on the Targa Tasmania, against the likes of the late Peter Brock. “He was in what you and I would call a Vauxhall Viva, him and his son, Jamie,” recalls Cann. “And he crashed in the end, so we actually beat him.”

Cann's V8 Vantage hasn't travelled down under but has competed at Spa among more than 100 outings and remains a draw, as evidenced by its popularity at the USA Snetterton 300 event in September. “I had posters made of it, give them away to sign,” says Cann. “It was like hot bread at the bakers, going out the door straight away.” Damage suffered there ended Rose's season early but has already been repaired, allowing focus to switch to the next raft of developments.

“This year we're going to be doing a little bit more work on the induction and exhaust side,” reveals Cann. “And a little bit more aero. We're forever developing it. And every year you think, ‘How can you find another half a second round Brands?’ But you do.”

FINISHING STRAIGHT

Netflix amps up the drama in Senna series



TV SERIES

SENNA

Netflix

Release date:
29 November

The long-awaited *Senna* Netflix series is almost here and, after Autosport

was granted access to the first three episodes, here are our initial thoughts.

Ayrton Senna is one of the few characters of Formula 1 who has truly transcended the sport, with a love for the Brazilian that is possibly greater than anything seen for any other driver before or since. This is reflected to an extreme in the series, with two clear camps of characters – those allied with Senna, and those not. While this divide is perhaps how the man himself would have viewed the world around him, it can sometimes play out as slightly comical, with the pantomime villain of FIA president Jean-Marie Balestre (played by Arnaud Viard) lurking in the shadows, portraying evil with an economy of words.

But on the acting front, Gabriel Leone shines in the titular role, showcasing the

internal conflict of a man forced to choose between keeping his word and returning home to Brazil or chasing his F1 dream, the raw explosion of emotion when things get too much, and the calculated talent judging each career move.

A key supporting player is Laura (Kaya Scodelario), a fictional journalist who begins the story writing for the *Norfolk Express* and later shows up for Autosport. While used largely for exposition and to fill in the blanks that are inevitable, given that not every moment of a career can be shown across a limited number of episodes, she also provides the emotional heart of the story, prodding Senna into a vulnerable place where his true thoughts can be put out into the open.

While the acting and casting are largely top-notch, we then come to the racing action itself, and the complaints are twofold. Frustratingly, both are common in motor racing films. Firstly, all of the Formula Ford and F3 racing takes place at the same track, with the same corner being used for every major incident or overtaking move that happened during Senna's junior career. Much like *Rush*, with its use of Brands Hatch for various circuits,

this sticks out like a sore thumb.

At least, in these foundational years, the racing action is strong, with real-world cars going wheel-to-wheel.

The same cannot be said for when Senna reaches F1, however. While the use of archive footage adds something and gives a glimpse of the master at work, when it cuts to the 'live' images, all the spits of exhaust flames in the world can't save what appears to be a cutscene from a previous generation games console. If you are suitably invested in the story, it's possible to remain in the moment, but the animation leaves a lot to be desired. This is a real shame because everything around the actual F1 action is very strong.

Obviously, Senna is the main focus of the series, but each time he gets a new kart or car, that vehicle gets its own hero moment where, were this a cinematic release, viewers would be expected to whoop and holler with glee. A particular standout was the revelation of Senna's 1985 Lotus 97T, which is exquisitely shot in a dimly lit warehouse, allowing the famous black-and-gold livery to really pop.

It's also refreshing to see proper period liveries, with the full cigarette advertising

Gabriel Leone takes the title role in a series best enjoyed in the language in which it was filmed



Can the hero outstare arch-rival Alain Prost?

on display – although this has largely been erased from the marketing materials.

Should you wish to get the full experience, watch it in Portuguese – as it was filmed – with English subtitles rather than with slightly jarring dubbing.

Despite criticisms of the F1 racing action, *Senna* comes highly recommended. Have things been over-dramatised and situations overplayed? Yes, but this is TV, and that's to be expected. There's a reason anything concerning real-world events that is not a documentary is prefaced with the line 'based on a true story'.

SAM HALL



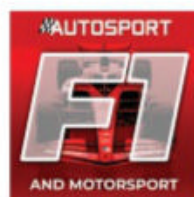
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SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Autosport Q&A

Brynn Lucas is joined by Kevin Turner and Haydn Cobb in the latest Autosport Q&A session. Available in both video and audio formats, questions surround the Las Vegas Grand Prix, what's going on at the FIA, and whether Liberty Media CEO Greg Maffei's recently announced departure will aid Andretti's F1 bid.



autosport.com/podcast



JEP

British GT season review

Ed Hardy makes his Autosport Podcast debut alongside Chief Editor Kevin Turner to look back at the 2024 British GT season, in which the Collard family pairing of Ricky and Rob joined forces to take overall glory, ahead of the second Barwell Motorsport Lambo of Alex Martin and Sandy Mitchell.



WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Las Vegas Grand Prix
F1 World Championship
Round 22/24
 Las Vegas, USA
23 November
TV Live Sky Sports F1, Sun 0555
TV Highlights Sky Sports F1, Sun 0930, Channel 4 1230

Rally Japan
World Rally Championship
Round 13/13
 Toyota City, Japan
21-24 November
TV Live TNT Sports 1, Thurs 1000, 2230, Fri 0100, TNT Sports 4, 0430, 0700, 0915, TNT Sports 2, 2300, Sat 0115, TNT Sports 1, 0400, 0615, 0915, 2230, 2330

TV Highlights
 TNT Sports 1, Fri 1600, TNT Sports 4, Sat 1930, TNT Sports 1, Sun 1900

Brazilian Stock Car Championship
Round 11/12
 Goiania, Brazil
24 November
Livestream Motorsport.tv, Sat 1700, Sun 1500



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SCAN ME



W

hen a Brit called Matt Bell turned up in the LMP3 class of the European Le Mans Series in 2023 there was inevitably some confusion.

A presumption was made that it was the same Matt Bell who was racing a P3 in the ELMS-supporting Le Mans Cup, having been a fixture in international sportscars for a dozen or more years. But if there were any aficionados of junior single-seaters around, they would have understood that there were now two drivers of the same name in town.

That's because Bell had raced open-wheelers to some effect in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Yet the confusion could be forgiven because he had pretty much disappeared after one full season in the 2013 BRDC Formula 4 Championship. Two years on, the befuddlement has dissipated: not only does he now go by his full name of Matthew Richard Bell, but he's twice been runner-up in P3.

The money ran out after an F4 campaign in which he was a race winner against the likes of Jake Hughes, Seb Morris and Charlie Robertson. Save for a handful of Radical

“WHEN WE WENT TO F4 IT WAS JUST ME, MY DAD AND A MATE, RUNNING THE CAR OFF A TRAILER”

races, he didn't compete again until making a comeback in one of the British prototypes in 2021. The Radical connection is an important one in Bell's story. He'd raced sporadically in Formula BMW and Formula Palmer Audi in 2007-10 before he and his father bought an SR3 for trackdays in 2011. That led to a return to competition in the Radical Clubmans Cup the following year, before a move to the new F4 series.

“When we went to F4 it was pretty much the same set-up: just me, my dad and a mate, running the car off a trailer,” recalls Bell. “It was a new championship and we won the first race at Silverstone, but when the big teams got the hang of the car, we went backwards.”

Bell opted to concentrate on the family renewable energy company. He only returned when he got a late pre-season call from old friend Rob Wheldon at RAW Motorsports. He won the 2021 Challenge title and the man he beat into second, Jerome de Sadeleer, subsequently recommended Bell to the EuroInternational team when it was looking for a quick bronze driver for P3. Bell was able to successfully appeal his original silver classification on the grounds that he hadn't held a race licence for multiple years.

In 2023, Bell and team-mate Adam Ali took a distant runner-up spot in their EuroInternational Ligier-Nissan JSP320, but Bell describes this year's championship “as the one that got away”. They were ahead going into the Algarve finale and were pipped by a point.

Bell insists that he has no racing ambitions

beyond making it third time lucky in P3 and being invited to join the British Racing Drivers' Club. “As far as life experiences go, I'm having a great time,” he reckons. “If I have to stop again, I'll be able to say I'm a double ELMS vice-champion and, hopefully after next year, a champion and a BRDC member.” ❄️

CV



Age	34
2024	2nd in European Le Mans Series LMP3
2023	2nd in European Le Mans Series LMP3
2021	Radical Challenge champion
2015	Radical Enduro Championship, 6 races
2013	BRDC F4 Championship, 3 wins
2012	3rd in Radical Clubmans Cup
2010	Formula Palmer Audi, 3 races
2009	Formula BMW Europe, 2 races
2008	Formula Palmer Audi, 5 races
2007	Formula BMW UK, 6 races



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Alex Zanardi's Chip Ganassi Racing Reynard-Honda lifts a wheel into Laguna Seca's famous Corkscrew during the penultimate round of the 1997 Indycar season. The Italian's

points advantage over nearest rival Gil de Ferran – who would have had to have won the race while Zanardi non-scored to stay in contention – meant a conservative run to third place was enough to lift the first of

his two championship crowns. His Ganassi team-mate, and reigning champion, Jimmy Vasser won the race, and in a moment of overexuberance on the cooldown lap Zanardi pulled alongside his

good friend to congratulate him on his first victory in 15 months, took both hands off the wheel to clap and tipped him into a spin. “Chip didn't seem to mind too much,” reckoned Vasser.





GILBERT

Zytek Z11SN

He may have driven numerous McLaren Formula 1 machines in his role as the Woking team's test driver since 2009, but it's from the world of endurance racing that Oliver Turvey picks his favourite car.

Turvey raced the Nissan-powered Zytek Z11SN three times at the Le Mans 24 Hours from 2013-15 with Jota Sport, the last of those after being rebadged as the Gibson 015S, and the open-top LMP2 machine instantly made an impression. "The first time I tested it, I thought, 'This car is incredible, it's just so good to drive'," enthuses Turvey, who alongside his McLaren duties is also DS Penske's reserve in Formula E. "It was a very stable car, very well-balanced. It inspired you to go faster and you felt you could push it to the limit all the time, which is a nice feeling in a sportscar, especially at a long race like the 24 Hours."

A European Le Mans Series campaign in 2013 yielded third in the standings via a win on home soil at Silverstone, along with seventh in class at the French classic. But a move to Delta Motorsport in the World Endurance Championship fell through the following season and Turvey's Le Mans participation in 2014 was unexpected. Loic Duval's practice accident left him sidelined, meaning Jota driver Marc Gene was called up



J BLOXHAM

to replace the Frenchman at Audi while Turvey stood in for Gene alongside Simon Dolan and Harry Tincknell.

"I arrived at Le Mans on the Thursday morning, I only did a few laps in the night qualifying to make sure I qualified for the race, so I basically went into the race with no practice or anything," recalls Turvey.

After suffering technical issues that put the car several laps down on the leading runners, Jota pushed on through the night. Aided by the Zytek's solid handling, the crew took the class lead in the final stint to seal a "pretty crazy" class victory in fifth overall.

"That car at that time was quite old compared to some of the other LMP2s, but it was the best car I've ever driven in terms of confidence," adds Turvey, who placed second in LMP2 with Dolan and Mitch Evans at Le Mans in 2015.

STEFAN MACKLEY



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Las Vegas GP

CAN VERSTAPPEN WRAP THINGS UP IN THE US?

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