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Supercar MAGAZINE **Xtra**

ISSUE 105
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PONY POWER MUSTANGS ON THE HORIZON

WHAT IT MEANS FOR SUPERCARS: FORD IN, NISSAN OUT, CAMARO NEXT?

ANTON DE PASQUALE EREBUS' RISING STAR ▶

THE ROGERS FOGES MEETS GARRY & BARRY

TANDER & GOLDING MASTER & APPRENTICE

23 RED RACING BETTING ON THE BLUE OVAL

PATHWAYS HOW TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP

RUBBER SOUL DUNLOP'S SUPERCARS OPERATION



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Ed's Desk

PONY POWER IN SUPERCARS

The news that Ford Australia and Ford Performance is providing backing for the Mustang Supercar to be raced from 2019 is a huge win for the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship.

With the new-generation Holden Commodore debuting in 2018, the arrival of the Mustang and continued use of V8 engines in both, the Gen2 era of Supercars will be well underway.

Bruce Newton examines the impact of the Mustang on the category, Ford and other manufacturers and how the two-door coupe will shape up as a Supercar in our cover story in this issue of *Supercar Xtra Magazine*.

Mark Fogarty chats with father-and-son combination Garry and Barry Rogers to discuss the progress of Garry Rogers Motorsport and the increased role of the second-generation team boss, while we also check in with their drivers Garth Tander and James Golding.

Tyres are always a key talking point in motorsport, so we examine the role Dunlop plays in Supercars and how a change in specification shook up the grid in 2018.

We continue our coverage of the new blood in the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship with a profile of Erebus Motorsport's impressive rookie Anton De Pasquale and



Phil Munday's 23 Red Racing. Also, there's a feature on the pathway for drivers to get into Supercars.

You'll also find the latest columns from Mark Winterbottom, Craig Lowndes and Garry Rogers, analysis of the key issues in Supercars, including Nissan's departure from the category, and our ranking of the top 10 corners in Supercars.

If you're reading the standard issue of #105, you'll find a new-look *Motorsport Legends* section in the middle of the magazine. If you're reading this within a program, you'll find the event info in the beginning and middle sections.

Within the *Motorsport Legends* section, we profile the record holders in the history of the Australian Touring Car Championship/Supercars, the Nissan Bluebird, the 1994 touring-car season and more.

Remember, this edition is also available in digital form and in the App Store and Google Play stores. Visit our website for details and keep in touch with us on our social media channels: on Twitter and Instagram @SupercarXtra and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SupercarXtra>.

Below are the two sides of the pullout poster you'll find in the print edition of this issue.

Enjoy!

— Adrian



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COUPE REVOL

The arrival of the Ford Mustang into Supercars sets a new template for other manufacturers looking to enter the category, with implications for Holden, a lesson in what could have been for Nissan and a saving grace for the V8 engine.

When we went to print with the previous issue of *Supercar Xtra Magazine*, Holden was committed to the development of a twin-turbo V6 engine for its ZB Commodore, Ford remained sidelined with no indication as to what would replace the Falcon, while Nissan was being pushed to convert to the GT-R.

Fast forward to this issue and Holden has shelved the twin-turbo V6 and will continue with the V8, Ford is back with a V8-powered Mustang, while Nissan will depart at the end of this season.

The dramatic turnarounds have swung the balance of power to the Blue Oval. Though Ford Australia had shown a

disinterest in Supercars in recent years, the decision to race the Mustang with a V8 across its teams has been praised by fans from both sides of the manufacturer divide. It will be the first two-door coupe to race under the Gen2 rules, which were created to open up Supercars to different body shapes and engine configurations.

Holden, in contrast to Ford, didn't waver in its commitment to Supercars, but has been battling sliding showroom sales and continued criticism for the decision to retain the Commodore name on the new imported version of the vehicle.

The struggle in the marketplace has raised the suggestion that parent company General Motors could simply do away with the Holden brand in its

outpost of Australia, instead exporting Chevrolet products.

Chevrolet's Camaro will be converted to right-hand drive and sold in Australia under a deal between the Walkinshaw family-owned Holden Special Vehicles (HSV), Holden and General Motors. Walkinshaw Andretti United would, therefore, be in prime position to lead the development of a Camaro Supercar, with co-owners Zak Brown and Michael Andretti able to champion the cause in North America as Roger Penske did with Ford.

This could create another battleground between Triple Eight boss Roland Dane and Ryan Walkinshaw, with Triple Eight the sole factory-backed Holden team and spearheading the development of the ZB Commodore and Walkinshaw

Andretti United in a position to control the future of a Camaro in Supercars.

Holden is open to the idea of giving the green light for the Camaro to enter Supercars, though much will depend on the future of Holden itself and the Commodore.

"Our focus is on having as many Holdens on the podium as we can, race in, race out," says Holden's executive director of marketing Kristian Aquilina.

"We're confident the ZB Commodore is the car to do this. We're not afraid of putting the ZB Commodore against the best, be that a Ford Mustang, or any other competitor – we know how good the all-new Commodore is.

"If it [a Camaro Supercar] became a serious prospect, we'd definitely look at it as an exciting development for the sport but our focus is on ZB Commodore."

So for the foreseeable future it's Ford versus Holden racing V8 products, as it was before Supercars opened the door to other manufacturers in 2013.

The first to enter under those Car of the Future regulations, Nissan, will depart despite having its own two-door performance coupe that could have raced in Supercars.

"It was never a point that we were entertaining on the table from our side," says Nissan Australia managing director Stephen Lester about the GT-R.

"To be very honest, I don't see the alignment of the GT-R to the Supercars series. At this point we've made no plans to consider other vehicles for

The Mustang and Camaro will soon do battle in the Australian marketplace.



UTION

racing in Supercars. We have aligned our strategy to focus around EV [electric vehicles], SUV and Nissan Intelligent Mobility, and that strategy will form our future course."

The Nissan Altima is in its sixth season in Supercars and is enjoying its best year yet with a string of podiums and race-winning performances.

"We've spent the last five and a half years putting countless hours of continuous effort in to try and get this package to the point where it could win races and be a podium contender," says team co-owner Todd Kelly.

"It's just been relentless and it's been up and down."

The use of the production-based VK56DE V8 set the Nissan Altima back in its first few seasons, heaping pressure on the team to develop parts just to be competitive.

"We were very ambitious to bring a road car-based engine in against race engines and the Car of the Future," explains Kelly.

"Everyone had a massive push when the engine power limit came in, in particular, and raised the bar again, and we were left sitting there with a

hell of a job to get this package to where it is.

"There was really no avenue to do anything other than follow the existing rules and try and match the incumbents, which was a huge task.

"At the end of the day, a lot of the performance or lack of through the period was us just being solely focused on the R&D of the engine in particular, not actually worrying about setting the car up and things that other teams are doing.

"It's only really now that we've got our package to the point where we can realign a

lot of our team's energy, day-to-day, on race prep and what setup are we putting in the car, rather than looking at designing new components."

The Gen2 rules will allow manufacturers to come into Supercars with the package they have rather than trying to conform to the strict technical regulations in place as Nissan did in 2013.

If entering in the coming years instead, when Mustangs and Camaros were on the grid, the GT-R would have been a better alignment with Supercars. **X**



What could've been: the Nissan GT-R in Supercars spec.



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PRIVATEER SWANSONG

Dick Johnson Racing was the last non-factory team to win the Supercars drivers' championship and now, as DJR Team Penske, is in pole position to do so again before it returns to the factory fold next season.

Factory status in Supercars can be a confusing term. This season it's Red Bull Holden Racing Team (Triple Eight Race Engineering) and Nissan Motorsport (Kelly Racing) who receive factory backing from Holden and Nissan respectively. Next season, Red Bull Holden Racing Team retains the title of Holden's factory team, with DJR Team Penske and Tickford Racing getting factory backing from Ford and Kelly Racing losing Nissan support.

Factory-backed teams have historically been the ones to beat in the history of Australian touring cars, with the aid of technical and financial backing from a manufacturer. But with more marketing-driven support nowadays, as opposed to direct technical assistance, it can negate any advantage.

In 2018, for example, the factory-backed Red Bull Holden Racing Team has been pushed by the likes of Erebus Motorsport, Walkinshaw Andretti United, Brad Jones Racing and Garry Rogers Motorsport, who don't receive funding from Holden.

Dick Johnson Racing was the last team to win a drivers' title as a non-factory team with James Courtney in 2010, and could be in a position to do so again with Scott McLaughlin this season before the Ford deal kicks in from 2019.



Scott McLaughlin is the driver to beat in 2019.

"We've gone from being heavily dependent on manufacturers to one that is significantly less so, which means teams have had to adapt to that," said DJR Team Penske team principal Ryan Story in the last issue of *Supercar Xtra Magazine* (#104).

"This team hasn't had significant manufacturer backing for some time, so we are able to live in that world."

The comings and goings of manufacturers, as evidenced by Ford and Nissan in recent months, highlights the need for Supercars teams to be able to survive and be competitive without manufacturer backing.

Garry Rogers Motorsport has had to revert back to privateer status following the departure of Volvo.

"Because our other business activities create a good income stream for us as well, if the sponsorship thing gets a little bit slow, we can cover the shortfall," explains team owner Garry Rogers in this issue of *Supercar Xtra Magazine*.

"With the Volvo deal, don't forget Fujitsu had left and we had no title sponsor. Valvoline stayed with us, but it took us a while to get a complete sponsor group back together and we had to carry that in the meantime.

"We had to fund the

homologation of that Volvo. Fortunately, our business is strong enough to do that sort of thing."

Kelly Racing (currently Nissan Motorsport) will also have to transition back to privateer status, continuing to run four Nissan Altimas without factory backing in 2019 while looking for new opportunities.

"We'll be looking at what the best option is for the team and the future," says team co-owner Todd Kelly.

"Next year it's to develop and evolve what we've got, which will allow enough time to make sure we make the right decision for the following year." X

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THE BEND IS HIGH

The Bend Motorsport Park will raise the bar for motorsport facilities in Australia when it hosts the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship for the first time in August.

Anticipation is building for the first Virgin Australia Supercars Championship round at The Bend Motorsport Park, the first new permanent circuit built in Australia in two decades.

The \$110-million motorsport precinct at Tailem Bend in South Australia, 100km southeast of Adelaide, held its first motorsport event in April and was widely praised.

The Bend Motorsport Park features four different circuit configurations, including the 7.7km GT Circuit (the second longest permanent race track in the world behind the Nordschleife, Nurburgring), with Supercars set to race on the 4.95km International Circuit (pictured right).

Tekno Autosports' Jack Le Brocq claimed the first

motorsport race win on the International Circuit in a Tekno-owned Group A Ford Sierra in the Heritage Touring Car category as part of the Shannons Nationals round.

"It's pretty unique in the way it's been built," says Le Brocq of The Bend Motorsport Park.

"It's quite undulating in a number of spots, with blind corners and apexes, which makes it very interesting. This will make it good for racing as there are a couple of spots where you could get down the inside but then opening up the crossover option.

"The grip from the track surface will improve by the time we get there in August, so we will see a few different lines on a number of corners and that

will lend itself to good racing and the chance for us to really make a difference and attack."

Red Bull Holden Racing Team's Jamie Whincup also got a taste of the circuit and described it as the best permanent circuit in Australia.

The facilities themselves, still under completion when hosting the Shannons Nationals in April, include a rallycross circuit, four-wheel-drive adventure park, dragway and a business park, including a Rydges hotel overlooking the circuit above pitlane.

The Bend Motorsport Park has been mentioned as a possible host

of the 500km endurance event beyond Sandown amidst speculation that Sandown will be sold off by its owner, the Melbourne Racing Club. But Sandown has received a stay of execution with a multi-stage safety upgrade plan for the next few years, including a safety upgrade of the high-speed Turn 6.

The Bend Motorsport Park hosts the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship from August 24 to 26. ✘



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ENDURO FIELD LOCKED IN

The Pirtek Endurance Cup is fast approaching with the eager co-drivers ready to go for their three events of the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship season.

The Pirtek Endurance Cup has yet to have a pairing successfully defend the title in its five-year history, and that will again be the case in 2018.

Reigning champions Chaz Mostert and Steve Owen have been split as part of a reshuffle at Tickford Racing, opening the door for a new combination to claim the long-distance events title this season.

Mostert will be joined by former full-timer James Moffat this season, the latter returning to the team with which he made his Supercars debut as an endurance co-driver in 2010, while Owen remains at Tickford but is instead pairing with Richie Stanaway. Dean Canto teams with Mark Winterbottom for a third consecutive season, while David Russell joins the team as partner to Cameron Waters.

In contrast to Tickford, it's unchanged at DJR Team Penske, with Alexandre Prémat alongside Scott McLaughlin and Tony D'Alberto with Fabian Coulthard.

Walkinshaw Andretti United's driver pairings also remain the

same, with Scott Pye joined by Warren Luff and James Courtney teaming with Jack Perkins.

Triple Eight Race Engineering welcomes two-times Le Mans winner Earl Bamber as co-driver to Shane van Gisbergen. The New Zealander joins his countryman for his debut in Supercars, in addition to his commitments as a factory-backed Porsche sports car racer. Paul Dumbrell and Steven Richards are back to partner Jamie Whincup and Craig Lowndes respectively.

Nissan Motorsport has reshuffled its deck, with Michael Caruso and Dean Fiore the only pairing remaining the same from last season. Dunlop Super2 Series drivers Garry Jacobson and Alex Rullo join the team to partner Rick Kelly and Simona De Silvestro respectively, while

Aaren Russell teams with Andre Heimgartner.

Those combinations confirmed that Todd Kelly won't be returning as a co-driver. The former Bathurst 1000 winner was troubled by a knee injury in the latter stages of his driving career and has been instead focussed on the development of Nissan Motorsport.

Brad Jones Racing maintains two combinations the same as last season, Nick Percat with Macauley Jones and Tim Slade with Ashley Walsh, the latter recovered from the injuries that sidelined him from Bathurst

and the Gold Coast, while former full-timer

Dale Wood returns to partner Tim Blanchard.

Garry Rogers Motorsport has recruited Chris Pither, who is expected to partner Garth Tander, with Richard Muscat locked in for his second endurance campaign as likely

co-driver to James Golding.

The reigning Bathurst 1000 champions, David Reynolds and Luke Youlden, will defend their title in the Great Race at Erebus Motorsport, with young-gun Will Brown joining fellow rising star Anton De Pasquale in the team's second entry.

The single-car teams have opted for a mix of youth and experience, with brothers Will and Alex Davison reuniting at 23 Red Racing, third-generation racer Matthew Brabham joining Lee Holdsworth at Team 18, former Bathurst winner and team owner Jonathon Webb likely to partner Jack Le Brocq and Matt Stone Racing expected to team Todd Hazelwood with Bryce Fullwood.

Wildcard entries are once again allowable at the Bathurst 1000 and will be confirmed closer to the event. The 2018 Pirtek Endurance Cup begins with the Sandown 500 from September 14 to 16 and concludes at the Gold Coast 600 on October 19 to 21. **X**

Left: Le Mans winner Earl Bamber will make his Supercars debut with Red Bull Holden Racing Team at Sandown in September.





SUPERCARS

2018 CHAMPIONSHIP CALENDAR

MAR 1-4	Adelaide 500	Adelaide Parklands Circuit
MAR 22-25	Coates Hire Supercars Melbourne 400	Albert Park Street Circuit
APR 6-8	Tyrepower Tasmania SuperSprint	Symmons Plains
APR 20-22	WD-40 Phillip Island 500	Phillip Island GP Circuit
MAY 4-6	Perth SuperSprint	Barbagallo Raceway
MAY 18-20	Winton SuperSprint	Winton Motor Raceway
JUN 15-17	CrownBet Darwin Triple Crown	Hidden Valley Raceway
JUL 6-8	Watpac Townsville 400	Townsville Street Circuit
JUL 20-22	Coates Hire Ipswich SuperSprint	Queensland Raceway
AUG 3-4	Red Rooster Sydney SuperNight	Sydney Motorsport Park
AUG 24-26	The Bend SuperSprint	The Bend Motorsport Park
SEP 14-16	Sandown 500	Sandown Motor Raceway
OCT 4-7	Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000	Mount Panorama
OCT 19-21	Vodafone Gold Coast 600	Surfers Paradise Street Circuit
NOV 2-4	ITM Auckland SuperSprint	Pukekohe Park Raceway
NOV 23-25	Coates Hire Newcastle 500	Newcastle Street Circuit

Dates correct at time of printing

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BEYOND THE WHEEL

Column by
Mark Winterbottom



BYE-BYE FALCON, HELLO MUSTANG

It's been a busy time for Tickford Racing following the news we will replace the Falcon with the Mustang from 2019.

It's fantastic to see Ford Australia back the Mustang Supercar project in addition to bringing Ford Performance to Australia, not just for Ford fans but also Supercars.

The team, along with DJR Team Penske, has been working hard on the Mustang behind the scenes and to see the deal and car come together is a reward for all that effort.

It's been the endless question in recent years. Everywhere you

go you'd be asked, 'Will we see the Mustang next year? When's the Mustang coming?' Even the team has been asking, 'When do we get the Mustang?'

Fans and the industry were wondering what we were going to replace the Falcon with, so it's fantastic to finally have an answer.

The Mustang has so much racing history already in Australia, so this next phase will only add to that legend. The older generation loves it because they've had history with it. The new generation loves it because they've seen the new car on the road.

"I PRIDE MYSELF ON LOYALTY. FORD AUSTRALIA GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO RACE IN SUPERCARS AND IT'S BEEN GREAT TO DO SO WITH THE BLUE OVAL."

It's an exciting car and everyone wants to see it on track. It's a model that hasn't dated, which is really cool for a car brand.

Seeing it on track is going to be amazing and the number of concepts and renders going around show how excited people are about it.

The supporters are going to love it. It's the ideal car to go racing with given its performance traits, and it's already been well received in the Australian marketplace. Racing it in Supercars will only add to that excitement and demand.

Our guys are working hard at the workshop at the moment and it's a nice little refresher, to see what the future holds and that it's not speculation any more.

While we get set to welcome the Mustang, we are determined to give the Falcon a fitting farewell for the remainder of this season.

It's sad not to see the Falcon on the road and getting manufactured, but at the same time people talk through sales and there's a reason they're not being produced. The Mustangs have sold through the roof and it was time for a change.

I've only ever raced Falcons in Supercars. I pride myself on loyalty. Ford Australia gave me the opportunity to race in Supercars and it's been great to do so with the Blue Oval.

The manufacturer's badge is still a powerful force in Supercars, even more powerful than the model, so to have the Ford brand into the next era of the category is a big thing.

—Frosty





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RIGHT ON TRACK

Column by
Craig Lowndes



THE FIRE BURNS ON

There's been a lot of speculation of late about my future as a full-time driver in Supercars, but I can assure fans they will hear any confirmation of my plans directly from me!

We'll finish off this year and then see where we are at. To be honest, I didn't think I would have had a career as long as this.

We recently surpassed the 650-race mark. And I didn't ever think I would achieve a number like that. But we might get to 700.

It'd be nice to be in the 700-race bracket at the end of my career. That number will mean a lot when we decide to step down.

We will go close to achieving that milestone. Hopefully it becomes a reality because, once I finish the full-time main game side of it, I will continue racing as a co-driver in the endurance events and that will still give me a chance to accumulate race starts.



"IT'D BE NICE TO BE IN THE 700-RACE BRACKET AT THE END OF MY CAREER."

That's the beauty of Supercars; we can race on as endurance co-drivers beyond our full-time careers and continue to be part of the Bathurst 1000.

That event still means the most to me and it's the 2006 Bathurst that remains the most emotional and satisfying victory of my journey, celebrating the life of Peter Brock, who

taught me so much on and off the track.

We were there honouring Peter that day at a track synonymous with him and I still value a win in the Bathurst 1000 at Mount Panorama above the Supercars championship win.

The introduction of the new-generation Holden Commodore Supercar has proven to be a good thing for us this season.

It's suited my driving style and it's allowed us to adapt to it in a positive way.

We did not know how competitive it was going to be at the beginning of the year because we didn't get a lot of time to do a lot of testing.

Overall the results and gains we've made through the first half of the season have proven that it's a very good package for us.

Hopefully we can continue to build on that strong form going into the second half of the season.

— Craig



CRAIG LOWNDES'
2018 AUTOBARN/LOWNDES/RACING
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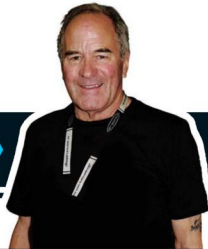
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GARRY THE GURU

Column by
Garry Rogers



OPENING UP TO NEW MAKES

It's great to see Ford commit to the Mustang for Supercars from 2019 and I am confident that in time more manufacturers will come along.

We proved with Volvo that it can be done and it's no secret that we spoke with Kia to potentially run the Stinger. We thought we could've done a deal there, but it didn't happen. And I'm sure we weren't the only ones talking to them.

The other manufacturer that has been talked about in recent times is Alfa Romeo. We haven't spoken to anyone at Alfa Romeo... yet! But don't forget we raced an Alfa 155 in Super Touring back in the mid-1990s. I bought that from Alfa Corse in Italy and it was fast, but reliability was an issue. We had some reasonable results with it with young Steven Richards driving.

It will only take one or two more manufacturers to show serious interest in entering the sport and then others will follow.

That's how we got Volvo across the line. We were close with both Volvo and Chrysler. I think that someone at Volvo got a sniff that we nearly had the deal with Chrysler and they thought they better to do something or we were going to go elsewhere.

However, one of the biggest hurdles for any new manufacturer coming into the sport is the cost of developing a competitive engine package from the block up. Unless a manufacturer has access to



a suitable racing engine in its stable, the development costs are extremely high. To some extent, I believe, Nissan discovered this over the past few years.

I have been pushing the barrow for a long time of an off-the-shelf crate engine for Supercars. What we need is a \$20,000 crate engine out of the USA that fits all the cars; race it for a year, throw it in the bin and get another one.

The engine builders and the big teams have a fit when you suggest that.

They want to do their own thing despite the cost because they think they can gain an advantage. It's impossible to sway them. What Supercars needs is someone really, really strong who comes in with a new book of rules and says this

is what's happening and if you don't like it, don't turn up. You know what would happen? They'd all turn up.

This would also reduce costs in other areas such as data acquisition and simulation systems. You shouldn't be able to use any of that. But try to convince a race engineer of that, or an engine builder – they won't have a bar of it.

That's what happens when you let the lunatics run the asylum. You need to get the engine builders and the

engineers to get their wallets out. If they had to pay for it, then they'd realise how much all this unnecessary development costs.

Then we wouldn't need hours of practice. We could just qualify in the morning, race in the afternoon and go home at night.

How simple would that be? Racing in its purist form, and we might even have an easier time of convincing some new manufacturers to join our sport.

– Garry

“WHAT WE NEED IS A \$20,000 CRATE ENGINE OUT OF THE USA THAT FITS ALL THE CARS; RACE IT FOR A YEAR, THROW IT IN THE BIN AND GET ANOTHER ONE.”



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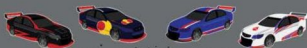
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PONY POWER! M

The Ford Mustang will make its long-awaited debut as a Supercar in 2019, bringing Ford Australia back to Supercars alongside Ford Performance and giving DJR Team Penske and Tickford Racing factory backing for the pony car's arrival.

WORDS Bruce Newton **IMAGES** Thrillhouse Arcade (Mikey Harland, Jay Kelly, Lucas Szoka), Autotpics.com.au, Peter Norton

It's been yet another turbulent few months in Supercars.

The category hit a high in April with confirmation the Ford Mustang would race in the championship from 2019. At the other end of the spectrum in May came the expected but still disappointing news that Nissan would withdraw from the category after a six-year run at the end of 2018.

The Nissan decision is sad, especially for the Kelly family, which along with commercial chief Nick Ryan and other team stalwarts put in a massive effort to represent the Japanese brand in Australia's only truly professional motorsport category.

It also means, barring an unexpected announcement, Supercars is headed backed to its traditional red versus blue state. Mind you, imported five-door

Commodore versus imported two-door Mustang is a far different proposition to locally built Commodore sedan versus locally built Falcon sedan. But there's no doubting the arrival of the Mustang is being welcomed in pitlane and the grandstands.

It heralds the return of Ford to Supercars in an official capacity for the first time since 2015 and debuts the two-door body shape in a series that has long been reserved for sedans. And it means Supercars, which has seen Nissan, Volvo and AMG Mercedes-Benz (through privateer Betty Klimenko) arrive and depart since 2013, will receive a much-needed energy boost that only new metal can provide.

While the Holden Commodore ZB served that role this year, it rolled on to the grid to take on the ageing Falcon FG X and Altima.



USTANGS IN 2019

The road-going version of the former has been retired from production since October 2016 and the latter hasn't been sold in Australia since mid-2017.

Even Holden's commitment has been watered down compared to what it once was, farming out development to Triple Eight Race Engineering, the parent of its only factory team, Red Bull Holden Racing Team.

Nor is Ford returning to racing using its traditional model. There will be no one factory team, no endless budgets thrown at success.

It is using renewed Supercars involvement as part of its launch of the Ford Performance high-performance and racing brand.

Other aspects of Ford Performance's local arrival include the launch of the locally-developed Ranger Raptor high-performance pick-up and the latest Fiesta ST.

Ironically, while the Mustang is being linked with Ford Performance in Australia, the mainstream coupe and cabrio street cars sold here aren't part of the hot tuner's stable. It develops higher horsepower versions we don't see. But Mustang is the local sports hero, sole



ABOVE: Ford Performance's concept sketch of the Mustang Supercar.

V8 in the line-up and global Blue Oval racing model. It got the nod to go Supercar racing after some early consideration about using the Mondeo was dismissed.

"At the end of the day we knew we had some products coming through aligned with the Ford Performance stable that essentially could have us back in racing," Ford





ABOVE: DJR Team Penske and Tickford Racing will work closely on the development of the Mustang Supercar.

Australia president Graeme Whickman told us when the Mustang announcement was made.

"So it was a matter of waiting for the right time both from a product and an investment point of view."

Along pitlane there's plenty of belief that pressure from Roger Penske has also forced Ford Australia's hand.

"The Captain" took over a majority share of local legend Dick Johnson's team in 2015 and has been exercising his extensive Blue Oval contacts ever since to get Ford back involved with the Mustang.

As recently as this year the American was outspoken in the press about his willingness to move to another brand if Ford didn't soon come onboard. But Whickman plays that down as a factor.

"Our dialogue [with Ford teams] has been long-standing and [media reports] were not particularly impactful because you do these things for reasons and those reasons need to be there," Whickman said.

"And the reasons [to return] were it's the right strategy, we have the right vehicles now, we want to connect with customers in that space. So we do it for those reasons, not because someone reports something in the press."

While the mechanics of the decision to return are subject to speculation, the mechanics of developing the Mustang for Supercars racing are reasonably clear.

It will be based on a tripartite technical liaison that includes Ford Performance, DJR Team Penske and Tickford Racing. Ford Australia glues it all together by co-ordinating the overall project and an investment commitment of somewhere near \$2 million.

Ford Performance has been drafted in to do the heavy lifting on the crucial body massaging and aerodynamic development because its extensive computational fluid dynamics (CFD) capabilities make it better suited to the job than either of the Australian race teams.

"IT WAS A MATTER OF WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME BOTH FROM A PRODUCT AND AN INVESTMENT POINT OF VIEW"
- GRAEME WHICKMAN

While there is no plan to do wind-tunnel work prior to homologation, Ford Performance does have strong data to draw on from development of Mustang racers for other categories such as GT4 and NASCAR.

"As they say in engineering you can never unlearn what you have learned," says DJR Team Penske team principal and co-owner Ryan Story.

"So there is a fundamental understanding of what the drag coefficient of the road car is and what it is when it is in GT4 guise.

"At the end of the day you are talking about people who know what works and what doesn't work when it comes to these sorts of projects."

While Ford Performance sometimes hands out projects to trusted suppliers such as Multimatic, the Canadian company that worked on both the Mustang GT4 and the Ford GT Le Mans racer, the Australian Supercar is an in-house project.

A project leader has been appointed, as has an aero leader. Up to eight Ford Performance people are on the other end of the phone during the weekly conference calls. The key players talking and listening and trading data with the Americans at the Australian end are the chief engineers of the two local teams, Ludo Lacroix at DJR Team Penske and Nathan Osborne at Tickford.

Lacroix is regarded as the best brain in Supercars. He studied mechanical engineering, aerodynamics and thermodynamics before moving to Australia and developing some of the best Supercars ever to race in the category for Triple Eight, then defecting to DJR Team Penske in 2017. Osborne takes primary credit for the FG X that won the championship in 2015 in the hands of Mark Winterbottom.



"Between those two – and those two work very well together and have a good level of respect for each other – they are going to provide the direction to create a Supercar out of the Mustang," explains Tickford Racing team principal Tim Edwards.

"Those guys in America can't just sit there and say, 'Let's create this racecar' because there are certain parameters they have to work around.

"There are certain areas that we just don't have freedoms. If the Americans were just creating a Supercar it would look nothing like a Supercar."

While both Lacroix and Osborne will have influence

ABOVE & BELOW The Mustang has pedigree in Australian touring cars under different rulebooks.



and input across all aspects of the Mustang's development, Lacroix's role will be primarily focused on the exterior bodywork and aero. Osborne will take the lead on fitting the body to the standard Supercars chassis, a complex task that uses a combination of standard and modified factory-supplied parts and unique pieces designed locally.

Lacroix also has the responsibility engineering Scott McLaughlin's title assault in 2018 and Story acknowledges detail development work will be handed off to other DJR Team Penske staffers.

"Ludo will be in charge of the overall broader philosophy, but in terms of the actual design work and heavy lifting we have quite an extensive group of engineers who are home-based," says Story.

"Perry Kapper is our chief designer who joined us this year [from Nissan] and he will take a pre-eminent role in the course of development as well. We are confident we have adequate resources to get this job done."

Both DJR Team Penske and Tickford will manufacture parts for the new car. In fact, local prototype panels, parts and pieces are being produced now. As the process goes on Supercars watches over the shoulder.

"The homologation is a period of time," confirms Supercars technical chief David Stuart. "It's not like election day where that's homologation day. It's ongoing."

DJR Team Penske has taken the official designation of 'homologation team' from Tickford, a change all parties play down as being "just paperwork". But there is no doubt DJR Team Penske has been handed a key role.

That's understandable considering it's been the best performing Ford team in 2017 and 2018 and Lacroix's undoubted talents.

So that means the first Mustang to be built will come from DJR Team Penske's Stapylton workshop. To coincide with an early December aero homologation date, it's likely to be rolling by late October.

A demonstration lap at the Bathurst 1000 in early October is entirely dependent on how development progresses.

"We won't compromise what we are doing for a marketing and display exercise," declares Story.

The racing Mustang will be based on the unique Supercars Gen2 technical regulations. These are rules that specifically allow body shapes other than four doors and engines other than V8s to run in the championship.

The five-door ZB was the first vehicle to exploit Gen2, which was formulated to encourage more manufacturers to join the championship in the post local manufacturing era.

The ZB was also going to run with a twin-turbocharged V6 engine from 2019. But development has been suspended indefinitely, which means the naturally aspirated Chev V8 continues.

Whickman wanted to race a turbocharged V6 in the Mustang but was dissuaded by the Ford teams, who recognised that it would be complex enough to introduce a new body in 2019, let alone a new engine.

So the Ford V8 stays as well. It's a decision sure to please the fanbase.

BELOW: Tickford's automotive arm produces upgrades for the Mustang and will race them from 2019.





ABOVE: The Mustang already has a presence in Australian motorsport in various categories and guises.



Edwards says the CAD files show extraordinary details of the racing Falcons.

"To get an accurate answer you want a complete underbody of the car exactly as it is out there, so when you are doing the design the oil coolers are in the right place and the radiator duct and the radiator and the exhaust hanging down."

Sharing data has unexpected spin-off, with the two teams making some Mustang design elements such as the radiator duct common: "There is no reason for it to be different," says Edwards.

Because of the position and height of the roll cage hoop, the racing Mustang's glasshouse will be about 10-15mm taller than the production car.

Like the ZB Commodore, the new Ford will use mainly composite body panels for ease of supply and lower weight.

Early feasibility studies conducted by the teams as far back as 2016 suggest the Mustang will work well aerodynamically. More work commissioned by Ford Australia has backed that up.

"There's a little bit of trickiness around the front of the car but for the most part it will be a great racecar," Story insists.

"It is a big car; it's big at the front end with a long bonnet.

"That basically means you have to consider the flow

of air over the greenhouse and where you position the rear wing.

"A huge amount of work will go into that - in fact, it's happening now."

The Mustang's fastback rear with its short boot presents a similar aerodynamic challenge to the ZB Commodore.

So, like the Commodore, expect a huge rear wing hanging out over the back of the Ford.

"I think we have seen it with the ZB and seen the way they have packaged that car and they have done a brutally effective job with it," says Story.

"There is a lot we can learn from that."

As we all know, there is a strong emphasis on performance parity in Supercars.

That means whatever the aero package Ford comes up with it will be tested against its rivals to achieve down-force and drag equivalence.

Intentionally, aerodynamic grip is limited to about 310kg across the two axles. The front splitter, rear wing and endplates are the crucial elements to get right.

For Supercars, the Mustang poses a new challenge as the first two-door it will paritise. But the category's technical chief David Stuart plays down the challenge.

"I think there are going to challenges, whatever the vehicle is, whether it is two doors or four doors or five doors," he explains.

"We have to do it, we can't sit on our hands and say this is the way we have always done it."

That's a hint that the Supercars' 2019 aero-testing methods could be changing, even if the philosophy remains the same.

Both instrumentation and processes included in the testing are up for change. Not that Stuart will hand out details...

Whatever Supercars does it will never stop the debates and mutterings about the aero-testing process.

In 2018 the Ford teams are unhappy with the way the ZB Commodore is slipping through the air.

Twelve months from now it's easy to imagine the Holden teams doing the complaining. It's usually the way.

But 12 months from now there should be at least eight Mustangs on the grid and the Supercars championship should have received a substantial Blue Oval boost. No-one will be whinging about that.

Ford went away but is coming back, giving Supercars exactly what it wanted in the shape of a Mustang Supercar. ✕

BELOW: Ford Performance is entering the Australian marketplace.





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RUBBER SOUL

Tyres are the only contact point between a Supercar and the circuit, so they are a vitally important ingredient to success. Dunlop has been the driving force of tyres in Supercars since 2002. Operations manager Kevin Fitzsimons explains the effort and philosophies behind the rubber.

The presence of Dunlop at Supercars races is such a visible and enduring feature that it's hard to imagine any other tyre maker getting into the supply chain. A number have bid to unseat Dunlop at the three renewals of the control tyre supplier, but it remains firmly yellow and black.

Kevin Fitzsimons is the ringmaster of rubber, the man who has looked after Supercars for Dunlop's entire time as the category tyre supplier and before that at Bridgestone. He understands the tyres but more so the marketing impacts for Dunlop that go well beyond anything learned in this class.

Supercars ended the tyre war in 1999 with Bridgestone the supplier until the end of 2001, when Dunlop took over. Fitzsimons didn't take long to move with the deal and is approaching his 500th round in succession.

"I had the opportunity to do something else when the Bridgestone deal finished in 2001, but I really didn't have any plans," he says.

"I left there on Friday the 21st of December and I got a phone call on Christmas Eve to say, 'What are you doing?' That was 8am and I was in Adelaide. I was in Melbourne by midday and had the job offer sitting on the table for me not too much later.



"It's been a very important marketing exercise for Dunlop. It's a prestigious category to have the tyre for, it's watched all around the world and it's one of the longest running and high-profile contracts that Dunlop has, so I'm proud to be a part of it.

"Because of my Bridgestone time we hit the ground running with all the bells, whistles and everything like that in 2002. It was a big deal from the company point of view."

There were issues early that were related to the politics of the switch rather than switch itself. Remembering this was a marketing exercise, some drivers who were connected with other brands didn't mind getting stuck into Dunlop, but the noise soon died down. Then, as now, Dunlop has been very restricted in what it could do. Just look at how long it took to get a second compound (softer tyre introduced in 2009), which had been on the wish list from very early.

"When we started the category didn't want the change from one manufacturer to another to have too much impact," says Fitzsimons.

"We were certainly restricted on size with the Project Blueprint cars because of the shape of wheel arches and the amount of room in there; you simply couldn't put a bigger tyre on it, whether it be width or diameter.

"I was hoping that when we went to the Car of the Future that we'd be able to go to the GT-type size, which is about 710mm in rolling diameter. I think we could have done that, but we ended up sticking with the 680mm because there was a thought process by some of the people that were making the decisions that we would end up with having Car of the Future chassis as well of Project Blueprint cars running at the same time."

Much of the evolution of the tyre has been steady rather than urgent. The construction has been tweaked a few times to keep up with the latest techniques, but the goal was never to create something significantly better. The people running the sport never wanted that and, at times, that in itself has caused issues.

Eventually they did get the larger diameter tyres and then the square shoulders for a bit until the teams pushed some of the camber setting beyond what Dunlop wanted and the tyres started to self-destruct.

They have rounded it off again now but that, aside from the introduction of a softer compound, is it in terms of evolution.

The early days were tough at times. Dunlop was an easy whipping boy for drivers still carrying Bridgestone stickers and they were happy to get stuck into the rubber as an excuse for missing the setup window or for overworking the rears with a little too much throttle.

"I've been around a long time and I sort of got where they were coming from," he says of the transition time.

"If we've ever had a major situation we sit down and talk to the teams and drivers. Getting them away from the track is actually quite good; ring them up and go and have a coffee and a bit of a quiet chat. Unfortunately, people do still have their own agenda and they'll either love something or hate something for some reason, but we work through the difference.

"If we've had an issue or anything like that I'll flick an



ABOVE: Kevin Fitzsimons leads Dunlop's Supercars effort.

email off to the people at our head office so they know before they read it or hear it, like at Phillip Island last year... head that off at the path.

"That was one where the tyre was okay, but there were other issues affecting it. The engineers were pushing it too far and that brought the risk of tearing the sidewall out of it. And it didn't give any warning, it just went, 'Bang!' That was a problem.

"So that had to be relayed back to the bosses and we had to do a full debrief with them so they understood what was going on. That is not really the tyre, it's not anything like that. It's just the fact that we're in the business of going fast and if they can find two-tenths of a second they will absolutely always put speed over risk. If it doesn't have a problem you've usually had a good weekend; if there is a problem it is not so good."

The secret to the longevity is the ability to leverage their involvement in a few ways.

Fitzsimons has always been open and forward with the media; he knows when he needs to be nervous about



ABOVE: Dunlop will produce around 12,000 slicks and 1000 wet-weather tyres a year for Supercars.

tyre performance and he will tell you, and then tell why. His honesty is refreshing.

Then there are the other ways Dunlop works it. Yes, we can start with the yellow hats on the podium, but then we can delve into the bunker and find the workers. The regular crew at the track is really just Fitzsimons and Hayden Smith, as well as truck driver Steve King. The rest of the staff on a weekend is lifted from the local Beaurepaires stores, which being Dunlop-owned makes things like insurance easy, and then top-ups through Drakes for the big meetings where more people are required.

"Generally you get guys that like coming back and doing it; they have a bit of fun, you're in pitlane and you're not going to get any closer to the action," says Fitzsimons.

"It's not an easy job and, unfortunately, a lot of store managers think they're here having a holiday, but believe me they're not. They work bloody hard, they really do."

"AT THE END OF THE DAY, SAFETY, DURABILITY AND SPEED ARE ALL THE THINGS YOU WANT, BUT SAFETY IS THE PARAMOUNT THING."

- KEVIN FITZSIMONS



“WE HAD TO GO WITH A TYRE WITH A BIGGER WINDOW AND WE’VE GONE TO THE REVISED SHAPE FOR 2018. IT’S THE SHAPE OF THE 2016 TYRE AND IT’S A TYRE EVERYBODY KNOWS AND EVERYONE SEEMS HAPPY.”

– KEVIN FITZSIMONS

At the end of the day, though, the rubber is an integral part of the competition and whether it is a control-supply component or not, it has to be good and to help the quality of the racing. You can’t just say anything will do, as you probably wouldn’t get your contract renewed for a start.

“There’s some tracks that you still go to and you’ve got a burning in your gut that you’re going to have issues,” says Fitzsimons.

“Places like Phillip Island do that to me. It is a great feeling when you get away from there without too many issues. We’re in the business of going fast and helping the teams go fast, but unfortunately with the lack of testing and the lack of track time the teams do push the envelope in races and that’s because they have not found their limit in any other way.



“The lack of track time is difficult. When we changed from the Group A era into what became V8 Supercars, we tested at Phillip Island 40 days that year. You wouldn’t even fathom doing that now! It’s not only for the manpower, time and the load on cars, it is just the sheer cost. It wasn’t cheap back then, but it sure as hell isn’t cheap now. It costs around \$600 to \$800 a lap when you are testing.

“At the end of the day, safety, durability and speed are all the things you want, but safety is the paramount thing. Do you want a tyre that drops off really, really quickly so it produces passing? Do we want them to race, or do we want to have a tyre-conservation run?”

But think of it from Dunlop’s point of view. You design a tyre to last 60km and you run the risk that some people with low motorsport knowledge might wonder why they can’t build a tyre to last longer. Dunlop could build anything, but they’ve got to sell the message to the public. Leaving all that aside, the silent evolution of the tyres has continued.

“We have had material changes because, like mobiles, golf clubs and cameras, tyres are evolving,” he says.





ABOVE: Demanding tracks such as Phillip Island add to the challenge for Dunlop.

"The materials that are available now that weren't years ago means it's very difficult when you're locked into a five-year contract to say, 'We're going to do this the same'.

"It just got to the point where materials like kevlar, nylon, rayon and even the amount of sulphur that goes into the tyre and then the binding agent have all changed. We had to do a lot of testing on the drum in Japan, where they run the things at high speed to make sure that we didn't have a massive change in wear rate or grip level and all of those types of things. They have always wanted similar tyre performance and that makes it hard.

"When we do make a change it can sometimes be controversial, like last year. Some teams loved the tyre and others didn't. It was a better tyre, and the teams that were happy didn't want to change back. It was certainly faster, it was a better drive tyre and steer tyre if you've got everything right in the ballpark, but too many teams pushed the safety window.

"We had to go with a tyre with a bigger window and we've gone to the revised shape for 2018. It's the shape of the 2016 tyre and it's a tyre everybody knows and everyone seems happy.

"Cost containment still comes into it and we have to keep the cost of the tyre in mind when we're doing developments. You can't put exotic materials and things in them that you could do, because the cost would be horrendous. A mould for one of these tyres is right about \$65,000 US and there's a certain amount of tyres that can put through them before they have to change the plates because they can only pull them apart and put them together so many times.

"It's not like building road tyres, it's a very refined process. We have a factory in Kobe, Japan, and we're expecting to do 12,000 slicks and 1000 wet-weather tyres a year, and then that's costed into the price from the factory. We're doing runs of around about 2000 tyres a month."

For the competitive and technically minded, parity formulae and control component manufacturers need to push themselves since competition won't. Fitzsimons is always thinking about what he'd like and he loves to float ideas. Not all the ideas stick but some do – that is how the soft-tyre compound, now the super soft, came about.

"If I had a wish-book, it would be fantastic to put these cars on a steer and drive tyre... to have the GT-type size where we go to the taller rear, which would help drive and stability of the vehicle, but go to a tyre that turns and brakes a little bit better at the front," he reflects.

"We face a lot of handicaps with the spool in the rear end, as far as it inherently makes the cars understeer, and then we've got a tyre that's not an ideal steer tyre because it's got to also drive the car as well because it's got to do all four corners.

"It is a compromise and that's a challenge to get it right. A steer and drive tyre is bordering on unheard of in most motorsport categories."

Dunlop has built upwards of 220,000 tyres for the Supercars category. They've battled earthquakes in Japan and floods in Australia, rarely losing any of the spring in its step and on the whole, it's hard to think of the sport without the yellow truck in the paddock. ✕

BELOW: Dunlop is heavily invested in Supercars.



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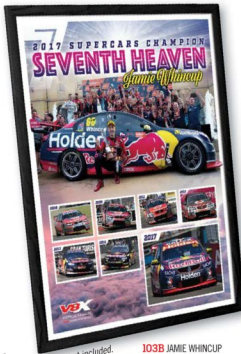
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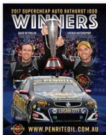
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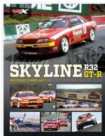
103B JAMIE WHINCUP



102A 2018 CALENDAR



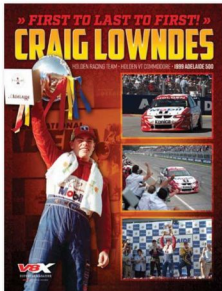
102B BATHURST WINNERS



101B SKYLINE R32 GT-R



101A 1977 BATHURST 1000



103A CRAIG LOWNDES

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MotorSport Legends



PAGE 36

RECORDS: ATCC/SUPERCARS HIGH ACHIEVERS



PAGE 40

ICONIC CARS: NISSAN BLUEBIRD



PAGE 46

SNAPSHOT: FIRST-LAP MELEE IN 1969



PAGE 48

THE YEAR THAT WAS: 1994

IMAGES Autopics.com.au, Peter Norton

RECORD BREAKERS

We dive into the record books to celebrate the record breakers of the Australian Touring Car Championship/Virgin Australia Supercars Championship.



◀ MOST CHAMPIONSHIP WINS [AS DRIVER]

Jamie Whincup – 7 (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017)

MOST CHAMPIONSHIP WINS IN SUCCESSION [AS DRIVER]

Ian Geoghegan – 4 (1966-1969)
Jamie Whincup – 4 (2011-2014)

▶ YOUNGEST CHAMPION

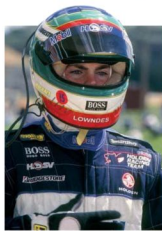
Craig Lowndes – 21 years, 11 months, 11 days (1996)

▼ OLDEST CHAMPION

Robbie Francevic – 44 years, 8 months, 25 days – 1986

MOST DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP WINS [AS TEAM]

Triple Eight Race Engineering – 8 (2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017)



MOST CHAMPIONSHIP WINS IN SUCCESSION [AS TEAM]

Holden Racing Team – 5 (1998-2002)





MOST CHAMPIONSHIP & WINS (AS MANUFACTURER)

Ford – 24 (1964-1969, 1973, 1976-1977, 1981-1982, 1984, 1988-1989, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2003-2005, 2008-2010, 2015)

MOST TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP WINS ▶

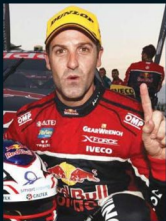
Triple Eight Race Engineering – 8 (2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)

MOST CHAMPIONSHIP WINS IN SUCCESSION (AS MANUFACTURER)

Ford – 5 (1965-1969)

MOST RACE WINS ▼

Jamie Whincup – 110*



MOST RACE WINS IN A SEASON ▶

Craig Lowndes – 16 (1996)

MOST RACE WINS IN SUCCESSION

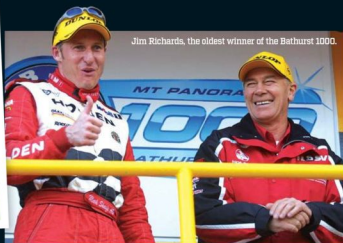
Craig Lowndes – 8 (1996 Lakeside, Barbagallo, Mallala)

YOUNGEST WINNER OF A RACE

Scott McLaughlin – 19 years, 10 months, 3 days (2013 Pukekohe)

OLDEST WINNER OF A RACE

Jim Richards – 55 years, 1 month, 11 days (2002 Bathurst)



Jim Richards, the oldest winner of the Bathurst 1000.





Murray Carter.

MOST RACE WINS BY MANUFACTURER

Holden – 537*

MOST RACE WINS BY TEAM ▶▶

Holden Racing Team
(now Walkinshaw Andretti United) – 180*

MOST PODIUM FINISHES

Jamie Whincup – 188*

MOST PODIUM FINISHES WITHOUT A WIN

Murray Carter – 20

MOST POLE POSITIONS IN A SEASON ▶

Scott McLaughlin – 16 (2017)

MOST POLE POSITIONS

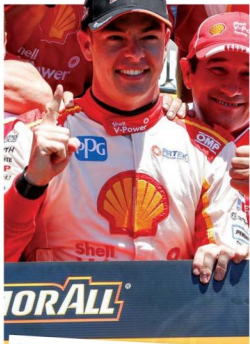
Jamie Whincup – 77*

MOST RACE WINS BY MODEL ▶▶

Holden Commodore VF – 108

OLDEST POLESITTER ▲

Peter Brock – 52 years, 5 months, 8 days
(Oran Park, 1997)



YOUNGEST POLESITTER ▲

Scott McLaughlin – 20 years, 9 months, 27 days (Winton, 2014)

MOST POLES IN SUCCESSION ▶

Peter Brock – 13 (Sandown, Wanneroo, Surfers, Lakeside, Adelaide, 1979)

MOST POLE POSITIONS BY TEAM

Triple Eight Race Engineering – 118*

MOST POLE POSITIONS BY MANUFACTURER

Holden – 332*

MOST EVENT STARTS

Craig Lowndes – 284*



*Current records following the 2018 Winton SuperSprint.

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WORDS Adrian Musolino IMAGES Nissan Motorsport, Autopics.com.au

NISSAN BLUEBIRD

ICONIC CARS

The Nissan Bluebird won just one race in the Australian Touring Car Championship, rarely made the finish of endurance events and was described by driver Fred Gibson as “a shithouse little car”. But the Bluebird is still considered iconic for the heroics displayed by George Fury.

Nissan entered Australian touring cars with the Bluebird in 1981, switching from rallying following the rebranding of the company from Datsun. The new-look factory-backed team was the brainchild of Howard Marsden, who entered two Bluebirds in the Bathurst 1000, with Fury following the manufacturer from rallying to partner Gibson and Japanese drivers Masahiro Haseemi and Kazuyoshi Hoshino in the other car.

Both entries retired with mechanical failures after failing to trouble the contenders in qualifying, though it was a learning

When Datsun rebranded to Nissan it switched from rallying to touring cars with the turbocharged Bluebird, a car that may have been unreliable but was the fastest-ever Group C racer around Mount Panorama.

experience for the team and drivers with the 1.8-litre Bluebird turbo.

“Those cars were not available in Australia, but they were sold to the Japanese public,” says Fury.

“It came with a relatively small turbo-charger and you couldn’t change it as it was always the first thing the scrutineers checked. We never had a flexibility problem in that area; with a big turbo with a big turbine fan it takes time to spin up and that’s when you lose responsiveness of the engine.

“In 1981 I got into stride quite easily at Bathurst and didn’t have any problems recording a quick lap time – I enjoyed it.

“I think that all of the cars racing at that time did not have power steering fitted and that made it more physically demanding on the drivers than what it is today.

“I remember my forearms getting sore during the long stints during the Bathurst races. And I considered myself to be one of



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From Nissan Company of Australia Pty. Ltd.

the fittest drivers in the field in the 1980s.”

The Bluebird showed encouraging signs of improvement in 1982, with Fury claiming second place in the Calder Park round of the Australian Touring Car Championship, though it was Allan Moffat in the Mazda RX-7 that scored the first race win for a Japanese car in the championship.

Fury and Gibson's efforts in the Australian Endurance Championship saw Nissan win the manufacturers' title, though the Bluebird yet again missed out on a race win.

The Bluebird was 14 seconds faster around Mount Panorama Circuit that year, with Hasemi qualifying in third place and the returning Japanese duo finishing in eighth, which would go down as the best result for the Bluebird at Bathurst.

The 1983 Australian Touring Car Championship season proved the high point for Japanese cars in Group C with a one-two finish for the Mazda RX-7 and Bluebird. Fury remained in contention up against eventual champion Moffat heading into the final round, though the close proximity to the endurance events and budgetary limitations robbed Fury and the Bluebird of a chance at the title.

“Howard mentioned that we had blown our budget and we couldn't afford to be there,” explains Fury.

“I have taken that with a grain of salt because I believe we would have won the championship, as it was a wet race. I sat at home and watched the television coverage and Moffat was in a dither as only he can get himself into and with our package we would have won it.

“Such is life. When you are a works driver you have to do what you are told.”

Fury won two rounds of the 1983 Australian Endurance Championship, though missed out on yet another title, while a front-row start at Mount Panorama was again hampered by technical issues.

Fury scored the Bluebird's only race win in the Australian Touring Car Championship at a wet Lakeside in 1984 in the final season of Group C. And Fury's heroics continued with pole positions for the Sandown 500 and Bathurst 1000, the latter arguably the Bluebird's greatest moment.

Cooler temperatures for the Hardies Heroes suited the turbo, with Fury setting a remarkable 2:13.85, the quickest-ever lap by a Group C car at Mount Panorama and

BLUEBIRD SUCCESSSES

1982 Aust. Endurance Championship makes' title

1983 Oran Park 250: George Fury

1983 Amaroo Park Silastic 300: George Fury

1984 Amaroo Park Silastic 300: Gary Scott

1984 ATCC Lakeside round win: George Fury

1984 Sandown 500 pole position: George Fury

1984 Bathurst 1000 pole position: George Fury



The Bluebird led the turbo revolution in the latter years of Group C.

enough to hand the first pole position to a Japanese car in the Bathurst 1000.

It remained the fastest lap set on the pre-Chase Mount Panorama Circuit and wouldn't be bettered for six years.

"That was a pretty good lap," reflects Fury.

"Despite some suggestions, we did not have a turbocharger-boost button in the car; in fact before each long-distance race we would decide at what boost the engine's turbo would live at for the whole race.

"We would qualify on 1.6 or 1.65 atmospheres of boost and then run between 1.3 and 1.4 boost during the races – we would never screw the boost up higher as we knew that would kill the engine's reliability."

But reliability would be the Achilles Heel of the Bluebird, with Fury and Scott yet again suffering mechanical issues in the race.

It was such a common theme for the Bluebird in endurance events that Channel Seven commentator Mike Raymond would regularly say, "The Nissan went missin'."

The introduction of the Group A regulations from 1985 sidelined the Bluebird. Nissan took a year out from racing that season to develop the Skyline, which debuted in 1986. Its latter iterations would come to dominate with multiple championship and Bathurst wins.

The Bluebird set the foundations for Nissan's success. And, despite its unreliability, its rapid rate of development and pole position at Mount Panorama justify its iconic-car status. **X**



ABOVE: The Bluebird was fast but unreliable in four attempts at the Bathurst 1000 from 1981 to 1984. **RIGHT:** Motorsport was a key part of Nissan's marketing in Australia following the rebranding of the company from Datsun. **BOTTOM:** Fury reunited with the Bluebird at Winton Motor Raceway.



If there's no substitute for experience, there's no substitute for Bluebird.



BLUEBIRD
NISSAN



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RK March 847 Can Am

Bob Fernley , Force India, owned the car and ran Jim Crawford(Ex F1) and Michael Roe in the 1984 CanAm championship, the RK 847 finished a credible 2nd in its inaugural year of competition. A major rebuild/restoration has been completed to bring this car back to the way it looked in the June 1984 Autosport track test article For contact details, more information and pics:

www.my105.com/19084



Historic 1974 Elfin 620B FF

CAMS Certificate of description (Historic Car). Holds current CAMS Historic Log Book. Comprehensive historic provenance including log books dating back to 1984. Has competition history at Calder; Sandown; Winton; Phillip Island; Morwell; Mallala and more recently Barbagallo; Collie and Albany - Round the Houses

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SNAPSHOT

In this new *Motorsport Legends* section, we look at the significance of some of the most iconic images from the history of Australian touring cars, starting with this dramatic action shot from 1969.

WHEN: 1969

WHERE: Calder Park Raceway, Victoria

WHY: The 1969 season is remembered as the start of the modern era of Australian touring cars, being the first multi-round championship of the Improved Production era. This non-championship race at Calder Park Raceway in 1969 got off to a fiery start

when Norm Beechey's Holden Monaro (#4) and Allan Moffat's Ford Mustang (#6) made contact on the warm-up lap. Moffat insisted he was brake-tested by Beechey in a hazing for the new arrival in Australian touring cars.

Moffat's entrance marked a changing of the guard, with Ian Geoghegan in the Ford

Mustang (#1) winning his fifth and final championship in 1969.

Following Geoghegan is Alan Hamilton in the Porsche 911 (#9) and Jim McKeown in the Ford Cortina Mark II Lotus (#3), with the variety of machinery highlighting the golden period of the Improved Production years in the late 1960s.



Some of the legends of Australian touring cars in the 1980s.

The Champ:

Beechey on Shell

Belmont, Sandstone, Lakeside - 3 great wins that clinched the 1978 Australian Touring Car Championship for Steve Beechey. Convincing proof of an unbeatable combination: Steve's driving skill, and the stability of his 'Vince-A-Go-Go' 'Vince' GT's 230 cc. Shell GT's and full Libe 'Vince' gas run only on Shell GT's give the engine the extra oomph you need to get out with Super Shell and Shell Super Move Oil.

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REP



1994 THE YEAR THAT WAS

The Ford Falcon and Holden Commodore V8 era launched in 1993 but it truly hit top gear in 1994, with Holden taking the honours in the championship, Ford in the endurance events and the fans witnessing a transition period for the drivers.

When looking back at the history of Australian touring cars, the 1994 season features a number of significant moments.

It was the second season of the Ford Falcon and Holden Commodore V8 era with the grace period for other manufacturers coming to end and forcing them into what would become the Super Touring championship. And while the likes of Peter Brock, Dick Johnson and Larry Perkins were still at the forefront of the category, a new generation of younger drivers was



Close racing defined the early years of the V8 era.



The wet start of one of the greatest Bathurst 1000s.

about to burst through for a changing of the guard in the coming years.

Fans had been won over by the return of Falcon and Commodore V8s in 1993 but parity between the two cars was still being worked out following a season in which the Falcon dominated in the championship and the Commodore cruised to victory at Bathurst.

Ford entrants were given longer rear wings and winglets on the front spoilers on their Falcons, though they were still significantly outnumbered by Commodores. Dick Johnson Racing and Glenn Seton Racing remained as the sole Ford teams amongst the full-time entrants, while Holden's numbers swelled.

The likes of Gibson Motorsport, Holden Racing Team and Perkins Engineering were joined by Wayne Gardner Racing and Tony Longhurst Racing running Commodores. Tony Longhurst opted for Commodores in the transition from BMWs, which he continued to run in the new Super Touring category, while Wayne Gardner set up his own team following his split with the Holden Racing Team. Peter Brock returned to the factory Holden team, officially ending his infamous split with General Motors from back in 1987.

For all the changes, though, there was a touch of Group A flashbacks when the Winfield-backed Gibson Motorsport entries dominated the early stages of the championship. Mark Skaife had well and truly stepped out of the shadow of teammate Jim Richards and won the opening three rounds of the season at Amaroo Park, Sandown and Symmons Plains.

Such was the speed shown by Gibson Motorsport, rumours spread over the legality of its Commodores. But there were no protests and nothing proven, with Skaife scoring round podiums in eight of 10 rounds for a comfortable championship win.



Two-litre Super Touring cars were moved out in 1994.

Reigning champion Glenn Seton won three rounds for second in the championship but lacked the consistency of Skaife, while Larry Perkins, Peter Brock and Alan Jones took the rest of the round wins at Lakeside, Eastern Creek and Barbagallo Raceway respectively and filled out the top five in the championship.

Dick Johnson Racing was notably absent from the winners' list, with John Bowe and Dick Johnson down in seventh and eighth respectively, with just two podiums across the season. But the team had been forming a strong engineering line-up in its transition from its Group A Sierras to V8-powered Falcons, delivering a mighty fightback at the endurance events.

Bowe and Johnson paired up for the endurance, starting a lowly 15th following changeable conditions in qualifying for the Sandown 500. Yet Bowe charged through into the lead in the first stint of the race to set up the win, a first win at the event for both drivers at a circuit typically dominated by Brock.

This return to form for a Falcon boded

well for Bathurst, where the Super Touring cars would be joining the field. Indeed, Tony Longhurst Racing was forced into running an additional BMW 318i after Paul Morris crashed his Commodore in testing at Lakeside.

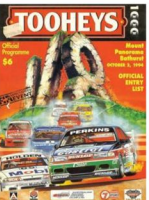
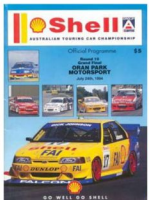
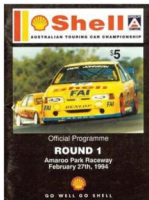
In another late change for the event, Holden Racing Team co-driver Rickard Rydell, the Swedish ace who was a front-runner in the British Touring Car Championship, was forced to miss the race due to personal reasons, with the team opting for a youngster by the name of Craig Lowndes to team with Brad Jones in the second entry. Few could've predicted the impact that change would have on not only the race but the category moving forward.

Tragedy, however, struck on the Thursday of the event when privateer Don Watson went off at the Chase following brake failure, colliding with the wall and suffering fatal injuries.

The lead up to the event also saw debates over the legality of frontstrut towers on the Holden Racing Team Commodore of Brock and Tomas Mezera, with the protests leading to the entry losing its fastest time on the Thursday.

Seton took pole position as he sought to end his Bathurst drought, though the heavens opened on Sunday and turned the formbook upside down. Rookie Lowndes was amongst the drivers caught out by the conditions in the warm-up, though his car would be fixed for his starring role in the race.

The opening stint of the race, in the worst of the conditions, was a masterclass



LEFT: Programme covers for the 1994 championship events and the Tooheys Bathurst 1000.

1994 ROUND WINNERS

AMAROO PARK	Mark Skaife – Holden VP Commodore
SANDOWN	Mark Skaife – Holden VP Commodore
LAUNCESTON	Mark Skaife – Holden VP Commodore
PHILLIP ISLAND	Glenn Seton – Ford EB Falcon
LAKESIDE	Larry Perkins – Holden VP Commodore
WINTON	Glenn Seton – Ford EB Falcon
EASTERN CREEK	Peter Brock – Holden VP Commodore
MALLALA	Mark Skaife – Holden VP Commodore
BARBAGALLO	Alan Jones – Ford EB Falcon
ORAN PARK	Glenn Seton – Ford EB Falcon

CHAMPIONSHIP TOP 10

1	Mark Skaife – Holden VP Commodore
2	Glenn Seton – Ford EB Falcon
3	Peter Brock – Holden VP Commodore
4	Larry Perkins – Holden VP Commodore
5	Alan Jones – Ford EB Falcon
6	Jim Richards – Holden VP Commodore
7	John Bowe – Ford EB Falcon
8	Dick Johnson – Ford EB Falcon
9	Tomas Mezera – Holden VP Commodore
10	Neil Crompton – Holden VP Commodore

BATHURST 1000 TOP 10

1	Dick Johnson/John Bowe – Ford EB Falcon
2	Brad Jones/Craig Lowndes – Holden VP Commodore
3	Larry Perkins/Gregg Hansford – Holden VP Commodore
4	Tony Longhurst/Charlie O'Brien – Holden VP Commodore
5	Win Percy/Russell Ingall – Holden VP Commodore
6	Colin Bond/Anders Olofsson – Holden VP Commodore
7	Allan Grice/Steven Johnson – Ford EB Falcon
8	Andrew Miedecke/Jeff Allam – Ford EB Falcon
9	John Trimbole/Gary Waldon – Holden VP Commodore
10	Paul Morris/Alftrid Heger – BMW 318i

of wet-weather driving, with the likes of Perkins power-sliding around Mount Panorama.

Conditions improved into the second half of the race with the Falcon of Bowe and Johnson leading the way, pursued by a multitude of Commodores. Emerging from that pack was Lowndes, the unfancied rookie, who despite being the second driver in the car, found himself driving into the final stint.

Lowndes audaciously passed Bowe around the outside of Griffin's Bend on lap 148, leading a number of former Bathurst winners in a moment that signalled the

arrival of a new generation. Bowe fought back and reclaimed the lead on lap 150 and went to take a second consecutive endurance win for the Bowe-Johnson combination.

It had been a classic Bathurst 1000, complete with 24 official lead changes between nine cars and six former or future Bathurst winners crossing the line on the lead lap. Morris' BMW took line honours amongst the Super Touring cars in 10th outright.

While Lowndes was lauded for his stunning display, other young talent had also made an impression. Russell Ingall finished in the top five in his second start at the

event, Steven Johnson debuted alongside veteran Allan Grice and finished seventh, while Greg Murphy made a low-key maiden appearance at Mount Panorama in a Toyota Carina.

In contrast to the 1993 season, Holden had won the title and Ford the Bathurst 1000. Parity arguments would continue to wage and the foundation for the Super Touring versus V8 Supercars battle for Bathurst had been set, though the shared spoils for both sides of the 'red versus blue' divide, competitiveness of the racing and glimpse of next-generation stars made 1994 a year to remember. ✘



John Bowe crosses the line for another Bathurst 1000 win for Dick Johnson Racing.

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Fraternising with Foges

INTERVIEW BY MARK FOGARTY

GARRY & BARRY ROGERS

THE GARRY & BARRY SHOW

Father and son co-bosses Garry and Barry Rogers don't take themselves too seriously, but they are very serious about being the custodians of the most enduring team in Australian motorsport, Garry Rogers Motorsport.

IMAGES Glenn Lindley, Garry Rogers Motorsport, Peter Norton

A classic Cadillac Eldorado convertible sits in a corner of the Garry Rogers Motorsport (GRM) workshop. Amid the current and past GRM racers, the leviathan rag-top highlights the eccentricity of the team's colourful founder.

Only Garry Rogers would cherish a gold roofless 1974 Caddy with a white interior and bull horns on its prow. The barge-like boulevardier has a

lazy big V8 driving the front wheels and an elongated bicycle chain runs under the dash to facilitate the left to right hand-drive conversion of the steering. Such were the '70s.

Neither agile nor subtle, the anachronous machine is a bit like Rogers himself. Outgoing, ostentatious,

old-school, slow-moving. Back problems have restricted the 73-year-old's gait around the paddock, but his sense of humour and outrageousness are undiminished.

In recent years, Rogers has shared the running of his eponymous squad with his son Barry, who manages the day-to-day operations and has become an increasingly high-profile presence as the emerging face of GRM.

Together, they are ensuring the nation's longest-established motor-racing team – celebrating 55 years this season – remains a family affair. Although not as outspoken or irreverent as his father, Barry Rogers is similarly down to earth and unpretentious.

Wilson Security Racing GRM continues to embrace new and old talent at its typically no-frills base at unglamorous Dandenong South in southeast Melbourne. It's a place where everybody has a (usually obscure) nickname and everybody mucks in.

Following the messy end of a mostly front-running three years with Volvo – and the coincident loss of rising superstar Scott McLaughlin – GRM last year reverted to Commodores. Garth Tander's return to where he started his stellar Supercars career has given the tight-knit team much needed stability and experience, as well as acting as a mentor to Rogers' latest protégé, rookie James Golding.

As you might expect, a conversation with the Rogers is fun, candid and unusually expansive. They speak their minds at length and without fear. Enjoy...

Who actually runs the team?

Garry Rogers (GR): Barry.
Barry Rogers (BR): Well, we both do, really. We just bounce off each other.

So how does that work?

BR: If Dad's lawns need mowing, he stays home and mows the lawns and I'm here. If the horses need feeding,





"WE HAVE A GREAT GROUP OF PEOPLE AND THAT'S A CREDIT TO DAD."
BARRY ABOUT GARRY ROGERS.



ABOVE: Foges chats with the Rogers in the Garry Rogers Motorsport garage.

BELOW: James Golding is the latest youngster to be given his chance in Supercars at Garry Rogers Motorsport.



he stays home and feeds them while I'm here.

GR: I'm the old wisdom, but Basil is the brains of the organisation. The vitality, the energy, just driving us forward. That's exactly what's happening here and I'm having a lot of fun having it done this way.

When did you start passing the torch?

GR: This is quite a good story. Barry worked in the car business with me for many, many years, then he went and got his own place (used-car business) and did a great job with that. His main place was in Pakenham and I used to regularly call in on the way home and have a chat. Anyway, I called in one night and he said to me something along the lines of, 'I've had an offer to sell' and I'm thinking to myself, 'Well, what are you going to do if you sell?'

He told me a guy from Berwick was interested in buying Barry's business and property. This all took place over a period of about a month, but before then, I asked him that once he'd sold out, what was he going to do? And I'll never forget these words. He said, 'Oh, I'm going to come down to your place and give you a hand' and I couldn't believe it.



Barry knows a lot about the car-selling business, but he'd never really been involved in the car-racing business. He'd been to a few race meetings and been to Bathurst a few times as part of the family, but that was it. That was five years ago – and that's exactly what happened. He arrived here a month later when the deal was done and he stayed here. It's as simple as that.

Was there a grooming to take over the running of the team?

GR: There wasn't any grooming because we'd worked together on and off, and he knows how I think and I know how he thinks. What was great for me was that a lot of the core people here knew Barry from years ago when he was working at the car dealership in Glen Waverley, so it wasn't like we'd brought in a manager from outside. They respected him; they knew he'd had his own business and done very well at that.

They were probably just as surprised as me that he decided to get involved in this. So there was no grooming. He'd seen what I'd done and how I'd done it, and he just knew what to do.

Barry, did you have a learning period?

BR: Oh, no, not really. I just got on with it.

GR: Businesswise, he's probably better at it than I was, right from the get-go. What he had to get up to speed with was the technical side. I understood that a lot more. But in terms of the running of the business, I couldn't teach him anything. He was spot-on.

Actually, there's one really good part of it I need to tell you. When he turned up here I said, 'How am I going to pay you?' He said, 'I don't need any money' and I replied, 'You bloody beauty, you're welcome!'

BR: I was the right price. *[Both laugh]*.

So five years ago you stepped in and started taking over the day-to-day running of the team?

GR: Sort of. It was really between us and still is. But as I recall it, you kept a low profile for the first few years. BR: Probably more people have seen me on TV over the past couple of years. I'd been there a while by then and people started to accept that I was heavily involved.



GR: That's right. Before, when the cameras came into the garage, they'd see me. But when he was there, they'd see Barry and me. Bit by bit his role became more prominent. By association alone, that's how it came about.

I think a good point for our team was that most of the people involved with us from our sponsor group and officialdom, as well as our staff, knew him because he'd been at the races occasionally throughout the years. That made his acceptance a bit easier, I think. But to get back to your question, we really didn't have a plan. We just work hard at everything we do.

BR: Still don't have a plan!

What are your titles within the team? Do you even have titles?

GR: No one in this place has a title. The minute anyone here has to have a title, including me, I need to go and so do they. Very simple.

So you're just the bosses?

GR: No, no, we're part of the workforce.

BR: We're workers.

GR: Can you see any reserved parking spots out there? My view is that the first person to work deserves the best parking spot. When I did my apprenticeship at Coffey's (Ford dealer back in the 1950s), old man Coffey was one of those bosses who had to have a reserved parking spot and he wouldn't talk to any of the garage floor workers; he'd only talk to the salesmen in their suits. I decided back then that when I had my own business I wouldn't be like that – and it's stuck with me ever since.

And no big office?

GR: I never use an office. I like to float around.

BR: Garry does what they now call 'hot-desking'. If he needs one, he uses someone else's office when they're not here. And everywhere he goes, he leaves a pile of junk behind. It's like a tornado's been through.

Barry, obviously, you couldn't help having an interest in racing, but why suddenly decide to join the team after so long?

BR: By the time I'd finished with my business, I had

about a dozen unsold cars left over and I said to Dad that I'd put them out the back here and try to sell them and while I'm doing that I'll give you a hand with the team. It just grew from there.

I thought I could give him a hand so he could have a couple of days off each week and see what happened. I knew I wouldn't be a mechanic, that's for sure, but there was no real plan for me to get involved in management. I just did what needed to be done. And that's the way it's always been with us.

Garry, have you had more time to do other things?

GR: Oh, absolutely. With no disrespect to the people here – because the people here work like buggery whether I'm here or not – but there's no doubt I felt an obligation to make sure I was here every day and go to every race meeting and attend every team owners' meeting.

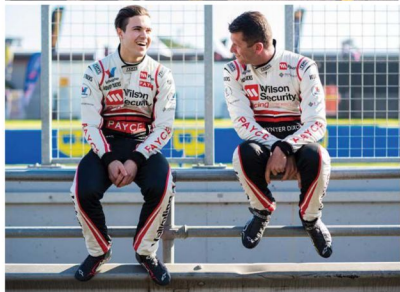
Once Barry was here – and here to stay – I no longer had to come in every day. I poked around with the horses or stay at home and do a few things. I still come here regularly, though, because, possibly sad to say, I just love coming here and I could not stay home every day.

BELOW: Garth Tander returned to his first home in Supercars last year.





Garry Rogers Motorsport is one of the most tight-knit teams in Supercars.



I can stay home as long as I have something productive to do, but just to stay home to do the garden or go to the pub or play golf, nup.

Someone has to be the final decision-maker, but most of these guys can make their own decisions about what's good for the team and they're all my friends. But, let me tell you, we can lay down the law when we have to, but when you have the right people, you don't need to do that very often.

You're still a prominent presence at race meetings, aren't you?

GR: That's because I actually enjoy the racing, I enjoy the majority of the activity and the company of the people in car racing. I'll stay home every now and again and watch it on TV, but I go to most of them because my whole life has been about racing and to be able to enjoy it without having to do it is an absolute blessing.

You clearly get on well together, which isn't always a given for fathers and sons. You're a good team yourselves.

GR: And I think what's really been beneficial is the fact that Barry worked with me years and years and years ago, and then said he wanted to do his own thing. He didn't hang around waiting for me to make a whole heap of dough and then come along and want part of it. He went and did his own thing – and did it very, very well – and I think that has shown to everybody that this isn't about some son waiting for his inheritance. I mean, he has more money than I have. *[Barry chuckles]*.

BR: We do work well together. Back in the car-yard days, I worked for him for a while and then decided I wanted to do my own thing, which was good. It would've been easier for me to stay in Dad's dealership and cruise along, but I saw an opportunity to do something else that I really wanted to have a crack at.

I enjoyed that and learned a lot. It's been great to come back and work with him because I enjoy the camaraderie of the sport. Am I a real racing buff? No. But I enjoy the camaraderie of the team. We have a great group of people and that's a credit to Dad. People come here and want to stay, which creates a really good climate in the place. I enjoy that more than the racing, really. As you know, the business side of it is very challenging and I like that. To get everything to balance, considering what you spend, isn't easy.

Garry is a big personality, a larger-than-life character, and yet my observation is that you haven't been overshadowed. You seem quite comfortable to be the face of the team when required.

BR: It's not something I'm even conscious of, to be honest, but I probably look at Dad differently to everyone else. He's just Dad and I don't see him as that colourful character. But, certainly, I appreciate that he's well respected and has a knock-about, fun attitude and image. I'm more serious, but so is he when he needs to be. But I'm certainly not intimidated or feel I have to live up to something.

GR: He won't dress up like I do.

You've never been afraid to make fun of yourself, have you, Garry?

GR: No, I have not. My philosophy on that is if you can make people laugh, even if it's at the expense of yourself, then you should. As long as it's not detrimental to anyone, then that's good. These days, it's hard because I can't bend over to put all the fancy clothes on, and I hate to say that because I love doing it. You probably remember me dropping my dacks for an ad in the *Waverley Gazette* (my local newspaper when I was growing up).

BR: One of the real early dress-ups was at Winton when Tander and Bargwanna were on the front row, and you had the desk on the grid between the cars. It was Bill Clinton (former US president) sitting at the desk and Monica Lewinski was under it. Would you get away with that today?

GR: We should do things like that today. What's wrong with the world if you can't have a bit of fun?

Supercars sadly lacks characters, doesn't it?

GR: Oh, it does. And it lacks aggravation. People need to have fights along pitlane. A bit of pro wrestling-style theatre wouldn't go astray.

Where does Garth Tander fit into all of this because when he rejoined GRM part of the attraction for him was a future management role?

GR: Well, there'll be a role for him, whether it's management or something else. We don't have managers.

Garth might see it differently.

BR: We've spoken with him about a few things, whether it's totally racing orientated or in our other businesses. Garth has a good brain and not just in racing, but also business in general, so we would think that after his racing days that there'd be an opportunity within the business. No doubt, motorsport-wise, his brain would be an asset.

GR: He's commercially smart. I think what Barry is alluding to is that we do other things. We build a few things, we build a few factories, we buy a bit of stuff and we cut up a bit of land. We do a whole lot of things. Most people would know we have a marina in Tassie and we have a whole lot of things going on.

I think Garth will be driving here for X amount of time, both in the championship and then perhaps in the enduros, and he'll increasingly give Barry a hand.

That's what we're thinking and what we spoke about. But there's nothing in concrete like he will be a shareholder or anything like that. We don't have shareholders.

What we do is encourage people we think can do good for us and them, and get rewarded accordingly. And that's pretty much how we would see it working with Garth somewhere along the line. And since the initial discussions, we've not really talked about it much more. It'll happen one day, I'm sure.

Going back to a team where you started doesn't often work, but it has for Garth. Why is it working so well?

GR: People thought when Garth left here that there

were some sour grapes, but there were never any sour grapes between us.

I realised that the opportunity that he got to go to Walkinshaws (HSV Dealer Team in 2005), financially, was fantastic.

There was no way we could pay that sort of money to keep him. We were never bosom buddies, but we always remained friendly and when the chance came up to get him back from where he was, I spoke to Barry about it and we agreed that I should talk to Garth and just see if he was interested.

I did and he was happy to come here. The good things was that he was confident we had the right team in place and we were financially stable enough.

We can't go and spend billions of dollars, but we don't go without for what's really necessary to try to get your best result.

He'd had success in his racing career, his family was well set up and he was happy to come back here.

It's worked because we knew what we were getting and he knew what he was getting into.

It wasn't like we painted a glossy picture to get him here. In fact, quite the opposite, I would have thought. BR: I would've also said a big reason why his coming here has been a success is the attitude he's brought with him.

In the early 2000s, he was really trying to make his mark in Supercars and it was all about Garth.

He was a young and aggressive guy, and it was all about him. But as much as he hasn't lost that competitive edge, he's matured a lot and he's much more team-oriented now.

He's great with young 'Bieber' (James Golding), mentoring him rather than regarding him as a threat. He has an overall view of the team, not just what's good for Garth Tander.

He came back a different and more mature person.

GR: Twenty years older.

BR: But he hasn't lost that aggressive edge. He might seem a bit softer, but he's not soft out there on the track. GR: He's a hard racer.

And he had a tough act to follow, replacing Scott McLaughlin.

GR: Of course he did. But it's a different time and a different age thing.

It must have been a big blow to lose McLaughlin, even though it was inevitable.

GR: It happens. Deal with it, move on. It's like when Tander left first time around. People asked how we'd get around that. Well, the fact is, you do. You find a way and you move on.

**"I'M THE OLD WISDOM, BUT BASIL IS THE BRAINS OF THE ORGANISATION. THE VITALITY, THE ENERGY, JUST DRIVING US FORWARD."
GARRY ABOUT BARRY ROGERS**

But with respect to Garth, losing Scott was a much bigger deal. He'd proved with you guys that he was a future superstar, don't you think?

GR: I think he's a fantastic driver and a fantastic young bloke and, to be honest, I was sorry to see him go, but I wasn't sorry to lose him because I knew he'd be able to do much better for himself.

Look, I don't want to be lying on my death bed in five or 10 years saying, 'Oh, jeez, I wish he hadn't left'... good luck to him, go and do it.

Scotty and I still talk and joke because even though he was with us for only a reasonably short time, there was a lot of angst and stuff in that early process, which he is well aware of, but we all stuck together, we got through that and we got on with it.

We got some great results together, so no regrets whatsoever. That's just how it is.

The combination of him and the Volvo, especially in the first and third years, made GRM a consistent contender, really, for the first time since 2000.

GR: I know what you're saying. I think what we'd done was we built an absolutely fantastic car and we could've put Alex Premat in that car, and other than the fact that he was probably a bit more crash-happy, he would've driven it equally as fast.

He wouldn't have had the charisma that Scotty had because he (McLaughlin) was a little boy having a lot of fun. And that's what people loved about him. But the fact was he had a great weapon to do it in – and he knew that, too.

All that business about the jandal (after beating Whincup in Adelaide in 2014), that all helped make him popular.

Occasionally, I see that video and I still nearly cry because it was fantastic.

GRM is known as a breeding ground for young talent and you have a reputation as a star-spotter. So many good young drivers have started here, but invariably they move on.

GR: It's all about the money and I understand and accept that. I'm very comfortable with that because, to be honest, even if I had billions of dollars, I wouldn't pay them the big money because I think eventually it spoils them at an early age.

So my job is to get the best out of them, give them the thrill of doing well at the top level and then wish them well when they move on. And I can't wait for it to happen again.

It's true to say that you are careful with your fortune, aren't you?

GR: Very. That's why we've been here all these years and why we continue to be here because I'm extremely careful with my money.

Does that run in the family, Barry?

BR: We're not wasteful. You can still be generous while being careful.

Garry, you've been in racing for 55 years and clearly over that time you've invested a lot of money in the sport...

GR: Millions and millions.

And I imagine there've been times when you've had to subsidise the operation?

GR: Correct. Right now's one of those times.

Well, I wondered about that. Is GRM financially self-sufficient?

GR: No. Every now and again it has to be helped along. But over the course of history we've been able to attract a good group of sponsors who enjoy doing business with us and can see that they get value out of the association with us.

But I think because our other business activities create a good income stream for us as well, if the sponsorship thing gets a little bit slow, we can cover the shortfall.

With the Volvo deal, don't forget Fujitsu had left and we had no title sponsor.

Valvoline stayed with us, but it took us a while to get a complete sponsor group back together and we had to carry that in the meantime. We had to fund the homologation of that Volvo.

Fortunately, our business is strong enough to do that sort of thing. **X**

Garry Rogers Motorsport returned to Halden following the departure of Volvo.



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PART 1

WORDS Adrian Musolino IMAGES Supercars, James Baker

THE MASTER

Garth Tander leads Garry Rogers Motorsport in the second year of his second stint with the team, embracing the role of senior team leader and guide to James Golding.

It all began at Phillip Island in April, 1998. A lanky 21-year-old from Western Australia named Garth Tander was thrust into his Supercars debut with Garry Rogers Motorsport (GRM).

Tander had won the 1997 Australian Formula Ford Championship and was set to graduate into Formula Holden the following season, only to be unable to raise the necessary budget. But his career fortunes turned when GRM's regular driver Steven Richards took a job as test driver with Nissan in the British Touring Car Championship. Tander was promoted into the Supercars drive, kicking off what would be a storied career.

"It was a tough initiation," reflects Tander. "There weren't a lot of young drivers in the category back then and the established drivers were still there. It was tough to learn how to race against them and I made a lot of mistakes, crashed a few cars, but Garry [Rogers] stood by me and we went racing again the following season."

Twenty years on and Tander is still racing for Rogers. He's gone from the rookie in the field to one of the established drivers, giving Garry Rogers Motorsport its sole Bathurst 1000 win in 2000 and going on to add another two Great Race wins and championship success at the factory-backed Holden stable (HSV Dealer Team and Holden Racing Team).

When it was time to move on, Tander returned to where it all began last season.

"There were a few offers on the table here in Australia, like with GRM, and a few offers on the table overseas," says Tander.

"You look at what they did with Volvo and even when I signed for Garry, we weren't sure what was going on with Volvo. It was very much about how the team has performed over the years. And, also, there were some attractive things as far as opportunities post-driving, so for me it was a no-brainer.

"It was very comfortable and the negotiation took all of about 30 seconds, to be honest. It was very, very easy. Both parties wanted to work together and away we went."

In the 12 years he was away there have been some changes at GRM. The team went from being a Holden team to the factory-backed Volvo outfit and then back again to Holden, while Barry Rogers is taking over the management side from father Garry.

"Back then we probably had around eight to 10 full-time staff and now it's 35 full-time staff," says Tander.

"You look at the GRM Commodore days, pre-Volvo, they're all competitive. The Volvo era was also very competitive and, obviously, we still are today.

"I knew Barry when I first moved to Melbourne and joined the team in 1998. I lived with Baz for about 12 months so it's very comfortable and very natural together. And 12 months down the track, the settling-in period is done and it's all about getting on with business and trying to make the cars as fast as we can."

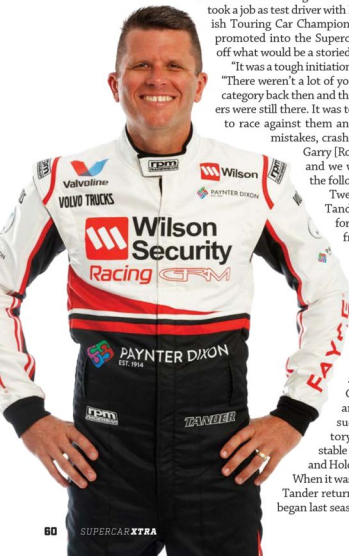
While GRM is known for its production line of young talent, who have often moved on to achieve success elsewhere, Tander is determined to give back. With a Bathurst 1000 win with the team, there is the ultimate goal of a maiden title for GRM.

"Having seen what resources other teams have available to them, financial, personnel and equipment, I think what GRM do with what they have is exceptional," says Tander.

"It is actually far and away the team that punches above its weight the most with the resources that it has at its disposal. And that's not saying that we feel like we have a disadvantage but what we do with what we have, having been in the factory team and seen all that stuff, it still impresses me every day.

"We want to be winning races and, for me personally, I still want to win some races with the team. That is what we are in this business for."

Tander is now the senior driver at GRM, helping to mentor the latest young talent to be given his big break in the category with the team. He was racing in the Australian Formula Ford Championship when teammate James Golding was born in 1996. Golding was co-driver





**“THE SETTLE-
IN PERIOD IS
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ALL ABOUT
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BUSINESS AND
TRYING TO MAKE
THE CARS AS FAST
AS WE CAN.”**

– GARTH TANDER

with Tander in the Pirtek Endurance Cup in 2017, graduating to his teammate in 2018.

“It’s part of my role to help him as much as I can,” says Tander.

“I don’t have to tell him how to drive a race car fast, he knows how to do that, so it is peripheral stuff... and we as a team are an open book.

“If he wants to know something it is available to him and we talk quite a bit about scenarios and things like that, so if that helps him fast-track his learning then I am absolutely 100 per cent happy to be doing that.”

And that learning process works both ways, with the driver 19 years his junior bringing some new ideas to the team.

“There are always parts of data that you can look at and apply to your driving regardless of who your teammate is,” explains Tander.

At 41 years of age, the retirement prospect looms large. But being back at GRM was also about paving the way for the next stage of his life.

“Well, the end is closer than the beginning, let’s be honest,” says Tander.

“Garry, Barry, myself and my management will sit down and talk about it. But all parties so far are saying that it’s not yet.

“I still feel like I am driving well and getting the most out of the package we have at the moment.

“The day that I stop being able to do that and someone comes along and is consistently doing a better job with the package we have, then we will look at that, but I don’t feel like that day is any time soon.

“There are some options there to be involved in a management role.

“How that management role looks and how that management role fits in with the team, we haven’t talked about it. But there are certainly opportunities there for that.

“I’ve said all along that it would be something I’d be involved with post-driving. So what better place to do it than the place you started your professional driving career?” **X**

Tander made his Supercars debut with Garry Rogers Motorsport in 1998.



"I JUST ENJOY WORKING ON INTRICATE LITTLE THINGS, PULLING STUFF APART, REBUILDING AND SEEING A CLEAN FRESH PRODUCT."
JAMES GOLDING



PART 2

THE APPRENTICE

James 'Bieber' Golding's ability to perform with both the tools in hand and behind the wheel has set the young charger up for a bright future under the tutelage of Garry Rogers Motorsport.

WORDS John Bannon IMAGES Supercars, Peter Norton

For a country lad from Warragul, Victoria, the professional moving feast that is the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship couldn't be more different to riding motorbikes around the family property at just four years old.

From a motorsport family, there were times growing-up when both his parents and sister were racing karts. But the family fun turned serious once the now 22-year-old won Australian karting titles before a crack at the big time, the World Rotax Grand Final in Portugal in 2012, where he ranked seventh.

Formula Ford stints followed, where he narrowly missed out on both the Victorian state and national titles. While he may not have captured a Formula Ford crown, Golding had done enough to catch the eye of renowned talent-spotter Garry Rogers, who after taking the man he dubbed 'Bieber' under his wing with a mechanic apprenticeship handed him the keys to one of his Supercars.

"We had a ride car which we used for sponsor rides that was also used for Robert Dahlgren when he raced for us for his first taste of Supercars as the new Volvo wasn't ready yet," says Golding.

"Garry said I should jump in and have a go. It was obviously awesome fun; my first time in a Supercar. Then he decided to put me in for the last round of the Dunlop Super2s at Sydney Olympic Park [in 2014]. It's obviously a pretty crazy street circuit for my first one, which was a huge experience."

Golding raced in the Dunlop Super2 Series full-time in 2015 and finished 10th. A strong second season in 2016 saw him claim his first race win and improve to fourth in the standings, leading to possible main-game promotion in 2017.

"We were under the impression that we were going to get a full-time gig last year," he says.

"But with the whole Volvo thing and the availability of Garth [Tander], a very experienced driver who no longer had a drive, as a team it was the best decision to get Garth in for us. I was a bit down at the start of the year, but then I got the opportunity to race in the wildcard races. So I did two of those along with the endurance races with Garth."

While Golding might be tackling his first full-time season in the main game, he's hardly new to the

Supercars paddock, having worked with Garry Rogers Motorsport as a mechanic for more than four years.

"I just enjoy working on intricate little things, pulling stuff apart, rebuilding and seeing a clean fresh product," he says.

"Working together as a team as well is fantastic. The reason I started with the apprenticeship was to get involved with a Supercars team and also to expand my knowledge with mechanics."

A big help for Golding is the belief of team boss Rogers, who has invested in 'Bieber' from a young age around a team whose workforce has largely remained the same during his time with the outfit.

"I would say that probably 95 per cent of the team is still there now," says Golding.

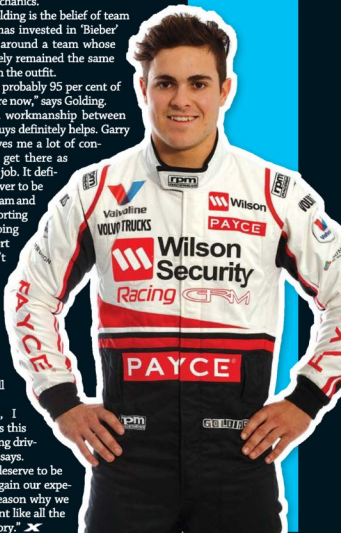
"That continued workmanship between me and the other guys definitely helps. Garry believing in me gives me a lot of confidence that I can get there as well and do a good job. It definitely helps as a driver to be involved with the team and have everyone supporting you rather than going to the track and sort of thinking, 'I don't really know much about this bloke.'"

Golding entered the championship alongside five other rookies, who will also be keen to make their mark in what he thinks will be a close battle.

"To be honest, I think all the rookies this year are pretty strong drivers themselves," he says.

"I think they all deserve to be there. Once we all gain our experience there's no reason why we can't run at the front like all the drivers in the category." X

OPPOSITE: Golding working as a mechanic at Garry Rogers Motorsport. He moved on from being a mechanic to main-game driver in 2018.



Seeing **RED**

WORDS Bruce Newton IMAGES Glenis Lindley, Ben Auld, Peter Norton



Phil Munday took over Lucas Dumbrell Motorsport and created 23 Red Racing, rolling the dice in Supercars with the experienced Will Davison and joining the Blue Oval brigade.

Phil Munday arrives at 23 Red Racing in his Porsche 911 GT3. It's just a fill-in until he gets his brand-new 911 GT2. He wanders into the workshop and inspects the VW Kombis (note plural) that he has under restoration and chats to the blokes who are working on them.

He's just come from his boutique brewery, where he and wife Caroline have had lunch with Russell and Julia Ingall. Munday and Caroline also made the trip to his first Indianapolis 500 with Will Davison and his partner Rihanna Crehan. This seems like the life and as we shake hands Phil's certainly got his usual smile on his face and twinkle in his eye.

So why, having retired at 60 from a highly successful and obviously profitable 41-year career in the smash-repair business, has he decided to take on the challenge, the responsibility and the headaches of being a Supercars team owner?

"I retired at the end of June last year," he explains. "I have been on the rev limiter in business for 40 years and to come to a halt and do nothing was almost impossible for me."

You may not have heard much about Munday before he took a majority stake in Lucas Dumbrell Motorsport (LDM) in 2017 and renamed it 23 Red Racing, but the reality is he's been around in motorsport for decades.

Munday's profile began growing when he became a major sponsor of LDM six years ago, especially in 2014 when his former business Repair Management Australia took naming rights when Ingall was doing the driving.

Some of the biggest names in racing in Australia are Munday's mates and perhaps the biggest of them all, the late, great Peter Brock, was an especially close friend. Phil even built the 48-215 Holden he raced at the Goodwood Festival.

"He was one of a kind and could drive everything; you give him anything and he could wring its neck when anyone else couldn't do it," says Munday.

"It was just a tragedy to lose him like that, we've all got to go but that was too early. My memories of PB are fantastic, just some of the things we did and fun we had together. He was a true people person, you just never saw him shun a spectator or a fan."

Munday tries to live by the same ethos. In pitlane his typical pose is a big smile and a deep conversation. He seems to know everyone and be on good terms with most of them.

A Holden man in his blood (but pragmatic enough to swap to Ford this year, even though it hurts), Munday raced Sports Sedans in his early 20s until family and

Phil Munday sought the experienced Will Davison to steer the 23 Red Racing entry.





ABOVE: Davison is charged with driving the 23 Red Racing entry up the grid in its first season.

business pressures forced him to give it up. But he never lost his love of high-octane motorsport.

His touring cars/Supercars sponsorship career stretches back to the late 1990s when he first backed his good mate Rod Nash's privateer Commodore. It's no surprise that 23 Red Racing is now a technical customer of the business Nash part-owns, Tickford Racing, or that Munday sold the Ford team one of LDM's two RECs.

Munday has completely transformed LDM. Initially, he took a 60 per cent stake in the business and Dumbrell kept a 40 per cent share. But Munday's since bought the quadriplegic former racer out and kept him on as a consultant.

It's important to stress this was an amicable buy-out, says Munday.

"I just thought he didn't need the mental stress of being a part-owner of a Supercars team. But I still wanted him to be part of it," he adds.

"I love him to bits, I think he's amazing. He is one in a hundred million guy. What he can do with the limited movement he has... he is totally underestimated for what he has achieved in his short life. He is an amazing inspirational person.

"I hope people respect his contribution to motorsport."

Munday's also swapped from aged Triple Eight Commodores to a Tickford Falcon FG X, moved the team to one of his factories in Melbourne's outer east, hired Davison on a three-year deal and brought Supercars veteran Rob Crawford in to run the show.

Rob Palermo has been drafted in on contract as

Davison's race engineer. All up the team has nine employees, six of them ex-LDM.

Munday's also added a Porsche Michelin GT3 Cup Challenge Australia program for promising youngster Luis Leeds (Palermo also engineers that program), bought a second FG X from Tickford as a spare and confirmed the team will upgrade to a Mustang for 2019. A Dunlop Super2 Series program is also on the cards for 2019, most likely with Leeds driving.

"Luis is going to be right up there in Supercars and I hope one day people will be saying, '23 Red and Phil Munday brought that kid through', a bit like the way Garry Rogers was very well known for bringing young talent through. I'd love to be known for that," he says.

"I reckon one day Luis will take over the main drive in 23 Red Racing."

But that's the future. Right now he's got Davison and he can't speak highly enough of him. The two came together only after the briefest of negotiations. Davison needed a new home after a disappointing second year at Tekno Autosports. Munday needed skill and experience and got it in spades from the former Bathurst winner.

Munday knows that confidence and belief are pivotal to strong performances from Davison, whose career has seen him fall in and out of love with a succession of racing teams.

"Will is just one of the best guys I have ever worked with and I think when his confidence gets a bit flattened or a bit knocked around then I think he just needs to be encouraged and built back up again," says Munday.

"If my confidence gets knocked around I am the same."

There have been some public misfires in the headlong rush to reach the 2018 grid. Racer Cameron McConville was initially named as team director, but that didn't happen. And former Australian sprinter John Steffensen was meant to race a Porsche in the Carrera Cup, but that plan got ditched too.

Munday is philosophical. Things weren't working, they had to change. Decisions had to be made. He made them. That's the thrust of it. If you're getting the impression Munday is an action man you're getting the gist of it.

Intrinsic to Munday's plan to make 23 Red Racing a profitable concern is growing the composites side of the business. Which makes sense; he has been in smash repairs all his adult life so why not do it in Supercars?

That composite department is already up and running. He's got FG X and VF Commodore moulds and is supplying panels to teams now. Next year he plans to be supplying Mustang panels to whoever wants them.

Munday is taking advantage of the fact that there will be no control over the production of Mustang panels. That's unlike ZB Commodore, over which Roland Dane and Triple Eight have a monopoly.

"My whole life has been panel beating and panel shops so it's a natural thing for us to go in and make panels for the cars. I think this could be a pretty successful business on its own," says Munday.

"The only thing that scares me is it's not big enough and I am most likely going to move composite into a separate facility."

That's Munday, making a buck is as natural as breathing to this guy. But he's also not scared to spend money either. He's got a solid naming-rights partner in Milwaukee Tools as well as supporting sponsors, but Munday's also investing his own money in the expensive early days to make sure it's all done right.

"I won't tell you how much money I will contribute," he says. "I have other businesses and none of them would have survived in the first three to five years without money being put into them and this is no different."

You have to tramp all the way to the end of pitlane at a Supercars meeting to find 23 Red Racing. Down past Charlie Schwerkolt Racing, with which it shares a boom. This is where LDM was anchored, but there's a different atmosphere here now; more organised, calmer, better presented. Although 23 Red Racing is young, it looks like it belongs.

There are hiccups and hold-ups, but there's also promising speed. At times Davison's been showing a clean pair of heels to the Tickford Falcons.

"My goal is to get three podiums this year," admits Munday. "We'll see how that goes."

While he's enjoyed the early success, Munday has also been surprised by the change of mindset that comes with swapping from team sponsor to owner.

As a sponsor he stuck his money in and got his promotional return. As a team owner his business-oriented mind never stops calculating the cost of racing.

"Like in Tassie," he snorts. "[Michael] Caruso drilled us in the rear – for the third time! – and that is \$60,000



23 Red Racing is expanding its racing program beyond just Supercars.

"I'D LIKE TO SEE US BRING THROUGH SOME KIDS WHO ARE STANDOUTS."

– PHIL MUNDAY

or \$70,000 worth of damage being done and taken us out of two races.

"So that frustrates me a lot. We know it's motorsport and it's dangerous and there's always pressure and all that, but that has definitely changed my thinking. It just makes me anxious because I think those things are unnecessary."

So get past 23 Red Racing's growing pains and what's the big picture?

"Five years from now hopefully 23 Red Racing will have established itself as a fairly serious competitor in motorsport and I'd like to see us bring through some kids who are standouts," says Munday.

Worthy goals, but perhaps surprisingly there's no grand ambition to go it alone and build an empire.

BELOW The single-car team is campaigning an ex-Tickford FG X Falcon and plans to upgrade to the Mustang in 2019.



Untethering from an engineering customer deal such as the one he has now with Tickford seems unlikely.

"Tickford is very good at engineering, that is undoubtedly their forte," says Munday.

"They've got the staff, they have got the base and they have the history. To me, having that engine deal, having the engineering part of it, the shock information we get through and all of the setups we need is important.

"We can concentrate on running a really good racing team, not diversifying into building engines... so I think long term I would stick with an engine deal and someone we can lean on in that space."

Surely, then, being a customer limits the ambition of what 23 Red Racing can achieve on the track?

"I think that gives us an advantage," he counters.

"We are not being sidetracked into trying to do things we are not set up to do. I have known Rod Nash for nearly 30 years and I have known Tim Edwards for nearly a dozen years. Those guys are good to deal with and they give straight answers and are straight shooters."

As we finish up, sitting in a race shop that didn't even exist a few months ago, Munday turns philosophical.

"It's always been an ambition of mine to own a Supercars team, even though people say, 'What a stupid thing to do' because you just tear up a lot of money. But if you can run the thing successfully I think that this could be a break-even or a little bit of money in it in a couple of years. If it's not I'll move on and retire and go fishing or something." Then he laughs and adds: "No I don't fish... I won't go fishing."

So why 23 Red Racing? Turns out Munday's birthday is February 23 and he always bets on 23 Red. It's proved a winner for him more than once. Could the race team do the same? ✕

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

Rob Crawford is sitting in his office at 23 Red Racing and he looks, well, relaxed.

In other words, completely different to the stressed-out team boss of the Holden Racing Team he used to be.

It's a change of mindset and demeanour that's striking and one his new situation directly contributes to.

"We haven't got the sponsor pressure here to go out and win day in and day out," he says.

"Also, you just need to make it a good healthy environment to work in.

"I need to make sure I don't put too much pressure on myself and everyone else in the place."

Rob Crawford mellowed? Seems so. He's done so much in his career and been so uncompromising throughout it. He's been in Europe in Formula 1, won championships in Supercars and worked for both Holden and Nissan factory teams.

Now, after a couple of years in Asian GTs, he's come back to Supercars running a single car that sits at the very back of the pitlane. And he's happy to do it!

"It's a good opportunity to get back in because I enjoy it," he says.

"I missed it when I wasn't doing it. I missed the racing and the camaraderie with the guys and all that sort of stuff. It's a way of life. I have been doing since I was 19."

Crawford says a good aim for 23 Red Racing in 2018 is to be the best single-car team in the Supercars championship standings. That means topping Craig Lowndes, though that's going to be hard task.

"We need to do the best job we can at every job we do and make that job perfect; whether it's in pitstops or servicing the car or preparing the car, even filling out the admin forms," he says.

"It's all about maximising everything we do 100 per cent."

There's a strong reminder of Crawford's factory Holden years ever-present at 23 Red Racing and that's driver Will Davison.

It's a reunion of two men whose time together at the Holden Racing Team ended badly. But Crawford says those distant days are a non-issue. If you can't move on in motorsport then you won't survive.

"He's great to work with and we are getting on like a house on fire," says Crawford on Davison.

"I think it's refreshing for him to enjoy his motor racing again.

"I get the feeling he didn't enjoy it that much last year [at Tekno Autosports].

"This year we are going out of our way to make sure we enjoy it and not put an extreme amount of pressure on ourselves.

"Just put enough on so we enjoy it!"



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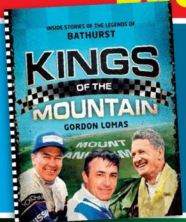
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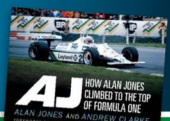
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ROOKIE ON THE RISE

If the name is not eye catching enough then his results thus far should be. Anton De Pasquale was perhaps a surprise rookie selection at Erebus Motorsport this season, but he is already rewarding those who've placed faith in him.

WORDS John Bannon IMAGES Supercars, Peter Norton, Ben Auld, Glenn Lindley

It's been dubbed 'the championship within a championship'. An injection of fresh blood sees five full-time rookies tackle the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship in 2018. Yet only one of those drivers had yet to sample the main game before the start of the season, either as an endurance co-driver or wildcard entrant.

Erebus Motorsport's Anton De Pasquale has turned heads up and down pitlane in his rookie campaign. Maybe this is a surprise to some but to those who've supported the 22-year-old throughout his career to date, there are no surprises to see here.

While De Pasquale may be the least experienced in Supercars terms after just two seasons in the Dunlop Super2 Series, he arrived on the scene with an

impressive resume and the support and encouragement of not only his team but experienced Supercars figures Mark Larkham and Paul Morris.

The 2013 Australian Formula Ford champion sparked his interest in motorsport on the family farm, hopping on his first motorbike at just three and a half years old. De Pasquale started racing on two wheels at age 10 but after a few too many broken bones decided go-karting was the way to go.

The De Pasquale family are avid motorsport fans, so when the now Holden driver started racing karts at the relative late age of 13 it was a family affair.

"When you start racing, if you don't have family support it's not going to work because you're not going to get to the track, especially at go-kart level," he says.

De Pasquale was the only one of the full-time rookies who hadn't started a main-games race entering 2018.



"I STILL FEEL LIKE I HAVE A LOT TO LEARN AND I'M STILL PRETTY FRESH."

– ANTON DE PASQUALE



"Usually Dad would set up the kart and put the kart together. We spent a lot of time together."

De Pasquale stepped up to Formula Ford after three years in karts and signed with renowned talent-developing outfit Sonic Motor Racing Services, where he spent the next two seasons. He claimed the national title in his final year with the squad in 2013, a career-defining win.

"Winning that in anybody's eyes is a pretty big thing," he reflects.

"If you look at all the previous champions, the guys in Supercars, they have either won one or been very close to winning one. So knowing that you've done it gives you hope that dreams can come true. And here I am. Sonic had a board of their champions in the garage. You look at it and see Jamie Whincup, Will Davison, Nick Percat, Cam Waters. All those guys are in Supercars now."

But instead of pursuing a career in Supercars, De Pasquale chose to chase the European single-seater dream.

"Larko put a deal together for me to race for an Austrian team [Lachner Racing School] in Formula Renault 1.6," he says.

"It was their first time back in the series in a long time. The cars were awesome and I managed to win that first weekend. And from there you've got good confidence and you know you've got a chance to win it. It was all new tracks, new car, new team, new languages – all of that. It was a lot to take in for an 18-year-old at the time but it was an awesome experience."

De Pasquale reveals that Larkham continues to be an influence for him since those early Formula Ford days.

"We kind of crossed paths, just got talking and became really good friends," he says.

"We talked a lot about the next few years and what the future holds. Obviously, he has done a lot of things in his life, from driving to team ownership, managing and lots more. At that time he was trying to make a motorsport academy and I was at the forefront of that. And we decided that the path we went was the best way to go. Still now he gives me a few pointers. He's a great guy and it's great to have him back in the pitlane, too."

After winning nine of 15 races and the title in his first year in Europe, De Pasquale moved up the next rung of the Formula Renault ladder but soon realised the budget wasn't going to stretch far enough.

"As the year went on it was quite expensive, quite hard with the budget," he says.

"It wasn't about completing that year, it was where do you go from there? How do you progress to Formula 1 or LMP1 or something like that, which is the main career path over there. How do you get there? How much does

BELOW: De Pasquale impressed the Supercars fraternity with his speedy transition to touring cars in the Dunlop Super2 Series.





that cost? All those things weighed up and so it made sense to come back to Australia."

De Pasquale spoke to a few people he knew back in Australia and teamed up with Morris, who not only gave him a start in the Dunlop Super2 Series but helped broker his deal with Erebus Motorsport.

"He [Morris] taught me everything in going from open-wheelers to the tin-tops," he says.

"The approach is very much the same no matter what you drive, just the little techniques and how to get a little bit more out of the car, how to understand what the car is doing. It's a big car which I'd never driven before.

"I'd obviously been around, driven a lot of cars at a lot of races. He's got an approach where we just suited each other, a straight-up approach, no sort of fluffing around and putting extra sugar on it. We were on the same path for those two years and I think that's how we got the most out of it.

"The first year was quite difficult because we were in an older car and half the field was in a newer car, so the results were never really there. But we kind of knew that we didn't really deserve to be where we were. So we worked out how to get a new car and how to push ourselves up the grid.

"I just trusted the people around me and aligned myself with the right people to get the job done. We didn't have the biggest operation in the Super2 paddock but we went about it our own way. I won two rounds out of the seven and just got talking to Barry [Ryan] from Erebus."

De Pasquale was given an in-season test with Erebus, impressing the team and landing a full-time deal for 2018 despite his lack of main-game experience.

"I was probably a bit fresh to get a co-drive at the time when all the co-drives were signed," he admits.

"If they were all signed up towards the end of the year then I probably would have got one. It actually worked out in my favour because the way the rules work with the evaluation and rookie days if you get a co-drive you can't do it.

"So that's how I actually got the evaluation day with Erebus. Although it's probably not the normal way to get in, it worked out because they were really happy with how I went. And from there the door opened."

While most main-game aspirants ply their trade in

ABOVE De Pasquale has been the most consistent of the full-time rookies in 2018.

"BENCHMARKING MYSELF AGAINST DAVE [REYNOLDS] IS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE."

— ANTON DE PASQUALE





ABOVE: De Pasquale has gelled well with Erebus Motorsport teammate David Reynolds.

the Dunlop Super2 Series over three or four seasons and usually tackle at least one enduro campaign before graduation to Supercars, De Pasquale has proved a quick learner by outclassing his fellow rookies in the early stages of 2018.

"Adelaide was my first start on the grid," he says. "Although we were five rookies I was the only one making my first start. But at the end of the day we're still all quite equal. I still feel like I have a lot to learn and I'm still pretty fresh."

As De Pasquale makes his steady climb up the grid, he feels his pace increases as he gets closer to teammate David Reynolds.

"The most common saying is that the benchmark is your teammate," he says.

"So I'm lucky to have one of the better ones. He has been up the front now for some time so he is a really good benchmark and there's some really good data to come out of that. The closer I get to him, the harder he pushes and the faster he gets, too. We're pushing each other but he is pushing me a lot more at the moment."

De Pasquale has a clear respect for Bathurst-winner Reynolds, who along with the entire team has lifted Erebus Motorsport from backmarker to genuine championship contender.

"Obviously he is at a different level to what I am at the moment," says De Pasquale.

"He is at the top of his game fighting for race wins and trying to fight for a championship and I'm at the start. He's been where I am and he understands what it's like.

"He's given me any information that I've asked for and even if I don't ask for it he is happy to help. The plan is to get both cars at the front, so we are just helping each other"

De Pasquale appears to be fitting in at Erebus among some big personalities in colourful team boss Betty Klimenko and paddock-larrikin Reynolds.

"The team is known to be a bit more quirky than most but it's just like any other racing team, the engineers are switched on," says De Pasquale.

"We're trying everything we can to make the cars as fast as we can. All the guys, girls and mechanics are working very hard.

"I've spent a lot of time at the workshop with them trying to help where I can and learn as much as I can. But so far it feels like a home... so although there is laughter and smiles there is a lot of seriousness, too; everyone wants to win and beat all the others out there."

De Pasquale's goal for the year is clear, stay as close to Reynolds as possible.

"Benchmarking myself against Dave is the main objective," he says.

"I want to try and end the year as close as I can, if not right behind him. That's the plan because he'll be up the front every event that we go to. The closer I get to him, the closer I will be to the front."

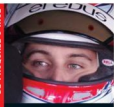
And what about this 'championship within a championship'? Does he have all these other full-time rookies covered?

"It's the first time there has been so many rookies so it's created a bit of hype," he says.

"We are kind of racing each other in a way. And we're all in good cars, too. The whole field is really tight and we've got a pretty good opportunity.

"So it's good to be considered ahead of them, but long-term we won't be rookies for too long so we'll be looking up the grid and trying to get as far forward as we can." X

DE PASQUALE'S RISE



2011

Australian National Sprint Kart champion

2012

Victorian Formula Ford runner-up

2013

Australian Formula Ford champion

2014

European Formula Renault 1.6 NEC champion

2017

Dunlop Super2 Series race winner

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WORDS Andrew Clarke IMAGES Supplied, Glenis Lindley, Ben Auld

THE PATHWAY TO SUPERCARS

Getting into Supercars is a mammoth effort, requiring the right level of support, plenty of talent and a fair bit of luck. This is how a young driver can negotiate the path from go-karts to the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship.

When Roland Dane first appeared on the Australian scene many years ago, he took a different view of the world.

His theory was that you can't teach a driver to be fast; they either are or they aren't, but you can teach him not to crash.

He was talking about choosing a driver for the top levels of the sport; a driver who has done the hard yards in the lower rungs, invariably kicking it all off in go-karts before a natural progression up the ladder.

Others in his shoes at the time were opting conservatively; taking someone who wouldn't scratch a car and could, possibly, win the odd race. But talent doesn't just land at your front door.

If you are involved in driver selection for Supercars, you have to cast your net far and wide.

A decade ago, the pathway was clear and to some extent it remains similar, but options are opening up for professional drives as motorsport in this country matures.

Today the opportunity to build a career with

a job in Australia is much more significant than when Roland arrived.

Karting remains the starting point for pretty much all racers, and from there the path veers in many directions.

Lotem Ben Yosef is one of those young racers at the start of what he hopes will be a professional career. Certainly his father, Yariv, hopes so, too, given how much effort and funding he is putting into his son's motorsport.

There are plenty of people offering lots of advice, most of them will make some money out of it, too, so to cut through the mire we sat Lotem down with Roland for some clarity.

"Like any top level of any sport, getting there is hard because there's always lots of aspirants and there's not room for everyone at the top," Roland states in his typically frank manner.

"If you play soccer, there's probably a couple of hundred teams with slots at the very top of European soccer, and many thousands of players around the world who'd like to end up there.

"So when they are 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 years old, that's what they are looking at, and





“LIKE ANY TOP LEVEL OF ANY SPORT GETTING THERE IS HARD BECAUSE THERE’S ALWAYS LOTS OF ASPIRANTS AND THERE’S NOT ROOM FOR EVERYONE AT THE TOP...” – ROLAND DANE

the numbers are okay. In motorsport there’s a smaller number of seats at the top for professionally paid drivers and there are lots and lots of people who want to get there, so it is a hard path.”

He did say, however, that even that has been changing of late. Going back 30 years, there were some touring cars and sportscars drivers making a living overseas, and certainly a handful of Formula 1 drivers making some pretty big dollars.

Today it has opened up, with other categories growing in importance to the motoring and motorsport worlds.

“The European route is not exclusive to Formula 1, as you know,” he explains.

“You can see with Matt Campbell now, for instance... he is a good example of somebody getting one foot in the door in with Porsche in Europe. Earl Bamber



Go-karier Lotern Ben Yosef meets Shane van Gisbergen.





ABOVE: Roland Dane offers his advice on the pathway to Supercars.

from New Zealand is in the same sort of situation.

"You might aspire to Formula 1 but there can be other routes to earning a living overseas like Scott Dixon or Will Power. If you go back many years, Vern Schuppan did well in in sportscars."

The bottom line is, though, that most of the drivers that head to Europe do so with the Formula 1 dream and lots of money. The sort of money that makes Yariv's eyes water.

Even if you are seriously talented, and we have plenty over here, you will still require a lot of money to climb the ladder. Joey Mawson needed to raise more than a million dollars for a season of GP3, Mark Webber sold shares in himself and the list goes on. The days of the Alan Jones grind are well gone and money talks more than ever, which is probably why there are now so many opportunities in a kind of Catch-22 scenario.

But now staying in Australia is a very viable option for building a career. There are enough drives paying money to earn a very good living as the success of Supercars filters down the ladder.

Lotem is just a teenager and Roland says the next couple of years can be critical. Now, he says, you find out if the young driver has the passion needed to be able to make it to the top.

"You need to see what people are doing when they are 15, 16, 17, are they really into the sport or have they suddenly got other interests and veered off into something else," he says.

"When we start seeing people in Formula Ford in Australia – and Formula Ford is still a great category for people to take the racing experience from karting and

then put it into a vehicle with less grip and where you can tangle wheels and learn your racecraft at a different level – that's when I start taking interest and watching people like Hunter McElrea or Courtney Prince. You need to wait until you know they are serious."

Serious. Lotem says that is not in any doubt, the bug has bitten and he is now just trying to work out with his father how to go to the next level.

"I will pretty much drive anything anywhere," he says. "So right now I'm karting and in one or two years' time I would like to start in Formula Ford or the Hyundai Excel Series... any category we can afford really, whatever we have the money to do."

Roland's face didn't light up at the thought of the Excel Series, but Formula Ford seemed to tick his boxes even though the category has been scaled back.

"It's up to you the way you want to try to get some experience, but from our point of view we'll look at Formula Ford and then it could be different routes after that," responds Dane.

"You need something which is relatively affordable and doesn't have ABS (anti-lock brakes). One-make series' can be good, like Toyota 86s, but I don't like the fact that it has ABS because that gives you bad habits.

"When you are doing Formula Ford we can start to take an interest. That is when I listen to people who come and tell me some kid is head and shoulders above everyone else."

Formula Ford in Australia is very different to what it once was, but it still has some significant racing series and works well as a next step after you have developed your racecraft in karting.

You can start with local classes, which in most major cities is okay because there are a few tracks nearby that don't require the investment of travelling around Australia. You can run it on the smell of an oily rag; one driver and the family tipping in to make it happen and then you can get a little more serious.

You get the feeling from the conversation with Lotem that this is where Roland would like to see them put their next effort.



"IF YOU'RE NOT PREPARED TO SPEND EVERY MOMENT YOU'RE NOT AT SCHOOL DEDICATED TO RACING, THEN WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE?" – ROLAND DANE

"Let's say you need to find \$50,000-plus to buy a car and they are not that expensive," says Dane.

"You've just got to make sure it's maintained beautifully and you have to be prepared to do some of that yourself and learn about it. If you're learning about it yourself like that, you have a greater appreciation of what makes a car work and looking after it and the mechanical side of it. I've never seen a driver suffer from having a good mechanical understanding of the car.

"The car doesn't know how old you are, so whether you are 15, 20 or 30 it is the same. And that means there is always opportunity, but you're going to have to work hard at creating those opportunities.

"You have to nurture every relationship that gets put in front of you and seek the other ones that are not in front of you, where you live, the people who you interact with as a family or the people that might give you a bit of help.

"It can be as simple as someone to look after your Formula Ford or somebody to buy it for you, somebody to buy the tyres for you, etc. And don't be scared of hard work. Don't expect everyone else to help you do what you want to do.

"If you're not prepared to spend every moment you're not at school dedicated to racing, then why should anyone else?"

Lotem is in Year 8 and he doesn't do anything outside of school but karting. At home he and his father work on the kart, getting it ready for the next race or practice day, working on the setup, learning and investigating. Then they get onto the track.

"I try to get the best mechanical understanding of it," he says. "I read articles to learn how the kart works, how the centre of gravity works."

"You're never wasting time reading about what's going on around the world in something like karting because there's plenty of it out there," Roland interjects.

"There's plenty of information and you can learn a lot and help your understanding of making it work... appreciating the difference in temperatures, the difference in correct levels on a particular day. It can make the difference between being first or 10th."

The key today for Lotem and his family, which only came to Australia in 2012, is that there is now a defined career path, one where you can earn a living as a driver at many levels of the sport.

"Lotem and I feel this is such a young industry in Australia, particularly karts" Yariv adds.

"Formula Ford through to V8s is a growing sport, the people we are talking to for sponsorship feel like it is growing. Everyone believes Australia will become more important in motorsport in the world. So for Lotem, this is a good career option."

Up and down the ladder, the classes are getting stronger and more competitive. So not only does a young driver like Lotem have the chance to earn a living, he will also get the chance to race in competitive classes in the country his family has chosen as its home. And that is critically important.

Today, Australia is a career option for drivers and Lotem's journey is just beginning. ✖



KARTSTARTER

James Courtney created JC Karts to give something back.

"It's where I started and it was so good to me," says Courtney on karting.

"I wake up every morning and can't believe that I get paid to do something that I love.

"Throughout my career I had so many people believe in me and put money into me, and I'm a big believer in paying it forward. So a lot of the motivation of doing it is to try and help some kids and really show what it's all about.

"I didn't want to do it and just slap my name on it and not be involved. It's about trying to give something back to the community. I don't want to be one of those blokes that rolls through and leaves the place and then gets out of there. JC Karts has been awesome so far."

A two-times CIK-FIA world karting champion (pictured), Courtney knows that this is where it all starts.

Courtney had a hand in the design of the karts and has them built in Italy, offering a range of karts from catering to the CIK-FIA classes.

The karts are all self-branded and distributed around Australia. Some are just sold but it is not just a set and forget. Even though he has sold about 275 karts, he tries to get involved where he can.

"I'm trying to help with how they go about it, it is not just the racing but things like how they do about sponsorship and all that sort of stuff," he says.

"I remember when I was little bloke and Mark Skaife came to the track and I thought Jesus had arrived.

"It's so easy to put a huge smile on their faces. It's been a feel good sort of thing for me, it's not a money spinner at all.

"It will certainly be good for me when the Supercars thing finishes. Karting set me up for life. Not only the racing side of things but you learn to manage your life as well. When I was 14 I was doing it all by myself and if I didn't I wouldn't be here."





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TOP 10 CORNERS IN SUPERCARS



10 THE ESSES, BARBAGALLO ▲
The run up the hill at Barbagallo Raceway funnels the pack into one racing line and drivers aggressively attack the kerbs. High tyre degradation and marbles off line add to the challenge of this series of corners.

9 DOOHAN CORNER, PHILLIP ISLAND
The fast right-hander first corner at Phillip Island is amongst the most popular with drivers. They hit top gear and 290km/h at the end of Gardner Straight and go down one gear and carry approximately 210km/h through Dooohan Corner, with Bass Strait providing a stunning backdrop.

8 BACK CHICANE, SURFERS PARADISE ▼
Drivers attack the spectacular Surfers Paradise back chicane at approximately 120km/h, with a clean run through this section



critical to a good lap time. There's a big risk versus reward factor in how drivers approach the corners, given the threat of overuse of kerb warnings and hitting the outside concrete wall.

7 HAYSHED, PHILLIP ISLAND
The run from the Turn 4 hairpin away from Bass Strait is critical to a fast lap time at Phillip Island, with the Hayshed a fast sweeper where drivers just touch the brakes and carry high speed on the approach to Lukey Heights.

6 TURN 4, SYMMONS PLAINS ▶
The hairpin at Symmons Plains is the slowest corner on the Supercars schedule, with its banking allowing for different lines. Drivers are increasingly taking a high line and using the concrete lining on the exit to get better traction. The hairpin

is not only the main overtaking spot on the circuit but also the biggest determining factor for a quick lap time.

5 DANDENONG ROAD, SANDOWN
The fast left-hand sweeper has been the scene of some of the biggest Supercars accidents, including Todd Hazelwood's massive hit last season. The turn-in is hard to get right for drivers, who carry approximately 200km/h in fifth gear into the corner.

4 TURNS 10 & 11, PUKEKOHE
The fast and flowing Pukekohe is an old-school circuit where corner speed is high. This is particularly the case for the fast left and right sweeper that leads onto the home straight, where the brave sometimes dive on the inside of their opponents or get on the throttle a little too early and run onto the grass.

3 TURN 8, ADELAIDE
The right-hand sweeper has destroyed a number of cars and the slightest mistake is punished at the concrete wall



on corner exit. Drivers enter in sixth at 220km/h and need to hit the apex cleanly for a smooth exit.

2 REID, SULMAN, MCPHILLAMY PARK, MOUNT PANORAMA
The run up Mount Panorama is arguably the most iconic stretch of track in Australia. The series of undulating left-handers leading to Skyline is a rollercoaster ride, where time can be gained or lost depending on how hard they are prepared to push.

1 THE CHASE, MOUNT PANORAMA ▼
The most daunting corner in Supercars was, ironically, installed on safety grounds in 1987. The Chase broke up Conrod Straight, with the right-hand kink adding another iconic corner to the legendary circuit. Drivers are on the brink of 300km/h when they use the extra seal on the left of the road to swing to the right in top gear after just a slight dab of the brakes. ✕





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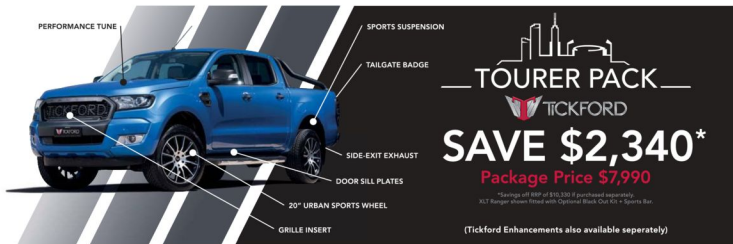
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