



# WILLIAMS BACK ON FORM But are the drivers good enough?

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# AUTOSPORT

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## RED BULL'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGE

Why double champs  
are playing catch-up

How it plans to take  
the fight to McLaren



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### RED BULL'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Two races have produced no wins, no poles and no fastest laps for the back-to-back champions. KOLJA HEIDFESZ reveals why

**ANALYSIS: RED BULL'S WOES**

It's a familiar sight: a Red Bull Formula 1 car on the track. The team has won 16 of the 19 races since the start of the season, but in the last two, they have been out of contention. In the first race, the team's cars were out of contention from the start, and in the second, they were out of contention for most of the race. This is a significant setback for the team, which has been dominant in the past few years. The team's cars have been out of contention for most of the race, and this is a significant setback for the team, which has been dominant in the past few years.

### More F1 surprises to come

A tight field and new tyres will continue to produce unpredictable grands prix. BY ED STRONACH

**NEWS: PIT & PADDOCK**

**SWINGOMETER: RACE v QUALIFYING PACE**

The winners and losers on race pace relative to qualifying pace

Driver	Loss	Gain
1. Vettel	-0.12	+0.15
2. Alonso	-0.10	+0.12
3. Hamilton	-0.08	+0.10
4. Webber	-0.06	+0.08
5. Ricciardo	-0.04	+0.06
6. Buemi	-0.02	+0.04
7. Grosjean	0.00	0.00
8. Vergne	+0.02	-0.02
9. Sutil	+0.04	-0.04
10. Barrichello	+0.06	-0.06
11. Piquet	+0.08	-0.08
12. Di Resta	+0.10	-0.10
13. Hülkenberg	+0.12	-0.12
14. Gutiérrez	+0.14	-0.14
15. Pérez	+0.16	-0.16
16. Rosberg	+0.18	-0.18
17. Massa	+0.20	-0.20
18. Räikkönen	+0.22	-0.22
19. Kobayashi	+0.24	-0.24
20. Gutiérrez	+0.26	-0.26

**RAW DATA**

Driver	Qualifying	Race
1. Vettel	1:28.000	1:29.000
2. Alonso	1:29.000	1:30.000
3. Hamilton	1:30.000	1:31.000
4. Webber	1:31.000	1:32.000
5. Ricciardo	1:32.000	1:33.000
6. Buemi	1:33.000	1:34.000
7. Grosjean	1:34.000	1:35.000
8. Vergne	1:35.000	1:36.000
9. Sutil	1:36.000	1:37.000
10. Barrichello	1:37.000	1:38.000
11. Piquet	1:38.000	1:39.000
12. Di Resta	1:39.000	1:40.000
13. Hülkenberg	1:40.000	1:41.000
14. Gutiérrez	1:41.000	1:42.000
15. Pérez	1:42.000	1:43.000
16. Rosberg	1:43.000	1:44.000
17. Massa	1:44.000	1:45.000
18. Räikkönen	1:45.000	1:46.000
19. Kobayashi	1:46.000	1:47.000
20. Gutiérrez	1:47.000	1:48.000

### GTs riding high

After a fine title battle in 2011, the British GT championship is looking strong again this season. BEN ANDERSON looks at the likely contenders ahead of the Oulton Park opener this weekend

**PREVIEW: BATHYST**

Ben Anderson looks at the likely contenders ahead of the Oulton Park opener this weekend. The British GT championship is looking strong again this season. The race will be a close one, with several drivers expected to be competitive. The race will be a close one, with several drivers expected to be competitive.



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## POLE POSITION

# F1 on the bench as Britain's finest take centre stage



WITH TWO GRANDS PRIX ALREADY IN the book, it's the turn of Britain's biggest championships to take centre stage in F1's 'off weeks'. And what a fantastic start to the British Touring Car Championship it was at Brands Hatch over the weekend.

The sun-blessed spectator bankings were packed as Rob Collard, Matt Neal and – who would have believed it? – Jason Plato, in his brand-new MG6, took the race victories. It was a remarkable achievement for Plato and the Triple 8 squad in particular to taste success this soon given so little pre-season running.

While there was off-track grumbling (nothing new there!) about turbo equivalency, there was nothing amiss with the on-track fare – with overtaking aplenty and bucketfuls of door-handling thrills. And there are plenty more potential race winners in that field, too.

Now we look forward to the British Formula 3 (Saturday only) and GT championships kicking off at Oulton Park over Easter.

What better place to be than the sweeping majesty of the Cheshire parkland venue on a Bank Holiday weekend?

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AUTOSPORT PODCAST

## BAMBER'S WEEK



EDDIE JORDAN AWARDED AN OBE FOR MAKING THE WORLD A MORE COLOURFUL PLACE

BTCC

## Traffic update: avoid Brands Hatch RTA...

...that's racing traffic accident. Mat Jackson's Ford Focus left a line of fluid in its wake in the third BTCC race last weekend. Seven cars slid off at Druids as a result, including Jackson's team-mate Aron Smith, the Proton of Dan Welch (12), Adam Morgan's Toyota (33), Tony Gilham's Honda (34), Ollie Jackson's VW (48) and Tom Onslow-Cole's BMW. Full report, p34.

Pic: Ebrey/LAT





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**McLAREN**  
Fastest in qualifying,  
but not in the races

**MERCEDES**  
Second fastest in qualifying,  
but only ninth in the races

**LOTUS**  
Yet to show its full  
potential on race day

# More F1 surprises to come

A tight field and new tyres will continue to produce unpredictable grands prix. By EDD STRAW

**F**ormula 1's unpredictable start to the season is set to continue, with the competitive spread slashed compared with last year.

At the 2011 Australian Grand Prix, a lap 2.293s off the pace was good enough to make Q3 in qualifying. This year, that margin has been reduced to just 1.327s. Similarly, the lap time needed to get out of Q1 dropped from 3.693s off pole to just 2.641s. The pattern was similar in Malaysia, where the Q3 cut-off dropped from 1.941s to 1.258s and for Q1 from 3.293s to 2.218s.

The tightness of the field has played a big part in the unpredictable races seen so far this year. This is partly down to there being more crossover in each team's performance spectrum – meaning that a fast car running relatively badly is likely to slip behind a greater number of cars than might have been the case last year.

Rules stability is a big part of this. The current rules package was introduced at the start of 2009 and with teams now in their fourth season of development, there are diminishing returns to be had. The

one major change was the effective ban on exhaust-blown diffusers, a concept that played a big part in the leading teams – especially Red Bull – taking a stride ahead of the pack.

The other key factor has been the new-for-2012 Pirelli tyres. As with last year, the performance gap on race pace has closed up because the fastest cars often take a bigger toll on their rubber. But more significantly, several teams, notably Mercedes, appear to be in trouble in terms of the way that they use the rubber.

Despite qualifying on the second row for both races so far this year, Mercedes has scored just one point. During the Malaysian Grand Prix, Nico Rosberg believed that he had run through a set of intermediate tyres, but when he pitted the team found them to be in good condition.

“There’s a conundrum to this car,” said Mercedes team principal Ross Brawn after the Sepang race. “There were little windows when we seemed to get the tyres working and other times where we fell out of them completely. I don’t believe that we were abusing the tyres, just not using them properly.”



The odds of this podium were long

The way that cars use their tyres in the race can also explain the variations in qualifying versus race performance. Sauber, for example, has been a marginal Q3 runner on Saturday afternoon but shown strongly during both races.

“If you are very hard on your tyres, then sometimes your qualifying pace can be very good because you can put a lot of energy

into the tyres and extract a lot of grip,” said Williams chief operations engineer Mark Gillan. “By doing that, you can destroy the tyre very quickly, either because you’ve worn the tyre or you have thermal degradation. You need to be light on the tyre, but still extract the grip from it. It’s a balance.”

The tyre troubles were exacerbated during the Malaysian Grand Prix,



**"If you are hard on your tyres, your qualifying performance can be good"**

Williams' Mark Gillan



**RED BULL**  
Strongest on race pace so far – but not on Saturdays

McLaren slipped up after front row start in Malaysia

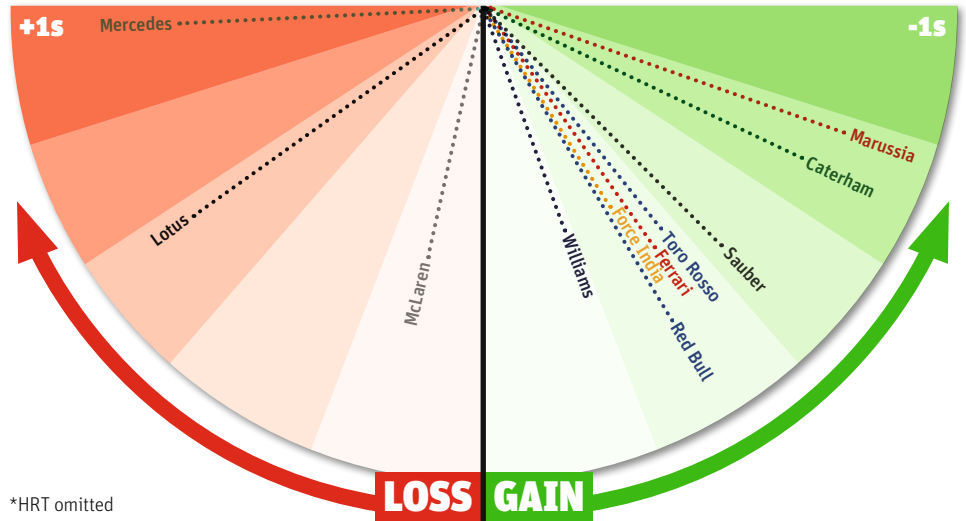
where the likes of Jenson Button struggled for pace when his tyre temperature dropped while in traffic. Given the narrow temperature window, this is a particular danger for the fastest cars when stuck in the pack as they will have tuned their set-ups to running at a fast lap time.

While it's likely that teams will get a tighter handle on the performance of tyres as the season goes on, the rules should mean that the overall competitive spread remains tight despite the development rate expected from the top teams. The top nine outfits have been covered by just 1.317s on average qualifying pace in the opening two races of the season (see panel right).

If you disregard struggling Marussia and HRT, plus Caterham (which has not delivered on its aim to join the midfield pack) it is closer than it was even than at the end of the 2008 season, where the whole field was covered by just one-and-three-quarter seconds in qualifying.

## SWINGOMETER: RACE v QUALIFYING PACE

The winners and losers on race pace relative to qualifying pace\*



\*HRT omitted owing to failing to qualify in Australia

**BASELINE: ABSOLUTE PACE**

McLaren, Lotus and Mercedes, arguably the three strongest cars in terms of qualifying pace so far this season, have proved to be

the biggest losers when their relative pace in the race is compared with relative pace in qualifying. While McLaren is

only 0.140s off, and Lotus is over half a second slower thanks to traffic in Melbourne, Mercedes is a massive 0.960s slower.

## RAW PACE

Based on outright pace during opening two weekends of the year around a hypothetical 80-second lap.

Rank	Team	Time (s)
1	McLaren	1m20.000s
2	Mercedes	+0.234s
3	Lotus	<b>+0.247s</b>
4	Red Bull	+0.410s
5	Williams	<b>+0.945s</b>
6	Ferrari	+1.189s
7	Sauber	<b>+1.291s</b>
8	Force India	+1.311s
9	Toro Rosso	<b>+1.317s</b>
10	Caterham	+2.846s
11	Marussia	<b>+4.646s</b>
12	HRT	+6.418s

## RACE PACE

Over the first two races, Red Bull has the best average in terms of fastest laps, suggesting that the RB8 does indeed have race-winning pace.

Rank	Team	Time (s)
1	Red Bull	1m20.000s
2	McLaren	+0.140s
3	Williams	<b>+0.750</b>
4	Lotus	+0.802s
5	Sauber	<b>+0.862s</b>
6	Ferrari	+0.870s
7	Toro Rosso	<b>+0.927</b>
8	Force India	+1.072s
9	Mercedes	<b>+1.194s</b>
10	Caterham	+2.168s
11	Marussia	<b>+3.874s</b>
12	HRT	+4.120s

**7 TEAMS** ...have so far held fastest lap at one point during the opening two races of 2012. McLaren, Lotus, Sauber, Ferrari, Toro Rosso, Red Bull and even Caterham have done so.



**P26 RED BULL ANALYSED**

# Williams confident it can sustain improved form

After a disastrous 2011 campaign, the venerable team appears to be emerging from the F1 wilderness – but can it keep up the pace?



**W**illiams is confident that it can develop its car fast enough to maintain its position as a top 10 runner after a highly promising start to the season.

Bruno Senna finished sixth in the Malaysian Grand Prix, giving Williams a haul of eight points, three more than it scored in the whole of last year, and team-mate Pastor Maldonado would have achieved the same result in Melbourne but for a last-lap crash. This is a marked improvement from 2011, which was the worst campaign in the outfit's illustrious history.

Chief operations engineer Mark Gillan is pleased with the progress made since last season. He is hopeful

that aerodynamic tweaks slated to be introduced at the Chinese Grand Prix will keep the Williams in contention for the top 10.

"It's definitely a step forward," Gillan told AUTOSPORT. "We will go to Shanghai with a few more developments. We have a good base car and we now have to improve that steadily in all areas. We're confident."

While it's impossible to point to any one factor that has made a decisive improvement, beyond the appointment of Mike Coughlan as technical director and the arrival of Gillan last year, the switch to Renault propulsion has been crucial. Not only is the engine a step forward over the Cosworth, with Maldonado raving

about its characteristics after just one lap in pre-season testing, but it has a big influence on the car as a whole. The compromises required in terms of cooling and packaging of last year have been solved through the switch.

"You mustn't underestimate the engine; it's very good," said Gillan. "The Renault is very strong, particularly in race trim. In Malaysia, it was hot but in terms of cooling the car has reasonably closed up compared to some. The general car is a lot tidier.

"As a package, the driveability of the car has improved. Some of that is down to the engine, some is the KERS system, some is just the general improvement in the car. How we use

the tyres has also improved as last year our race pace was not good."

The team aims to consolidate its position as a Q3 regular - Maldonado missed out on the top 10 by just 0.112s and had the pace to make the cut - which would mean that Williams has lived up to the ambitious targets set pre-season.

But it will need to make progress to retain that position, especially given how close the pack is and the fact that the likes of Mercedes have failed to capitalise on their innate pace so far this season. A major package is expected for the Mugello test on May 1-3, which is likely to have a decisive impact on whether Williams can carry its early-season form into the European campaign.

"It's a great team effort and we want to show progress, make it into Q3 on a regular basis and get ourselves into the points," said Gillan. "We have put ourselves in that position in both events this year. We didn't sneak into Q3 in Malaysia but we definitely had the pace to and finished in the points."

The other area where the team impressed was strategically in Malaysia. In recent seasons, Williams has made some strange gambles in mixed conditions that have rarely paid off. Gillan describes this as

Senna charged from last to sixth in Malaysia





Maldonado had the pace to make Q3 in Malaysia

**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**EDD STRAW**  
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**W**illiams has stopped the rot and returned to near the front of the midfield pack, which is exactly where a team of its size should be. Assuming that this form holds, with the car a Q3 contender and a regular points scorer, now the real work begins.

Even with a 129-race winless streak under its belt, 14 seasons without a title and not a single podium finish since the Singapore Grand Prix in 2008,

Williams remains a name to be reckoned with. It has fallen behind the leading teams in F1 and is probably the sixth biggest outfit, so there is still a



Singapore '08: last podium

massively long way to go to get back to the top. But there are signs that it at least has a platform from which to rebuild.

Mike Coughlan has brought a very clear design direction in his role as technical director. Chief operations engineer Mark Gillan's has presented a thorough methodology to the race team that has the factory dancing to its tune, rather than vice versa. This means that the scattergun approach to technical upgrades of the past has been abandoned.

It is these changes that gives real confidence that Williams has turned a corner. A lot more needs to be done before Williams can be taken seriously as a realistic challenger for race wins again, but at least a ship that has lurched worryingly in recent years has at last been steadied.



Parr (left) has departed Williams

**WILLIAMS PAIR SHOW THEY ARE UP TO IT**

Since announcing that Bruno Senna would be partnering Pastor Maldonado in 2012, Williams has been under fire for its driver line-up, which some regard as not strong enough to capitalise on the pace of its car.

But the performances of both early in the season suggest that they are capable of defying their pay driver reputations. Maldonado drove superbly in Australia until he crashed out of sixth on the final lap, while Senna was one of the stars of Malaysia with his sixth place.

While neither is of the calibre of a Fernando Alonso, Sebastian Vettel or Jenson Button, and both still have room for improvement, considering Williams finished ninth in the constructors' standings last year, its line-up appears up to the task. According to chief operations engineer Mark Gillan, they are still improving.

"Both of our drivers are still reasonably inexperienced and are both developing," said Gillan. "You can see both progressing strongly."

While neither driver is on the radar of a top team, both have CVs worthy of F1 and have the potential to establish themselves as regulars on the grid regardless of the financial package they bring.



"encouraging in a scenario where we have not typically been that strong".

It's unclear what effect, if any, former chairman Adam Parr's sudden departure at the end of March will have on this revival. He had played a key role in sponsorship deals with the likes of PDVSA. Majority owner Frank Williams admitted his surprise, but does not expect his former right-hand man to crop up at another team.

"It came as a great shock," Williams told AUTOSPORT. "Adam has done a fantastic job for us and he will be missed. I don't know where he is off to but I don't think it's another Formula 1 team."

**PASTOR MALDONADO ON** **PLUS**  
F1's wild man speaks to AUTOSPORT Plus on Friday about life at Williams. Visit [autosport.com](http://autosport.com) to subscribe for exclusive content

**BIG NUMBER**

**24**

Number of races Williams started without a top six finish between Singapore 2010 and Malaysia 2012

# French GP to use long version of Paul Ricard

Should the bid to revive the French Grand Prix succeed, it would use the original track configuration. By GARY WATKINS



The French Grand Prix will take place on the original 3.6-mile Paul Ricard long circuit should it return to the Formula 1 schedule in 2013 or '14.

Circuit bosses and figures involved in the bid to revive the French GP have revealed to AUTOSPORT that it is in the plan for the grand prix to run on the configuration used for the F1 fixture between 1971 and '85, rather than the truncated layout that succeeded it. However, it remains undecided

whether the F1 cars would have to use the chicane in the middle of the Mistral Straight or run its entire 1.1-mile length uninterrupted.

Track director Stephane Clair said: "We would use the long circuit. I don't know exactly what track the promoters would want to use. Maybe they will want to keep the long straight or use the chicane."

Red Bull Racing reserve driver Sebastien Buemi, who was taking part in last weekend's European Le Mans Series race at Paul Ricard,

suggested that it was plausible for F1 cars to use the full Mistral.

"We would see some high speeds, but maybe not so high because of the amount of downforce that F1 cars have," he said. "It would mean lots of overtaking."

Former F1 driver Alex Wurz, who estimates that he has completed "maybe six trillion laps" at the venue agrees.

"The track would be cool if they use the long Mistral straight," he said. "It would create some fancy

**"The track layout would be cool if they used the original long Mistral straight"**

Alex Wurz

aerodynamic solutions and raise the eyebrows of some engineers."

Paul Ricard was shortened to 2.5 miles in the wake of the death of Elio de Angelis in a testing accident in May 1986. The Mistral chicane, which increases the length of the current circuit from just under 3.6 miles to 3.63 miles, was built when Paul Ricard was redeveloped following its sale to the Excelis company owned by Bernie Ecclestone's family.

Hopes that the French GP will return to the calendar were raised last week when French prime minister Francois Fillon hosted a press conference at the track. He claimed that a provisional deal had been agreed but stated that there was a €2 million difference in what F1 was demanding and what the promoters were willing to pay.

The deal hinges on Paul Ricard

## WHY FRANCE LOST ITS GRAND PRIX AFTER 2008

The death knell for the French Grand Prix came after the FFSA decided that it could no longer absorb the costs of an event that was losing upwards of €2 million a year.



Massa won the last French GP in '08

The French federation took over the event in 2003 after the previous promoter dropped it. Although a huge amount of effort was put into finding a new promoter, the FFSA stated after Felipe Massa's victory in the 2008 race that the French Grand Prix would not go ahead in the future without new investment.

Magny-Cours remained an option to host the race and there were numerous other mooted projects at ground-up facilities, including the Disneyland-based Paris Val d'Europe

circuit, Flins, Gonesse, Sarcelles and a Paris Motorspace project. None got off the ground.

In 2008, FFSA president Nicolas Deschaux said that he hoped "this cancellation will act as an earthquake and provoke some reaction from the state and private companies in France." That appears to be the case, given the increasing chance of the French Grand Prix returning, the interest of the country's president and the arrival of three French drivers in F1 in 2012.

## PAUL RICARD'S FORMULA 1 HISTORY



**1971**

Jackie Stewart wins the first grand prix held at the new circuit for Tyrrell, ahead of home hero Francois Cevert.



**1973**

Super Swede Ronnie Peterson claims his maiden F1 victory in Paul Ricard's second grand prix, driving for Lotus.

**1982**

Jochen Mass's March catapults into the crowd and catches fire after colliding with the Arrows of Mauro Baldi at Signes corner.

No-one is hurt other than Mass, who burns his hands and promptly quits F1. Rene Arnoux wins the race controversially after refusing to cede to Renault team-mate Alain Prost.



**1985**

After hosting the race eight times in 14 years, sharing it with Dijon and Clermont-Ferrand, Paul Ricard becomes the French Grand Prix's permanent home. Nelson Piquet takes Brabham's last victory in the race.

**1986**

Following the death of Brabham driver Elio de Angelis in a testing shunt, the French Grand Prix is held over a truncated 2.369-mile version of the track.



**1989**

Mauricio Gugelmin creates one of F1's iconic images by being launched into the air on the first lap of the 1989 French Grand Prix. Jean Alesi takes fourth place on his Formula 1 debut.



**1990**

Ivan Capelli comes close to winning the French GP for Leyton House, only to be passed by Ferrari's Alain Prost with three laps to go.



**1991**

Magny-Cours becomes the new home of the French Grand Prix.

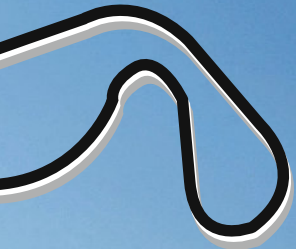
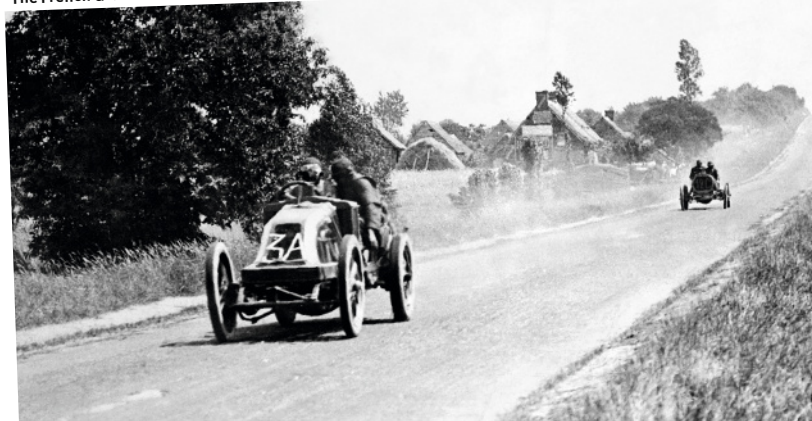
### PAUL RICARD F1 WINNERS

<b>1971</b>	<b>Jackie Stewart</b>	(Tyrrell-Ford)
<b>1973</b>	<b>Ronnie Peterson</b>	(Lotus-Ford)
<b>1975</b>	<b>Niki Lauda</b>	(Ferrari)
<b>1976</b>	<b>James Hunt</b>	(McLaren-Ford)
<b>1978</b>	<b>Mario Andretti</b>	(Lotus-Ford)
<b>1980</b>	<b>Alan Jones</b>	(Williams-Ford)
<b>1982</b>	<b>Rene Arnoux</b>	(Renault)
<b>1983</b>	<b>Alain Prost</b>	(Renault)
<b>1985</b>	<b>Nelson Piquet</b>	(Brabham-BMW)
<b>1986</b>	<b>Nigel Mansell</b>	(Williams-Honda)
<b>1987</b>	<b>Nigel Mansell</b>	(Williams-Honda)
<b>1988</b>	<b>Alain Prost</b>	(McLaren-Honda)
<b>1989</b>	<b>Alain Prost</b>	(McLaren-Honda)
<b>1990</b>	<b>Alain Prost</b>	(Ferrari)



F1 cars were regulars at Ricard last decade

The French Grand Prix was first held in 1906



Ricard became a test venue after sale

sharing its date with another European race, most likely to be the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa.

"The organisers [Formula One Management] have approved F1, but without saying what the other country will be," said Fillon. "The proposals are quite reasonable, but it is not done yet."

The French government, whose president Nicolas Sarkozy is facing re-election later this month, is involved in the negotiations with Ecclestone, but is insistent that it is not bankrolling the deal. The race would be funded by what is known as a Groupement d'Interet Public made up of two of the local authorities around Ricard and the regional chamber of commerce, which has the backing of leading automotive companies in France.

Ricard would need only minimal work to host the grand prix.

"The track is already category 1 homologated [the level required for F1] by the FIA," said Clair, "but for the public, we would have to build some more grandstands, but only temporary ones like Monaco."

Ricard is looking to raise its spectator capacity from approximately 30,000 to 50,000.

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# THIS WEEK IN F1

## VILLENEUVE'S MAIDEN POLE

This Saturday marks the anniversary of Gilles Villeneuve's first F1 pole position, secured at Long Beach in 1979 aboard the iconic Ferrari 312T4



## FORCE INDIA PLAYING CATCH UP

Force India deputy team principal Bob Fernley is confident that the Silverstone-based team can improve its form once a major upgrade package is introduced at the Mugello test on May 1-3. "I am hoping that Mugello puts us where we would have liked to have been for the start of the season," said Fernley, who admitted that the team has suffered from pushing on with development to the end of 2011 while chasing P6 in the constructors' points.



## CUQUERELLA PROMOTED

Toni Cuquerella has been appointed technical director at HRT, where he was previously chief race and test engineer. Cuquerella joined HRT in November 2009 after stints as race engineer for Robert Kubica at BMW Sauber and Anthony Davidson at Super Aguri. Prior to that he worked on the SEAT WTCC effort.



## Alguersuari joins Pirelli

Scuderia Toro Rosso refugee Jaime Alguersuari has joined Pirelli as a test driver. He will participate in the Italian tyre company's development programme for its 2013 rubber, as well as working on its GP2 and simulator projects. Lucas di Grassi will also continue to work with Pirelli and will get mileage in the Renault R30 test hack.



I am amazed by the reaction in the media, but I think everyone has to calm down now.

There are five other world champions on the grid who have been through bad times, but none of them reacted like that



## BAHRAIN DOUBTS

Fresh question marks have been raised over whether the Bahrain Grand Prix will go ahead after the death of a protester last week. Activists have stepped up their campaign to have the race called off.

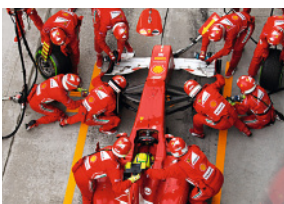
FOR THE LATEST ON BAHRAIN VISIT [AUTOSPORT.COM](http://AUTOSPORT.COM)



Narain Karthikeyan is surprised by the response of the media and Sebastian Vettel to his clash with the Red Bull driver in the Malaysian Grand Prix.

## Massa determined to turn around form

Under-pressure Ferrari driver Felipe Massa is adamant that he can reverse his disastrous start to the campaign amid fears that he will be replaced mid-season. "I feel there is confidence around me, that the team is united in its support for me and that is very important," said Massa via Ferrari's website. "Now I want to transform that into results to pay back all this support."



Number of starts made by Felipe Massa without a podium



## JORDAN GETS OBE

Eddie Jordan has been awarded an honorary OBE for his services to charity and motor racing.



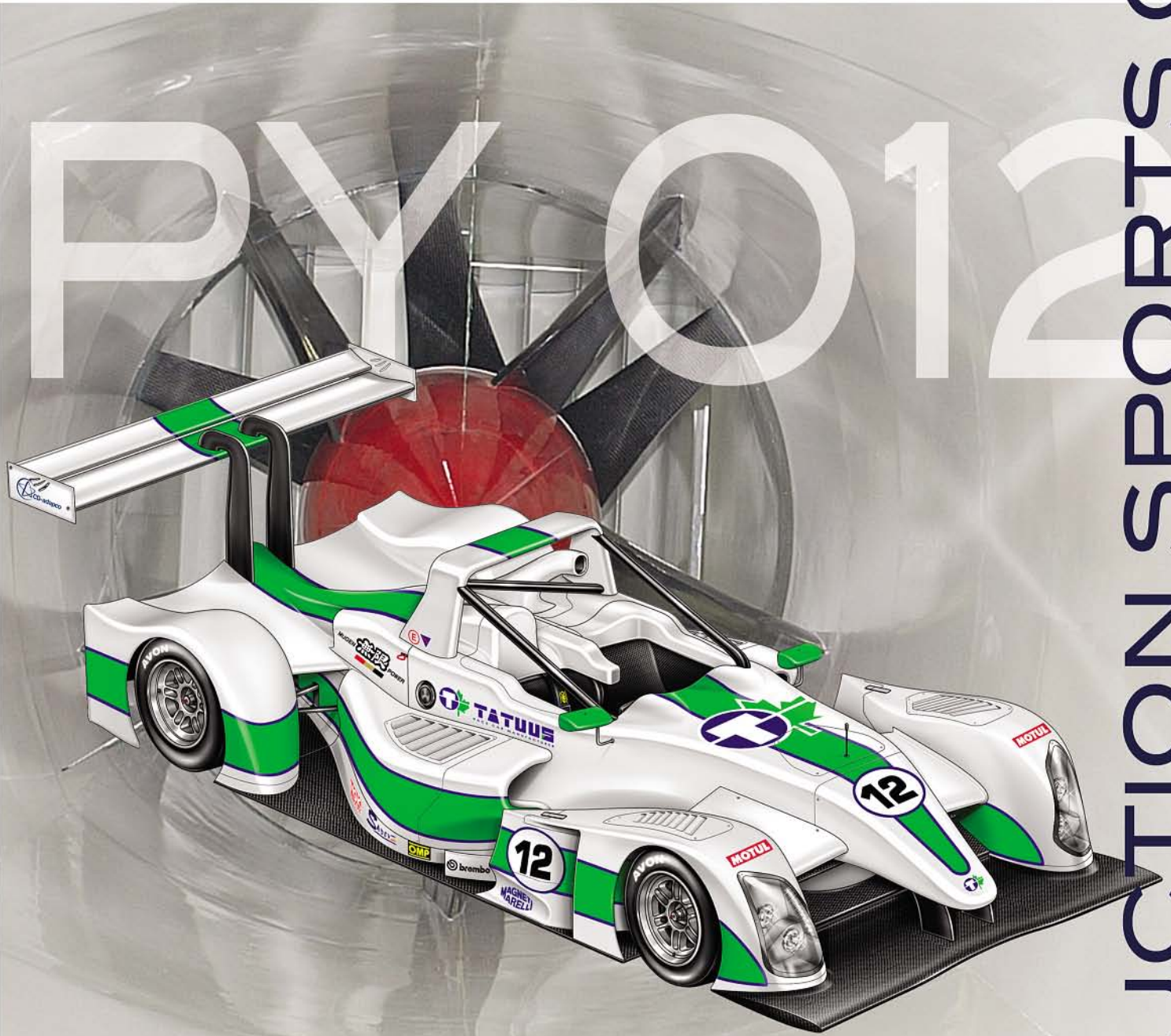
## Lom lands FIA role

Ex-Renault man Fabrice Lom has joined the FIA as head of powertrain. Lom enrolled after the departure of ex-Ferrari engine specialist Gilles Simon, who is now technical director of Craig Pollock's PURE engine company.



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## MARK HUGHES GRAND PRIX EDITOR

Felipe Massa may only still be at Ferrari because Robert Kubica's recovery from injury is taking so long, but time is running out for both of them

It's not pleasant witnessing the humiliation Felipe Massa is suffering at the moment. Having just finished 15th in Malaysia on a day when his team-mate won and the guy speculated to be on the verge of taking over his drive finished a brilliant second, he was then put in front of the media, as per his contract, and forced to endure the pack picking over the bones of his latest disastrous performance. As if he wasn't already hurting enough. There are those who question



Is Massa still suffering ill effects of Hungary 2009?

how he has remained in the seat even this long, such has been his struggle to recapture the form and fizz of his drives before that nasty accident in Hungary 2009. Ironically, it's probably due to the accident of the guy who otherwise would in all likelihood have already taken his place: Robert Kubica. The Pole's rallying accident at the beginning of last year and his long

recovery has probably given Massa a reprieve, in that Ferrari has been waiting in hope for Kubica to get back to fitness, without the awkward timing of a stand-in Massa replacement. Massa has in effect merely been keeping Kubica's seat warm – if it turns out that Robert can and does return.

The hope was that Massa's performances this year would at least be good enough not to make the issue of his replacement a pressing one. But so far that does not look like being the case – and as if pre-destined, young Ferrari Academy driver Sergio Perez has started delivering hugely impressive performances in the Sauber. The mounting pressure to do something about the under-delivery of the second Ferrari – and the very obvious in-house solution – has all come rather too early for the rate of Kubica's recovery. A couple of weeks ago he tried a rally car for the first time since his accident, and he was reportedly just 0.1s slower than when he'd competed over the same stage. But the prospect of him testing an F1 car – an obsolete Ferrari at Fiorano perhaps – is still only a vague one, the physical recovery far from complete, some nerves recovering very slowly, others very quickly, and the strength required is significantly greater than in a rally car.

Recovery from severe injury is a notoriously difficult subject to predict when applied to racing drivers. Some come back as if they'd never been away, others are never quite the same again. Some are physically fine, but can somehow never quite attain the pre-accident level of performances. Peter Arundell, the hugely promising

rookie of 1964, was just a shadow of the driver he'd been when he returned from injury a couple of years later. Stirling Moss, having bounced back from several injuries in the past to be as great as ever, was convinced he could no longer hold the necessary concentration when he first tested a year after his Goodwood '62 crash, in which his brain had suffered severe bruising.

Karl Wendlinger describes much the same when he talks of returning from his heavy impact with the Monaco chicane barrier in '94. He says it took him around three years before he felt the same again – by which time F1 had moved on without him. One immediately thinks of Massa when Wendlinger talks of how he could initially still do a good lap time – Felipe was on the front row in his comeback race of Bahrain 2010 – but that he could not sustain that performance, that his concentration did not allow him that focus.

Then there was the case of Didier Pironi, his legs and right ankle horribly injured at Hockenheim 1982 when apparently headed for the world title. His friend Rene Arnoux was present in 1986 when Pironi tested an F1 Ligier. "I was listening as he drove," he recalls, "and I could hear that he was not able to brake hard. It was over. When he got out of the car we didn't even talk about it." When hearing that, one inevitably fears about whether Kubica's hand movement will allow him the necessary dexterity.

With the injuries suffered between them, Massa and Kubica are making Ferrari's choices very difficult. Sometimes time just dictates its own solution. ❧

**“Massa's and Kubica's injuries make Ferrari's choices hard”**



➔ P52 ELMS PAUL RICARD

Loeb won't risk ELMS hopes of Minassian (r) or Sarrazin

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

# Loeb eyes return to prototypes

Multiple world rally champion could race his own team's ORECA LMP2 later this season. By GARY WATKINS

**E**ight-time World Rally champion Sébastien Loeb has not ruled out racing his new team's LMP2 prototype this season.

The Frenchman was present at the first race for Sébastien Loeb Racing, the European Le Mans Series opener at Paul Ricard last weekend, and said that it was his hope to fit in a race with the team this year around his WRC schedule with Citroën. He said racing the team's ORECA-Nissan 03 prototype, one of its French Porsche Carrera Cup cars or its GT3 Mercedes-Benz AMG SLS were all possibilities.

"Maybe I can do something this year," said Loeb, who attended Ricard after crashing out of Rally Portugal

on the opening day. "That could be in GTs, the Carrera Cup or why not in an endurance race with the prototype? I would like to try this car [the ORECA], but at the moment I don't have any precise plans and my rally schedule is very busy.

"I wouldn't take the place of one of our drivers in this championship, so it would have to be an extra race, perhaps in the FIA World Endurance Championship."

Loeb would also not be drawn on whether he could return to the Le Mans 24 Hours, which he contested with Pescarolo Sport in 2005-06, as a driver next season. He said that it was part of his team's plan to be at Le Mans in 2013.



Loeb raced Pescarolo at Le Mans in 2006

Loeb explained that he had started the outfit together with Dominique Heintz to give him something to do when he ends his rallying career.

"I didn't want to find myself sitting on the sofa not knowing what

I would be doing the next year," said the 38-year-old Frenchman.

Loeb insists he has set no timescale for stopping rallying. His existing contract with Citroën runs out at the end of next season.

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

# Buurman wants dual sportscar and GT campaigns

**SPORTSCAR CONVERT YELMER**

Buurman could undertake a twin assault on the European Le Mans Series and the FIA GT1 World Championship.

The Dutchman, who starred on his prototype debut in the ELMS at Paul Ricard last weekend, is talking to Status GP about continuing in the team's Lola LMP2 for the remainder of the year. At the same time, he is in discussions with the

Vita4One BMW team to race in GT1, starting this weekend at Nogaro.

Buurman said: "I'd say it is 50-50. It's not sorted with Status yet, but it would be nice to do the two programmes."

The plan is for Buurman to partner Vita4One owner/driver Michael Bartels. Mathias Lauda is also set to drive one of the team's Z4 GT3s.

The entry list remained fluid as

AUTOSPORT closed for press.

Ex-Formula 1 driver Antonio Pizzonia appeared to have moved from the Exim Bank Porsche team to the Aston Martin squad fielded under the Valmon banner. His place was expected to go to ex-A1GP driver Matt Halliday. Meanwhile Sergei Afanasiev, third in Auto GP last year, was likely to take the Valmon drive earmarked for Mikhail Aleshin.



Buurman wants racing miles

**EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES**

# Donington ELMS round to go ahead

**THE DONINGTON PARK ROUND OF** the European Le Mans Series will go ahead, as planned, on July 15, according to the bosses of the circuit and the championship.

Donington's managing director Christopher Tate and ELMS organiser Patrick Peter have expressed their confidence in the future of the event, despite the cancellation of round two of the series at Zolder in May due to a lack of entries. They claim they will have a grid of 25 cars for the British round of the series.

Peter said that Zolder had been axed because the series was facing a 19-car grid, two less than the number that started last weekend's opening round at Paul Ricard.

"Christopher at Donington is working on ideas on how to have more cars," Peter explained. "He has promised me a minimum of five new cars just from British teams."

Tate added: "There is no shortage of GT cars in Britain and people who would want to race them in an



Donington says sports cars will return

important endurance race at Donington Park. We have already had some preliminary conversations with some teams and individuals."

Both Tate and Peter refused to say what would happen if 25 entries were not secured for the Donington event.

The ELMS is open to GTE machinery and cars from the Ferrari,

Porsche and Lotus one-make series running in the GTC class.

Six places on the grid for the second round of the new FIA World Endurance Championship at Spa on May 5 will be made available to ELMS LMP2 teams. Priority will be given to those already on the Le Mans 24 Hours entry list.



San Luis is gone from GT1

**FIA GT1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**

## GT1 replaces Argentina with South Korean race

**THE FIA GT1 WORLD** Championship has undergone a major end-of-season reshuffle prompted by the cancellation of the Argentinian round.

The season-ending event, set for San Luis on November 4, has disappeared from the calendar in the wake of a change of provincial governor in the area. It is set to be replaced by a race at Yeongam in South Korea after the Chinese double-header.

That has forced the event at the new Moscow Raceway to be pushed back by two weeks in

September and the cancellation of the Zandvoort race in early October. A replacement European event will take place at the Slovakia Ring in June.

The changes mean GT1 will visit only two continents: Asia and Europe. FIA rules state that world championships must have races on three continents.

Series boss Stephane Ratel said: "The FIA understand that the cancellation of Argentina was force majeure. It is my intention to go back to South America next season."

**AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES**

## BMW could use GTE Z4 in ALMS

**BMW HAS REVEALED THAT IT COULD** run its Z4 model in the American Le Mans Series when it retires its M3s at the end of this season.

The German manufacturer is evaluating what it would take to create a GTE-class version of its V8-powered Z4 GT3 contender. This move would allow the BMW North America-backed Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing team to remain in the ALMS when its E92-shape M3 goes out of service for marketing reasons.

BMW Motorsport director Jens Marquardt said: "We have to consider how much work would have to go into that and whether it would be cost-effective, especially if it is just for two cars in the American Le Mans Series."

Marquardt also called for a reorganisation of GT racing.

"We need two healthy classes rather than four unhealthy classes," he said.



Z4 is a proven GT3 winner

**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**JAMIE O'LEARY**  
REPORTS EDITOR

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**I** am a bit too young to remember Michael Schumacher, Karl Wendlinger and Heinz-Harald Frenzen in the Mercedes Junior Team first time around in 1990, having only just been bitten by the racing bug at the time. But the revival of the brand for the DTM this year is a source of interest, and the selection of Roberto Merhi, Christian Vietoris and Robert Wickens as its members has been as well thought-out as Schumacher's role as mentor.

In Merhi and Wickens, Mercedes has the 2011 champions from two of the world's top junior single-seater categories and has given both an opportunity to emulate the likes of Paul di Resta and Giancarlo Fisichella in using the series as a springboard to F1. While the move for Vietoris into Bruno Spengler's old seat gives the manufacturer the opportunity to create its next Bernd Schneider in time.

For all three of them, I just hope that Schumacher will fulfill his role as expected; attend DTM races and tests and pick up his phone when one of them needs some advice. After all, any information gleaned from the seven-time world champion is going to be worthwhile...

That said, it's a shame to see Maro Engel dropped from the line-up after serving his apprenticeship so well since 2008. Let's hope he can impress Norbert Haug and co enough in his new role as GT driver/AMG brand ambassador to secure a very long-term future with the manufacturer.

Merc junior Merhi's car in testing action



**REMEMBER WHEN...**

FEBRUARY, 1990



...Mercedes first launched its junior team? Mercedes Junior Team mentor Michael Schumacher was part of the original line-up in 1990. Karl Wendlinger and Heinz-Harald Frenzen joined him in Sauber sportscars.



F3 EURO SERIES

# Carlin back to Euro Series

British team to run two cars alongside its British F3 commitments

Carlin's last Euro Series appearance: Dillmann at Hockenheim last year

Carlin is set to return to the F3 Euro Series this year with a two-car line-up that will maintain Volkswagen's involvement in the championship.

Following the temporary withdrawal of the Signature team from the single-seater category, as

revealed by AUTOSPORT (March 29), it looked likely that Volkswagen would not be represented in the Euro Series this year and that the grid would be limited to 11 Mercedes-engined Dallara F312s.

However, outgoing Volkswagen motorsport director Kris Nissen

said that this was not the case and that both Carlin and German squad Ma-con Motorsport would each field two cars.

Nissen told AUTOSPORT: "I am very pleased we've managed a good package with Carlin, and Carlin will enter two cars in the Euro Series. We're also working strongly with a German team, Ma-con [Motorsport], so I believe there will be two cars there. So four cars in total with two from Carlin and two from Ma-con."

Carlin team boss Trevor Carlin would not confirm the move.

AUTOSPORT understands that Red Bull junior driver Carlos Sainz Jr, who is racing in British F3 for Carlin this year, will drive, although his British programme takes priority and the Norisring

and Valencia events clash with the British rounds at Paul Ricard and Donington Park.

Will Buller, who was the top-placed non-Carlin driver in British F3 last year, is understood to be the other driver. It is likely that he would also take in British rounds at Pau and Spa that count for FIA European Championship points and a full GP3 campaign with the team.

Carlin competed full-time in the Euro Series from 2008-09 and took its sole win through Brendon Hartley at Brands Hatch in '09.

More recently, it made a one-off appearance at the Hockenheim event last year – which was also the inaugural FIA International F3 Trophy round – with Jazeman Jaafar, Carlos Huertas and Tom Dillmann driving.



Hartley won in Euro Series for Carlin at Brands in '09

INDYCAR

## IndyCar to reintroduce push-to-pass

**PUSH-TO-PASS IS EXPECTED TO RETURN** to IndyCar racing later this season.

The system was initially left out of the new generation of cars and turbo engines to avoid problems that could arise from introducing too many variables too soon. But Will Phillips, IndyCar's vice-president of technology, said it will be brought back once the engine manufacturers are ready.

"It's not in the [engine] software right now, but the capability to pop it in is there," Phillips told AUTOSPORT. "The engine regulations require the manufacturers to have a push-to-pass capability. Could we have it on the car tomorrow? Yes, because the button is on the steering wheel and the software is programmable to do it. But are the engines ready to do it yet? That's the

concern. The engines are in their first lifecycle of mileage. From a technical point of view it is early to look at changing it, but ultimately that's what we need to look at doing for the show's perspective."

IndyCar first experimented with push-to-pass systems in 2010, although it had been widely used in series such as Champ Car and A1GP in the past.



Phillips: system will return

DTH

# Schumacher to mentor DTM juniors

## MICHAEL SCHUMACHER PLANS TO

closely monitor the progress made by Mercedes-Benz's new DTM junior drivers after being named mentor of the revived programme this week.

Mercedes confirmed on Monday that reigning Formula Renault 3.5 champion Robert Wickens and 2011 F3 Euro Series title winner Roberto Merhi have both joined the manufacturer and will form two thirds of the junior team along with second-year DTM driver Christian Vietoris.

Schumacher was part of the original junior team in 1990, which also featured Karl Wendlinger and Heinz-Harald Frentzen (plus Fritz Kretzpointner, who joined later) and was based around the manufacturer's Sauber-run Group C sportscar programme.

He believes the experience he gained at the time was crucial in his professional development and aims to help the new trio in a similar manner.



Schumacher will mentor Mercedes junior drivers

"I remember clearly the early stages of my career, and what I gained from my time in the junior team – both on and off the track," said Schumacher. "It taught me the best way of working with the engineers and helped me build a professional relationship with the media. I'm excited to see how Christian, Roberto and Robert develop

and will be following the performances of all three closely."

Vietoris, who raced for Persson Motorsport in 2011, has been promoted to the crack HWA squad for the coming season. Merhi replaces him, while Wickens will be David Coulthard's team-mate at Mücke Motorsport, replacing Maro Engel.

## IN BRIEF



Tagliani won't be at Indy

### POMMER TOPS F2 TEST

Markus Pommer topped last week's Formula 2 test at Silverstone by 0.4s from Mihai Marinescu. Christopher Zanella was fourth fastest a day after confirming his series return.

### KUROSAWA JOINS JOTA

Haruki Kurosawa will return to Jota for the first time since 2005 at the Le Mans 24 Hours. He will share its LMP2 Zytek-Nissan Z11SN with Sam Hancock and Simon Dolan.

### TOP LINE-UP AT PHOENIX

Phoenix Racing will run two works-backed Audis in the Nurburgring 24 Hours. The roster of drivers includes Le Mans winner Marcel Fassler, Markus Winkelhock, Marc Basseng and Frank Stippler.

### JARVIS FOR 'RING 24

Audi factory driver Oliver Jarvis will race at the Nurburgring 24 Hours in a WRT-entered R8 LMS ultra with Edward Sandstrom, Andrea Piccini and Allan Simonsen.



Jarvis will drive at the 'Ring



Engel will race GT3-spec Merc SLS

GT

## Engel makes switch to GTs

**MARO ENGEL WILL SWITCH TO A GT-based programme with Mercedes this year after losing his Mücke Motorsport DTM drive to Robert Wickens.**

Engel, 26, has been named as an ambassador for the manufacturer's sporting arm, AMG, joining the likes of Bernd Schneider, Karl Wendlinger and Thomas Jager on the roster.

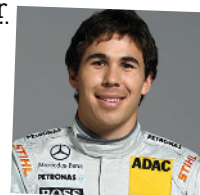
Engel will race the SLS AMG GT3 car in selected events this year; most likely to be based around the Blancpain Endurance Series. AUTOSPORT understands that he could also take in some FIA GT1 World Championship races with Munnich Motorsport, which is running a pair of SLS models this year.

"Any driver would love to do a world championship and the 24 hour races at Spa and the Nurburgring, but my programme's not been finalised yet," he said. "We'll wait and see."

## 60 SECONDS WITH

### ROBERT WICKENS

Mercedes DTM driver



**Why move to the DTM when you're on the crest of a wave in single-seaters?**

There was a chance I could have raced in Formula 1 this year and that didn't happen. Then I got to the point where I thought that if I didn't follow up my World Series title with at least a top year in GP2, then my title would be forgotten. Then the Mercedes opportunity came up. I just made an impulse decision and went for it.

**Did you have other serious options? You were an official Marussia F1 junior driver last year and tested the Virgin in Abu Dhabi.**

It was one of the most promising off-seasons I've ever had. There was a GP2 drive ready to go, but I think that if I want to keep going after F1, which is a real money market now, then perhaps this is a better way. It worked for [Paul] di Resta.

**Are you jealous that Jean-Eric Vergne, the team-mate you beat in Formula Renault 3.5, has made it to F1 and you haven't?**

No, he deserves it. He's a terrifically fast driver and definitely one of the quicker team-mates I've had. I wish him all the best of luck.

**Are you excited about having Michael Schumacher a mentor for the junior drivers?**

Yes. I can't believe you'd have a conversation with a seven-time world champion without being able to learn something. Someone who has achieved so much has got to be worth a call when you need help with something.

**Have you set yourself targets for 2012?**

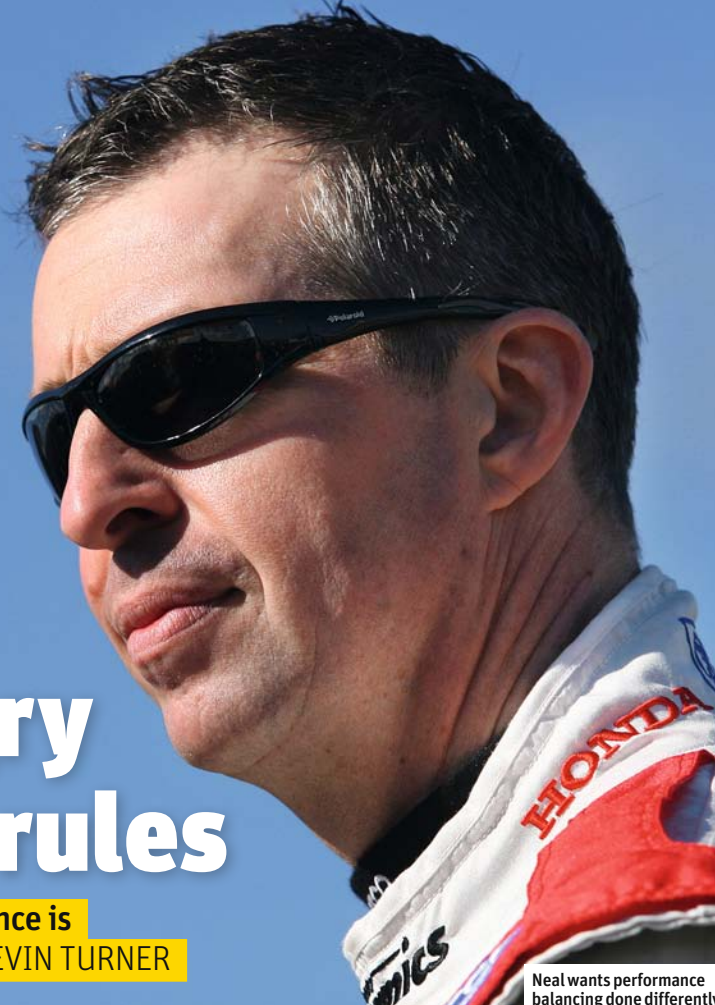
I want to win a race, which will be very tough, but it's something I've managed in every category I've ever raced in. It's a stat that goes unnoticed, but it would mean a hell of a lot. Realistically, if I can score points every race, I'll be pretty happy.



Robert Wickens was talking to AUTOSPORT's reports editor Jamie O'Leary

Wickens hopes DTM will propel him towards F1





**BTCC**  
**Neal angry at boost rules**

**Champion says his title defence is already being affected. By KEVIN TURNER**

**R**eigning British Touring Car champion Matt Neal believes the new engine turbo-boost rules in the series are already hampering his title defence.

Over the winter, Lotus conducted an engine-flow test programme to determine the relative strengths of the series' base units. BTCC organiser TOCA has now used the information to set different boost levels for the various cars, but Neal feels the new NGTC Honda Civic has been overly-restricted.

In qualifying at Brands Hatch last weekend, the top NGTC Honda through the startline speed trap – Jeff Smith's Eurotech car – was only 16th fastest, 4.3mph down on Aron Smith's Motorbase Ford.

"We haven't got any straightline speed," said Neal, who was 6mph slower than his turbocharged S2000 Civic of 2011. "They say we have to run less boost because we have the best engine, but it shouldn't put the five Hondas in the bottom seven.

"We have no chance of passing



Neal's Civic has less boost than the MG

as we have no straightline speed."

Neal also criticised the new ongoing performance-balancing system, which will use the quickest race-lap times of each model to calculate a boost change – limited to between plus or minus 0.1 bar – every two rounds.

"They're doing it on lap times so if we keep it at the front we'll have it reduced more," added Neal. "They should do one handicap – weight or boost. It still hurts me if I have ballast and am slow and another Civic is fast."

But series boss Alan Gow said all engine tuners had agreed with the flow-test results and believes the

new balancing system is fair.

"It closes everyone up," he said. "It doesn't make a bad car better – it's exactly the same as WTCC, but with boost instead of weight.

"They used to have big arguments and then they brought this in and everyone agrees with it. It's numbers-driven. All the engine builders agreed with our numbers.

"There's an enormous difference between the top engine and the worst engine and the aim is to reduce any major disparities."

Other teams felt the new levels had improved the situation. AmD boss Shaun Hollamby said: "I think TOCA has done a great job because if you look at the speed traps, it's closer than it has been. The whole field will concertina and it'll keep people competitive, which is what it's about. It's X-Factor motor racing so it needs to be entertaining. If it isn't, fans and sponsors are lost."

**P34 BTCC BRANDS HATCH**

**IN BRIEF**

**Bruni drove Pecom car**



**BRUNI BACK IN A PROTOTYPE**

Ferrari factory GT driver Gianmaria Bruni returned to LMP machinery after a 10-year absence at the Paul Ricard European Le Mans Series opener last weekend. Bruni, who raced a Durango LMP1 in 2002, drove the Pecom ORECA-Nissan in place of the injured Soheil Ayari.

**VILANDER STAYS AT AF CORSE**

Toni Vilander has completed AF Corse's GT1 World Championship line-up and will share the team's second Ferrari 458 Italia with Filip Salaquarda. Meanwhile, Milos Pavlovic will share a SUNRED Ford GT with ex-F2 champion Andy Soucek.

**ENGINE CHANGES IN WTCC**

Tiago Monteiro and his WTCC team-mate Andrea Barlesi switched from turbodiesel to SUNRED-homologated 1600cc petrol engines at Valencia, and carried 20kg of penalty weight as a result. Both plan to switch to SEAT Sport units soon.

**HAZELL MISSES BTCC DEBUT**

Mark Hazell failed to make his British Touring Car debut for Rob Austin Racing at Brands Hatch due to issues with his revised Audi A4. He plans to race at Donington Park next weekend.

**PAFFETT FASTEST IN TESTING**

Gary Paffett topped DTM testing at Hockenheim as the 2012 series was officially launched on Monday. The HWA Mercedes driver was less than 0.2s quicker than Audi's Mike Rockenfeller. Dirk Werner was the best BMW man in eighth.



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WRC

# Citroen facing further wrath over car legality

## THE CITROEN TOTAL WORLD RALLY

Team could face further penalties following the exclusion of Mikko Hirvonen's DS3 WRC on last week's Rally of Portugal.

The Finn won the event, but was later stripped of victory after his car was found to contravene technical regulations on two counts. The DS3 was excluded for running

the wrong clutch, but the FIA is looking at a secondary contravention regarding the diameter of the turbinewheel in the turbo.

Sources in rival teams have admitted the turbo issue had concerned them prior to the event. "This is something the teams have been discussing," said one source. "We are working with a universal supplier

[Garrett], but have asked for clarity."

The Citroen's turbinewheel has been removed for lab examination.

The source added: "We're told there could be ramifications and further penalty."

Citroen has announced it will appeal the exclusion that meant Adapta Ford driver Mads Ostberg was the winner of the event.

Stewards examine the #2 Citroen



WRC

# Latvala linked to 2013 VW move

Ford star rumoured to have signed long-term deal with German squad for next year. By DAVID EVANS



This could be J-M's final season in a Ford Fiesta

Jari-Matti Latvala is believed to have signed a long-term deal to drive for Volkswagen in the WRC from 2013.

The Finn's deal with Ford expires at the end of this season and sources in Finland have confirmed agreement with Volkswagen has been secured from the start of 2013. Latvala will join Sebastien Ogier as a frontline driver in a Polo R WRC, with Andreas Mikkelsen, Kevin Abbring or Sepp Wiegand taking the third car.

VW's motorsport director Kris Nissen denied the deal was done.

"We still need to fill the seat for the second senior driver," said Nissen, "but I am very happy to hear if he [Latvala] is interested in driving for us. I am quite sure he is good and I think he has another

**"It's too early to talk about this kind of thing.**

**My focus is on Ford now"**

Jari-Matti Latvala

couple of races to show that he can stay on the road."

Ogier added: "He is one of the fastest drivers in the world and he is a nice guy, I'm sure I could have a good relationship with him. But this is not my decision."

AUTOSPORT's source said: "We understand the agreement has been made early and for some time — maybe even last year when Ford's future in the championship wasn't so sure. It was clear that either Petter [Solberg] or him [Latvala] would be going to drive the Polo."

Ford team director Malcolm Wilson was quick to pour cold water on speculation, saying: "Yes, his contract is up at the end of the year, but our intention is to keep Jari."

Asked about the situation, Latvala replied: "It is too early to talk about this kind of thing, my focus is only on driving with Ford this year now."

Latvala's manager Timo Jouhki said he'd had lengthy discussions with VW and that a move to the German firm would make sense, given its long commitment to the WRC, but he denied the deal had been done yet.

"I hope to have this done before Rally Finland [in August]," he said. "We have talked to VW and we have talked to Ford. The main

reason for not staying at Ford will be if there is no long-term agreement for them to stay in the championship. This is obvious. From the discussions I have had with Kris Nissen and Carlos Sainz, they seem to have a good package with the right people and technical details with the car."

Jouhki admitted that his driver had made mistakes this year, but he added that Ford should also shoulder some of the blame for his tough start to 2012.

"Look at this rally in Portugal," he said. "Without this mechanical problem on Saturday, Jari-Matti could have been fifth."

Latvala's hopes of a rally win went out of the window on day one, when he made a mistake for the third time in four rallies.



IRC

# Local stars ready for big Irish scrap

**THIS WEEK'S CIRCUIT OF IRELAND** is building into a clash of local heroes Alastair Fisher and Craig Breen, with both drivers talking up their chances of success on Britain's first asphalt round of the IRC.

Ford Fiesta S2000 driver Fisher arrives in Belfast for tomorrow's (Friday) start on the back of a dominant WRC Academy win on the Rally of Portugal, while Breen will make his debut in a Peugeot 207 S2000 – a car he described as “exceptional” after his first test in the machine.

Fisher admitted this week's third round of the IRC will be an emotional event for him; he will be co-driven by Rory Kennedy, the man who co-drove Bertie Fisher, Alastair's uncle and a legend of the sport.

“This was an event Rory won three times with my Uncle Bertie,” said Fisher, “so to win would be very special for me.”

Fisher admitted Breen and the Peugeot posed the biggest threat, adding: “You would have to say Craig's the main threat, followed by Robert Barrable and Andreas [Mikkelsen]. It's going to be incredible – we'll all be going for it.”

Breen said: “I want to showcase what I can do in my own country. I want to find a good pace on Friday evening and then



push like hell on Saturday and try to get a win.

“The car felt exceptionally good, it's very much a Tarmac

racer. Straight out of the box it was very, very stable and powerful. I'm sure Peugeot can give me a car capable of winning.”

## Circuit offers a Titanic route

**This week's Circuit of Ireland starts from Belfast at 1600 tomorrow (Friday). The crews will then tackle a specially constructed stage in the city's Titanic Quarter, with the cars running around the Harland and Wolff cranes, used to build the Titanic 100 years ago.**

**The crews then contest two daylight and two dark stages, with the first cars arriving in Armagh at 2245. The bulk of the action runs on Saturday, with three loops of stages – the last of which includes two goes at a street stage through Lisburn. The finish is in Armagh at 1900.**

### TOP 10 ENTRIES

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Floene	Skoda Fabia S2000
2	Jan Kopecky/Pavel Dresler	Skoda Fabia S2000
3	Juho Hanninen/Mikko Markkula	Skoda Fabia S2000
4	Craig Breen/Gareth Roberts	Peugeot 207 S2000
5	Alastair Fisher/Rory Kennedy	Ford Fiesta S2000
6	Sepp Wiegand/Timo Gottschalk	Skoda Fabia S2000
7	Robert Barrable/Dermot O'Gorman	Skoda Fabia S2000
8	Garry Jennings/Barry McNulty	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX
9	Mathieu Arzeno/Renouil Jamoul	Peugeot 207 S2000
10	Donagh Kelly/Kevin Flanagan	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX

## IN BRIEF

### PRODRIVE FOR NZ OUTING

The Prodrive WRC Team has been linked to a possible Rally New Zealand entry for Dani Sordo. The Spaniard will contest four more rallies this season, with the Auckland event increasingly likely. The latest homologation of the Mini John Cooper Works worked exceptionally well on last week's Rally of Portugal. The Spaniard won six stages, after being ruled out of overall contention with an electrical problem on day one.

### CAPITO LANDS TOP VW GIG

Former Ford motorsport chief Jost Capito will replace Kris Nissen as VW's motorsport director from the end of July, although he will start working alongside Nissen from the start of May. Nissen will continue in motorsport, but in another area of the VW Group.

### KETOMAA DITCHES DMACK

DMACK-backed driver Jari Ketomaa ran with Michelin tyres fitted to his Ford in Portugal and, due to contractual reasons, the Finn will not use the Chinese covers again this

year. Fellow Fiesta RS WRC driver Martin Prokocik will contest Rally Argentina with DMACKs to continue the development process for the firm.

### CHELSEA BOSS VISITS WRC

While being sacked from Chelsea was an undoubted disappointment for Andre Villas-Boas, it did at least afford him the opportunity to visit the Rally of Portugal on Saturday – at the same time that his former employer was busy beating Aston Villa 4-2. Portugal's deputy PM Miguel Relvas, the tourism minister, and 1982 German GP fighter Eliseo Salazar were also in Faro.

### ATKO WINS ON SKODA DEBUT

Chris Atkinson took a debut win for the MRF Team on last weekend's International Rally of Whangarei, the

opening round of the APRC. The Australian was immediately at home in the ex-Freddy Loix Skoda Fabia S2000 he will drive all year and beat Proton's P-G Andersson by 28.1 seconds on the New Zealand event. Andersson led before a puncture cost him 1m20s.

### GIRAUDET'S PODIUM RECORD

Evgeny Novikov's co-driver Denis Giraudet became the oldest co-driver to stand on the WRC podium on last week's Rally of Portugal. The 56-year-old Frenchman last celebrated a podium finish 10 years ago, when he and Thomas Radstrom finished third in the 2002 Safari Rally in a Citroen Xsara WRC. Giraudet last won a WRC event alongside Didier Auriol in Catalunya in 2001.

### REIGNING ITALIAN RALLY

Champion Paolo Andreucci recently took on his co-driver Anna Andreussi in a downhill ski race – except that Andreucci was in his regular Peugeot 207 S2000. The challenge took place in the Italian ski resort of Zoncolan, close to the Austrian border, and resulted in yet another win for Andreucci.



## AUTOSPORT SAYS...

**DAVID EVANS**  
RALLIES EDITOR

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**T**ell me, who won the 2002 Rally Argentina? Precisely, Carlos Sainz. The history books tell the tale of the Spaniard's second of three successes on the South American adventure.

But was that the whole story? No. I'll jog your memory: Marcus Gronholm won the event first before he was excluded. Richard Burns then, momentarily, scored his first and only win for Peugeot before the stewards binned that one too. Leaving Sainz the victor.

Point is, the circumstances fade with time, but the result stands firm. In 10 years, Mads Ostberg's maiden world rally win will still be there, cast in stone. Nobody can take it away from him now. And he's earned it.

Ostberg's one of the good guys.

It's a real shame that he didn't get the chance to hear the Norwegian national anthem (been a while since we heard that on a WRC round) or sit in the middle at the press conference, but those are the peripherals. Look at the results in the report on page 45, the name Ostberg sits beside the number one.

I do feel a great degree of sympathy for Mikko Hirvonen, the man who thought he'd scored his first win for Citroen, only to be told the wrong clutch and a minutely-oversized turbiniwheel in the turbo had done him up like a kipper. His win, born out of patience and tremendous foresight and ability, had been stripped.

But the most amazing thing? Sebastien Loeb crashed out, but he still leads the championship.

That title just doesn't want to go anywhere else, does it?

Good guy Ostberg: now a WRC winner



## IRC PREVIEW

Event:	Circuit of Ireland
Round:	3/13
Based:	Armagh
Date:	April 6-7
Mileage:	136.89
Stages:	15
Surface:	Asphalt
Last year's winner:	Derek McGarrity (no IRC)
Championship leader:	Andreas Mikkelsen



# RED BULL'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE

Two races have produced no wins, no poles and no fastest laps for the back-to-back champions. *MARK HUGHES* reveals why



“We don’t make the mistake of thinking this level of success is normal,” said Red Bull’s Christian Horner in the midst of the team’s record-busting season last year. “It’s not, it’s extraordinary and we realise it won’t always be like this.” Welcome to 2012, and a season that’s kicked off with the team qualifying no better than fourth and returning from the opening races only second in the constructors’ and with its best-placed man fourth in the drivers’ championship.

It seems clear that, as design chief Adrian Newey feared, the 2012 regulation restrictions have eaten into the aerodynamic advantage the team has enjoyed for the previous two-three seasons. This year’s car is just a further iteration of the design initiated with 2009’s RB5. That car and all its descendants have led the way on aerodynamic efficiency, with a

philosophy focused on getting as much through-flow to and around the diffuser as possible. This aim was boosted hugely by the adaptation of exhaust-blown diffusers for the 2010 season, an innovation that pretty much everyone followed, but applied to cars that could not take quite as much advantage of it. The technology enabled the airflow leakage from beneath the diffuser to be sealed – and this in turn allowed the car to be run with much more rake, which brought big aero advantages.

From mid-season 2010 Red Bull’s cutting-edge software in combining structural analysis with CFD then found it a way of taking fuller advantage of this, by allowing the nose of the car to be almost touching the ground under load while still passing all the static height and flexibility regulations. This enabled yet-more rake. There were huge gains to be found

from this. The negative pressure at the diffuser’s kick-up point increased dramatically, speeding up the airflow and its power accordingly for almost no penalty in drag. Furthermore, getting the outer ends of the front wing so close to the ground allowed them to operate in ground effect, giving a massively more efficient lift:drag ratio.

It also unloaded the central part of the wing, allowing greater, cleaner flow through there and to the underfloor and bargeboards – thus feeding that hungry diffuser yet more. It was a beautiful spiral of virtue, and it withstood the repeated attempts by the FIA in both 2010 and ’11 to rein it in with ever-tighter wing flexibility tests.

But drastic limitations put upon both the exhaust placement and the engine software for 2012 seems to have clipped Red Bull’s wings – at least for the time being. It was something that Newey feared even before the season



began. “We have lost a lot of downforce from the banning of the exhaust effect,” he confirmed during Jerez testing, “and we have also lost from having the front wing flexibility tightened up. In some ways, the loss of the exhaust effect, because we in reality pioneered it, means we have got more to re-learn having lost it.

“It reminds me a little bit of when I was at Williams. Having had active suspension for two years, when we then lost it for ’94 we had more trouble re-adapting to passive suspension than other people who hadn’t been on active for very long. The 1994 car was not a good car at all at the start of the year. It was very difficult to drive. Its design relied too much on the active suspension and we developed the aerodynamics using the active suspension in a very small window.

“It wasn’t until we got to Magny-Cours with the short sidepod that the

car was right. This feels a little bit like that. We have got a lot of learning to do again. That’s all gone, it’s history now, so I think we’ve got a little bit more to re-learn than the others because we’ve been away from it for longer.”

Initially, Newey seemed fairly confident that there was no longer any advantage to be found from the exhaust layout with these regulations and in its initial form – as launched and run until the last two days of winter testing – the RB8’s exhaust layout was quite conservative compared with that on the McLaren, Ferrari and Sauber. Sited as far back as permitted and pointing inboard, the Red Bull exhaust simply blew upon the lower beam wing and brake ducts. By contrast, McLaren had sited its exhaust as far forwards as allowed and used the airflow from the downward slope of the sidepods to pull the exhaust flow down with it, routing it between the wheels and around the

back of the diffuser, to give a sort of lower-powered version of the blown diffuser. The MP4-27 was conceived this way from the start, just as the 2010 RB6 had been conceived around blown exhausts, and the analysis of both teams from winter testing suggested the McLaren had an advantage in high speed corners.

Then right at the end of testing Red Bull showed up with its own version of the McLaren system, with the exhausts outlets well forward and pointing outboard. But the RB8 had not been configured around the system – and maybe this is where the difference between the early-season form of McLaren and Red Bull lies.

Gary Anderson watched much of Barcelona testing and from observation reckons the Red Bull’s balance changed for the worse as soon as that new exhaust system went onto it. “Before then it looked much like last year’s ▶

# 1

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◀ car,” he says, “nicely balanced and very consistent. After that the drivers were suddenly busier at the wheel.”

Put that to Mark Webber and he dismisses it. “No, that step was actually quite a good, positive improvement,” he says. The car did pick up more aerodynamic grip from the upgrade and it did find lap time, the team insists. But it perhaps became less balanced in the process.

“Yeah, there’s been a bit of a disconnect between the low speed and the high speed balance over one lap,” confirms Webber. “That was particularly the case in Melbourne but in Malaysia we’d made a lot of progress on that.”

QUALIFYING TIMES		2011	2012	DIFFERENCE	% DIFFERENCE
AUSTRALIA	RED BULL	1m23.529s	1m25.3*	+1.771s	2.12%
	McLAREN	1m24.307s	1m24.922s	+0.615s	0.73%
MALAYSIA	RED BULL	1m34.870s	1m36.461s	+1.591s	1.68%
	McLAREN	1m34.974s	1m36.219s	+1.245s	1.31%

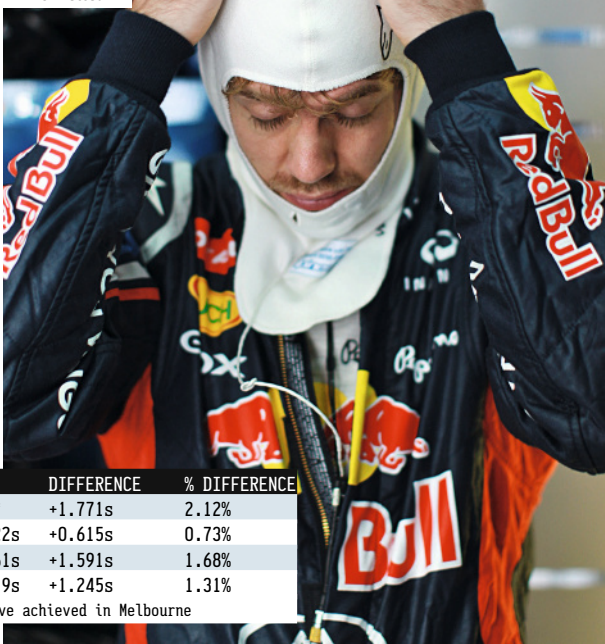
\*1m25.3s is the calculated lap time the RB8 would have achieved in Melbourne had Webber’s KERS been working.

With this exhaust layout the car seems to have been lacking low-speed rear grip. But making set-up changes to cure that would have led to greater understeer in the high-speed bends. The set-up window hasn’t been wide enough to encompass good balance in both low- and high-speed corners. It all goes back to that regulated reduction in exhaust-derived downforce, as Newey explains: “We were able to generate a lot of rear downforce which meant that we had to work the front wing quite hard. [Now] the front wing is perhaps easier because we’re running [previous] Spa levels of front wing at high downforce circuits. That’s no particular problem; the problem is that we have to run the car at a reduced rake because of the loss of exhaust-blown technology.”

That the team was still in the early stages of fully understanding its revised car in the opening races was suggested by the tweaks that were being made to the rear lower bodywork area, around where they were trying to get that airflow to reach the diffuser. For Australia the hole in the floor was replaced by lateral fences, trying to induce vortexes there that would re-energise that flow and get it to the intended destination. There was also a revision to the exhaust itself, which was changed back again for Malaysia. Heat sensors around the bodywork confirmed the team was still grappling with a fine-tuned understanding of the McLaren-type exhaust, whereas it’s been on the McLaren from conception and throughout testing – and evidently works very well.

It all tends to suggest the team is still feeling its way with understanding the car, in contrast to McLaren. The numbers (above panel) back this up.

Tough start to '12 for Vettel



RB8 caught Vettel out in Oz



Newey: must adapt to '12 regels

“When you don’t have that balance it makes it difficult to find that last bit of time from yourself”

### Sebastian Vettel

It can be seen that the exhaust restrictions have slowed both cars significantly, but the Red Bull much more heavily than the McLaren. Comparing the two years, there was a net swing in McLaren’s favour of 1.39 per cent in Melbourne and 0.37 per cent in Sepang. The big reduction in that loss from Australia to Malaysia ostensibly backs up Webber’s claim that they did improve the car significantly between the two races. However, that Malaysia number perhaps flatters the 2012 Red Bull in that in 2011 the RB7 had to be set up with a lot of understeer in order to protect its rear tyres during the race (which was why Vettel was pushed untypically hard for pole by McLaren).

The rate of improvement between Australia-Malaysia this year may not therefore actually be as big as the numbers make it look, but it is definitely there. At Melbourne, neither driver delivered the car’s ultimate lap: Webber because of non-operative KERS, Sebastian Vettel through errors on the crucial lap.

Allowing for that, the car could potentially have set a time good for third on the grid (rather than fifth and sixth), around 0.3s off pole. By Sepang the gap was down to 0.2s on a longer track, confirming that the car had improved regardless of how the 2011 figures skew the comparison.

In Melbourne all the evidence suggests the RB8 was a couple of tenths adrift of McLaren’s ultimate pace on race day, whereas that couldn’t really be assessed in the mixed conditions of Sunday in Malaysia. Based on the evidence of the first two races, the car is vying with Lotus as the second fastest in the race and third fastest in qualifying (given the Mercedes’ extra turn of Saturday speed, courtesy of its double DRS). There’s plenty of scope, therefore, for a slight improvement to bring the team back to race-winning form sooner rather than later – but in championship terms it’s already playing catch-up.

Understanding the detail of exhaust-enhanced aero is not the work of a moment, despite the sophistication of the simulation tools. As Gary Anderson pointed out in last week’s issue, there’s the complication from the exhaust pulsing to be considered – and that’s not something that can be easily modelled. This is one area of F1 where a suck-it-and-see approach still seems to be necessary, and it would be surprising indeed if Red Bull didn’t have a much fuller understanding of its problem by the next couple of races.

Furthermore, the team’s turnaround on new components seems faster than anyone else’s, even McLaren’s, so it then becomes a question of how much lap time the other frontrunners find in development while Red Bull sorts out its problem. It should not be insurmountable and is certainly nowhere near the chasm that Ferrari needs to bridge – amazing Malaysia result notwithstanding!

There may be more than just exhaust-derived aerodynamics to it, though. The way cars, including the ▶

◀ Red Bull, seemed to be coming into and then dropping out of the window of tyre performance has been very puzzling and was especially marked around Sepang. “We will be spending the additional week before China focused on getting consistency from the car and understanding the tyres,” says Horner. “They seem to be the biggest variant and seem to have changed the most from last year. Different cars at different points are quick. Suddenly Kimi [Raikkonen] came alive at the end of the [Malaysia] race and started setting purple sectors.”

Even the McLaren suffered from this in Malaysia and it seems there is a lot to be found from understanding it. Having a consistent car balance – the very area where the Red Bull has struggled – may actually be more valuable this year than ever, because of the tyres’ propensity to switch on and off. “Yes,” confirms Vettel. “I think there’s a lot of performance to be found from the car as it is, just by understanding it better and getting the front and rear working together rather than against each other. I don’t think there’s a global problem with it. When

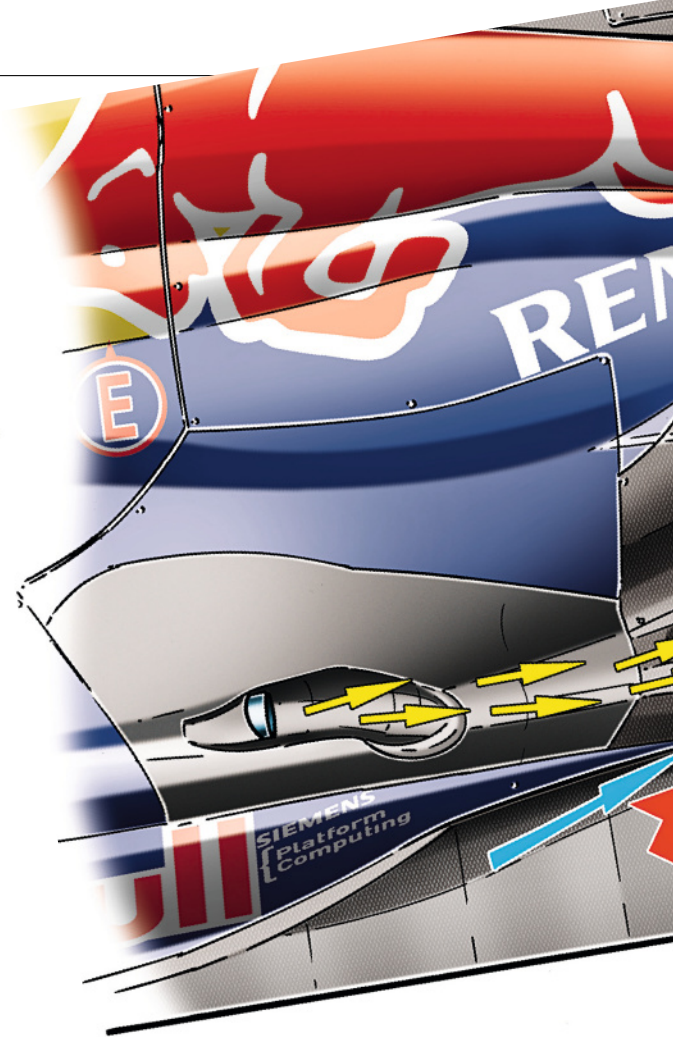
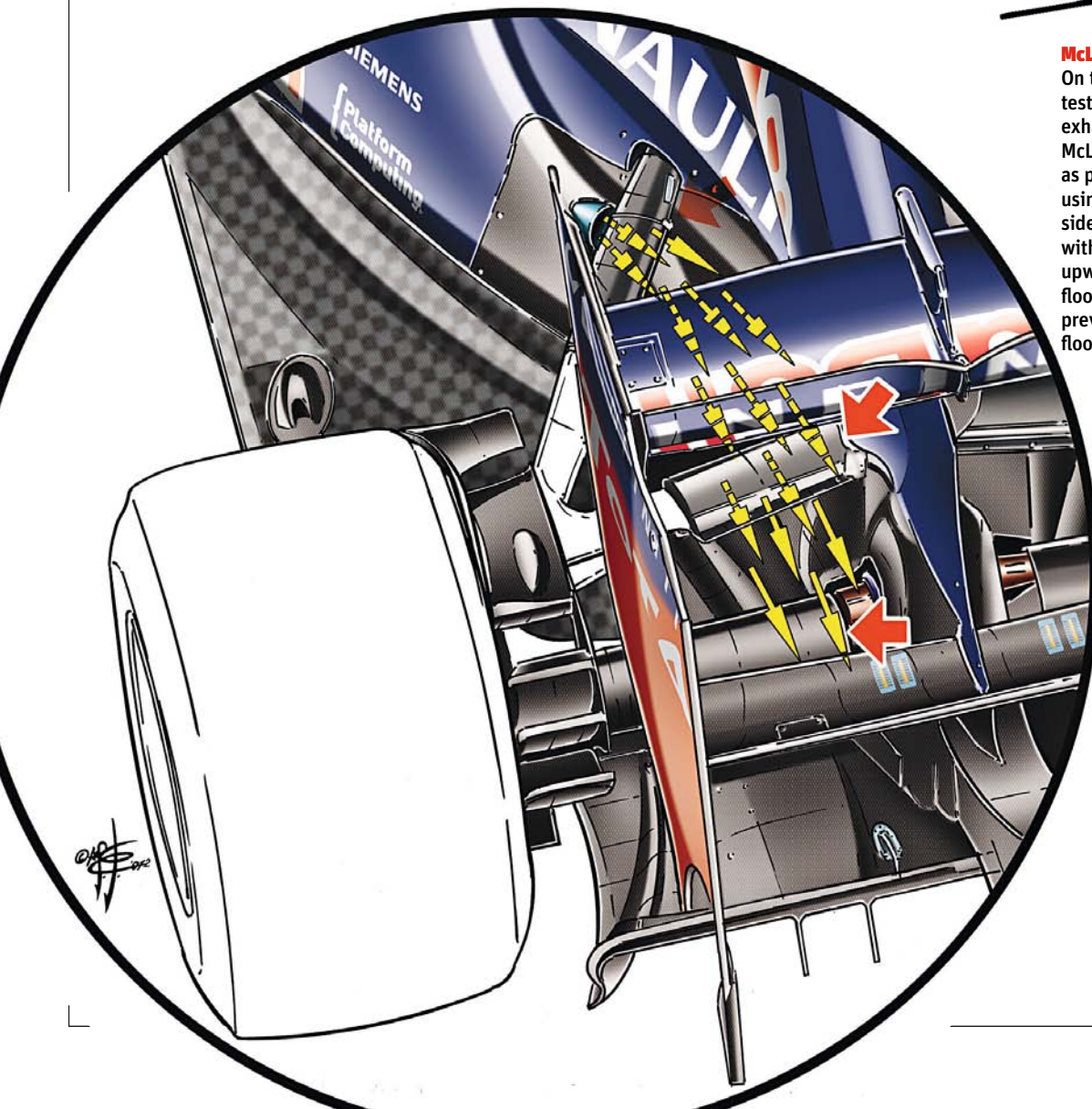
you don’t have that balance it makes it difficult to find the last little bit of time from yourself – and it makes you vulnerable when you go looking for it.”

Asked about why the team might be struggling to find this understanding, Vettel pinpoints an additional factor to the late change of exhaust concept. “Our reliability during testing was not as good as it has been in the past and that has cost us track time and I think that’s hurting our understanding too.”

It’s inconceivable that Red Bull will not be back to race-winning ways soon enough, but it does appear as if McLaren has turned the tables on its adversary in having a crucially important, very well resolved concept on the car from the beginning. By contrast, Red Bull’s later adaptation of a similar feature has left the team still looking to optimise its car around it – and that has given McLaren a head-start. With more than a little help from the regulation changes. ❧

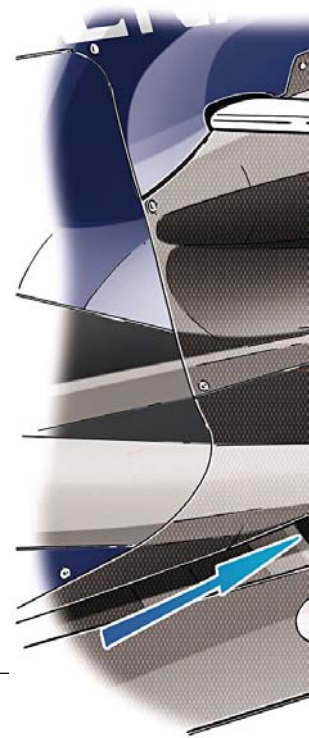
**INITIAL EXHAUST DESIGN ▼**

The original Red Bull exhaust layout had outlets well back, as close as permitted to the beam wing over which it blew.



**McLAREN-STYLE BARCA TEST VERSION ▲**

On the penultimate day of Barcelona testing Red Bull tried a totally reworked exhaust system that appeared to be more McLaren-like. Outlets moved as far forward as permitted and angled more outboard, using airflow over the slope of rear of sidepod to bring down the exhaust flow with it, despite outlet itself having to slope upwards by at least 10 degrees. Hole in floor took flow from lower part of sidepod, preventing it being sucked under side of floor and directing it to behind diffuser.



## WEBBER v VETTEL

For all that the restrictions upon exhaust-blown diffusers appear to have impacted upon Red Bull's competitiveness, it appears to have brought the performance of the Red Bull drivers closer together. Mark Webber makes no bones about the fact that he never fully got on top of the technique required to maximise off-throttle blown diffusers.

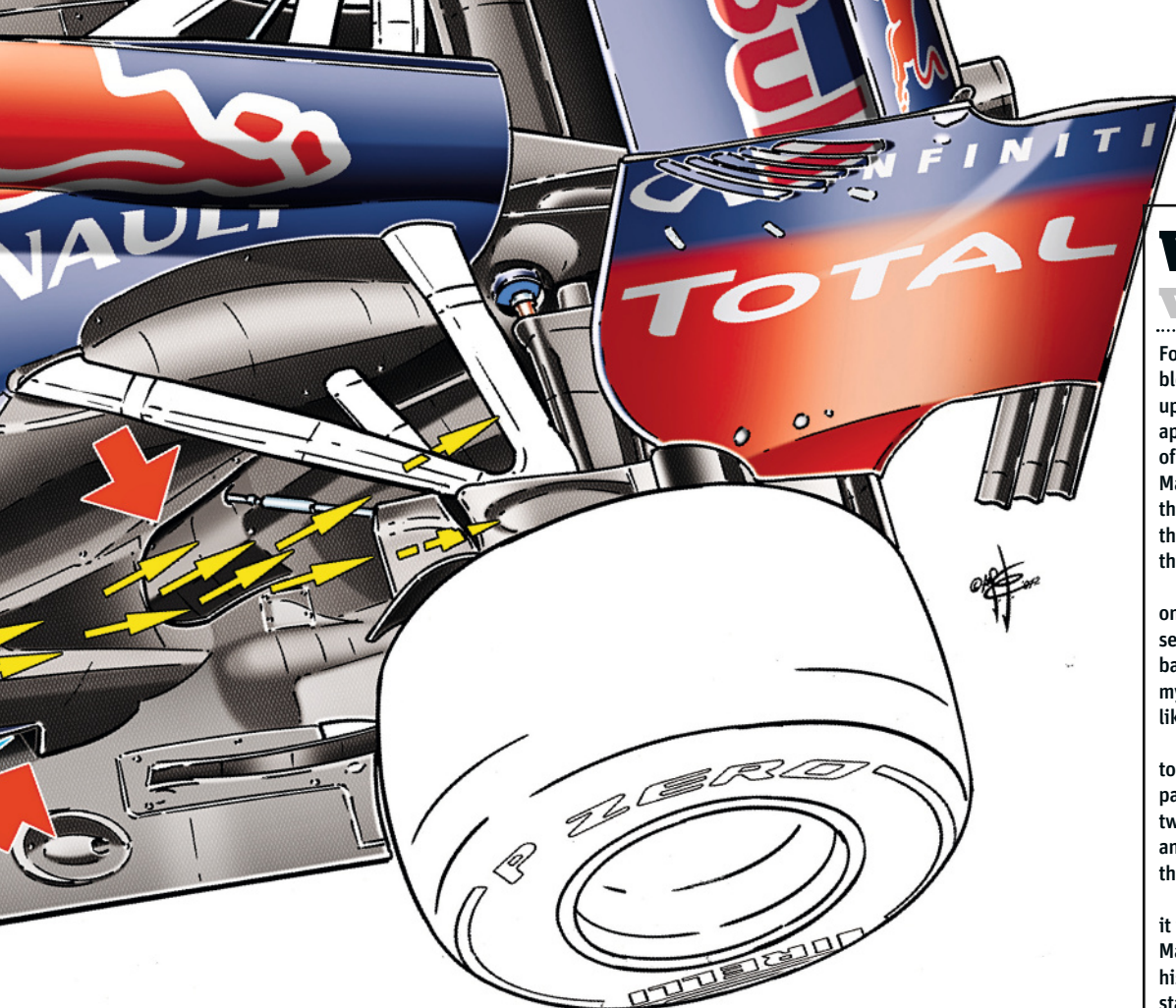
"Those cars were very, very different on the way into a corner," he says, "very sensitive to rpm and that changed the balance quite a lot and I never really got my teeth into them. These are much more like traditional racing cars."

Throughout winter testing he appeared to lose little, if anything, to Vettel and that pattern has been repeated in the opening two events, with Webber out-qualifying and scoring more points than Vettel, but the margins are small.

The pattern seems set to revert to how it was in 2010 rather than last year when Mark was cast in the number two role by his performances. It was 2011 that was the statistical aberration, with a generation of car that Webber just could not get his head around – complicated further in the first half of the season by tyres that he could not feel adequately.

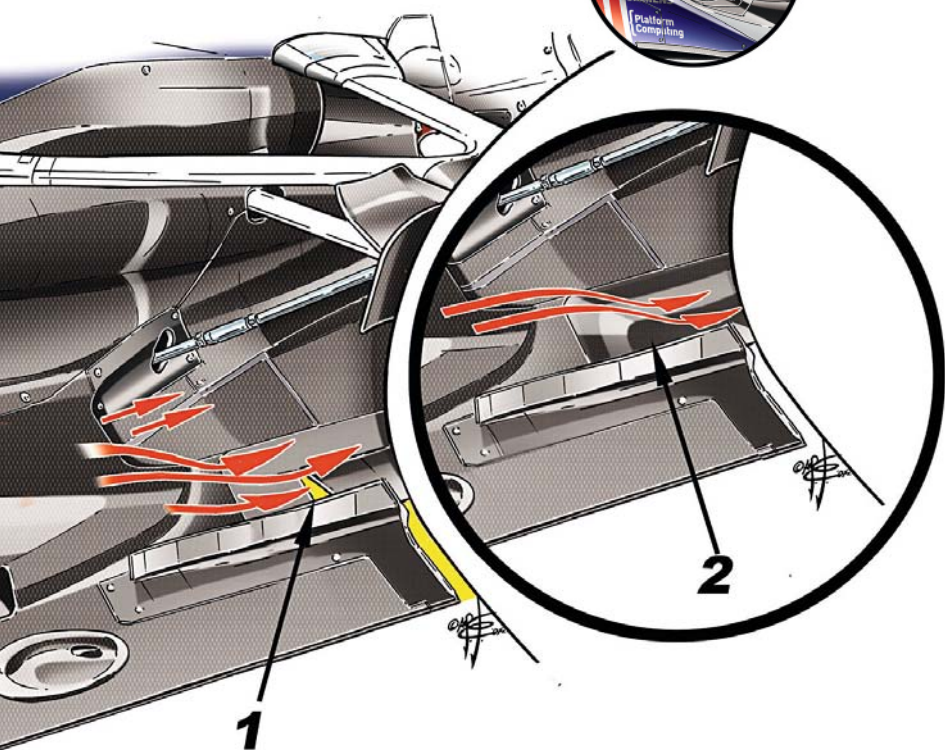
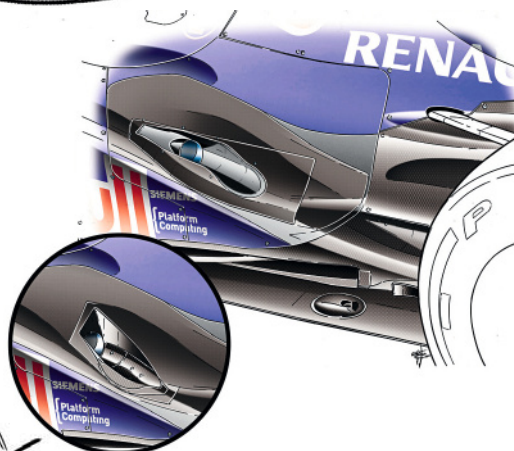
Vettel last year was supremely adept at using the initial instability of the car – the way the rear Pirellis did not instantly grip – into a slow turn as an asset, something that would help him get the direction change on the car early in the corner. This wasn't a technique Webber ever mastered, and it was counter-intuitive with the way the off-throttle blown diffuser would then give the car a lot of rear end grip. With no artificial off-throttle aero boost and the grippier 2012 generation of tyre, the behaviour of the cars on corner entry is much more progressive. So Webber's key disadvantage to Vettel has evaporated.

Drivers are closer together this year



### HOW IT HAS RACED SO FAR ▶▼

Subsequent experimentation with variations on the theme of the late-Barcelona exhaust were used in Australia (right, inset) and Malaysia (right, main). The outlet had a more walled-in fairing in Australia, before reverting back in Malaysia. Hole in floor (below) disappeared, replaced by lateral vortex-inducing fences that hurried flow to the rear of the lower bodywork.



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## BRANDS HATCH

Great Britain

April 1

British Touring Car Championship  
Round 1/10



### AT A GLANCE RACE 1

- Winner Rob Collard
- Pole Dave Newsham
- FL Tom Onslow-Cole



Newsham took great pole for ES Racing

# MG back with a bang

Jason Plato didn't have to wait long for his first BTCC win with MG - two races in fact



**AGAINST ALL EXPECTATIONS,** including his own, Jason Plato leads the British Touring Car Championship after the Brands Hatch opener last weekend.

Nobody doubted his new works MG programme with

Triple Eight would become formidable, but to score some points on the MG6's debut would have been considered a success.

The car didn't have a proper test until the week before Brands and the team

worked flat-out just to get the two NGTC machines finished. Yet the car improved with every session, scoring a podium in the second race and taking MG's first BTCC win for six years in the third

"We were in a right tangle with the set-up in first free practice," admitted the double champion. "We were on three wheels, it was moving under braking, and having powersteering issues.

"The car was pretty horrible in qualifying too, but with each session we've tried a big change. On Saturday night we had confidence in a pretty clear direction. It was a good step forward in race one, we made a big change in race two and it was a bit too far."

That second race provided

a duel between the series' two champions as Plato fought the number-one NGTC Honda Civic of Matt Neal. The Honda had to defend from a charging Plato, who forced a gap at Clearways at around two-thirds distance and

race three, Plato chased Jordan in the shortened third race before finding a way by – using the MG's ability to hold a tight line at Clearways to decisive effect.

"It's got really good mid-corner and exit grip, and traction," added the

**"It was a big risk to leave RML, but I knew Triple Eight would deliver. The MG was really good in race three"**

Plato praises the job his team has done with MG6

looked faster.

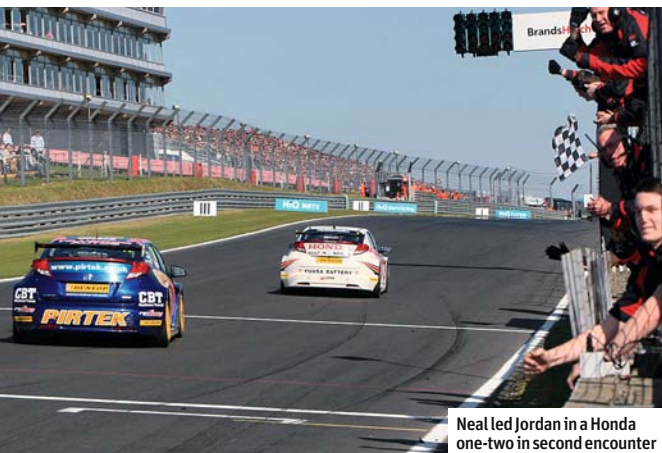
But a minor Plato error at the same corner gave Neal the chance to retake the lead. The MG's tyres were now spent and Plato was powerless as Andrew Jordan overhauled him late on to give Honda a fine one-two.

Set-up changed again for

69-time BTCC race winner.

"It's got a really good front-end, which you need in touring cars, and now we're sorting the rear.

"As each hour goes on, and as we run the car, we make a step. We've got to build a picture of what it can do. We're in the window now,



Neal led Jordan in a Honda one-two in second encounter

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Unpredictable and eventful weekend with some fine racing. Fewer safety cars please!

## MILESTONES

First MG win since Donington Park 2006 (Colin Turkington), first pole for Dave Newsham, BTCC debut for Adam Morgan, first victory for WSR since 2009

## REPORT BTCC BRANDS HATCH

KEVIN TURNER  
reports



Plato and Neal fought it out in race two



Plato's MG removes Newsham from race one



Plato celebrates his first MG victory



Collard (middle) and Neal (right) both scored wins

## HONOURS SHARED BY NEW MACHINES

THREE NEW CARS TOOK THE wins as the British Touring Car Championship kicked off at Brands. Rob Collard won the first encounter in one of WSR's newly turbocharged BMWs, before Matt Neal and Jason Plato became the first drivers to win a BTCC round in NGTC machinery, for Honda and MG respectively. From third, Collard's rear-wheel-drive S2000 machine jumped Neal at the start of race one. A wobble by polesitter Dave Newsham at Paddock gave Collard a run on the climb to Druids, which became the lead when Newsham's refusal to yield resulted in contact.

After a brief safety car period to recover Adam Morgan's Speedworks Toyota, Collard came under pressure from Neal, Newsham and Plato.

All three made it by, only for the Plato-Newsham clash to delay Neal and allow Collard through to take a lead he was not to lose.

Neal took second, while Collard's team-mate Tom Onslow-Cole just kept Plato off the podium by 0.036s on the run to the line.

Collard leapt into the lead at the start of race two as TO-C spoiled his chances by jumping the start and getting a drive-through penalty. Neal pressured Collard and was soon joined by Plato.

The two champions went by together out of Clearways at the end of lap five and headed off into a race of their own. Despite a safety car period, and Plato briefly grabbing the lead, Neal took his 44th BTCC win.

Andrew Jordan's Eurotech Honda Civic got by Collard shortly after the restart on the run to Paddock, allowing Mat Jackson (Motorbase Ford) and Rob Austin's Audi to follow him through. Jordan then charged after Plato, who struggled with worn tyres towards the end, and dived past at Paddock with four laps to go.

The reversed-grid race had to be restarted after Jackson went off and damaged his car, leaving fluid on the run to Druids that caught out seven cars.

Collard led the restarted event, but was closed down by Jordan and Plato, who fought a personal duel at the front once they had dealt with the BMW.

As Plato defeated Jordan, Newsham came through to finish third, just ahead – on the road at least – of Gordon Shedden's works Honda.

After a weekend beset by electrical gremlins, Shedden drove through the field brilliantly to fourth, only to be disqualified as his team was deemed to have worked on the car during the parc-ferme, red-flag period.

we just need to find the spot. "I thought hard about leaving RML [for which he raced last year] and it was a big risk on paper. But I knew Triple Eight would deliver. My car in race three was really good – that's what these guys can do."

Team boss Ian Harrison is sure there is more to come from the MG6 too. "It's way off where it needs to be and where we think it should be," said Harrison, who dominated the sport during the past decade with the works Vauxhall team.

"We've got a job list that gets bigger every time we go out, but Jason's doing the job and we're chuffed to bits."

Even old rival and reigning champion Matt Neal was impressed, despite his dissatisfaction with the

relative turbo-boost levels the various cars are allowed to run (see Pit & Paddock).

"I was relieved to get to the flag in race two because he was fast," said Neal. "We were quick in different places. He had a good front-end through the tight corners, but we were quick in the fast stuff."

"I wouldn't have put money on them making round two, never mind race one, and I know it's not been easy to drive for Jason, so fair play to him."

The MG and Honda NGTC teams aside, there were signs at Brands that independent outfits running S2000 chassis with turbos will still threaten in 2012.

Dave Newsham took a surprise pole in an ex-Triple Eight Vauxhall Vectra run by

Team ES Racing, and Rob Collard gave WSR's new turbocharged BMW a win on its debut in the first encounter.

For ex-Renault Clio Cup champion Newsham, it was vindication for the move to ES after stints at Geoff Steel Racing and Special Tuning Racing in 2011.

"It was the car that attracted me to ES," he said. "I raced against it last year and knew it was the best S2000 chassis out there, and the team put a really good deal together. They wanted me. I had unfinished business with the BTCC."

Newsham's weekend didn't yield the points his pace deserved. He was battling Neal and Plato for the lead of race one when an optimistic move at Paddock ▶

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Foster's weekend comes to abrupt end

### AT A GLANCE RACE 2

- Winner **Matt Neal**
- Pole **Rob Collard**
- FL **Jason Plato**

### AT A GLANCE RACE 3

- Winner **Jason Plato**
- Pole **Ollie Jackson**
- FL **Jason Plato**

◀ by Plato sent the Vauxhall into the gravel. He charged to ninth in race two, despite having to pit after being involved in someone else's incident, and ended the day with his first British Touring Car podium.

"We need to make hay while the sun shines – we've seen how quick the MG is already," said the 44-year-old. "Our car is fully developed – it isn't going to go any quicker – and at some point the NGTC cars are going to come good."

It was a remarkable turnaround for ES, which tended to race near the back last season with team boss Chris James driving its sole Chevrolet Lacetti.

James, who now drives the team's second Vectra, has brought in new staff, including the experienced Andrew Dean as engineer and team manager. "We had a professional team before, but Andrew's been around a long time and he's brought a tyre specialist," said James.

"Part of the deal with Triple Eight was the set-up sheets and that's massive. We've got one of the most competitive packages."

Newsham is clearly part of that. "His record speaks for itself," added James. "The Clio championship is the feeder series for the BTCC and he's a champion. He's a quiet guy and doesn't shout, so he stays under the radar, but he is awesome."

Collard's win was an emotional one for WSR boss Dick Bennetts. After a difficult year with the normally-aspirated BMWs in 2011, he selected the German marque's new two-litre turbo engine for 2012, only to find the unit unsuitable. A switch to an NA road lump, to which Neil Brown Engineering then bolted a turbo, left WSR with little time to prepare.

"We've had very little testing, so to come out and do this is great," said Collard. "It's where we should have been last year, but the



Shedden had a nightmare weekend

**"We're in a car and team capable of winning the championship. They've done it before and that's where I want to be"**  
Rob Collard is happy with WSR's turbo BMW package



Jordan was on good form in NGTC Civic

equalisation didn't work out. "We've got more acceleration, which is brilliant, but we have lost in some areas. We're struggling in the braking areas, but overall the car is very good and I feel we can improve. It shows we've got potential."

The team's lack of experience of the car helps explain why Collard fell back in race three, a potential win turning into sixth as the rear tyres went off.

Nevertheless, Collard believes he has a chance to repeat Colin Turkington's 2009 title success with WSR. "We're in a car and team capable of winning the championship," he said. "They've done it before – and that's where you always want to be."

He'll have to beat MG though, which looks a lot harder now than it did before Brands. "There's still a massive amount of speed to come," said Plato. "I imagine the others are shitting themselves now." ▶



Collard wins as TO-C pips Plato for third



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Austin was quick in new Audi



**NEXT ROUND**  
**DONINGTON**  
April 15

**REPORT**  
**BTCC BRANDS HATCH**

**DRIVER BY DRIVER**

<p><b>Matt Neal (2/1/7)</b></p> <p>Not happy about boost levels, but had a good weekend. Fine win against Plato in R2.</p>	<p><b>Gordon Shedden (5/R/DQ)</b></p> <p>Unbelievably unlucky. Electrical gremlins spoiled weekend and then disqualified from R3.</p>	<p><b>Jason Plato (4/3/1)</b></p> <p>Incredible debut weekend for MG. Got better with each outing and won R3. Now has a real spring in his step.</p>	<p><b>Andy Neate (12/14/14)</b></p> <p>Some way off his team-mate, but Triple Eight boss Ian Harrison was pleased with Neate's efforts.</p>	<p><b>Mat Jackson (7/4/R)</b></p> <p>Suspension issue hurt qualifying but raced well until R3 off caused multi-car shunt.</p>	<p><b>Aron Smith (R/R/8)</b></p> <p>Looked promising. Taken out by Austin in R1, which also hurt R2. Good R3 recovery.</p>
<p><b>Liam Griffin (14/12/11)</b></p> <p>Trouble-free weekend allowed Griffin to quietly score points each time.</p>	<p><b>Rob Collard (1/6/6)</b></p> <p>Scored fine first win for nearly three years in new turbo BMW. Struggled with tyre wear, but is a threat.</p>	<p><b>Tom Onslow-Cole (3/10/R)</b></p> <p>Poor starts (including jumping one) aside, good return to WSR as he relearns rear-wheel drive.</p>	<p><b>Nick Foster (9/R/NS)</b></p> <p>Was putting in another solid performance until rolling the car in R2, which finished his day.</p>	<p><b>Andrew Jordan (6/2/2)</b></p> <p>Unfortunate in lap one R1 clash, but was fast in new Honda. Unhappy to lose to Plato in R2, but a contender.</p>	<p><b>Jeff Smith (10/7/4)</b></p> <p>A little off Jordan, but looked competitive on his NGTC debut and came away with good points.</p>
<p><b>Dave Newsham (R/9/3)</b></p> <p>One of the stars of Brands. Great pole and good race pace, but R1 clash hurt his weekend.</p>	<p><b>Chris James (15/R/12)</b></p> <p>Looked much happier in Vectra than he did in old Chevy Lacetti and now has a team-mate to learn from.</p>	<p><b>Rob Austin (8/5/5)</b></p> <p>Didn't make the most of qualifying, but revised car had good pace. Engine issue prevented R3 charge.</p>	<p><b>Frank Wrathall (R/NS/13)</b></p> <p>Things went downhill after fine qualifying thanks to gearbox problems. Much more to come.</p>	<p><b>Adam Morgan (R/NS/R)</b></p> <p>As unlucky as Shedden. Victim of lap-one R1 clash, missed race two, then went off on Jackson's oil in R3.</p>	<p><b>Tony Hughes (16/16/15)</b></p> <p>As in 2011, struggled for pace, but managed to bring new Toyota home in all three races.</p>
<p><b>Tony Gilham (18/13/10)</b></p> <p>Got better as worked to learn his newly-rebuilt 2011 Honda Civic.</p>	<p><b>Dan Welch (17/11/R)</b></p> <p>Boost problems and R3 off on oil meant he didn't get the results pace deserved.</p>	<p><b>Ollie Jackson (13/8/R)</b></p> <p>Quite a few offs, but showed promise on first weekend with Amd Golf.</p>	<p><b>John Thorne (R/17/16)</b></p> <p>Big practice off severely hampered efforts on first proper BTCC weekend.</p>	<p><b>Lea Wood (11/15/9)</b></p> <p>Solid in turbo Vectra, only a penalty stopped fine R2 result.</p>	

**RESULTS**

British Touring Car Championship, Brands Hatch (GB), March 31-April 1, round 1 of 10

**GRID**

1 NEUSHAM	48.483
2 NEAL	48.615
3 COLLARD	48.698
4 JORDAN	48.698
5 O-COLE	48.765
6 PLATO	48.868
7 AUSTIN	48.883
8 WRATHALL	48.963
9 SHEDDEN	49.022
10 FOSTER	49.078
11 M JACKS	49.100
12 J SMITH	49.166
13 MORGAN	49.176
14 A SMITH	49.237
15 WOOD	49.421
16 O JACKS	49.604
17 GRIFFIN	49.623
18 JAMES	49.861
19 NEATE	50.126
20 GILHAM	50.617
21 HUGHES	52.301
22 WELCH	1:02.449
23 THORNE	no time

**RACE 1 - 27 LAPS, 32.613 MILES**

POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR (eBay Motors)	BMW 320si	26m15.638s	3
2	Matt Neal (GB)	Honda (Yuasa Dynamics)	Honda Civic	+0.329s	2
3	Tom Onslow-Cole (GB)	WSR (eBay Motors)	BMW 320si	+1.114s	5
4	Jason Plato (GB)	MG (KX Triple Eight)	MG6	+1.150s	6
5	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Honda (Yuasa Dynamics)	Honda Civic	+3.872s	9
6	Andrew Jordan (GB)	Eurotech (Pirtek)	Honda Civic	+5.156s	4
7	Mat Jackson (GB)	Motorbase (Redstone)	Ford Focus	+7.339s	11
8	Rob Austin (GB)	Rob Austin Racing	Audi A4	+7.489s	7
9	Nick Foster (GB)	WSR (eBay Motors)	BMW 320si	+7.581s	10
10	Jeff Smith (GB)	Eurotech (Pirtek)	Honda Civic	+7.886s	12
11	Lea Wood (GB)	Team Wood (Binz)	Vauxhall Vectra	+8.186s	15
12	Andy Neate (GB)	MG (KX Triple Eight)	MG6	+12.090s	19
13	Ollie Jackson (GB)	Amd Tuning	Volkswagen Golf	+12.112s	16
14	Liam Griffin (GB)	Motorbase (Redstone)	Ford Focus	+12.307s	17
15	Chris James (GB)	Team ES Racing	Vauxhall Vectra	+15.499s	18
16	Tony Hughes (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Avensis	+24.791s	21
17	Daniel Welch (GB)	Welch Motorsport	Proton Persona	+27.661s	22
18	Tony Gilham (GB)	Gilham Racing (HARD)	Honda Civic	-2 laps	20
R	John Thorne (GB)	Thorney Motorsport	Vauxhall Insignia	24 laps-accident	23
R	Dave Newsham (GB)	Team ES Racing	Vauxhall Vectra	14 laps-accident	1
R	Aron Smith (GB)	Motorbase (Redstone)	Ford Focus	14 laps-accident	14
R	Frank Wrathall (GB)	Dynojet	Toyota Avensis	1 lap-gearbox	8
R	Adam Morgan (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Avensis	0 laps-accident	13

**RACE 2 - 27 LAPS, 32.613 MILES**

POS	DRIVER	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Neal	24m52.965s	2
2	Jordan	+0.360s	6
3	Plato	+1.720s	4
4	M Jackson	+3.516s	7
5	Austin	+3.973s	8
6	Collard	+7.865s	1
7	J Smith	+8.561s	10
8	O Jackson	+14.521s	13
9	Newsham	+16.334s	19
10	Onslow-Cole	+16.417s	3
11	Welch	+16.493s	17
12	Griffin	+17.351s	14
13	Gilham	+19.962s	18
14	Neate	+24.261s	12
15	Wood	+32.658s	11
16	Hughes	+44.404s	16
17	Thorne	+47.446s	21
R	Shedden	13 laps-electrics	5
R	Foster	6 laps-accident	9
R	James	6 laps-acc damage	15
R	A Smith	3 laps-acc damage R1	20
NS	Wrathall	gearbox	22
NS	Morgan	acc damage from R1	23

**RACE 3\* - 20 LAPS, 24.158 MILES**

POS	DRIVER	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Plato	16m41.826s	4
2	Jordan	+1.866s	3
3	Newsham	+8.283s	6
4	J Smith	+10.525s	5
5	Austin	+11.755s	2
6	Collard	+13.117s	1
7	Neal	+14.498s	7
8	A Smith	+22.056s	13
9	Wood	+25.211s	8
10	Gilham	+28.311s	14
11	Griffin	+29.360s	10
12	James	+32.304s	11
13	Wrathall	+38.902s	9
14	Neate	+39.136s	14
15	Hughes	-1 lap	12
16	Thorne	-2 laps	13
NS	M Jackson	acc damage - first R3	-
NS	Welch	acc damage - first R3	-
NS	Morgan	acc damage - first R3	-
NS	Onslow-Cole	acc damage - first R3	-
NS	O Jackson	acc damage - first R3	-
NS	Foster	acc damage from R2	-
DQ	Shedden	work during red flag	15

**DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Plato	52
2	Neal	48
3	Jordan	45
4	Collard	43
5	Austin	30
6	J Smith	28
7	Newsham	24
8	Onslow-Cole	22
9	M Jackson	22
10	Wood	13

**Race 1** Winner's average: 74.51mph.  
Fastest lap: O-Cole, 48.948s, 88.84mph.  
**Race 2** Winner's average: 78.64mph.  
Fastest lap: Plato, 48.943s, 88.85mph.  
**Race 3** Winner's average: 86.81mph.  
Fastest lap: Plato, 49.083s, 88.59mph.  
\*Original race red-flagged on lap four. New grid based on running order and cars still running.

**P40**  
Support races



PICS: EBREV/LAT

# BRANDS HATCH

Great Britain  
March 31-April 1  
TOCA supports  
Round 1/10



## CARRERA CUP AT A GLANCE

- Race 1 **Richard Plant**
- Race 2 **Michael Meadows**
- Points lead **Meadows**



Rivett lost out in race one, but bounced back



Plant inherited win for Team Parker

PORSCHE CARRERA AND RENAULT CLIO CUPS BRANDS HATCH, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

## Plant and Meadows are cream of the crop

MICHAEL MEADOWS AND Richard Plant shared the spoils during a dramatic opening weekend for the 2012 Porsche Carrera Cup at Brands Hatch. It could easily have been a double win for Meadows, the race one victory going begging due to a penalty.

Leading away from pole in round one, the Redline driver also made a perfect restart following a brief safety car interlude. Reeled-in by Plant, as the

pressure mounted Meadows understeered wide at Graham Hill Bend on lap 20, sparking the appearance of the driving-standards flag.

Four laps from the finish, the 2011 vice-champion was adjudged to have transgressed track limits once too often and was slapped with a five-second time penalty. Although taking the flag first, he ended up third, behind first-time winner Plant and Jonas Gelzinis.

“Winning is winning”, said Plant. “I was a bit shocked when I saw the penalty, I thought it was for me for a start!”

For race two, Meadows made amends with a 1.2s victory over hugely impressive Porsche Scholar Daniel Lloyd. Qualifying a sensational third for race one, Lloyd was on course for a strong top-four result when a left-rear puncture spat him off the circuit and into the barriers on lap 11 of 34 at Paddock Hill Bend.

Like Meadows, he was keen to make amends in race two and Lloyd started from an improved second on the grid. He saw off a first-corner challenge from Gelzinis before keeping Meadows under close attention for the duration.

“I had no other option than to win today”, said Meadows after race two. “Yesterday was galling when I got the radio call, it’s so early in the season though so it shouldn’t have a bearing on the title. The win today is a relief.”

In Pro-Am 1, Derek Pierce won race one after jumping polesitter Ahmad Al Harthy at the start. In race two,

Ollie Mortimer achieved his first class victory when leader Al Harthy fell victim to one of the many ‘track limits’ penalties. Will Goff and Tautvydas Barstys shared the Pro-Am 2 wins.

Reigning Renault Clio top dog and three-time champion Paul Rivett – a late addition to the grid after an eleventh-hour deal with Stancombe – was on course for victory in Saturday’s Clio opener when a broken track-rod on the penultimate lap led to retirement.

“I didn’t hit any of the kerbs any harder than any others in all the years I’ve been racing here,” said Rivett. “When I got the lead I thought ‘drive sensibly, drive within yourself’, so I did that and still got bitten.”

Rivett’s woes were good news for Jack Goff, who had been ever-present in second place. He had edged out team-mate Josh Files, who originally led from pole but slid sideways and off at Graham Hill on lap one.

In a chaotic race two, Rivett hit back to win by 0.4s from Goff, with Adam Bonham taking third. Lap one accounted for seven

cars, a multi-car tangle at the exit of Graham Hill Bend triggering a bigger collision further along Cooper Straight, though all involved were unscathed. ● Marc Orme

### RESULTS

#### Porsche Carrera Cup (34 laps)

**1 Richard Plant;** 2 Jonas Gelzinis +1.452s; 3 Michael Meadows; 4 Sam Tordoff; 5 Ben Barker; 6 Glynn Geddie. **Class winners** Derek Pierce; Will Goff. **Fastest lap** Meadows 46.685s (93.14mph).

#### Race 2 (34 laps) 1 Meadows;

2 Daniel Lloyd +1.201s; 3 Gelzinis; 4 Tordoff; 5 Barker; 6 Chris Dymond. **CW** Ollie Mortimer; Tautvydas Barstys. **FL** Plant 46.805s (92.90mph). **Points 1 Meadows, 39;** 2 Gelzinis, 34; 3 Plant, 30; 4 Tordoff, 28; 5 Barker, 24; 6= Lloyd & Geddie, 18.

#### Renault Clio Cup (20 laps)

**1 Jack Goff;** 2 Josh Files +0.490s; 3 Aaron Williamson; 4 Luke Wright; 5 Adam Bonham; 6 James Dixon. **CW** Williamson; Mark Tilbury. **FL** Dixon 52.593s (82.68mph). **Race two (23 laps) 1 Paul Rivett;** 2 Goff +0.381s; 3 Bonham; 4 Files; 5 Ant Whorton-Eales; 6 Dixon. **CW** Whorton-Eales; Simon Belcher. **FL** Bonham 52.607s (82.66mph). **Points 1 Goff, 60;** 2 Files, 50; 3 Bonham, 47; 4 Dixon, 38; 5 Whorton-Eales 34; 6 Rivett, 32.



Jostling Clio pack heads into Druids



## GT SUPERCUP AT A GLANCE

- Race 1 Tom Sharp
- Race 2 Sharp
- Race 3 Sharp
- Points Lead Sharp

“It’s pretty devastating to see such massive damage to the car in only the first race weekend of the season, especially as I felt confident I could have taken my first win”  
Walkinshaw reflects on being taken out of race three by Sharp

## REPORTS TOCA BRANDS HATCH

GINETTA BTCC SUPPORTS BRANDS HATCH, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

# Tom is too Sharp for GT Supercup rivals

**WHAT A DIFFERENCE 12** months doesn’t make in the Ginetta GT Supercup – Tom Sharp completely dominated the opening weekend at Brands Hatch last weekend to replicate his hat-trick of wins from a year ago.

“We’ve been quicker than everyone else with our race pace”, said Sharp. “Qualifying was really close but in the races we seemed to have the advantage. When you’ve got a car that’s working so well, it makes everything a lot easier.”

Races one and two were as straightforward as could be for Sharp, a couple of rocket-ship starts enabling him to comfortably control Saturday afternoon’s 16-lapper and the first of Sunday’s 27-lap encounters.

Race three posed more of a challenge, with Sharp starting fourth on the reversed-grid and it wasn’t as troublefree as the first two. A brush at the exit of Clark Curve with then-leader Fergus Walkinshaw triggered a multi-car crash on the start/finish straight.

“We went round Surtees side-by-side, then round Clearways side-by-side and onto the start/finish straight there was contact when I tried to get the under-cut – it just seemed like he [Walkinshaw] was a bit hesitant to come back on

the racing line”, added Sharp. “That definitely wasn’t the way I wanted to win that race, I’m gutted for Fergus.”

Walkinshaw reckoned: “It’s pretty devastating to see such massive damage to the car in only the first race weekend of the season, even more so when I felt confident I could have taken my first win.”

Following the inevitable safety car period, required to clear away Walkinshaw’s car and the badly damaged G50 of Reece Somerfield (who had chosen to throw his car at the barriers rather than hit the stranded G55), the restart came on lap eight. Sharp pulled well clear of Jamie Orton, who achieved a well-deserved maiden podium.

Andrew Richardson was one of the star performers on his debut in the headline G55 class, although outstanding pace wasn’t reflected by his results. In race one, a drive-through penalty for a false-start wrecked his hopes of a podium but he proved a point with the fastest lap of the race.

Reigning G50 class champion Tom Ingram started the season strongly with second in race one, ahead of impressive category newcomer Josh Wakefield. Ingram got tangled-up with Richardson



Sharp started 2012 as he began last season with three Brands wins

on lap five of round two though, when his car became destabilised over the kerbs at Paddock Hill Bend. Richardson managed to bounce back in race three with his first podium.

Colin White, meanwhile, celebrated his first podium of the year with second place in round two ahead of Walkinshaw. In the G50 Cup, Mark Davies, Max Coates and Rob Gaffney shared the wins.

Niall Murray and Charlie Robertson earned the spoils in the Ginetta Junior Championship, although for HHC racer Robertson it

could have been a double victory had a left-rear puncture not ruined his race-one lead.

Despite being under close attention from polesitter Sennan Fielding, whom he jumped at the start, Robertson looked comfortable prior to the emergence of the safety car on lap five. As racing was set to resume at half-distance, he dived into the pits knowing the left-rear had a problem.

This enabled Fielding to lead, but his hopes of victory were also to be dashed. Contact with Gamble, who was trying to pass on the inside at Clearways, resulted in a spin. Murray shot by to open his 2012 account in winning ways.

Robertson hit back in race two with victory, three seconds clear of Murray, with Gamble third to add to his second in race one. Scholarship winner Oliver Basey-Fisher enjoyed an excellent car-racing debut, the highlight a maiden podium in round one.

● Marc Orme

### RESULTS

#### Ginetta GT Supercup (16 laps)

**1 Tom Sharp;** 2 Tom Ingram +2.759s; 3 Josh Wakefield; 4 Carl Breeze; 5 Hunter Abbott; 6 Fergus Walkinshaw. **CW** Mark Davies. **FL** Andrew Richardson 47.515s (91.52mph).

**Race 2 (27 laps) 1 Sharp;** 2 Colin White +5.391s; 3 Walkinshaw; 4 Jamie Orton; 5 Abbott; 6 Max Coates. **CW** Coates. **FL** Orton 47.753s (91.06mph).

**Race 3 (27 laps) 1 Sharp;** 2 Orton +8.393s; 3 Richardson; 4 White; 5 Marcus Hogarth; 6 Rob Gaffney. **CW** Gaffney. **FL** Sharp 47.427s (91.69mph). **Points 1 Sharp, 107;** 2 White, 68; 3 Orton, 53; 4 Ingram, 48; 5 Walkinshaw, 44; 6 Richardson, 41.

#### Ginetta Junior (16 laps)

**1 Niall Murray;** 2 George Gamble +0.133s; 3 Oliver Basey-Fisher; 4 Nathan Harrison; 5 Harry Woodhead; 6 Andrew Watson. **CW** Basey-Fisher. **FL** Charlie Robertson 54.320s (80.05mph).

**Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Robertson;** 2 Murray +2.914s; 3 Gamble; 4 Sennan Fielding; 5 Ollie Chadwick; 6 Pepe Massot. **CW** Massot. **FL** Gamble 54.338s (80.02mph). **Points 1 Murray, 65;** 2 Gamble, 57; 3 Robertson, 46; 4 Fielding, 39; 5 Basey-Fisher, 38; 6 Harrison, 36.

Robertson leads Ginetta Junior field





## RALLY OF PORTUGAL

Faro, March 28-April 1

ROUND 4/13

### WINNERS

Mads Ostberg/  
Jonas Andersson  
4h21m16.1s

### RALLY RATING



It's a Mads, Mads,  
Mads, Mads World Rally  
Championship event

### DRIVERS' STANDINGS

Loeb 66pts  
Solberg 62pts  
Ostberg 53pts

### POWERSTAGE WINNER

Dani Sordo

### MILESTONES

- Ostberg's first WRC win
- Novikov: first Russian to take WRC podium

DAVID EVANS  
reports



# Merriment for Mads after misery for Mikko

Mads Ostberg took his maiden WRC victory after on-the-road winner Mikko Hirvonen was excluded



**BONKERS. SORRY IF THAT** offends the literary virtuosos among you, but it's just about the only way to describe last week's Rally of Portugal. Or, more accurately, utterly bonkers. From the usual high emotion of Lisbon's race through the streets, via Sebastien Loeb's roll in the dark; a double-disaster that stopped Ford in its tracks and all the way on to Mikko Hirvonen's Sunday-night exclusion. Had Lynda La Plante penned this one, it would have been flung back labelled 'unbelievable'. But it happened. After three bone-dry months, the rains came to the Algarve last week and transformed an already riveting rally into four days of extraordinary entertainment. And then, when we thought we could

breathe a sigh of relief, Mads Ostberg joined the ranks of world rally winners 10 hours after the event had finished.

#### LEG ONE (24.14 miles)

OVERCAST THEN RAIN - AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 14-22C

As the clouds gathered south of Lisbon, Ford and Jari-Matti Latvala must have been wondering if fastest time in qualifying was something of a poisoned chalice. The Finn's unbeaten time gave him first choice of position on the road and he went for the back of the pack, relying on the crews ahead to sweep the loose stones aside. The decision was complicated by the potential for dust, but the organisers promised to water the roads ensuring this wouldn't be a problem.

And for the first two

stages, there was precious little dust and Latvala and team-mate Petter Solberg powered into a 10-second advantage over the nearest Citroen. Dust certainly wasn't an issue on Thursday night's fourth and final test, when the heavens opened. Fortunately for Mikko Hirvonen, running first, he'd come through the stage before the weather really turned. He'd struggled slightly on the loose, but his dry run allowed him to halve the gap to the Fiestas ahead.

The big story of Thursday night was the loss of Sebastien Loeb. The Frenchman rolled his DS3 WRC on the third stage after misreading the road.

"I just didn't hear well the note," said Loeb. "I thought the road went left, but it was

right. I went on the wrong side, so I was off the line and the corner was over a crest so I couldn't see it. It was a misunderstanding."

A costly misunderstanding at that. A big thump on the roof damaged the car's rollcage and rendered the DS3 redundant for the remainder of the event.

Having been sat alongside his own rollcage-damaged motor just one event earlier, Latvala sympathised with Loeb. But not too much.

"We have the good cards now," said the leader. "Now we have to use them wisely."

Solberg was an early second, admitting to throttling back when he heard about Loeb. Hirvonen was a trouble-free third, with Ott Tanak a strong fourth. Tanak had been quickest on SS4, running before the rain came while also making use of Hirvonen's lines ahead of him. Thierry Neuville was equally impressive in fifth, while Mads Ostberg

Solberg fought back to P4, which became third





Fine drive led to doom and gloom for Hirvonen



Ostberg became 71st WRC winner

overcame a third-stage puncture to run sixth.

**POSITIONS AFTER DAY ONE**

1 LATVALA/ANTTILA	25m04.6s
2 SOLBERG/PATTERSON	+2.6s
3 HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN	+5.0s
4 TANAK/SIKK	+15.7s
5 NEUVILLE/GILSOUL	+34.0s
6 OSTBERG/ANDERSSON	+53.3s

**LEG TWO (82.44 miles)**

RAIN - AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 11-16C

Drive slowly. Two words and an implicit instruction from Ford's top brass to Latvala. Drive slowly.

He did. But then he hit a rock, broke the track-control arm on the front-left of his Fiesta and spent the next couple of hours staring at his stricken, rain-lashed Ford in a ditch. The fog drifted in

and out, with Latvala likely hoping the gathering gloom would gather him and his wheels up and hide them away for the rest of the day.

After a tough evening cost the rally its eight-time world champion, a new day brought even more madness. And this time it was all coming from Ford.

The only silver lining in the cloud that gathered above Ford's corner of the service park was Solberg's sensible approach. The Norwegian suffered a half-spin in Tavira and quickly steadied himself.

But, less than an hour after the #3 Fiesta hit the ditch, the #4 version was in a similar position just close to the end of Alcarias.

Agony didn't do it justice; the Ford World Rally

Team was tortured last Friday. Team principal Malcolm Wilson still looked shell-shocked two hours later.

"I can't believe it," he grimaced, not wanting to believe it. "It was on a platter for us. Right there, all we had to do was take it..."

His voice faded and Wilson was lost for words. He didn't need them. His demeanour said it all and said it all on behalf of a team left bereft on a day that had promised a golden opportunity to slash the gap between it and Citroen.

"We know we had the pace to beat Seb [Loeb]," said technical director Christian Loriaux. "And controlling Mikko wouldn't have been a problem for them. All they had to do was drive."

For their part, both drivers were full of contrition as they waited for their hearing with Wilson.

Latvala talked of clipping his rock and damaging the TCA. The rock wasn't in his notes. While the dank Portuguese coast seemed a world away from scorching central America, there was a terrible sense of *deja vu* in the Finn's words.

"We had big hopes this morning," said Latvala quietly. "Now they are gone."

Solberg's Fiesta had got away from him under braking for a slow right-hander.

"I braked like normal, but the car slid wide and dropped into a small ditch," he admitted. "I wasn't even pushing."

The clutch was burned out as he tried to return to the road. Solberg's perfect start to the year had hit the rocks. It all left Hirvonen half a minute out front.

Hirvonen's approach must have been a source of massive frustration for Ford.

"I don't think I have ever driven as slowly as I did today," he said. "I got the splits and I knew I was losing time, but that was my approach. I decided to take it and see what's going to happen. It paid off, because we are here now."

The former Ford man sympathised with his rivals, pointing out that staying on top of the car on roads shorn of grip, with deep standing water and fog so dense that vision was limited to 10 metres in places was not easy. He also sympathised at the thought of the conversations Latvala and Solberg would be having with Wilson.

The conditions had, however, been utterly horrendous. Tanak, Neuville and many more were also caught out in Tavira. Tanak ditched his Ford on a slow corner, while the Belgian's DS3 objected to a compression in a watersplash and spat a cooling fan into the radiator.

Behind the leading Citroen, Evgeny Novikov moved into second place, despite intercom problems through the first loop. Ostberg was just five down on the Russian, despite suffering another puncture on SS6 and then being forced to run with the slowly deflating cover for the next stage after there wasn't room for him to stop and change the tyre between the exit of the fuel and the arrival control for SS7.

Patrik Sandell was a delighted, if slightly bemused, fourth on his gravel debut in a Mini. The real Mini hero, however, was Dani Sordo, who put his day-one retirement behind him with fastest time on all three stages. The Spaniard was testament to the fact that running first on the road wasn't always a bad thing on gravel rallies.

Given the way Ford's day was going, the news that the organisers had decided to cancel the afternoon loop on safety grounds wasn't the end of the world.

**POSITIONS AFTER DAY TWO**

1 HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN	1h20m01.7s
2 NOVIKOV/GIRAUDET	+36.3s
3 OSTBERG/ANDERSSON	+41.8s
4 SANDELL/ANDERSSON	+3m07.2s
5 PROKOP/HRUZA	3m25.8s
6 AL-ATTIYAH/BERNACCHINI	+3m46.9s



Second a great result for Russian Novikov



## STAGE TIMES

### SS1 SSS LISBOA (2.03 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 2m57.1s  
Leader: Solberg

### SS2 GOMES AIRES (6.37 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 6m38.1s  
Leader: Solberg

### SS3 SANTA CLARA (8.87 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 8m34.4s  
Leader: Latvala

### SS4 OURIQUE (6.89 MILES)

Fastest: Tanak 6m45.5s  
Leader: Latvala

### SS5 TAVIRA 1 (15.54 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 17m55.3s  
Leader: Solberg

### SS6 ALCARIAS 1 (15.62 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 20m14.7s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS7 S. BRAS DE ALPORTEL 1 (10.04 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 13m11.7s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS8 TAVIRA 2 (15.54 MILES)

Cancelled – poor weather

### SS9 ALCARIAS 2 (15.62 MILES)

Cancelled – poor weather

### SS10 S. BRAS DE ALPORTEL 2 (10.04 MILES)

Cancelled – poor weather

### SS11 ALMODOVAR 1 (16.29 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 16m30.8s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS12 VASCAO 1 (15.71 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 17m03.5s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS13 LOULE 1 (14.02 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 15m49.7s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS14 ALMODOVAR 2 (16.29 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 16m06.9s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS15 VASCAO 2 (15.71 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 16m16.5s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS16 LOULE 2 (14.02 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 15m25.0s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS17 SILVES 1 (13.31 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 12m01.2s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS18 SANTANA DE SERRA 1 (19.28 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 22m48.0s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS19 SAMBRO 1 (3.15 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 3m09.2s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS20 SILVES 2 (13.31 MILES)

Fastest: Solberg 12m05.2s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS21 SANTANA DE SERRA 2 (19.28 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 22m54.1s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS22 SAMBRO 2 (3.15 MILES)

Fastest: Sordo 3m10.4s  
Leader: Hirvonen

## LEG THREE (92.06 miles)

OVERCAST – AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 12–21C

Lining up at the start of Almodovar on Saturday morning, the inevitable winding up of rally leader Hirvonen began, led largely by Ostberg's gibes about him being past it. Hirvonen smiled: "Those boys, hey..."

Ostberg backed up the banter with a time a tenth of a second faster than Hirvonen. The rally leader wasn't best pleased at the end of the opener. He'd softened his Citroen in readiness for more damp conditions only to find large sections of the stage dry.

"The tyre was moving," he said at the finish. "It was in the very high-speed stuff the soft tyres were starting to overheat. We have to make some changes to the car."

Hirvonen hurried away to click some stiffness into his Citroen.

Ostberg might not have made much of an impression on the leader, but he had moved past Novikov for second place. The Russian was struggling with a misfire at low revs, an issue that would remain with him for the rest of the day.

"The car's not pulling cleanly out of the corners," said the frustrated Muscovite, who also lost the sumpguard from the bottom of his Fiesta two stages later.

"I don't know how this happened, but I think we are lucky to make it back to service after driving over the rocks with no protection," he added.

While the organisers

hoped and prayed for dry weather, Ostberg and Novikov were still rain dancing, well aware that the consistent conditions that were accompanying the day were not going to offer the same wet window of opportunity.

Content to drive to Ostberg's split times, Hirvonen was starting to count down the stages.

"I'm still not confident, but it's looking better and better," said the leader mid-way through a trouble-free afternoon.

Much to his rival's frustration, Hirvonen kept nibbling time from Ostberg to build a lead of 1m11.9s with one day remaining.

"He's a bad boy, this Hirvonen guy," admitted Ostberg. "Every time I take time from him, he takes a little bit more."

Novikov drifted further back through the afternoon, slipping into no-man's land, half a minute back from Ostberg but more than four minutes up on Nasser Al-Attiyah who was running in a career-best fourth overall in his Citroen.

Solberg started the day 13th and was determined to rattle through the top-10's lower order as quickly as possible. He did just that. Ninth by lunchtime, he was back to his best.

"I want fourth," he declared with his racing face set firm against the five drivers ahead.

His third successive fastest time of the day netted sixth place and one stage later he was there – astonishingly up

to fourth and still fastest.

And then disaster. The powersteering failed early in the day's final stage.

Having heaved the Ford through 14 unassisted miles, Solberg took a long, long slug at a bottle of water at the end of the test.

"Have," he said, breathing hard, "I lost fourth?"

Typically, before he would talk about the trouble, Solberg's steely determination was demanding answers.

He had. But 71 miles to left 16 seconds from Al-Attiyah was, he felt, in range.

His passage up the leaderboard had been helped elsewhere with Sandell crashing, Martin Prokop suffering a sustained misfire and Jari Ketomaa a broken rear brake disc.

Once again, however, Sordo set a cracking pace in his Mini and was the only man other than Solberg to post a Saturday scratch time.

## POSITIONS AFTER DAY THREE

1 HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN	2h59m33.6s
2 OSTBERG/ANDERSSON	+1m11.9s
3 NOVIKOV/GIRAUDET	+1m41.2s
4 AL-ATTIYAH/BERNACCHINI	+6m10.1s
5 SOLBERG/PATTERSON	+6m26.5s
6 PROKOP/HRUZA	+6m47.5s

## LEG FOUR (71.51 miles)

OVERCAST THEN RAIN – AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 11–18C

Already leading by more than a minute, Hirvonen's day got even more straightforward when he discovered Ostberg was the latest victim of a curious misfire that had beset Ford on this event. There would be no more trouble from the



Latvala gives Malcolm Wilson the bad news



WRC future stars: Ostberg, Novikov

potential runner-up.

"Honestly," smiled the Citroen driver at the finish, "I have never driven as slowly for all my career. I was driving around everything and waiting for this. It's a great feeling to win this event."

Ostberg reflected on his morning, saying: "I had to try and drive the car with about 10 per cent throttle, when I gave it more, the misfire was coming with three cylinders. It was really difficult."

M-Sport sorted the problem and allowed the Norwegian to equal his best-ever WRC finish. A win had looked possible – in fact anything had looked possible on this event – but in the end Ostberg simply couldn't match Hirvonen's pace, precision and complete common-sense approach.

In the afternoon it was the turn of third-placed Novikov to suffer near heart-failure when the throttle cable

snapped on his Ford at the end of the stage. Cue frantic scenes and WRC radio reporter Colin Clark on the rev limiter at his entertaining best.

Fortunately for Novikov his repairs worked and he collected his maiden podium. The Russian's smiles was born out of relief as much as delight in the result. This was the perfect way to bounce back after bouncing out of the last round in Mexico.

Solberg brought his Ford home fourth, his hopes of a Powerstage win ruined by the kind of shockingly heavy shower that had brought the event to a halt two days earlier.

Al-Attayah's grip on fifth place had been loosened by a penultimate-stage puncture, but he made it back past Prokop (who stalled at the start of the Powerstage) to take fifth with the Czech ace one place behind.

Further down the field, there were stories aplenty of yet more chaos. The late shower ensured the event ended with the same kind of drama it began.

Only there was more to come. And this storm was brewing in the stewards' room and it would cast a much darker cloud over the Citroen camp. The clutch and turbocharger were in doubt on Hirvonen's car. Then came the confirmation: The Finn's first win for the French squad had been scratched. Exclusion beckoned for him and a one-place rise on the leaderboard for everybody else. Ostberg could now count himself among the 71 drivers to have tasted success at world championship level and only the second from his country.

And what an event for the man called Mads to chalk up win number one.

That was Rally of Portugal. ☘

WRC ACADEMY

## Fisher makes amends for his first win of the year

Northern Irishman Alastair Fisher finished the job he started 12 months ago in Portugal, winning the opening round of the WRC Academy.

A year ago, Fisher dominated the first-ever Fiesta-only event, but dropped his car on the final stage of the event. This time, he overcame some of the toughest conditions ever at a canter.

A minute after Thursday night's dark stages and the rain-lashed roads of Friday morning, Fisher and co-driver Dan Barritt throttled back through the Saturday morning stages to deliver his first Academy win of 2012.

"It's long overdue," he smiled at the finish. "I was maybe a wee bit too cautious this morning, but this is a great result. It's fantastic."

Swede Fredrik Ahlin led through the dark, but went off the road on Friday morning, when Fisher was breathing down his neck. Brendan Reeves ended up second, with Pontus Tidemand a distant third.

Welshman Elfyn Evans was third and enjoying a fine WRC Academy debut when he went off on SS6 and dropped 14 minutes. He finished seventh.

SWRC

Just when the third round of the Super 2000 World Rally Championship couldn't twist, turn or torture any more, it did just that. And Yazeed Al Rajhi's near-nine-minute lead

disappeared in the time it took for a cross-member to break on his Ford Fiesta RRC.

Craig Breen led the event after the opening dash through the Lisbon streets, with his Ford Fiesta S2000 just ahead of Hayden Paddon's Skoda Fabia. The Kiwi then made the best fist of the night stages, taking a 24.6-second advantage into the second day. Paddon was making good on his promise that his approach was, loosely speaking, win or bust.

Just when he was winning, his engine went bust.

Momentarily, Breen was out front and clear. It wouldn't last.

His Ford ingested some of the vast quantities of water that were falling around Faro and stopped. Heroically, Breen and his co-driver Gareth Roberts got the car going and got out of the stage 17 minutes slower than the lead SWRC time, only for the problem to reoccur terminally in the next one.

Out of nowhere, and just a handful of stages into this event SWRC rookie Al Rajhi was six minutes up. And he stayed there, driving as slowly as he could but still building three more minutes into his lead over Maciej Oleksowicz (Ford) and Pedro Meireles (Mitsubishi).

Then disaster. Al Rajhi's co-driver Michael Orr reported: "We came through a small dip and the cross-member broke. We couldn't have gone more steady."

And back to Paddon. The disbelieving PWRC champion came home the winner.

## RESULTS

Rally Portugal, March 28-April 1, round 4 of 13

22 SPECIAL STAGES, 270.166 MILES

POS	NO	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	TIME
1	10	Mads Ostberg/Jonas Andersson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	4h21m16.1s
2	6	Evgeny Novikov/Denis Giraudet	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+1m33.2s
3	4	Petter Solberg/Chris Patterson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+1m55.6s
4	7	Nasser Al-Attayah/Giovanni Bernacchini	Citroen DS3 WRC	+6m05.8s
5	21	Martin Prokop/Zdenek Hruza	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+6m09.2s
6	18	Dennis Kuipers/Robin Buysmans	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+6m47.3s
7	15	Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia	Skoda Fabia S2000	+7m09.0s
8	8	Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul	Citroen DS3 WRC	+8m37.9s
9	16	Jari Ketomaa/Mika Stenberg	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+9m52.8s
10	17	Peter van Merksteijn/Eddy Chevallier	Citroen DS3 WRC	+10m11.7s

OTHERS

DSQ	2	Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen	Citroen DS3 WRC	Clutch
13	3	Jari-Matti Latvala/Mikka Anttila	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	4h38m18.7s
R	1	Sebastien Loeb/Daniel Elena	Citroen DS3 WRC	SS3-acc

Starters/finishers: 49/31. Leaders: SS1-2 Solberg; SS3-4 Latvala; SS5 Solberg; SS6-22 Hirvonen

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Sebastien Loeb	66
2	Petter Solberg	62
3	Mads Ostberg	53
4	Mikko Hirvonen	50
5	Evgeny Novikov	39
6	Jari-Matti Latvala	28
7	Dani Sordo	21
8	Nasser Al-Attayah	20
9	Ott Tanak	15
10	Martin Prokop	14

MANUFACTURERS' POINTS

1	Citroen Total WRT	108
2	Ford WRT	96
3	M-Sport Ford WRT	69

**RALLY SUMMARY** The rally remained based in Faro this year, with many of the Algarve stages extended in length to make this the longest WRC round in the south of the country. Like last year, the drivers contested a street stage in Lisbon before the addition of three new Thursday-night stages.



Paddon locked in to S2000-class victory

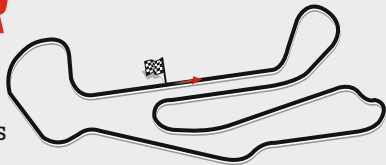
SWRC - Round 3 of 8

POS	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	TIME
1	Hayden Paddon/John Kennard	Skoda Fabia S2000	4h49m41.2s
2	Maciej Oleksowicz/A Obrebowski	Ford Fiesta S2000	+5m02.3s
3	Pedro Meireles/Mario Castro	Mitsubishi Lancer EX	+8m50.3s

# BARBER

USA

APRIL 1  
IndyCar Series  
Round 2/16



## AT A GLANCE

- Winner Will Power
- Pole Helio Castroneves
- Most laps led Scott Dixon
- Fastest lap Power



Polesitter Castroneves (left) had to settle for third place

# Power cuts it fine at Barber

Inspired strategic calls lifted Will Power from an unpromising grid spot, but to win the race he had to outrace Scott Dixon over the closing laps

INDYCAR MAY HAVE CHOSEN the streets of a Florida city to launch its new era, but it had to make for the hills of Alabama to have a proper race. Whatever edge fuel saving had taken off the season-opener at St Petersburg was restored last weekend with a race at Barber that started out being framed by strategy, but was settled by an all-out showdown between two of the series' quickest drivers.

Will Power was first across the line for Penske Racing, however his 3.3s margin of victory over Ganassi's Scott Dixon did

nothing to reflect how easily things could have gone the other way. Power had never expected to be in contention in the first place after having his best qualifying lap struck off as a result of being set under yellows, leaving him to start ninth on the grid at a circuit where passing is usually difficult.

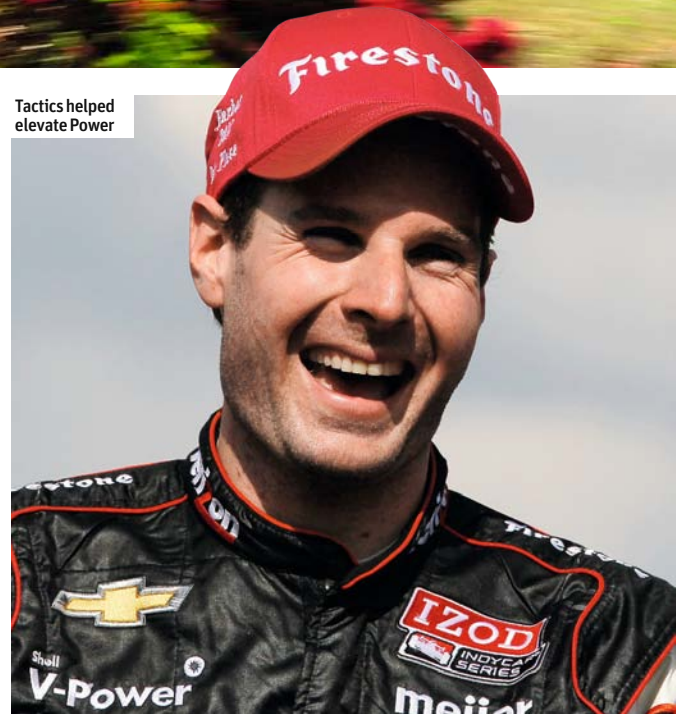
He made up a lot of the lost ground through some clever work on the pitwall by Tim Cindric. It wasn't enough to win him the race by itself, but it got him into a position to capitalise if anything happened to Dixon, who had held the

advantage for much of the afternoon.

Penske's work paid off during an eventful few minutes either side of the final pitstop. Dixon lost time to lapped traffic, then dropped additional seconds when his right-rear tyre changer dropped a wheelnut and he then had to be held briefly in the pits to allow EJ Viso past. The combination was enough to allow Power to leapfrog him during the pitstop cycle.

At that point the field was behind the safety car that had been triggered by a spinning Katherine Legge,

Tactics helped elevate Power



## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Race-long action built to a thrilling finish

## MILESTONE

Power's victory moves him ahead of Tony Kanaan and Alex Zanardi (right) on IndyCar's all-time winners' list



## REPORT INDYCAR BARBER

MARK GLENENNING  
reports



Slow stop proved costly for Scott Dixon



my turbulent air. Obviously clean air looks after your tyres – you have more downforce and grip, so you're not sliding and destroying them. If he was in front, I'm pretty sure it would have been the same result for me."

But key to Power's afternoon were a couple of decisions on the strategy front, the first of which was opting to start on the prime tyres when everyone else in the top 10 was starting on the softer reds. The team was confident that Power had the pace to hang with the cars around him during the first stint, and he'd then be well-placed to move up through the field when he switched to reds and everyone else put on blacks.

The other game-changer came when Cindric opted to bring Power in several laps early for his second stop, thus avoiding getting him bottled up behind Graham Rahal – whom he was starting to catch – and also releasing him into a clear section of track.

Dixon had similarly relied on strategy to get himself ahead of polesitter and early leader Castroneves, pitting a lap after the Brazilian but two laps earlier than he was fuelled for. It was enough to give him the lead before a couple of slow stops and his late-race misfortunes conspired against him.

If there was a third star of the afternoon it was Firestone, whose efforts to bring a new compound of both black and red tyres was rewarded with an afternoon full of overtaking. "You'd put [the overtaking] down to ▶

to give in and Power was able to kick open a gap.

"I tried for a few laps there, but burned the rear tyres off with about five or ten laps to go," Dixon said. "That was that."

Power was confident that he could have maintained the pace to the end, although he conceded that had he been chasing rather than leading, it would have been a different story.

"It was actually reversed when I was behind Scott [during the third stint]," he said. "My tyres went off worse than his, and he was quicker than me. He got in

Picturesque Barber track is tricky to overtake on

meaning that although Dixon had lost the lead, he still had an opportunity to regain it on the restart. Power had the inside covered, but that didn't stop Dixon from trying a strong lunge down the outside of the first corner. It forced Power to work to maintain his position, and even once he'd done so, Dixon still kept up the chase.

Over the laps that followed, the lead pair opened a substantial gap over Helio Castroneves in third, and Dixon had Power under sustained pressure before his tyres finally began

## Dragon's top 10 "as good as it gets"



Bourdais hauled Dragon into top 10

**BEHIND SCHEDULE, UNDER-FUNDED, UNDER-TESTED,** down on power, and not especially drive-able. Marry an engine of those specifications to a car that was shaken down the day before its first timed session at St Petersburg two weeks ago, run by a team that isn't operating out of a permanent base yet, and you have a package that is clearly not destined for greatness. At least, not in the short-term.

So how did Sebastien Bourdais manage to get the Lotus-powered Dragon Racing entry into the top 10?

"The car was switched on," he told AUTOSPORT. "We had good tyre degradation, and just made the most of it. The race itself was about as good as it gets for us. We had a strong run, and the car was not burning up its tyres, and that is how we picked up so many positions. I just drove to a pace where I felt I was not hurting the tyres, and after that it stayed together."

Bourdais had been competitive in the wet session on Friday, where the reduced amount of time spent at full-throttle masked some of the Lotus's inadequacies, but he'd started the weekend even more pessimistic than he'd been at St Petersburg.

"On the street courses, it is easier to compensate," he said. "As long as the car brakes right and has got good traction, you can kind of pull it off. But on the road course it's all about the flow and the balance, and if the car is not dialed-in then it's really hard. At the start of the weekend, we didn't even have a road course set-up."



New Lotus engine is down on power

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Nine runners-up will receive a pair of weekend BTCC tickets, including race-day programmes and tickets to the Donington Grand Prix Collection museum.



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**Question: What is the name of the first corner at Donington Park?**

- A) Redgate      B) Coppice      C) Goddards

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Terms and conditions: 1. To enter send an email to [autosport.competitions@haymarket.com](mailto:autosport.competitions@haymarket.com). 2. Competition closes at 11.59pm on April 9 2012. 3. The prize is as stated above and does not include any transportation or additional costs for catering/insurance or any other extra costs. 4. Open to UK residents aged 18 or over. 5. No cash alternative. Prizes are non-transferable. 6. Only one entry per person. 7. For full terms and conditions visit [www.autosport.com](http://www.autosport.com). The Promoter is Haymarket Media Group, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE.

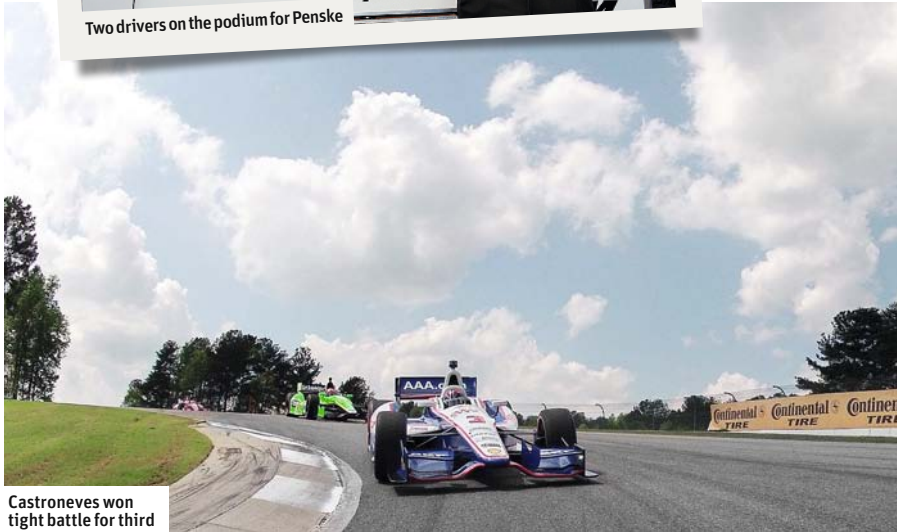


**“The boss is happy.  
That’s the main thing”**

Penske team president Tim Cindric made the calls that put Power in Victory Lane



Two drivers on the podium for Penske



Castroneves won tight battle for third



Tyres made for close racing

Had the race been only half as long the star of the day might have been Marco Andretti, who had hauled himself well into the top 10 from 13th on the grid before breaking his front wing during combat with EJ Viso. The missing front downforce particularly hurt him when he found himself being mugged by a posse including Barrichello, Franchitti and Sebastien Bourdais late in the race, and he dropped back to 11th.

outstanding – even if you subscribe to the post-race muttering from a rival who suggested that his first overtaking move came before the race started.

Rubens Barrichello enjoyed an action-packed final stint to finish eighth, putting him just behind Andretti’s James Hinchcliffe (who was denied a podium by the timing of the final yellow), and AJ Foyt’s Mike Conway (who was wrestling with understeer).

“They race hard here,” said Barrichello “But fair.”

The new era of IndyCar is still in its infancy, and there remain kinks that need ironing out. But if the new technical package has managed to produce a proper, gloves-off race in just its second start, then things bode well for the future. Somebody just tell Firestone to keep making those tyres. ❁



F1 refugee Barrichello was eighth

“The fact that the tyres had a discrepancy from brand-new to old of up to two seconds, three seconds, that allowed for good passing. It really eradicated fuel saving, because often we go in and we start lifting. These tyres eradicated that. It was just hard racing. I ran hard the whole day; never saved fuel.”

The short lifespan of the tyres was lifesaver for those who had figured out how to make them work, but they were a nightmare for those who hadn’t. Dale Coyne Racing’s Justin Wilson in

particular looked like he was driving a sprintcar during his stint on scrubbed reds, with the rear swinging dramatically out at the slightest invitation. Rubber played a hand in Andretti’s Ryan Hunter-Reay and Ryan Briscoe finishing outside the top 10, and also helped to muddy JR Hildebrand’s afternoon after he had taken his best-ever grid spot on a non-oval with fifth.

Elsewhere in the field, there was action pretty much anywhere you cared to look. The fact that Castroneves crossed the line

with both Rahal (Ganassi) and Simon Pagenaud (Schmidt Hamilton) within a second of him shows how tight the battle for third was, but even more remarkable was Dario Franchitti. The reigning champion came into the weekend off the back of a difficult opening race at St Petersburg, and his fortunes didn’t appear to have brightened much when he qualified 18th on Saturday. So when you consider that he spent the entire afternoon in traffic, his feat of recovering to tenth was

## RESULTS

IndyCar Series, Barber Motorsports Park (USA), March 30-April 1, round 2 of 16

GRID	
1 CASTRONEVES 1:10.4768	2 HINCHCLIFFE 1:10.5222
3 DIXON 1:10.5291	4 CONWAY 1:10.6791
5 HILDEBRAND 1:11.0759	6 KANAAN 1:11.3740
7 VISO 1:11.5257	8 RAHAL 1:11.5841
9 POWER 1:12.0098	10 PAGENAUD 1:14.2839
11 HUNTER-REAY no time	12 BRISCOE no time
13 ANDRETTI 1:10.6512	14 BARRICHELLO 1:10.5664
15 NEWGARDEN 1:10.6851	16 SATO 1:10.6111
17 BOURDAIS 1:10.7255	18 FRANCHITTI 1:10.6749
19 WILSON 1:11.5524	20 JAKES 1:10.7526
21 DE SILVIO 1:11.5721	22 KIMBALL 1:11.3594
23 TAGLIANI 1:12.5778	24 CARPENTER 1:11.8672
25 LEGGE 1:13.6457	26 SERVIA 1:13.3349

90 LAPS, 207 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	2h01m40.1127s	9
2	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+3.3709s	3
3	Helio Castroneves (BR)	Team Penske	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+19.1150s	1
4	Graham Rahal (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+19.3395s	8
5	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Schmidt-Hamilton	Dallara DW12-Honda	+20.1050s	10
6	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+23.3093s	2
7	Mike Conway (GB)	AJ Foyt Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+24.5552s	4
8	Rubens Barrichello (BR)	KV Racing Technology	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+25.4023s	14
9	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dragon Racing	Dallara DW12-Lotus	+27.1815s	17
10	Dario Franchitti (GB)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+32.7377s	18
11	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+33.5038s	13
12	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+35.8730s	11
13	Oriol Servia (E)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara DW12-Lotus	+37.8944s	26
14	Ryan Briscoe (AUS)	Team Penske	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+41.6742s	12
15	JR Hildebrand (USA)	Panther Racing	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	+44.5059s	5
16	James Jakes (GB)	Dale Coyne Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+54.5343s	20
17	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Sarah Fisher Hartman Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	+1m00.6182s	15
18	EJ Viso (YV)	KV Racing Technology	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	-1 lap	7
19	Justin Wilson (GB)	Dale Coyne Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	-1 lap	19
20	Simona de Silvestro (CH)	HVM Racing	Dallara DW12-Lotus	-1 lap	21
21	Tony Kanaan (BR)	KV Racing Technology	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	-1 lap	6
22	Ed Carpenter (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing	Dallara DW12-Chevrolet	-2 laps	24
23	Katherine Legge (GB)	Dragon Racing	Dallara DW12-Lotus	-5 laps	25
24	Takuma Sato (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	52 laps-engine	16
25	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara DW12-Honda	45 laps-brakes	22
26	Alex Tagliani (CDN)	Bryan Herta Autosport	Dallara DW12-Lotus	0 laps-engine	23

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Castroneves	86
2	Dixon	84
3	Power	77
4	Hinchcliffe	60
5	Pagenaud	58
6	Hunter-Reay	53
7	Rahal	50
8	Briscoe	46
9	Conway	38
10	Barrichello	37

Winner’s average: 102.082mph.  
Fastest lap: Power, 1m12.3912s, 114.379mph.  
Qualifying: field divided into two groups for qualifying. The fastest six from each move into a 12-car second round. The fastest six from this move into the pole shootout.

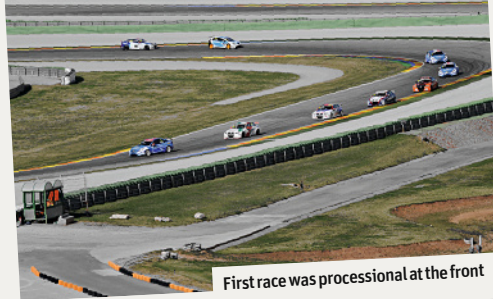
## VALENCIA

SPAIN  
April 1  
WTCC  
Round 2/12



### AT A GLANCE

- Race 1 Yvan Muller
- Race 2 Alain Menu
- Pole Muller/D'Aste
- Fastest laps Muller/Menu



First race was processional at the front

# BMW can't end Cruze saga

Success ballast, heat and an abrasive surface were expected to upset Chevrolet's dominance at Valencia, but it wasn't to be



D'Aste slid off after being hit by Menu

VALENCIA WAS BILLED AS a potential stumbling block for Chevrolet, the World Touring Car Championship's powerhouse team. A recipe of 40kg of success ballast, a busy, abrasive Ricardo Tormo circuit and hot conditions combined to pose a potentially stiff test for Chevrolet's front tyres.

Whether those challenges were oversold is open to debate, but Chevrolet left Spain's Orange Blossom Coast maintaining its perfect record of 2012 victories. RML's crack engineers had prepared for the meeting with a productive test at Vallelunga in Italy, but the successful outcome of the weekend must go down in part to a dash of brilliance from

reigning world champion Yvan Muller in qualifying.

Muller was on exceptional form after being stripped of his fastest time in Q1. The Frenchman dug deep on used tyres to evade an upset and progress to Q2. Panic over, Muller regained his composure to produce a blistering pole lap in the second session. A surprise? Well, the considered opinion of some seasoned observers was that Valencia was sure-fire BMW territory. In 2011, only what Muller dubbed "some sort of collective suicide" prevented the BMW runners from victory in race two.

Tom Coronel had been involved in the thick of the action 12 months ago, and the Dutch racer was back in the limelight last weekend

Menu risked all to win race two



by qualifying third, and top BMW, for race one. Monza pole-winner Gabriele Tarquini started his Lukoil SEAT on the front row for the rolling start. Muller's RML team-mate Rob Huff, suffering from tyre chatter on new rubber, lined up fifth – four places ahead of the third RML Cruze of Alain Menu.

"Coronel is the one to watch," predicted Huff. "If he's on form he'll be untouchable. If we outqualify the Beemers by half a second, we know we can hold them at bay. When Tom is only two or three tenths off pole, and it is hot and abrasive, Yvan could have one hell of a fight on his hands."

As things transpired, the first race proved processional among the leaders. Coronel began in a feisty mood, hounding Tarquini and giving the second-placed Leon's bumper a few 'love taps'. But Coronel's attack was extinguished by a warning flag from race officials for unsporting driving.

"I thought Gabriele was very smart, deliberately slowing down in the corners to defend his position," said Coronel. "The team came on the radio and said 'Do you know you have a camera in your car?' My response was, 'Yes, but I don't think I am doing anything wrong.'"

The scrap allowed Muller to break clear and claim an unchallenged victory. Further back, Huff and

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Low-key first race; thrilling climax to the second one

## MILESTONE

Yvan Muller is the only driver to win the first three races of a season



## REPORT WTCC VALENCIA

PETER MILLS  
reports



Tarquini claimed second for SEAT in race one

Menu made short work of Pepe Oriola's Tuenti Racing Leon to take fourth and fifth. Oriola demonstrated good sense to earn the Independents' victory and sixth place overall, and the Chevrolet duo also delivered a toned down, cerebral battle, after clashing in round one at Monza.

There was an air of anticipation ahead of race two. Series veteran Stefano D'Aste sat on the reversed grid pole. The Italian, a regular in the championship since 2005, was still chasing his maiden outright win. Could this be the big day?

Menu started on the front row alongside the Weichers-Sport BMW, but was unable to compete with the

rear-drive car away from the line. Careful not to over-exert his front tyres, Menu waited until lap six making before staging a passing attempt. It didn't quite go to plan. D'Aste was punted into a slide after closing the door on the Menu's over-committed Cruze.

In sporting fashion, Menu elected not to take advantage of the incident and allowed D'Aste to recover his position. On the next tour, Menu's patience and gentlemanly conduct was rewarded. D'Aste ran wide on the exit of Turn 1, presenting Menu with a clear path into the lead.

Behind D'Aste, two more BMWs of Franz Engstler and Coronel followed in close

pursuit. Oil on the track at Turns 9 and 10 broke the stalemate. Menu was the first on the scene.

"I went straight off into the gravel, and thought 'Oh, no!' But, looking in my mirrors, everyone else was doing the same," said Menu. Coronel stayed on the asphalt to leap into second and stage a final-lap charge. On the exit of Turn 6, Coronel made a classic cutback to draw alongside. Contact was made as Menu moved to the left, but the leader gathered a lurid moment together as Coronel opted for safety.

D'Aste was nevertheless delighted to claim an overall podium, not least because of the opportunity show off a new set of race overalls, designed in the style of a lounge suit. "I wanted something really different, with a tie," explained D'Aste of his upmarket creation. "OMP said, 'Stefano, do you want something to wear in your car or to a party?'" If an excuse for a celebration was needed, the Italian's best result in almost seven years was as good as any.

On Chevrolet's current form, it could be a while before the BMW men get such a look in again. ☼

## Choice words for Menu after oil spill

**THE FINISH TO VALENCIA'S** second race was one of the most exciting in recent WTCC memory. Chevrolet's winning Swiss racer Alain Menu had already survived punting the rear of polesitter Stefano D'Aste's Weichers-Sport BMW and a mid-race trip across the gravel (having lost control on oil) before his last-lap duel with Tom Coronel's ROAL Motorsport BMW.

A clash on that last lap at the exit of Turn 6 failed to change the order, and both men were relieved to survive the final corners in damaged machinery.

Coronel had to contend with bent steering and an unusual smell in his cockpit, but third-placed Stefano D'Aste was unable to take advantage. The Italian had sustained his own damage from an earlier bounce through the gravel, when the leaders' progress was disrupted by oil.

"I felt Alain took a mental risk after he went off," said

Coronel. "I couldn't tell if there was any more oil out there, but he was pushing like crazy. That's why I backed off from him a bit."

Menu disagreed with the assessment. The Swiss claimed to have made a judgement call that the leaking car would pit, leaving the remainder of the track clear.

"I noted that Tom initially backed off more than me, but after that I was over-safe. I slowed down far too much and left myself open to a last-lap attack," explained Menu. "It has been a long time since I remember a race as exciting as this one!"



Coronel ran Menu close during race two

## RESULTS

World Touring Car Championship, Valencia (E), March 30-31, RD2/12

GRID	RACE 1
2	TARQUINI
1:42.591	1:42.228
4	ORIOLO
1:42.829	1:42.643
6	MICHELISZ
1:42.994	1:42.862
8	DUDUKALO
1:43.410	1:43.108
10	D'ASTE
1:43.544	1:43.472
12	O'YOUNG
1:43.832	1:43.640
14	MACDOWALL
1:43.951	1:43.889
16	NASH
1:44.126	1:44.060
18	SABATINO
1:44.342	1:44.316
20	MONJE
1:44.509	1:44.435
22	BOARDMAN
1:44.703	1:44.702
24	NG
1:45.716	1:45.124

RACE 1 - 13 LAPS, 32.352 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Yvan Muller (F)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	22m01.705s	1
2	Gabriele Tarquini (I)	Lukoil Racing	SEAT Leon WTCC	+6.988s	2
3	Tom Coronel (NL)	ROAL Motorsport	BMW 320 TC	+7.232s	3
4	Robert Huff (GB)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	+8.988s	5
5	Alain Menu (CH)	Chevrolet (RML)	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	+9.250s	9
6	Pepe Oriola (E)	Tuenti Racing (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon WTCC	+10.164s	4
7	Norbert Michelisz (H)	Zengo Motorsport	BMW 320 TC	+11.584s	6
8	Franz Engstler (D)	Team Engstler	BMW 320 TC	+12.202s	7
9	Tiago Monteiro (P)	Tuenti Racing (SUNRED)	SEAT Leon 1.6T	+21.185s	11
10	Darryl O'Young (PRC)	Special Tuning Racing	SEAT Leon WTCC	+24.010s	12
11	Stefano D'Aste (I)	Weichers-Sport	BMW 320 TC	+25.349s	10
12	James Nash (GB)	Team Aon (Arena)	Ford Focus S2000 TC	+30.104s	12
13	Alberto Cerqui (I)	ROAL Motorsport	BMW 320 TC	+30.282s	13
14	Mehdi Bannani (MA)	Proteam Racing	BMW 320 TC	+30.685s	15
15	Alex MacDowall (GB)	bamboo-Engineering	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	+31.373s	14
16	Isaac Tutumlu (E)	Proteam Racing	BMW 320 TC	+32.187s	19
17	Gabor Weber (H)	Zengo Motorsport	BMW 320 TC	+32.507s	17
18	Charles Ng (PRC)	Team Engstler	BMW 320 TC	+34.050s	24
19	Tom Chilton (GB)	Team Aon (Arena)	Ford Focus S2000 TC	+34.372s	21
20	Tom Boardman (GB)	Special Tuning Racing	SEAT Leon TDi	+36.599s	22
21	Fernando Monje (E)	SUNRED Engineering	SEAT Leon 1.6T	+37.377s	20
22	Pasquale Di Sabatino (I)	bamboo-Engineering	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6T	+37.926s	18
23	Andrea Barlesi (B)	SUNRED Engineering	SEAT Leon 1.6T	+51.999s	23
NC	Aleksei Dudukalo (RUS)	Lukoil Racing	SEAT Leon WTCC	6 laps	8

RACE 2 - 13 LAPS, 32.352 MILES				
POS	DRIVER	TIME	GRID	
1	Menu	23m07.643s	2	
2	Coronel	+0.861s	8	
3	D'Aste	+1.306s	1	
4	Michelisz	+1.629s	5	
5	Engstler	+1.901s	4	
6	Huff	+3.007s	6	
7	Oriola	+5.704s	12	
8	Muller	+6.368s	10	
9	Tarquini	+15.044s	9	
10	Bannani	+15.306s	15	
11	Tutumlu	+19.838s	19	
12	Dudukalo	+21.166s	3	
13	Monteiro	+21.865s	11	
14	MacDowall	+23.167s	14	
15	Chilton	+25.024s	21	
16	Di Sabatino	+27.021s	18	
17	Barlesi	+50.229s	23	
18	Monje	+1m04.377s	20	
19	Ng	+3 laps	24	
R	Nash	8 laps - suspension	16	
R	O'Young	4 laps - overheating	12	
R	Cerqui	1 lap - accident	13	
R	Boardman	0 laps - accident	22	
NS	Weber	Transmission	17	

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Muller	88
2	Menu	61
3	Coronel	58
4	Huff	57
5	Tarquini	44
6	D'Aste	25
7	Michelisz	24
8	Oriola	24
9	Engstler	22
10	Rydell	14

INDEPENDENTS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Oriola	31
2	D'Aste	28
3	Michelisz	27

MANUFACTURERS		
POS	MANUFACTURER	PTS
1	Chevrolet	173
2	BMW Customer	108
3	SEAT Customer	101

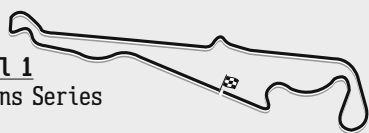
Race 1 Winner's average: 84.77mph. Fastest lap: Muller, 1m44.194s, 85.98mph. Race 2 Winner's average: 84.20mph. Fastest lap: Menu, 1m44.278s, 85.91mph.

## PAUL RICARD

France

March 31-April 1

European Le Mans Series  
Round 1/4



### AT A GLANCE

- **Winners** Mathias Beche/  
Pierre Thiriet
- **Pole position** Beche
- **Fastest lap** Beche



Thiriet and Beche enjoy their success

# TDS far from tedious at Ricard

There was nothing boring about the new-era, LMP2-based European Le Mans Series opener, with TDS duo Mathias Beche and Pierre Thiriet taking a deserved victory



Beche and Thiriet weren't in the clear until late on

**REPORTS OF THE IMMINENT** death of the European Le Mans Series appear greatly exaggerated; at least if the re-branded series is to be judged on the quality of its premier class and the action those cars provided at the series opener at Paul Ricard.

Mathias Beche and Pierre Thiriet claimed a one-lap victory aboard the French TDS Racing squad's ORECA 03-Nissan against a backdrop of confusion over the future of the series (see Pit & Paddock), yet the 6 Hours du Castellet could have gone any one of three ways. What's more, a further five of the 11 LMP2

prototypes entered in the top category appeared to be within striking distance of the podium at one point or another.

Beche, Thiriet and TDS, two-time class winners in LMP2 in last year's Le Mans Series, took victory with a perfect performance that was interrupted only by an enforced late-race pitstop to replace the car's nose. That proved decisive in their battle with the brand new Status GP Lola-Judd/BMW B12/80 and Greaves Motorsport's Nissan-powered Z11SN.

The unfancied Beche (who proved at Ricard that

he really is a star of the future) and the improving Thiriet (who is remarkably only in his fourth season of racing) battled first with the Status Lola and then the Greaves Zytek until their respective challenges wilted.

The chances of a fairytale sportscar debut for Status disappeared when Dean Stirling, the team's mandatory silver-graded driver, took over from Yelmer Buurman in the third hour. The Brit, who has had a stop-start sportscar career, was unable to get close to Buurman's times and had lost a lap after he was hauled out of the car after the 75-minute minimum driving time.

Greaves, which had led thanks to Tom Kimber-Smith and Lucas Ordenez, remained in the hunt until the fifth hour when Alex Brundle took over. On his first flying lap, he ran wide on the exit of Turn 2 and was unlucky to dislodge part of the nose on the almost non-existent kerbs.

Brundle damaged Greaves car's nose



That forced him into the pits, where the Greaves crew set about replacing the missing item before the fuel had finished going in. The result was a draconian two-minute stop-go penalty that potentially deprived the car of a victory and left Brundle fourth at the finish.

Greaves was confident that it would have come out on top in the battle with TDS. The Zytek was marginally more fuel-efficient than the ORECA, despite using the same engine, and the British team was sure it would have

avoided the need for a late-race splash.

"Our strategy, if everything went to plan, was to do one less stop," said Kimber-Smith. "By our calculations, that would have put us 30s in front at the finish."

There was less disappointment over at Status, which moved back up to third after an impressive stint from Alexander Sims, who in his own words "just drove the pants off the car". After all, the car hadn't turned a wheel before the Monday of race week and Status



Buurman led for Status early on

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

The three-way fight ultimately broke up, but this was still an enthralling race

“I might leave this engineering game at that. It can only go downhill from here”

Stand-in engineer Tim Sugden on his new and potentially temporary role at JMW

## REPORT ELMS PAUL RICARD

GARY WATKINS  
reports



showed its inexperience during the pitstops.

“To end up third having not driven the car before the weekend is very good,” said Buurman. “We’d have all taken that on Friday.”

The Sebastien Loeb Racing ORECA-Nissan claimed second in the hands of Nicolas Minassian, Nicolas Marroc and Stephane Sarrazin. Another team to run for the first time last week, it was unable to hone its brand-new car into a frontrunner.

The Loeb drivers benefitted from the issues encountered not only by Status and Greaves. The AF Corse-run Pecom ORECA (accident damage), OAK Morgan-Judd/BMW P2

(tyre wear and engine), the Jota Zytek (accident damage) and the Murphy Prototypes ORECA (exhaust) all ran ahead of the Loeb car and appeared to be well in the mix before their problems.

And that’s why the start of the new era of the ELMS should be regarded as a success. The P2 field is stronger numerically and in quality to that of the World Endurance Championship.

“There are four constructors all with competitive cars,” said OAK Racing boss Sebastien Philippe. “We had three or four cars fighting for victory and eight looking for the podium. So surely we have a good future.” ☼



JMW Ferrari took GTE Pro honours at Ricard

## One Ferrari lets another in for win

**JMB RACING LOOKED TO** have this one in the bag. Its Ferrari 458 Italia had a clear advantage on the only other genuine GTE Pro contender at Paul Ricard, yet ended up losing to the JMW Ferrari by seven tenths of a second.

JMW drivers James Walker and Jonny Cocker pulled off an unlikely victory over Jaime Melo and Marco Frezza courtesy of a risky tyre call, better fuel mileage (because the car was running less rear

wing) and a mistake by JMB.

A little over two hours into the race, Frezza held a 40s lead over the JMW Ferrari. That was reduced to just 15s when JMW took the gamble to double-stint all but the left rear Dunlop.

The gap was up to half a minute when Melo brought the JMB car in for a what turned out to be a slightly bigger splash of fuel than was actually required with 11 minutes to go. Ferrari

debutant Cocker, who was racing for the first time since 2010, managed to nip ahead into the first corner and then held on over the final laps.

Double-stinting the tyres was the key to the victory, reckoned JMW team manager Tim Sugden, who also doubled up as the car’s engineer for the weekend.

“We hadn’t planned to do it,” he explained, “but we had to try something to get the gap back.”



Loeb ORECA gained from others’ problems

## RESULTS

European Le Mans Series, Paul Ricard (F), March 31 - April 1, round 1 of 4

GRID	
1 BECHE 1:48.171	2 BUURMAN 1:48.482
3 K-SMITH 1:48.882	4 MOREAU 1:48.977
5 KAFFER 1:49.068	6 HUGHES 1:49.122
7 SARRAZIN 1:49.157	8 HANCOCK 1:49.687
9 FREY 1:50.193	10 VIGNALI 1:55.388
11 KEEN 1:55.410	12 MELO 1:57.630
13 GOOSSENS 1:58.517	14 ARMINDO 1:58.428
15 WALKER 1:58.517	16 HALL 1:58.532
17 CIOCI 1:58.803	18 PETER 1:59.082
19 FERTE 2:00.182	20 BRIERE NO TIME
21 ROSTER NO TIME	

189 LAPS, 701.190 MILES						
POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	TIME	GRID
1	Mathias Beche (CH)/Pierre Thiriet (F)	Thiriet by TDS Racing	ORECA Nissan-03	LMP2	6h00m53.302s	1
2	Nicolas Minassian (F)/Stephane Sarrazin (F)/Nicolas Marroc (F)	Sebastien Loeb Racing	ORECA Nissan-03	LMP2	-1 lap	7
3	Ye'Imer Buurman (NL)/Alexander Sims (GB)/Dean Stirling (GB)	Status GP	LoLa Judd/BMW-B12/80 Coupe	LMP2	-1 lap	2
4	Tom Kimber-Smith (GB)/Alex Brundle (GB)/Lucas Ordenez (E)	Greaves Motorsport	Zytek-Nissan Z11SN	LMP2	-1 lap	3
5	Michel Frey (CH)/Jonathan Hirschi (CH)/Ralph Meichtry (CH)	Race Performance	ORECA-Nissan 03	LMP2	-3 laps	9
6	Domnik Kraihamer (A)/Guillaume Moreau (F)/Jacques Nicolet (MC)	OAK Racing	Morgan Judd/BMW-P2	LMP2	-4 laps	4
7	Pierre Kaffer (D)/Gianmaria Bruni (I)/Luis Perez Companc (RA)	Pecom Racing (AF Corse)	ORECA-Nissan 03	LMP2	-6 laps	5
8	Phil Keen (GB)/Alex Kapadia (GB)/John Hartshorne (GB)	Curtis Racing Technologies	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	LMPC	-12 laps	11
9	James Walker (GB)/Jonathan Cocker (GB)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPPro	-13 laps	15
10	Jaime Melo (BR)/Marco Frezza (I)	JMB Racing	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPPro	-13 laps	12
11	Marc Goossens (B)/Maxime Soulet (B)	Prospeed Competition	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTAm	-14 laps	13
12	Fabien Rosier (F)/Philippe Thirion (F)	Extreme Limite ARIC	Norma-Judd M200P	LMP2	-14 laps	21
13	Sam Hancock (GB)/Simon Dolan (GB)	Jota	Zytek-Nissan Z11SN	LMP2	-15 laps	8
14	Nicolas Armindo (F)/Raymond Narac (F)/Anthony Pons (F)	Imsa Performance	Porsche 911 GT3-RSR	GTAm	-15 laps	14
15	Michal Bronizewski (PL)/Philipp Peter (A)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTPPro	-15 laps	18
16	Alain Ferte (F)/Phillippe Illiano (F)	JMB Racing	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTAm	-17 laps	19
17	Stuart Hall (GB)/Roald Goethe (D)	Gulf Racing	Aston Martin Vantage	GTAm	-29 laps	16
18	Marco Cioci (I)/Matt Griffin (IRL)/Piergiuseppe Perazzini (I)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia	GTAm	-45 laps	17
R	Massimo Vignali (I)/Jean-Marc Merlin (F)/Thomas Dagoneau (F)	Boutsen Ginion Racing	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	LMPC	111 laps-fuel pressure	10
R	Warren Hughes (GB)/Jody Firth (GB)/Luca Moro (I)	Murphy Prototypes (RLR)	ORECA-Nissan 03	LMP2	64 laps-exhaust fire	20
R	Bastien Briere (F)/Sebastien Buemi (CH)/Jack Clarke (GB)	Boutsen Ginion Racing	ORECA-Nissan 03	LMP2	27 laps-fuel/dashboard	6

### LMP2 POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Beche/Thiriet	26	1	TDS	26
2	Sarr'n/Mina'n/Marroc	18	2	Loeb	18
3	Buur'n/Sims/Stir'g	15	3	Status	15
4	Brun'e/Ordo'z/K-Smith	12	4	Greaves	12
5	Frey/Hirs'i/Meic'y	10	5	Race Performance	10

### GTE-PRO POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Cocker/Walker	25
2	Melo/Frezza	19

### GTE-AM POINTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Goossens/Soulet	26
2	Arm'do/Pons/Narac	18
3	Griffin/Cioci/P'zini	15

Winners' average: 113.069mph. Fastest lap: Beche, 1m49.369s, 118.433mph. LMPC: Keen, 1m54.675s, 112.965mph. GTE: Armindo, 1m59.112s, 108.740mph. Driver listed on grid set qualifying time. First-named driver in each car in table started the race.

**INTERNATIONAL RACES & RESULTS**  
**NASCAR SPRINT CUP**  
Martinsville (USA), Rd 6/36

**QUICK RESULTS**  
→ Winner **Ryan Newman**  
→ Pole **Kasey Kahne**  
→ Most laps led **Jeff Gordon**  
→ Points leader **Greg Biffle**

**RACE RATING** Unpredictable finish to what appeared to be a predictable race  
★★★★☆



NASCAR SPRINT CUP MARTINSVILLE (USA), APRIL 1, RD 6/36

# Newman's April Fool's joke on Hendrick squad

Newman (39) sneaks by as Johnson crashes

**RICK HENDRICK MUST HAVE** left Martinsville wondering how he failed to score his 200th win at NASCAR's top level as a team owner.

One of his Chevrolets had started on pole position – the #5 car driven by Kasey Kahne – but a blown engine had sent him spinning down the pitlane and into retirement. But the other three Impalas had dominated the race, with Jeff Gordon, Jimmie Johnson and Dale Earnhardt Jr leading 443 of the green-and-white-chequer extended 515 laps.

The reason for those extra laps also explains how Hendrick failed to win the race. With Johnson cruising to his first victory of the season, David Reutimann somehow failed to drag his hobbled Tommy

Baldwin Chevy into the pitlane. With it stranded on track the yellow flag was thrown, setting up a two-lap dash to the flag.

Johnson took the outside line, Gordon the inside. Critically, they were the only front-running cars not to stop for a top-up of fuel and some fresh rubber under caution, and when racing resumed they struggled to get up to speed.

Aided by a bump from Stewart-Haas' Ryan Newman, Clint Bowyer took his Michael Waltrip Toyota to the inside. The inevitable consequences of running three-wide followed. All of them spun and Newman slipped by into the lead. Behind the pace car Gordon then ran out of fuel to add to his frustrations.

At the final restart

Newman made a perfect getaway to cruise to his 16th Cup win. AJ Allmendinger brought his Penske Dodge home a career-best second, while Earnhardt came home third to salvage something for his team owner Hendrick. Amazingly, all of the top three came from a lap down after being penalised for speeding in the pitlane.

Matt Kenseth was the top Ford runner in fourth after a tough race for all the Roush Fenway cars. Points leader Greg Biffle was never a factor, but plugged away to take 13th.

Johnson eventually took 12th with Gordon 14th after suffering a very cruel April Fool's joke of an end to their day. Champion Tony Stewart was seventh.

● Connell Sanders Jr

**RESULTS**

- 1 **Ryan Newman (Chevrolet Impala)**, 515 laps in 3h26m12s; +0.342s; 3 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 4 Matt Kenseth (Ford Fusion); 5 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota Camry); 6 Denny Hamlin (Toyota); 7 Tony

- Stewart (Chevy); 8 Aric Almirola (Ford); 9 Brad Keselowski (Dodge); 10 Clint Bowyer (Toyota). **Points** 1 Greg Biffle, 226; 2 Earnhardt, 220; 3 Stewart, 214; 4 Kenseth, 214; 5 Kevin Harvick, 214; 6 Martin Truex Jr, 214; 7 Hamlin, 210; 8 Newman, 202; 9 Bowyer, 192; 10 Jimmie Johnson, 189.

**HE'S SHUT HIS TEAM, BUT HARVICK'S STILL WINNING** Kevin Harvick (2) took victory in the NASCAR Truck Series race at Martinsville - his first since shutting down his own outfit. His Richard Childress Racing team-mate Ty Dillon was second with points leader John King ninth.



**Castrol EDGE**  
Rankings  
CURRENT STANDINGS

- 1 **Sebastian Vettel** <> 29,770
- 2 **Mark Webber** <> 21,638
- 3 **Jenson Button** <> 20,358
- 4 **Lewis Hamilton** <> 19,865
- 5 **Fernando Alonso** <> 18,865

Ranking the world's best drivers.....

**WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK**

Adrian Quaife-Hobbs leapt 33 places to an all-time high of 142nd following his pole position, win and second place in Auto GP at Valencia. Russian Sergey Sirotkin was the only other driver to climb the podium twice and gained 445 spots to reach 663rd place.

To see the full list, visit [castroldriverrankings.com](http://castroldriverrankings.com)

## INTERNATIONAL RACES & RESULTS

**AUTO GP**  
Valencia (E),  
Rd 2/8

## QUICK RESULTS

- Race 1 **Sergey Sirotkin**
- Race 2 **Adrian Quaife-Hobbs**
- Pole **Quaife-Hobbs**
- Points leader **Quaife-Hobbs**

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Tyre strategy made for an intriguing pair of races

## REPORTS

### WORLD OF SPORT



**AUTO GP VALENCIA (E), MARCH 31-APRIL 1, RD 2/8**

# Quaife-Hobbs does the business

**ADRIAN QUAIFE-HOBBS** carried his Monza form through to Valencia, and took another Auto GP win in commanding fashion.

The Briton was unable to do anything about Sergey Sirotkin in race one, however – the 16-year-old Russian becoming the youngest winner in the series history after dominating proceedings.

Sirotkin's Euronova team was the only one to choose the medium-compound Kumho tyre in race one, and from the front row he jumped polesitter Quaife-Hobbs to build a lead that would hit 5s at one point.

Following a late-race safety car, caused when his Super Nova team-mate Victor Guerin spun on his own oil at Turn 2, Quaife-

Hobbs had one lap to pass Sirotkin, but on the soft tyres that did not provide the grip of the mediums, he had no chance of making a move on his target.

Pal Varhaug, who entered the meeting tied for the points lead with Quaife-Hobbs, was minus his Virtuosi UK engineer (who returned home for personal reasons), but put a brave

move on Facu Regalia's Campos car to take third.

Quaife-Hobbs jumped four places to third thanks to a brilliant start to race two. An early stop to replace his worn medium rears gave him the lead once the rest had been in, and netted him a second win of the year.

Front-row starter Regalia recovered from a tardy getaway to finish second. The Argentinian held off a charging Sirotkin, who suffered a slow turnaround by his Euronova crew.

MP Manor Motorsport's Daniel de Jong took strong fourth places in both races, while Italian F3 champion Sergio Campana led the opening 12 laps of race two, but was denied a strong result when he overshot his MLR71 pit box.

● Peter Mills

## RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Sergey Sirotkin**, 21 laps in 32m49.721s; 2 Adrian Quaife-Hobbs, +0.969s; 3 Pal Varhaug; 4 Daniel de Jong; 5 Sergio Campana; 6 Max Snegirev. **Race 2 1 Quaife-Hobbs**, 21 laps in 30m55.874s; 2 Facu Regalia, +5.496s; 3 Sirotkin; 4 de Jong; 5 Victor Guerin; 6 Chris van der Drift. **Points** 1 Quaife-Hobbs, 77; 2 Varhaug, 56; 3 Sirotkin, 51; 4 van der Drift, 37; 5 de Jong, 37; 6 Regalia, 35.

**V8 SUPERCARS SYMMONS PLAINS (AUS), MARCH 31-APRIL 1, RD 2/15**

# Whincup spins and wins in Tasmania

**WHEN JAMIE WHINCUP SPUN AT** the ultra-tight hairpin that dominates Symmons Plains, it looked like he had blown his chances of victory.

But despite dropping back to fifth place when the moment occurred on lap nine, the Triple 8 Holden driver knuckled down and



picked his way through the field to amazingly grab the lead once the pitstop cycle had cleared his path.

His 54th career win – and a record eighth at Symmons Plains – brought a big smile to the face of the three-time V8 Supercar champion.

"It's crazy how this sport works," he said. "Nothing went right all weekend and we walk away with a third and a win. Luckily enough in the spin I nailed it and spun it around!"

Whincup's victory meant that the 18-point deficit to Will Davison he had arriving in Tasmania was unchanged.

Davison had battled with Whincup's team-mate Craig Lowndes for the first third of the race, but contact between the two at the hairpin put Lowndes out and caused damage to Davison's

car, which developed brake problems later on that limited him to third, behind Shane van Gisbergen's Stone Brothers Ford.

Davison beat his team-mate Mark Winterbottom – still suffering from a leg injury to win the first race.

● Dylan Jacobs

## RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Will Davison (Ford Falcon FG)**, 59 laps in 52m30.548s; 2 Mark Winterbottom (Ford), +0.636s; 3 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore VE II); 4 Shane van Gisbergen (Ford); 5 Craig Lowndes (Holden); 6 David Reynolds (Ford). **Race 2 1 Whincup**, 84 laps in 1h17m26.386s; 2 van Gisbergen, + 5.000s; 3 Davison, 4 Tim Slade (Ford), 5 Winterbottom, 6 Lee Holdsworth (Ford). **Points** 1 Davison, 567; 2 Whincup, 549; 3 Winterbottom, 471; 4 van Gisbergen, 432; 5 Holdsworth, 387; 6 Garth Tander, 368.

## IN BRIEF

Hawksworth won again



## STAR MAZDA

Team Pelfrey's British ace Jack Hawksworth picked up a pole, a win and a second at Barber Park. The points leader was beaten by Juncos driver Martin Scunio in race two. Andretti driver Sage Karam was second in race one.

## ITALIAN F3

Eddie Cheever Jr won the first race at Valencia while his Prema team-mate Henrique Martins beat him later on. Moonlighting GP3 driver Patric Niederhauser (BVM) won race three.

## VLN

Schubert BMW trio Jorg and Dirk Muller and Dirk Adorf won a race declared early as fog hit the Nordschleife. Pole went to Peter Dumbreck's Falken Porsche.

## SUPER TC2000

Mariano Werner won on the new Buenos Aires street circuit. Ford privateer Caca Bueno inherited second – and the points lead – when Jose Maria Lopez retired with a broken water hose.

## AUSTRALIAN F3

Britain's James Winslow made it six wins from six races by taking a treble at Symmons Plains in his R-Tek Dallara. His team-mate Steel Giuliana pushed him hardest and was under a second behind in race one.

## SUPERSTARS GT SPRINT

Raffaele Giammaria dominated race one at Monza, while his Black Team Ferrari team-mate Andrea Palma turned the tables on Sunday in his 430. Simone Pellegrinelli drove Giammaria's car to third place.



- Race 1 Max Pigoli
- Race 2 Vitantonio Liuzzi
- Pole position Pigoli
- Points leader Pigoli



Liuzzi's race pace was a pleasure to watch at Monza

SUPERSTARS INTERNATIONAL SERIES MONZA (I), APRIL 1, RD 1/9

# Liuzzi the (Super) star on comeback in tin-tops

VITANTONIO LIUZZI WAS the star turn on his Superstars debut at Monza as the ex-Formula 1 driver took away a race victory and a podium in his Caal Racing Mercedes.

Liuzzi's weekend started slowly, a wheel problem

leaving him stranded at the side of the track on his qualifying out-lap.

But things went far better on race day. From the back of the grid, he charged through to sixth by the time the safety car came out at half distance and made it up

to third by the end, just 1.2s behind winner Max Pigoli's Ferlito Motors Jaguar and the Roma Racing Mercedes of Andrea Larini.

Sixth on the reversed grid for race two, Liuzzi was leading within a lap and took a stunning victory.

"I love karting, and the start of the second race was just like karting," he said. "The Mercedes engine helps as well, because it has so much torque. It's a shame we had some issues on Friday and Saturday, but we really did put together an amazing weekend."

Having taken a surprising win in the first race, Pigoli was even more shocked to be second in race two. Having been buried in the midfield for much of the race, a late safety car gave him the chance to make a late charge; a chance he grabbed with both hands. Francesco Sini was third in his Solaris Chevrolet.

Mika Salo had a disappointing end to the round, spinning out of race two when his Swiss Racing Maserati tried to part with one of its wheels late on. He was second at the time, and making inroads on Liuzzi's lead.

The brand new Audi RS5 was another car to give its drivers some headaches, with Audi Sport Italia drivers Gianni Morbidelli and Johan Kristofferson having problems in qualifying. Both drivers recorded fifth places as their weekend best, Kristofferson in the first race and Morbidelli in the second.

● Andrew van Leeuwen

## RESULTS

**Race 1** Max Pigoli (Jaguar XF SV8), 13 laps in 28m35.422s; 2 Andrea Larini (Mercedes C63 AMG), +0.414s; 3 Vitantonio Liuzzi (Mercedes); 4 Thomas Biagi (BMW M3); 5 Johan Kristofferson (Audi RS5); 6 Mika Salo (Maserati Quattroporte). **Race 2** 1 Liuzzi, 13 laps in 26m58.452s; 2 Pigoli, +1.153s; 3 Francesco Sini (Chevrolet Lumina); 4 Biagi; 5 Gianni Morbidelli (Audi RS5); 6 Nico Caldarola (Mercedes). **Points** 1 Pigoli, 39; 2 Liuzzi, 34; 3 Biagi, 22; 4 Larini, 21; 5 Sini, 15; 6 Morbidelli, 14.



Liuzzi beat Pigoli and Sini to race-two win

GRAND-AM BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK (USA), MARCH 31, RD 2/13

# Maiden win for Spirit of Daytona

IS THERE A NEW TOP DOG in Grand-Am? The manner in which Richard Westbrook and Antonio Garcia dominated at Barber suggests that their Spirit of Daytona Corvette DP will be tough to beat.

Westbrook claimed his first Grand-Am pole, and was never challenged in the race.

Bob Stallings Corvette duo Jon Fogarty and Alex Gurney never gave up the chase, finishing second ahead of Memo Rojas and Scott Pruett. The Ganassi team seemed to be out of contention after Rojas was penalised for punting Steven Kane's GT Audi off the road, but strategist Tim Keene called in Pruett for fresh

tyres during a late caution. Pruett charged from fifth to third in two laps and almost caught up with Gurney.

Jonathan Bomarito and Sylvain Tremblay won GT in their Speedsource Mazda RX-8.

● Jeremy Shaw

## RESULTS

1 Antonio Garcia/Richard

Westbrook (Chevrolet Corvette DP), 103 laps in 2h46m54.250s;

2 Jon Fogarty/Alex Gurney (Corvette), +2.326s; 3 Scott Pruett/Memo Rojas (Riley-BMW); 4 Ryan Dalziel/Enzo Potolicchio (Riley-Ford); 5 Max Angelelli/Ricky Taylor (Corvette); 6 Alex Popow/Lucas Luhr (Riley-Ford).

**Points** 1 Dalziel/Potolicchio, 60; 3 Westbrook/Garcia, 58; 4 John Pew/Ozz Negri, 58; 5 Luhr/Popow, 57; 6 Rojas/Pruett, 55.



Westbrook leads Angelelli

FERRARI EUROPEAN CHALLENGE MONZA (I), MARCH 30-31, RD 1/8

# Grossman resists Cadei to take double victory at Monza

IF LAST WEEKEND'S OPENING round at Monza was any indication, Bjorn Grossman and Niki Cadei are in for an epic battle in the Trofeo Pirelli Ferrari Challenge.

Grossman might have taken two wins at Monza, but the German hardly had things his own way. He and Cadei were almost inseparable all weekend, fighting wheel-to-wheel for the lead throughout the pair of 30-minute races.

The epic battle got the better of Cadei in race one, the Italian flying off at the Parabolica late in the race while trying to pass Grossman around the outside. He rejoined the track, but had to settle for sixth.

Cadei bounced back in race two, but could only manage second, Grossman holding his nerve to take his second win of the weekend by just 0.4s, with Stefano Gai a distant third.

In the Coppa Shell races, Giacomo Stratta and Alexey Basov shared the wins.

● Andrew van Leeuwen

## RESULTS

**Race 1** Bjorn Grossmann, 17 laps in 31m49.196s; 2 Andrea Belluzzi, +4.069s; 3 Andrii Kruglyk; 4 Stefano Gai; 5 Alexander Skryabin; 6 Niki Cadei. **Race 2** 1 Grossmann, 16 laps in 31m42.871s; 2 Cadei, +0.492s; 3 Gai; 4 Dario Caso; 5 Skryabin; 6 Max Blacardi. **Points** 1 Grossmann, 43; 2 Cadei, 28; 3 Gai, 24; 4 Belluzzi, 18; 5 Skryabin, 18; 6 Kruglyk, 17.



## INTERNATIONAL RACES & RESULTS

### INDY LIGHTS

Barber (USA), Rd 2/12

### QUICK RESULTS

- Winner **Sebastian Saavedra**
- Pole **Saavedra**
- Fastest lap **Saavedra**
- Points leader **Tristan Vautier**

### RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Processional racing from start to finish

## REPORTS WORLD OF SPORT



Saavedra dominated the Barber weekend

INDY LIGHTS BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK (USA), APRIL 1, RD 2/12

# Saavedra holds off Vautier for return victory

INDY LIGHTS FEATURED ITS second lights-to-flag win in as many weekends at Barber Motorsports Park last Sunday, where series returnee Sebastian Saavedra took a dominant victory.

The Colombian shared the front row with St Petersburg winner Tristan Vautier and capitalised on his advantage to open a gap

of around 2.5s by the time the race hit its mid-point. Sam Schmidt Motorsports driver Vautier responded, giving AFS/Andretti Autosport man Saavedra a brief fright when he found that his grip had vanished.

“Towards the end I saw Tristan start to push again, and when I tried to use my tyres, they were not there

any more,” he said. “But I knew I was not going to give away this victory, and I kept it together.”

He also had to survive a late restart following two late caution periods. The first was triggered by Bryan Herta driver Troy Castaneda firing himself into the Turn 5 tyres with six laps remaining. Shortly

after the restart, Andretti’s Carlos Munoz crashed out of fourth position.

Vautier felt that had it not been for the first yellow, he might have been able to pass Saavedra.

“I tried to save my tyres and then tried to do a move in the end,” he said. “And it almost worked, but it didn’t. We got the yellow

flag, which cost us a few laps, and it was close between us on the restart, and then [we had] another yellow flag.”

Esteban Guerrieri earned his spot on the podium with an early move on Munoz, giving Schmidt’s team a two-three, although there were mixed fortunes for the squad’s other two cars. Victor Carbone had started last following a crash on his first lap of qualifying, and did an outstanding job to work his way back to fifth behind Gustavo Yacaman.

Britain’s Oli Webb was less fortunate, suffering from tyre issues and then pitting for a new nose after a clash with Castaneda.

● Mark Glendenning

### RESULTS

**1 Sebastian Saavedra**, 26 laps in 56m12.358s; 2 Tristan Vautier, +0.629s; 3 Esteban Guerrieri; 4 Gustavo Yacaman; 5 Victor Carbone; 6 Alon Day. **Points** 1 Vautier, 93; 2 Saavedra, 88; 3 Guerrieri, 75; 4 Yacaman, 60; 5 Carbone, 60; 6 Juan Pablo Garcia, 50.

ADAC GT MASTERS HOCKENHEIM (D), MARCH 31-APRIL 1, RD 1/8

# Tandy keeps on winning

NICK TANDY AND CHRISTIAN Engelhardt took a tight win in the opening ADAC GT Masters round of the year at Oschersleben.

Tandy started fifth in race two and battled forwards to put his Schutz Porsche into the lead within 11 laps. From there, Engelhardt took over at the pitstop and fended off the advances of Sebastian Asch, who had replaced Maxi Gotz in the MS Mercedes a lap earlier.

Diego Alessi/Daniel Keilwitz were third in their Callaway Corvette, ahead of Dino Lunardi/Maxime Martin in their Alpina B6 BMW.

Lunardi/Martin had won race one in commanding fashion

from BMW Z4 crew Claudia Hurlgen and Dominik Schwager. ● Rene de Boer

### RESULTS

**Race 1** 1 Dino Lunardi/Maxime Martin (BMW Alpina B6), 38 laps in 59m59.306s; 2 Claudia Hurlgen/Dominik Schwager (BMW Z4); +0.886s; 3 Nicki Thiim/Robert Renauer (Porsche 911 GT3 R); 4 Nico Verdonck/Jesse Krohn (Ford

GT); 5 Nick Tandy/Christian Engelhardt (Porsche) 6 Dominik Baumann/Hari Proczyk (Mercedes SLS AMG). **Race 2** 1 Tandy/Engelhardt (Porsche), 39 laps in 1h00m02.741s; 2 Sebastian Asch/Maxi Gotz (Mercedes), +0.392s; 3 Diego Alessi/Daniel Keilwitz (Chevrolet Corvette Z06); 4 Lunardi/Martin; 5 Andreas Simonsen/Maximilian Buhk (Mercedes); 6 Baumann/Proczyk. **Points** 1 Lunardi/Martin, 37; 2 Engelhardt/Tandy, 35; 3 Gotz/Asch, 20; 4 Schwager/Hurlgen, 18; 5 Proczyk/Baumann, 16; 6 Renauer/Thiim, 15.



Engelhardt (l) and Tandy took victory

SUPER GT OKAYAMA (J), MARCH 31-APRIL 1, RD 1/8

# Last-lap pass gives Cerumo crew victory at Okayama



Cerumo pair triumphed

Kunimistu Honda of Naoki Yamamoto, who had taken over from Takuya Izawa.

Tachikawa closed in and retook Yamamoto to claim a 0.6s win.

● Jiro Takahashi

### A LAST-LAP MOVE BY YUJI

Tachikawa claimed victory for the Cerumo Lexus squad and his co-driver Kohei Hirate at Okayama.

From pole, Hirate was ahead early on, but lost his lead to Satoshi Motoyama’s NISMO Nissan four laps before the opening of the mandatory pit window.

Despite reclaiming position over the Nissan with a swifter driver change, he found himself still second, but now behind the

### RESULTS

**1 Yuji Tachikawa/Kohei Hirate (Lexus SC430)**, 82 laps in 2h01m21.776s; 2 Takuya Izawa/Naoki Yamamoto (Honda HSV-010), +0.588s; 3 Toshihiro Kaneishi/Kodai Tsukakoshi (Honda); 4 Satoshi Motoyama/Michael Krumm (Nissan GT-R); 5 Kazuki Nakajima/Loic Duval (Lexus); 6 Ralph Firman/Takashi Kobayashi (Honda). **Points** 1 Tachikawa/Hirate, 20; 2 Izawa/Yamamoto, 15; 3 Kaneishi/Tsukakoshi, 11; 4 Krumm/Motoyama, 8; 5 Nakajima/Duval, 6; 6 Firman/Kobayashi, 5.

# How can you match this?

On the eve of the British F3 season, top team Carlin knows it's almost impossible to emulate Dallara F308/016. Why? This car won four titles and has carried three men to F1. By *MARCUS SIMMONS*

**T**he svelte little beauty below is Dallara F308, chassis 016, proudly gleaming its lines to any visitors entering the reception of the Carlin team's new factory in Farnham.

It's in the livery it sported during Felipe Nasr's 2011 British Formula 3 International Series-winning campaign, but it spent the three previous seasons wearing the colours of Red Bull. For not only did 016 carry Nasr to BF3 honours, it also did the trick for Jaime Alguersuari, Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Eric Vergne in 2008, '09 and '10. In terms of major races and championships won – 31 and four respectively – it is surely the most successful F3 car of all time.

It won't be winning anymore: for 2012 it's a new generation of F3 chassis, and Carlin has been testing its five Dallara F312s to get them ready for this weekend's season-opener at Oulton Park. The main aim? To make the new cars exactly the same as the old.

"We've gone through the set-up bit by bit and tried to reproduce the car we had last year as a basepoint," says Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen, who also race-engineered Alguersuari and Nasr. "We've been testing the big bits – diffs, dampers, springs, aero – and we're very fortunate to have good drivers who can do those test programmes and give us some decent feedback. We then cherry-pick all the good points, put them on the car for

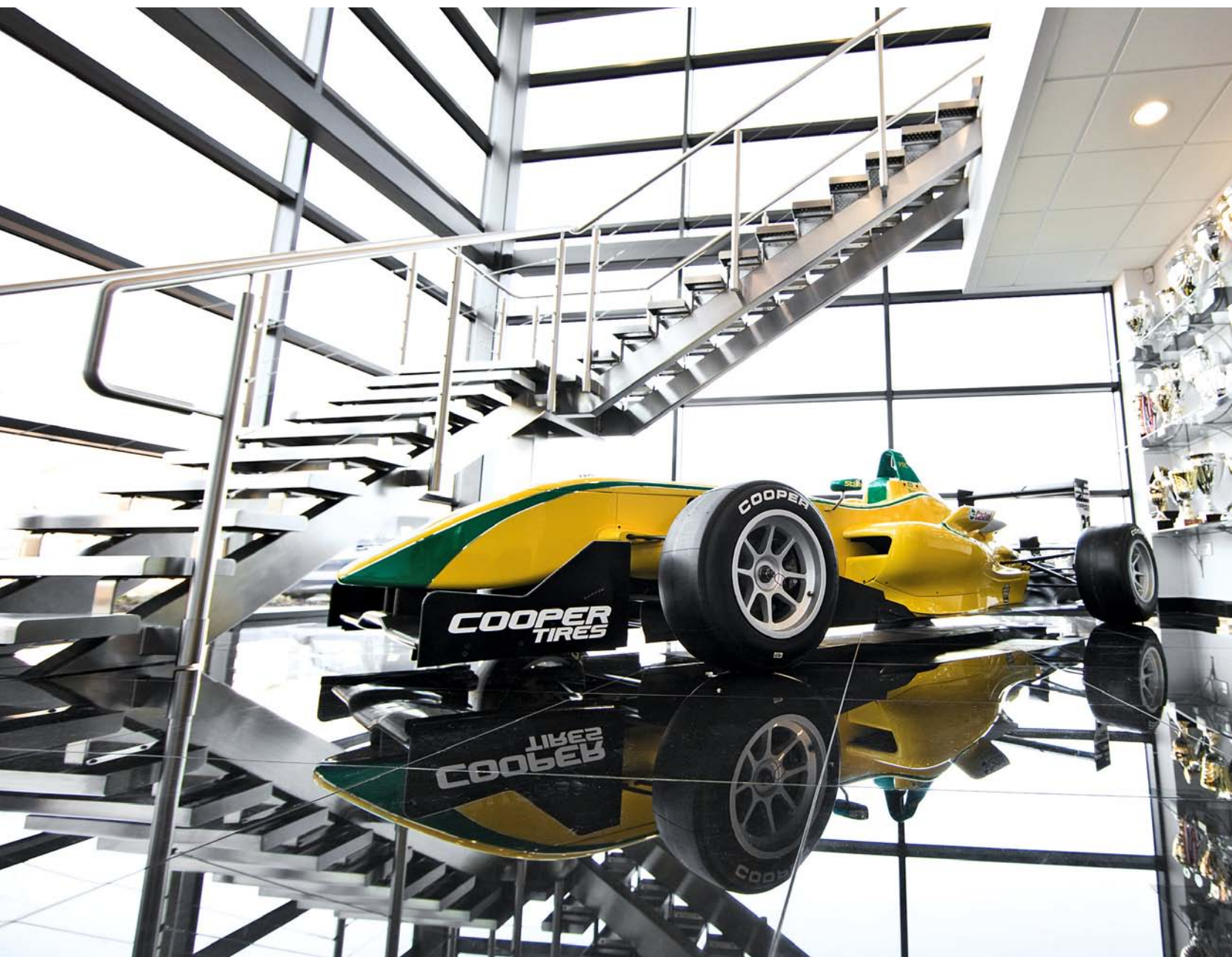
the next test, and move on from there for the next programme."

It's a methodology that has served them well since team chief Trevor Carlin set up the squad in 1997. The team is renowned for its development – but caution in applying radical ideas.

"We're very careful not to go off in the wrong direction," says Owen, who joined the team in late 2001 from the Benetton Formula 1 squad. "We always start with our baseline set-up – it's

**"We were instantly impressed with Ricciardo and Vergne. Neither of them had any real weaknesses"**

**Carlin chief engineer Mark Owen**



what Carlin has developed over the years since way back when.

"There was quite a big change in 2005 when we went from monoshock to twin dampers, and it was a big step to replicate what we'd had before. But we kind of knew it must be better so we persevered with the twin-shock."

When the previous chassis was introduced in 2008, Alguersuari celebrated the new era by reducing 016 to a wreck in the Oulton barriers, along with team-mate Brendon Hartley.

"I was quite... cross!" understates Owen. "We'd put in a huge effort over the winter and I was absolutely determined to put every bit of development from the previous car [the F305] into the new one. When we were running one-two-three I was really happy, saying, 'There you go boys, it was all worth it.' Then they collided..."

Alguersuari redeemed himself with his late-season run to the title, pipping team-mates Hartley and Oliver Turvey, plus T-Sport's Sergio Perez. Of the four drivers to win the title in 016, he

started his campaign from the lowest level of previous form, so perhaps it was to be expected that he might take longer to get to grips with F3.

"Ricciardo and Vergne finished a little bit higher in Formula Renault, so they were a bit more on top of their game when they came to us," acknowledges Owen. "We were instantly impressed with both of them. There were no real weaknesses – we just had to get them working with the team on getting the best out of the car."

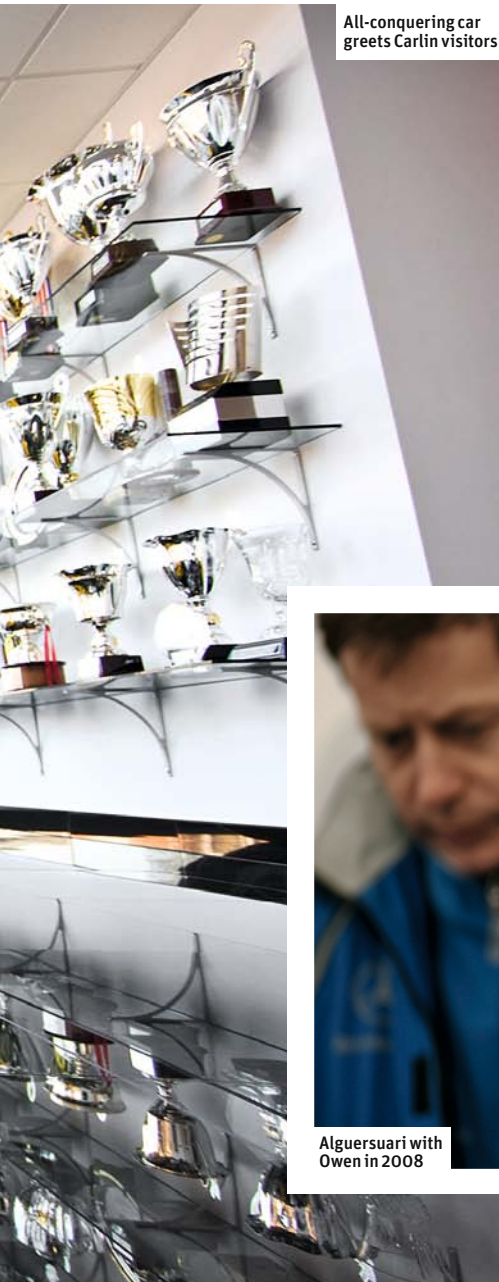
Nasr, meanwhile, already had a season in BF3 under his belt with Double R. "He had some weak points that were very easy to identify over the winter and he worked hard on them," says Owen. "It was really how to get the best out of the car in qualifying."

Even at Carlin, Nasr found himself outshone on one-lap pace by team-mate Kevin Magnussen. "He wouldn't put the car at risk in qualifying," says Owen. "I think he was a bit within himself." Was this a consequence of his being the only one of the four champions not backed by Red Bull, and possibly mindful of budget? "No I don't think so," continues Owen. "He's just a careful guy, respectful of what he's got."

So how have Carlin's engineers managed the ambitions of the five guys on board this year – who all expect success? "It may sometimes look from the outside that we don't have to worry about other teams because we're quick, but that's not the case," says Owen. "There's pressure on everyone; we are battling within the team at times and undoubtedly we can get distracted."

Even so, he says there are no worries if one of the drivers gets lumbered with a development route that doesn't work: "If you explain it to the driver it's fine – it's only when someone who wasn't part of the decision gets on the phone that it can be a problem. But to be the quickest team, you've got to find a few bad things on the way." ❧

PIC: DREW GIBSON/CARLIN, LAT



All-conquering car greets Carlin visitors



Alguersuari with Owen in 2008

## ONE CAR'S FOUR F3 CHAMPIONS

### JAIME ALGUERSUARI

**Pole positions 6 Wins 5**

Mark Owen: "He worked and worked on getting the best out of it on new tyres. Then he was pretty much there. He was quite cool and level-headed, and maybe that worked to his advantage because the other drivers were getting frustrated. If he was third on a given day, he was fine."



### DANIEL RICCIARDO

**Pole positions 6 Wins 6**

MO: "He was teamed with Max Chilton, who'd done a bit, and straight away he was pushing him. When we went to new circuits that none of the drivers had been to, Ricciardo was the one who was straight on it, finding the quickest lines first."



### JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

**Pole positions 11 Wins 13**

MO: "Like Ricciardo, from the initial tests he was very quick straight away – neither of them were like rookies, and they were both expected to be in the top three in year one. He could drive the car with more oversteer – there was quite a bit more steering movement with him."



### FELIPE NASR

**Pole positions 4 Wins 7**

MO: "He has always been a very good racer and at Carlin he was so calm – I would imagine his heartbeat hardly increased in a race. He understood that you can make a car do what you want it to – if he had a problem in one corner he would adjust his driving rather than change the car too much."





uk



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**PAST FIVE CHAMPIONS**

<b>2011</b>	Felipe Nasr	Carlin Dallara-VW
<b>2010</b>	Jean-Eric Vergne	Carlin Dallara-VW
<b>2009</b>	Daniel Ricciardo	Carlin Dallara-VW
<b>2008</b>	Jaime Alguersuari	Carlin Dallara-Merc
<b>2007</b>	Marko Asmer	Hitech Dallara-Merc



Pietro Fantin back for more

Sainz topped two test days



**WHERE TO WATCH ON TV**

Channel 4 and Motors TV show highlights, with Pau going live on Motors



**BF3 2012 CALENDAR**

- April 6-7**  
Oulton Park, Cheshire
- April 13-15**  
Monza, Italy
- May 11-13**  
Pau, France
- June 9-10**  
Rockingham, Northants
- June 23-24**  
Brands Hatch, Kent
- June 29-July 1**  
Paul Ricard, France
- July 26-28**  
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
- August 4-5**  
Snetterton, Norfolk
- September 8-9**  
Silverstone, Northants
- September 29-30**  
Donington Park, Leicestershire

**FIVE TO WATCH**



**Carlos Sainz Jr (Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen)**

Red Bull junior narrowly tops our unofficial AUTOSPORT test ranking (giving F3 points for the seven days). Driving on instinct at the moment – and spectacular to watch! A great talent. AUTOSPORT test ranking: 1st, 99pts.



**Harry Tinncknell (Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen)**

Has bounced back from a finger/knuckle breakage at Spa last November and is driving with a beautiful fluidity as he enters his second year of F3. Loving life at Carlin after switch from Fortec. AUTOSPORT test ranking: 2nd, 98pts.



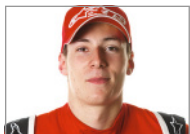
**Jack Harvey (Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen)**

Another guy who has really sussed the momentum style needed for F3, and has come back fitter than ever for his second year with Carlin. It's time to deliver for the Racing Steps-backed ace. AUTOSPORT test ranking: 3rd, 90pts.



**Jazeman Jaafar (Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen)**

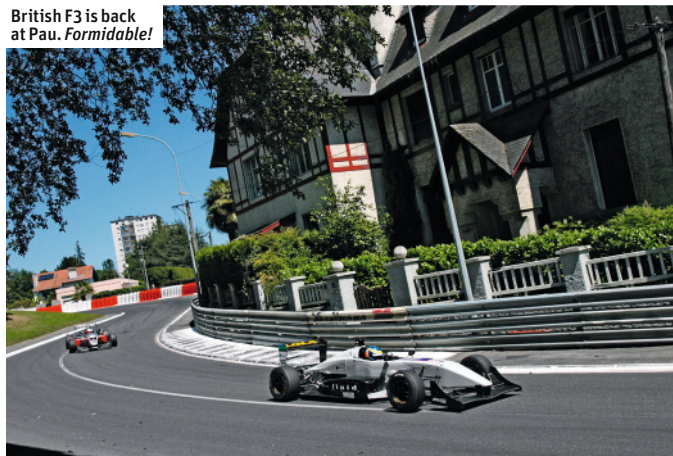
When he gets it together the amiable Malaysian can put in a great lap time – his Oulton test-topper was first class. But can he add frontrunning consistency for his third F3 campaign? AUTOSPORT test ranking: 4th, 74pts.



**Alex Lynn (Fortec Motorsports Dallara-Mercedes)**

Formula Renault UK champion was the only non-Carlin driver to top a test day and is looking more and more impressive as season approaches. And he's still climbing his learning curve. AUTOSPORT test ranking: 5th, 68pts.

British F3 is back at Pau. *Formidable!*



Lynn has headed Fortec charge



Ratel worked tirelessly to save series



French team Hexis switches from Aston to McLaren...



Audi's latest-spec R8 will be run by WRT squad

# How this man saved World GTs... again

Stephane Ratel has pulled together the grid he wanted – at a price. *GARY WATKINS* assesses it

**T**he master magician has pulled the rabbit out of the hat once more. Stephane Ratel has conjured up a grid at the last moment to ensure the continuation of the FIA GT1 World Championship into a third season. Only this time he's broken the golden rule of the Magic Circle: he's told us how he did it.

Ratel has made no bones that he put together three of the nine teams on the entry list, though there were those within his eponymous organisation who weren't so keen on spilling the beans. In his words, those three teams "have been engineered by the Stephane Ratel Organisation". That could be

interpreted as the action of a desperate man, one who had already changed the technical rules three times, trying to save his series. Or alternatively, of someone who has utter conviction in what he is trying to achieve.

Ratel, of course, insists it's the latter. He suggests it's not so out of the ordinary for a series organiser to prop up the grid (see panel, right) when the need arises. What's more, he reveals that the reason he took the financial risk to put together the teams is that he sees signs of a healthy future.

The switch away from the GT1 machinery that fought out his first two world championships to what, for now, are as-near-as-damn-it pure GT3 cars

explains his optimism. He says the level of interest from manufacturers motivated him through a winter of uncertainty that he'd promised would never happen. Remember, Ratel vowed that he would call time on his world championship adventure if he didn't have the 2012 grid in place by the middle of last summer.

"The only reason I did it was because I had encouragement from the manufacturers," he says. "When I started the championship we had manufacturer interest from Nissan and Nissan alone. The rest of the grid was made up of what really were all old cars. Now we are switching to GT3 we have established a dialogue with



...as All-Inkl.com do Lambo-to-Merc trade-in



Some of these old-style GT1 cars are out for 2012

most of the manufacturers.”

There is logic to Ratel's insistence that the championship has a future. It is starting afresh from where it should have begun in 2010. His original plan, hatched back in '07, for a new-breed GT1 car was based on the regulations of the then-new GT3 category. The proposal for a GT3+ category was hijacked by the manufacturers, the so-called Gang of Four comprising Aston Martin, Chevrolet, Porsche and Ferrari. The category that resulted was both expensive and unsustainable once the Automobile Club de l'Ouest at Le Mans decided it would do away with GT1 at the 24 Hours and the series around the world that run to its rules.

The move to a GT3-based formula means that Ratel's ambition to have a grid brimming with 10 manufacturers – or brands as he calls them – is now realistic simply because the cars already exist, and more are on their way. It is also a cheaper category, which has led to a shift in the kind of team on the entry list.

The majority of the field in the first two years of the world championship was funded by wealthy individuals such as James Rumsey at JRM/Sumo Power

and Young Driver AMR boss Jan Struve. Now it's made up largely of what Ratel calls professional racing teams such as AF Corse, WRT, Vita4One (formerly Vitaphone) and Reiter Engineering.

“I now have around the table real racing professionals,” he says. “They are people, like me, who make their living from motorsport. Our aim is to build something together.”

Vincent Vosse, whose WRT team will run a pair of Audi R8 LMS ultras, believes in Ratel's vision. “I see this as a great opportunity, because it is a true world championship where only one team represents each manufacturer,” he says. “It is the first time in my career, as a driver and then a team owner, that I have had sponsors approaching me rather than the other way around.”

It seems that Ratel's optimism is shared by his participants. If that confidence is maintained through to the summer, the series will have a future. If not, it probably won't. Ratel is promising that unless he has nine or 10 teams signed and sealed by the end of July, there'll be no series in 2013.

“No one is going to believe me,” he says, “but I have had two crazy winters like this and I won't do a third.” ❖

## RATEL ANSWERS THE BIG QUESTIONS

### Did the multiple U-turns on regulations through the second half of last year give you a credibility problem?

Possibly. My problem is that I'm too much of a nice guy. If I had been more of a hard-nosed businessman, I would have said that this is what we are going to do and that would have been what we have now. I tried to respect the investments of the teams that had supported me. I didn't want to tell them that they had to put the cars they'd bought for €500,000 in their private collections. That's why I tried as long as possible to keep the old GT1 cars.

### Does the fact that you have put three of the teams together yourself send out the wrong message?

Absolutely not. Sure, we are financing them in some way and providing a safety net, but I am hopeful that with the interest we have from sponsors and drivers that we can balance the books. Any business has to decide where it makes the correct investments. In the past, we have had financed events, but now the championship is starting to have self-financed races. Do you think that A1GP and Superleague Formula weren't paying for cars to be on the grid? The difference is that I prefer to be open about it.

### Will the level of the competition this year reach the same heights as in 2010 and 2011?

If I look down the entry list, I see 10 of the 18 cars that can win races. We cannot say that it is packed with grid fillers.

### GT1 2012 CALENDAR

- April 8-9**  
Nogaro, France
  - April 21-22**  
Zolder, Belgium
  - May 26-27**  
Navarra, Spain
  - June 9-10**  
Slovakia Ring, Slovakia
  - July 7-8**  
Algarve, Portugal
  - August 25-26**  
Beijing-Goldenport, China
  - September 1-2**  
Ordos, China
  - September 15-16\***  
Korean International, S Korea
  - September 29-30\***  
Moscow, Russia
  - December 1-2**  
Buddh International, India
- \*provisional



### PREVIOUS CHAMPIONS

- 2010** Michael Bartels/Andrea Bertolini  
Vita4One Maserati MC12
- 2011** Michael Krumm/Lucas Luhr  
JR Motorsports Nissan GT-R

### WHERE TO WATCH ON TV

The FIA GT1 World Championship will be screened live on ESPN and Bloomberg TV. Channel 4 will show a highlights package



### WHAT'S NEW

- GT3 cars replace the mixture of old and new GT1 cars
- Each manufacturer or brand can only be represented by one two-car team
- Success ballast system has been discarded
- Pirelli replaces Michelin as the control tyre supplier

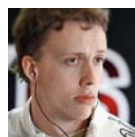
GT3 cars replace mixed bag of GT1s



India's F1 circuit joins the calendar



## FIVE TO WATCH



**Frederic Makowiecki/Step Dusseldorp**  
Hexis McLaren MP4-12C

McLaren-contracted Alvaro Parente may be the star addition to the Hexis line-up, but the combination of Makowiecki and Dusseldorp looks like its best shot for a drivers' title to add to the teams' crown it won last year.



**Marc Basseng/Markus Winkelhock**  
All-Inkl/Munnich Mercedes SLS AMG

The reliability issues that were partly to blame for this duo's championship challenge going off the rails last year should be a thing of the past courtesy of a move from Lamborghini to Mercedes machinery.



**Oliver Jarvis/Frank Stippler**  
WRT Audi R8 LMS Ultra

The Belgian WRT squad will vie with Vita4One as the best-organised (and funded) team in the paddock and the combination of two former Audi DTM drivers of different generations looks like a strong bet.



**Antonio Pizzonia/Mike Parisy**  
Exim Bank (Muhlner) Porsche 911 GT3-R

Former Jaguar and Williams Formula 1 driver Pizzonia makes a long overdue return to a world championship. What impact he makes is likely to depend on the competitiveness of the Porsche.



**Mikhail Aleshin/Andreas Zuber**  
Team Russia (LMP) Aston Martin DBRS9

French LMP squad has been given Russian backing and ex-Formula Renault 3.5 champ Aleshin for its GT1 graduation. He and ex-GP2 ace Zuber, who has starred on sporadic GT1 outings, could be title-winning material.



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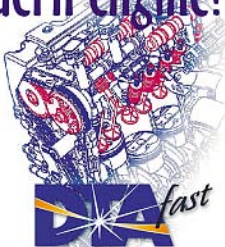
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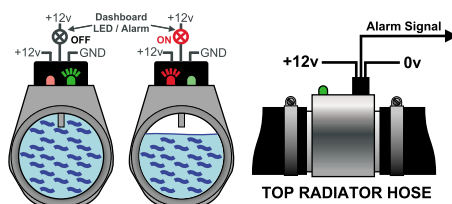
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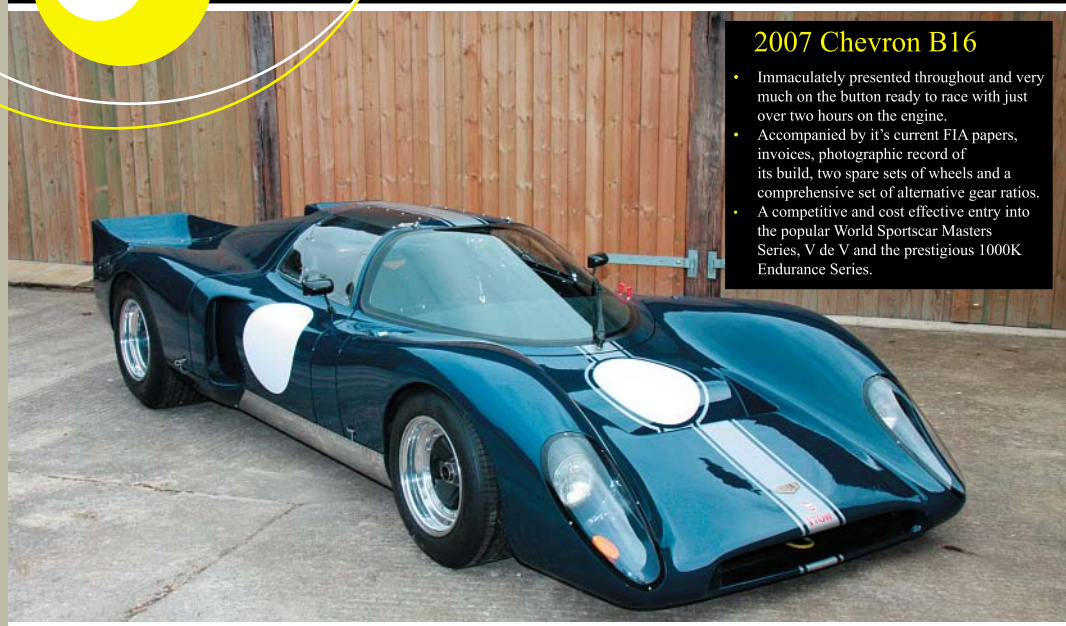
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Company	Job Title	Application Deadline
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Motorbase will add another Porsche to its Brit GT attack

## AUTOSPORT SAYS...

**KEVIN TURNER**  
FEATURES  
EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



**THERE WAS SOMETHING A BIT** odd about many of the decisions made at Brands Hatch last weekend. On the one hand, there were penalties handed out left, right and centre for cars 'not respecting the track limits'. Sometimes it was a drive-through, at others the penalty came in the form of a post-race time addition. Michael Meadows even lost a Carrera Cup win thanks to running over the white lines once too often.

And yet driving that resulted in cars bouncing off each other, barriers, or both, didn't seem to incur the same immediate response. There was some serious damage in the Renault Clio Cup and Ginetta GT Supercup races. And Fergus Walkinshaw has Reece Somerfield's brave decision to crash into barriers, rather than his stationary car, to thank for walking away unscathed.

Putting aside the debate about cars going off track, there does appear to be a mismatch of priorities.

Perhaps it is because one crime is easier to police than another. A steward can easily tell if a car has gone too far over a line, but making a call on the actions of two drivers, who can state their cases in no uncertain terms, is another matter entirely.

In some - uncertain - instances, caution is understandable, but letting too many incidents go is dangerous. Penalties in the right place could do a lot more than protect the grass at the side of the track.

### Extra contact details

**Ben Anderson**, national editor  
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

## Tandy Porsche and RJN Nissan to British GT opener

Top squads prepare extra cars for Oulton Park Bank Holiday GT meeting

**GT SQUADS MOTORBASE** Performance and RJN Motorsport plan to provide extra entries for the British GT season opener at Oulton Park this weekend and could run them throughout the year.

Motorbase has already announced it will return to the series with a Porsche 997 GT3 R for Michael Caine/Daniele Perfetti and will now add a second car. If it is ready in time, Porsche Supercup race winner Nick Tandy and former Carrera Cup racer Steve Parish will drive at Oulton.

Motorbase boss David Bartrum said:

"We went with GTs and Steve wasn't sure what he wanted to do. He drove the car at Brands Hatch and looked more comfortable than he ever looked in a Porsche and wanted one. He loved it.

"We need to find another partner for the rest of the season because Nick can't do all the rounds. Nick will coach Steve, who hasn't had much running, and sort the car.

"Richard Westbrook is at Oulton [in a Traxspeed Porsche] and we want to announce our arrival on the scene, so what better than a duel between

probably the best Porsche GT drivers in the world, Richard and Nick?"

Tandy, who won a round of the ADAC GT Masters at Oschersleben in a similar car last weekend, added: "We haven't practised together so it'll be difficult at the weekend. It's getting used to the Avon tyre, which is different to other tyres I've raced on, and it has an impact on how you set-up the car.

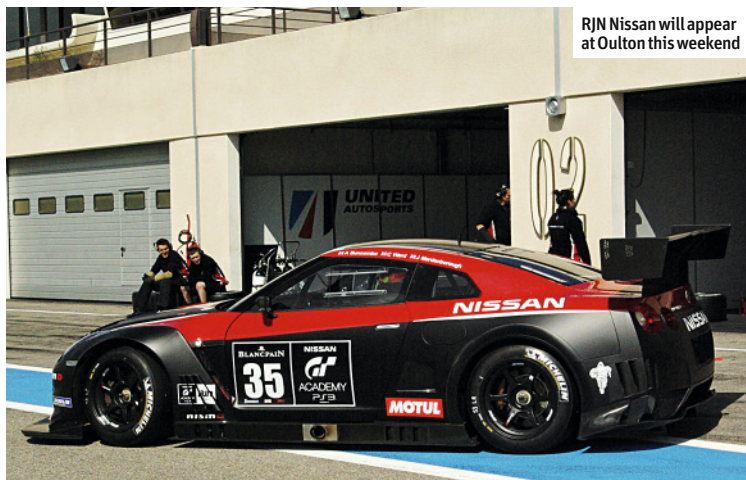
"It's always nice to race against top guys like Richard Westbrook and Allan Simonsen. If you want to be the best you have to beat the best."

Joining Motorbase in the entry will be an RJN Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 in a precursor to what could be a full-season assault. Alex Buncombe and 2011 Nissan PlayStation GT Academy winner Jann Mardenborough will drive as a warm-up for the opening round of the Blancpain Endurance Series at Monza on April 15.

Team boss Bob Neville said: "We are treating Oulton as a shakedown ahead of Monza. It will be a low-key effort, but the intention is there to do more races. There are a number of different scenarios, which include cherry picking a number of races or doing the rest of the season.

"The British races will be part of the Academy programme, which is aimed at bringing Jann on towards driving an LMP2 prototype in 2012."

RJN Nissan will appear at Oulton this weekend



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Blancpain Endurance Series

# Jelley makes McLaren move

Carrera Cup and British GT ace joins new team for Blancpain Endurance campaign

Jelley is building his GT racing reputation



## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP

GB frontrunner Stephen Jelley will contest the Blancpain Endurance Series at the wheel of a McLaren this season.

Jelley, who finished third in the Carrera Cup in 2010 and '11, will drive a McLaren MP4-12C GT3 for the new VonRyan Racing team. The 29-year old will share the car with brothers Matt and Julien Draper, who are respectively graduating from the MSV F3 Cup and British GT.

Jelley is making the move into Blancpain after a planned assault on the 2011 Le Mans Series fell over at the last minute.

Jelley said: "Endurance racing is the most sensible place for me to be at this stage of my career. It was a matter of finding the right seat and I'm happy to be at VonRyan Racing and driving with the Drapers. They see themselves racing at the Le Mans 24 Hours in a few years and needed someone with the same goal and a bit

of experience to help guide them."

Jelley was due to get his first taste of the McLaren at Oulton Park on Tuesday and Wednesday this week, ahead of the BES opener at Monza on April 15.

Ollie Millroy, a race winner in Formula Renault UK, will also be on the grid for the first round of the BES in the Barwell-run Ecurie Ecosse BMW Z4 GT3. He hopes to extend the deal for the remainder of the six-race season, which includes the

Spa 24 Hours in July.

Fellow ex-Formula Renault racer Michael Lyons will also race in the BES this season. The historic Formula 5000 ace will graduate with the Scuderia Vittoria team that helped him finish third in British GT3 last season.

Lyons will share the team's Ferrari 458 with Italian Alessandro Bonetti, who won the Superstars GT Sprint championship in 2010. The third driver has yet to be confirmed.

## Renault Clio Cup

### Gould dented by damage on debut

**FORMER BRITISH RALLY ACE ADAM** Gould may be forced to miss the second round of the Renault Clio Cup after a fraught racing debut at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Gould qualified his Stancombe machine 16th of 25 and finished 12th in the first race, but was then involved in an accident in race two that leaves his participation in the Donington Park meeting on April 14-15 in doubt.

"It's been a dramatic start to my racing career, and a savage introduction to the Clio Cup," said the 24-year-old.

"Saturday's race went perfectly and everyone was happy with me finishing in the top half of the field, but Sunday



Gould (left) learned the cut and thrust of Clios

seemed more like a Daytona-style pile-up.

"In rallying if I wreck the car it's my fault, but in racing you are so often at the mercy of others.

"The car is a mess. I may not be able to compete in round two. Without a full sponsor in place the budget is very tight, which unfortunately doesn't allow for crashes of this size."

## British Formula Ford

### Buri to race JTR EcoBoost Ford

#### BRITISH FORMULA FORDSQUAD

JTR has signed Antti Buri to race its new EcoBoost Mygale at Oulton Park this weekend.

JTR ran Geoff Uhrhane to two wins in the series last year, while Buri took fourth in the standings in an LMS Racing Mygale. The former Finnish Formula Ford champion has been in the British series for three years, and a frontrunner for the last two, with Enigma Motorsport and LMS, but has yet to win a race.

Nevertheless, JTR boss Nick Tandy, who plans to run Buri throughout 2012, believes he should be strong. "He's come into it late, but I'm hoping for big points this

weekend," said Tandy. "We don't have to do a lot of testing because Antti knows the tracks, so shouldn't take too long to get up to speed. His experience will help the team."

Leading Dutch squad Geva Racing has also confirmed it plans to run its EcoBoost Mygale in selected rounds this season.

Buri is a veteran of British Formula Ford



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**Euro NASCAR**

## Ex-touring car racer Valkhard signs up for European NASCAR

**FORMER BRITISH AND WORLD**

Touring Car racer Harry Valkhard has set his sights on a career in the USA after sealing a deal to compete in the Euro Racecar NASCAR Touring Series for this season.

Valkhard, 26, will drive for series organiser Jerome Galpin's Team FJ outfit in the machine that took Eric Helary to the 2011 title. Helary raced the car as a Chevrolet, but Valkhard will

run with a Ford Mustang bodykit. All cars in Euro NASCAR are identical, but with interchangeable bodywork to alter their identity.

Valkhard said: "I haven't got the budget to do WTCC or BTCC, but I was desperate to race something again after over a year out.

"I'd actually decided to race in the VW Golf Mk2 championship, but then this came up and I'm really excited

about it. I've always had a desire to race in America, so hopefully this could be the start of something."

Valkhard was due to have his first test in the V8 machine at Nogaro today (Thursday) and make his race debut at the French circuit this weekend.

Valkhard raced BTCC in 2009



**VW Racing Cup**

## Ginetta ace Pettit to VW Cup

**GINETTA ACE DOMINIC PETTIT will make a full-time switch to the VW Racing Cup this season in a Volkswagen Jetta.**

**Pettit, 21, will join an expected 24-car field for this weekend's season opener at Oulton Park in a car prepared by Kevin Poole's eight-car KPM team.**

**Pettit, who finished second in a one-off appearance in the VW Cup at Brands Hatch in 2010, has secured backing for a title attack from his local Cambridgeshire VW dealer Vindis Group.**

**Pettit said: "I have always wanted to be in the Volkswagen Racing Cup but have never had the budget to compete.**

**"Now Vindis has stepped in to help me and I am so grateful - hopefully I can repay the company's faith in me with some good results."**

**Series promoter Sam Roach is pleased with how the grid is shaping up. "There are new cars and new faces, so it all bodes well for a fantastic season," he said.**

Pettit finished second on VW debut in 2010



**National Motorsport Week**

## Rallying cry for motorsport week

**THE TWO LEADING BODIES IN UK** motorsport are calling on the industry to maximise the potential of National Motorsport Week this summer.

The Motor Sports Association and Motorsport Industry Association are calling on teams, venues, clubs, manufacturers, events, suppliers and series organisers to get behind this year's National Motorsport Week, which runs from June 30 to July 8.

MSA chief executive Colin Hilton said: "It allows us to celebrate our past and present successes but also gives us a great opportunity to attract

new people to get involved.

"A number of clubs and venues organised special activities last year. We want to build on that, working with motor clubs to set up events that encourage newcomers to take a look at the sport and realise how much fun they can have on four wheels."

MIA CEO Chris Aylett added: "National Motorsport Week exists not only for all involved to publicise their fabulous achievements, but also [provides] the perfect shop window to attract a new generation of young engineers and entrepreneurs."

MARCUS PYE

# HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing

Pye was reunited with the Rochdale Olympic



**L**ife is full of surprises. At Silverstone on Saturday, as the 750 Motor Club qualifying sessions got under way on the National circuit, I dashed to the Porsche Experience Centre for the 2012 Historic Racing Drivers' Club press intro. The first thing I spotted there was a beautifully presented Rochdale Olympic.

I'd not seen many - around 250 Phase 1 and 150 Phase 2 kits were made in the 1960s - although one lurked in a Wimbledon side street in the '90s and I saw another at the Brooklands start of the Classic Monte Carlo rally.

This latest sighting took me back more than 45 years, however, to a memorable trip to Silverstone in an Olympic.

My late godfather [sometime NSU sprinter and Mini autocrosser Mike Salmons] built it in a south London lock-up from a package delivered by lorry from Rochdale Motor Panels. It took longer than the claimed weekend to assemble, but emerged in its pale blue glory with the note of a Riley 1.5 engine resonating through its GRP sinews.

It went well as I recall, principally due to its light weight, and my father ran it for a while after we moved to Hampshire. On the Silverstone expedition, we left Basingstoke at the crack of dawn - for the International Trophy I think

- with brother Bill (4-ish) and me (7-ish) lashed to the second bucket seat.

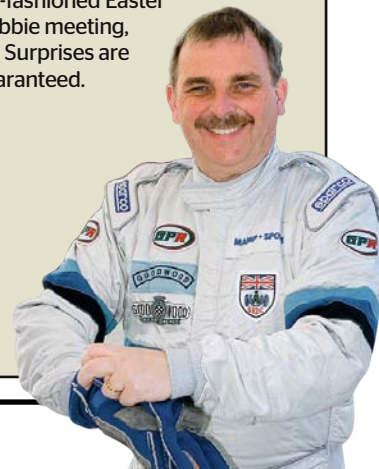
On hearing the tale, ex-Porschemeister Mike Youles said: "Take it for a spin." Thus I made my Experience Centre test track debut in a Rochdale, in an Olympic year!

Mike's was rebuilt last year for the HRDC's 1500cc Grand Touring Greats series with a [non-original] 1380cc BMC 'A' series engine set way behind the front axle line in the fibreglass monocoque chassis.

The course is a devilish melange of cambers and curves, which the Rochdale's lithe handling and cammy engine lapped up, sounding wonderfully crisp in first and second gears. That designer Richard Parker's father had owned a Porsche 356 is perhaps evident in styling cues, then again I'd always joked that a 928 is a Rochdale Olympic V8...

First stop for the GTG series, which also boasts a big banger set with AC Cobras, Sunbeam Tiger, Daimler SP250 and Jaguar E-types - plus HRDC founder Julius Thurgood's (Pre-'60) Touring Greats, TC63 and MGB50 sets - is Castle Combe next Monday. If you love the fun and variety of a good old-fashioned Easter clubbie meeting, go! Surprises are guaranteed.

**“The course is a devilish melange of cambers and curves, which the Rochdale lapped up”**



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## IN BRIEF



Albone's Batten was rapid

**ROTAX MAX KARTING ACE BILLY**

Albone's Batten 3 750 Formula car made a fleeting appearance at Silverstone last Sunday. The Albone Fabrications team worked all-nighters to finish the car, which ran in the top six but suffered problems.

**FORMER GINETTA JUNIOR**

frontrunner William Foster recorded two top-10 finishes on his Formula Vee debut at Silverstone last weekend. Foster, 16, who finished fifth in Ginetta Junior last season, drove a Bears Motorsport GAC to ninth in race one and 10th in race two.

**FORMULA RENAULT UK FINALS**

Series runner-up Dan Wells will switch to the Formula Pilota China Series for 2012, following the cancellation of FR UK. Wells will race with Hong Kong outfit KCMG.

**ITALIAN RACER IVAN BELLAROSA**

won the 2012 SPEED EuroSeries season-opening races at Paul Ricard last weekend. The Juno CN2012 of Darren Burke/Duncan Williams chased poleman Bellarosa's Wolf GB08 home in both events. The earlier Juno of 2009 Formula Ford Festival winner Chrissy Palmer/Sarah Reader took third in race one.

**THE PORSCHE GT3 CUP CHALLENGE,**

which has support from Porsche GB for the first time this season, has gained championship status from the MSA.

**LEGENDS FRONTRUNNER BEN**

Power will combine circuit racing with hillclimbing events in 2012, using his Legends machine.

**KIMI RAIKKONEN'S LEFT-REAR-**

wheel man Jackie Christie made a return to the driving seat after a six-year layoff at Kirkistown on Saturday. After dusting off his '94 Mondiale, Christie qualified in the midfield and ran strongly in both races.

**LOTUS ELISE RACERS SCOTT**

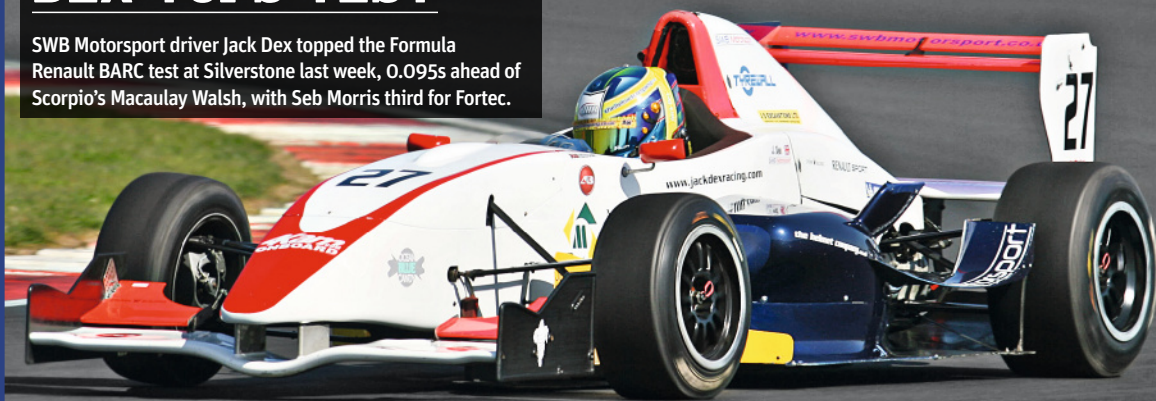
Fitzgerald, Ben Pitch and Chris Randall won the five-hour Fun Cup season opener at Donington Park last Sunday. The trio, racing under their Sloak Hunts Racing banner, finished 10s clear of reigning champ Team Honeywell (Neil Plummer/Geoff Fawcett) in the 28-car field.

Fitzgerald/Pitch/Randall won



## DEX TOPS TEST

SWB Motorsport driver Jack Dex topped the Formula Renault BARC test at Silverstone last week, 0.095s ahead of Scorpio's Macaulay Walsh, with Seb Morris third for Fortec.

**Formula Renault BARC**

# Malvern to Renault BARC

Formula Ford ace joins new team for attack on slicks and wings category

**REIGNING FORMULA FORD**

champion Scott Malvern will contest Formula Renault BARC this season after signing a late deal to drive for new squad Cullen Motorsport.

Malvern dominated Formula Ford last season with Jamun Racing, but has struggled to put together a budget to progress. Now he will join Cullen, which will also field Ryan Cullen in British FFord.

Malvern said: "There are talented drivers in FR BARC this year so it will be

a great environment to compete in."

Malvern, 23, will be engineered by Cliff Dempsey, who ran him to second in the 2010 British FFord championship. "I shook down Trent Hindman's new car a few weeks ago and Cliff said there and then he'd love to run another car for me, but without any budget this was going to be difficult," added Malvern.

"Then Patrick Cullen kindly offered us a deal. We've had to source a suitable car and we will have to go straight in

at the first round at Snetterton [this weekend] without any testing so I'm not expecting too much. We'll aim to do a solid job and then build from there."

Malvern has not ruled out competing in F3, F2 or British GT at some point in '12.

Established FR BARC squad MTECH Lite has also confirmed Mexican Jorge Cevallos for its line-up. The 17-year-old is part of the Escuderia Telmex Driver Development scheme that helped Sauber F1 driver Sergio Perez.

**Monaco Historique**

## Sportscar racer targets Monaco F3 meeting

SPORTSCAR RACER SIMON DOLAN has purchased the Ralt RT1 in which Anders Olofsson won the Formula 3 support race at the 1977 British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

The 42-year-old Briton, who is racing a Jota Zytek-Nissan LMP2 in this year's European Le Mans



Dolan plans to race Ralt RT1

Series, has purchased the car to fulfill his ambition of racing at Monaco. The Toyota-engined car, which also took Olofsson to the runner-up spot in the European F3 Championship in 1977 and '78, will be run for him under the Jota

Historic banner at the Grand Prix Historique on May 11-13 in the race for 1974-84 two-litre Formula 3 cars.

Dolan, who has never raced a single-seater, said: "I've no idea what to expect, but I really wanted to get to Monaco and they want cars with history."

The Monaco entry with the Ralt, previously owned by Michael Quinn, will be the first outing for Jota's new historic arm. It will also run Rainer Becker's Porsche 910 in the Le Mans Classic in July.

**Mighty Mini**

## TV actor stars on first Mini racing outing

**EMMERDALE ACTOR KELVIN**

Fletcher made a sensational start to his racing career by securing pole position and finishing second on his Mighty Mini debut at Oulton Park last weekend.

Fletcher, 28, who plays Andy Sugden in the long-running ITV soap opera, has no prior racing experience. He qualified on pole by 0.254 seconds and finished second to reigning champion Chris Slade

in the race after a battle with Dan Palmer and Ben van den Bos. He also set the fastest lap, almost a full second quicker than the next best effort by Slade.

Fletcher said: "I have never raced before, nor done trackdays, but managed two tests at Oulton before the race.

"I am hoping to do all year, but all the circuits are new to me. I am happy with my result, but wanted to win."



Actor Fletcher impressed on Mini racing debut



RGB SILVERSTONE, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

## Brilliant Gray aspires to lift the RGB crown

**TIM GRAY’S SWITCH** from RGB sponsor Andy Bates’ AB Performance Sabre to Paul Nightingale’s Spire Sports Cars team was vindicated with runaway victories in the opening rounds of the 750 Motor Club category everybody is talking about.

Gray, 27, a class act with multi title-winning pedigree, had put just 78 miles on the new works development GT3 going into Saturday’s race, but the package – which incorporates revised suspension and aero – proved exceptional.

He and team-mate John Cutmore (in last year’s car) both broke the ‘magic’ minute in qualifying, but Cutmore was missing from

race one. After an oil fire wiped out his Honda CBR engine’s wiring loom the motor was changed, but the race started early...

Despite experiencing “massive understeer at the first corner,” Gray’s stunning opening lap was 2.49s quicker than defending champion Paul Rogers’ and he simply left the pack panting. “When I saw the steady signal I backed off, but was surprised to still be going away,” explained Tim.

Rogers and Gary Goodyear (Contour-Suzukis) joined him on the podium, with former champ Derek Jones and rear-engined debutant Lee Baverstock fourth and sixth in Sabres, split by the older Spire GTR of 2011 Locost



Gray gave the new Spire a perfect debut

runner-up Nick Morley.

Gray was not quite as dominant on Sunday, for Cutmore – minus the Power Commander fuelling system in his frazzled loom – kept him in sight. Rogers tagged a backmarker and spun out at Luffield, handing third to Goodyear. Having run-in his

self-built car at Mallory the previous week, Gaunt put in the drive of the race, picking off several rivals en route to a splendid sixth.

● Marcus Pye

### RESULTS (BOTH 14 LAPS)

**1 Tim Gray (Spire GT3);**  
2 Paul Rogers (Contour RGB09)  
+12.15s; 3 Gary Goodyear (Contour

RGB10); 4 Derek Jones (AB Sabre); 5 Nick Morley (Spire GTR); 6 Lee Baverstock (AB Sabre). **Class winner** Alastair Boulton (STM Phoenix). **Fastest lap** Gray 59.89s (98.61mph).

**RACE 2 1 Gray;** 2 John Cutmore (Spire GT3) +7.96s; 3 Goodyear; 4 Jones; 5 Morley; 6 Tony Gaunt (Wolfe TGO2). **CW** Boulton. **FL** Gray 59.79s (98.78mph) **record**.



Smiech (4), Watts (7) and Hands (22) battle

FORMULA 4 SILVERSTONE, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

## Smiech’s elderly car keeps Watts and Hands honest

**THE FORMULA 4 GRID** might have been small, but Robbie Watts and Danny Hands won two epic races in which their hi-tech Ford Zetec-powered Van Diemens were harassed by Erwin Smiech’s elderly Suzuki motorcycle-engined FF2000 Reynard.

All three led Saturday’s 750MC season-opener, former Vee champ Hands passing veteran Smiech to lead in his ex-Jeremy Walker title-winner until a

misfire blunted its power.

Watts, nursing an overheating engine, was unable to repel Smiech, who breezed past several times, but lost out into the corners. “That car is ballistic in a straight line,” grinned Robbie.

Hands broke Watts’ run on Sunday, not panicking when Robbie passed him briefly at Becketts. Again Smiech kept the Van Diemen duo focused, but Hands earned his victory.

“[Having lost out at the 2010 and ’11 finales] F4 is my priority, but it’s not going to be quite as easy as we’d hoped,” said runner-up Watts after Smiech had annexed fastest lap.

● Marcus Pye

### RESULTS (14 LAPS)

**1 Robbie Watts (Van Diemen RAW 01);** 2 Erwin Smiech (Reynard SF84) +0.06s; 3 Daniel Hands (Van Diemen RF10/F4); 4 Paul Presgraves (Van Diemen RF98); 5 Damon Bland (Van Diemen RF98); 6 Charles Adrian (Van Diemen RF93). **CW** Smiech. **FL** Watts 57.92s (101.86mph). **RACE 2 (15 LAPS)**  
**1 Hands;** 2 Watts +0.35s; 3 Smiech; 4 Bryn Tootell (Van Diemen RF09); 5 Presgraves; 6 Bland. **CW** Smiech. **FL** Smiech 58.10s (101.65mph).

LOCOST SILVERSTONE, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

## Comber stars in Locost

**WITH SCOTT MITTELL,** champion of 2010-’11, graduating to RGB, the Locost title race has been blown wide open again, with some quick new names emerging to fight the old guard.

Hugely experienced karter Michael Comber has found his feet, nineteen-year-old Derby-based Mark Draghicescu – from Portland, USA – has arrived on the back of a single Rotax Max kart season, and David Boucher impressed under Matt Cherrington’s tutelage.

Boucher, last year’s third-place man Alex von Ehrheim and Stuart Sellars set the race one pace, while Comber demonstrated his racecraft by haring through the order to lead with two laps to go.

Von Ehrheim, Boucher and Sellars ousted him before the chequer,

although Boucher was bumped to fifth, behind Richard Jenkins, by a jump-start penalty.

Comber, von Ehrheim and Boucher all led race two, in which Sellars, Jenkins, Sian Stafford Atkinson and others bolstered the lead group to eight cars at times.

After a fraught final lap, von Ehrheim’s bold outside run at Comber through Woodcote was 0.03s short.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better start,” said the jubilant winner.

● Marcus Pye

### RESULTS (BOTH 12 LAPS)

**1 Alex von Ehrheim;** 2 Stuart Sellars +0.95s; 3 Michael Comber; 4 Richard Jenkins; 5 David Boucher; 6 Mark Draghicescu. **FL** Comber 1m12.16s (81.84mph) **record. RACE 2 1 Comber;** 2 von Ehrheim +0.03s; 3 Boucher; 4 Sellars; 5 Jenkins; 6 Sian Stafford Atkinson. **FL** Boucher 1m12.27s (81.72mph).



Von Erheim leads Comber in Locost

FORMULA VEE SILVERSTONE, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

# Smith on top despite Oliveira's efforts



Sunday's second Vee race was a thriller

**PAUL SMITH RESUMED** where he left off at the end of last year by winning both Formula Vee races, but returning double champion Sam Oliveira proved that Smith's AHS Dominator is not vastly superior to its rivals, even with its clever variable fuelling system.

Sam Oliveira, back in the Sheane 'Jenvee' with which he lifted the 2006 and '09 crowns, 2010-'11 champion Martin Farmer (GAC), and Jake Oliveira (Storm) hurtled after Smith on Saturday, with the GACs of Keith Farrance and AUTOSPORT's Ben Anderson also in the mix.

While Sam O's bravado allowed him to get his nose ahead of Smith, the winner of six of 2011's last eight races always had an answer. Punch out of the corners was his trump card and only Sam stayed close, with brother Jake pipping the GAC trio to third.

In Sunday's stanza – which lost Jake O on the green flag lap – Oliveira minor exploited the braking areas to trade the lead with Smith early on.

Farmer managed to jostle his GAC to the front later on, but the midlander's glory was brief. Smith and Oliveira gobbled him up again and Anderson went with them – Farrance having retired with a broken gearbox from the six-car lead pack.

Smith got a break in

traffic, doubling his advantage over the chasers on the final lap. Having been ousted from third by Farmer at Becketts on lap 12, Anderson came back with a flourish to almost out-drag Oliveira on the run to the line, with Farmer and John Hughes (Scarab) in tow.

● Marcus Pye

## RESULTS (BOTH 13 LAPS)

1 Paul Smith (AHS Dominator); 2 Sam Oliveira (Sheane Jenvee) +0.49s; 3 Jake Oliveira (Storm); 4 Martin Farmer (GAC 01); 5 Keith Farrance (GAC 03); 6 Ben Anderson (GAC 01). **CW** Peter Studer (Sheane). **FL** S Oliveira 1m04.92s (90.97mph). **RACE 2** 1 Smith; 2 S Oliveira +2.39s; 3 Anderson; 4 Farmer; 5 John Hughes (Scarab Mk5); 6 Ian Jordan (Sheane Jordan 2012). **CW** Jordan. **FL** Farmer 1m04.90s (91.00mph) record.

## IN BRIEF



Hinson (leading) scored MR2 double

## TOYOTA MR2

Although three of the top four past the chequered flag jumped the first MR2 start at Silverstone, 2011 runner-up Paul Hinson negated his 10-second penalty to pip the innocent George Robinson to the spoils. Hinson doubled-up in race two, under intense pressure from Guy Hefford.

## STOCK HATCH

Class returnee Joe Ferguson stayed cool at Silverstone, despite an omnipresent gang on his tail to bag a brace of wins. Defending champ 'Patch' Fletcher's fine Saturday run from 13th to second showed grit, but Nick Thornton-Jones proved Ferguson's most consistent rival.

## CLASSIC STOCK HATCH

Despite being re-armed with Pip Hammond's 2011 title-winning Vauxhall Nova, Damian Cottrell was surprised to win the opener at Silverstone. Runner-up Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i) took Sunday honours from Martin Cayzer, whose XR2's engine was built by his 13-year-old son James!

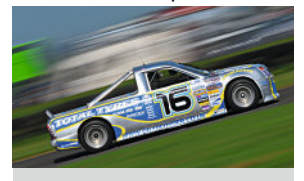
## 750 TROPHY

Paul Gorolini (JB) and Ron Welsh (Fairthorpe F) traded places merrily at Silverstone until the former's bolide picked up a puncture. Lyndon Thruston's DNC was too far behind to deny Gorolini second while Michael Inglis' Black Shadow topped the Austin 7 set.

## PICKUP TRUCKS

Nic Grindrod and Steve Dance locked out the top two steps of the podium in both heats for the Pickups at Pembrey. Dance prevailed in the final, with Paul Tompkins and Dave Briggs following him home as Grindrod suffered a puncture.

## Dance won the Pickup final in Wales



750 FORMULA SILVERSTONE, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

# Copse lunge reaps rewards for champion Cooper

**NATHANIEL COOPER'S** 750 Formula title defence started with a win, but the Davis driver had to fight to repel Chris Gough and 2009 champion Dave Robson in their self-built Fiat-powered speedsters.

As Gough's CGR2's grip faded Robson's SDAR was in the ascendant. Indeed, Robson dived past Cooper at Luffield on lap 12 of 13, but Cooper countered into Cope. "Superior driving," conceded Robson.

Bill Rutter spun his Darvi having split Gough and Robson, while young Bill Cowley retired when his wonderful Cowley Special's

second gearbox of the day seized up.

Also out early was karting ace Billy Albone, whose Batten 3 was finished on race morning. It didn't complete a practice lap, yet Albone came round sixth on lap one – ahead of champs Roger Rowe and Peter Bove – before it broke again.

● Marcus Pye

## RESULTS (13 LAPS)

1 Nathaniel Cooper (Davis T7); 2 Dave Robson (SDAR/83) +0.26s; 3 Chris Gough (CGR2 Evo); 4 Roger Rowe (Centaur Mk20); 5 Peter Bove (ADR 750F); 6 Bill Rutter (Darvi Mk5). **CW** David Larkins (DNC). **FL** Robson 1m06.39s (88.96mph) record.



Davies leads bolstered Welsh Sports/Saloons

WELSH SPORTS & SALOONS PEMBREY, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

# Cond stars as White spins

**IT LOOKED AS IF KEITH** White would be in the running for a step on the podium in the rejuvenated Welsh Sports and Saloons. However, he fell foul of old tyres on his BMW Z4 silhouette in race one, having surged to an initial lead, and spun at Hatchets.

In fact it was Michael Cond (Sylva Riot) who impressed bumper crowds at the Welsh circuit.

The newbie caught many by surprise in his spritely R1-engined machine and managed to get within a hair's breadth of eventual winner Martin Davies in the opening bout.

Cond overhauled the Welshman in the second

encounter to be runner-up again, as Patrick Havill took a cleverly calculated maiden win in his rapid Caterham Vauxhall.

● Ben Bostock

## RESULTS (BOTH 16 LAPS)

1 Martin Davies (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 2 Michael Cond (Sylva Riot) +0.390s; 3 Patrick Havill (Caterham Vauxhall); 4 Neil Watts (Westfield); 5 John Morris (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Keith White (BMW Z4). **CW** Cond; Havill; Mike Woods (Honda Civic); Mike Edgell (Mini Rover); Chris Morris (Suzuki Ignis); Giles Beck (BMW 318Si). **FL** Cond 1m01.445s (85.30mph). **RACE 2** 1 Havill; 2 Cond +0.250s; 3 Davies; 4 White; 5 Morris; 6 Watts. **CW** Cond; Davies; Woods; Edgell; Ben Scrivens (Gin G20); Morris. **FL** Cond 1m01.873s (84.71mph).

Cooper (97) fended off Robson for 750 Formula victory





CATERHAM CLASSIC & MEGA GRADUATES DONINGTON PARK, MARCH 31

## Caterham thrillers light up live TV race day

**TWO TREMENDOUS** Caterham Graduate races for the Classic and Mega classes were the highlights of Donington’s Motors TV Live Raceday.

The first 20-minute thriller had innumerable leaders, the first being Mick Whitehead who headed the pack to Redgate.

His lead was short-lived, though, and reigning champion Myles Packman usurped him mid-lap to lead the field.

However, category stalwart Nick Frost was in irresistible form. He benefitted from a tow on the run to the chicane on lap two to leap from fourth to second and then used the slipstream to help him past Packman for the lead, diving

into Redgate at the start of the following tour.

The two traded the lead, with Packman ahead as they entered the chicane for the penultimate time. Frost pulled off another of his jaw-dropping moves, around the outside this time, to grab back the lead. He hung on for the win, his task eased by Martin Amison catching Packman and attacking him for second.

Packman made a last-gasp effort for the win at the chicane only to outbrake himself and bounce off the road, dropping to fourth as Amison and Whitehead came by.

Frost and Amison were crucial to the outcome of the shorter second race.



Frost dives inside Packman

Lawyer Amison wriggled his way to the front but Frost ran out of braking room at the chicane and walloped the back of the leader, spinning Amison out of the pack.

Frost’s car suffered frontal damage and the nose of the car pointed skyward to the end of the race. His pace, barely diminished,

illustrated the relative lack of aero a Caterham has...

Like a cork in the bottle, he kept the pack at bay for as long as he could, but Packman surged ahead for the win from early leader Paul Allen.

Meanwhile, David Pearson worked hard for two Classic class wins.

● David Addison

**RESULTS (15 LAPS) 1 Nick Frost;**

2 Martin Amison +0.107s; 3 Mick Whitehead; 4 Myles Packman; 5 Glenn Burtenshaw; 6 Adrian Russell. **Class winner** David Pearson. **Fastest lap** Amison 1m20.165s (88.87mph).

**RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Packman;**

2 Paul Allen +0.588s; 3 Whitehead; 4 Amison; 5 Frost; 6 Darrell Wilson. **CW** Pearson. **FL** Amison 1m20.344s (88.67mph).



Hibberd held off the chasing hordes

FORMULA JUNIOR DONINGTON PARK, MARCH 31

## Hibberd holds on tight for Formula Junior double

**MIKE HIBBERD’S TWO** Formula Junior wins were hard earned. His Lotus 27 qualified on pole for race one with Formula Junior newcomer Jonathan Hughes (Brabham BT6) alongside.

Hughes was struggling with a down-on-power engine, helping Hibberd to lead from Denis Welch (Lotus 22), the leading two remaining as one race-long.

Welch was never more than three lengths adrift, but didn’t have the grunt to close on to the tail of the

ex-Peter Arundell Lotus.

Hibberd, though, was never able to shake off the Burton-on-Trent driver and was constantly under pressure, save for a brief respite when Peter Morton surged his Lightning Envoyette into second.

Welch retaliated and squeezed back ahead, but Morton got a better run out of the chicane on the last lap and bagged second by just 0.004 seconds. Hughes (racing after an 18-year lay-off) guided his ex-Jo

Siffert Brabham to fourth.

Morton was the main opposition to Hibberd in race two, although Hibberd again made the best start and led into Redgate.

Welch lost out to Morton and was confined to third, while Hughes fell to fourth.

Morton pressed Hibberd hard, his best effort to sneak past coming as he took a tighter line at McLains and challenged coming out of Coppice. Hibberd had the extra speed though and the Rolls-Royce restorer won by a tenth.

● David Addison

**RESULTS (BOTH 12 LAPS)**

**1 Mike Hibberd (Lotus 27);** 2 Peter Morton (Lightning Envoyette) +0.992s; 3 Denis Welch (Lotus 22); 4 Jonathan Hughes (Brabham BT6); 5 John Truslove (Brabham BT6); 6 Peter Anstiss (Lotus 20/22). **Class winners** Stuart Roach (Condor S11); Chris Drake (Elva 300); Phoebe Rolt (Eva 200); Pat Barford (EFAC Stanguellini); Stephen Bulling (Sadler FJ). **Fastest lap** Morton 1m17.414s (92.03mph). **RACE 2 1 Hibberd;** 2 Morton +0.175s; 3 Welch; 4 Hughes; 5 Truslove; 6 Drake. **CW** Drake; Roach; Rolt; Bulling. **FL** Morton 1m17.453s (91.98mph).

CATERHAM SUPER & SIGMA GRADUATES DONINGTON PARK, MARCH 31

## Benson bounces back

**THE CATERHAM** Super Graduate and Sigma Graduate classes provided two cracking races, Ed Benson winning the second after being hit from behind in race one.

Portugal-based Benson led the opener until the car hesitated coming out of McLains and was hit by Neil Shinner, who had nowhere to go.

After a safety car period, Toby Briant battled with Dylan Stanley until Martin Collier, up from row nine, came through to second.

Benson and Shinner (their cars repaired) argued over the lead of race two until Benson

started to edge clear.

As he did, Shinner fought with Caterham newcomer Jon Wolfe, allowing Benson to pull clear by 10 seconds by the end, as Stanley stole second at the death.

● David Addison

**RESULTS (14 LAPS)**

**1 Toby Briant;** 2 Martin Collier +0.492s; 3 Dylan Stanley; 4 Charles Elliott; 5 Sean Mighall; 6 Andrew Sagar. **Class winner** Ian Anderson. **Fastest lap** Mighall 1m21.413s (87.51mph).

**RACE 2 (11 LAPS)**

**1 Edward Benson;** 2 Dylan Stanley +10.395s; 3 Jon Wolfe; 4 Neil Shinner; 5 Toby Briant; 6 Charles Elliott. **CW** Anderson. **FL** Sagar 1m21.075s (87.87mph).



Briant (leading) won race one



Taylor (leading) was a double Porsche winner

**NORTHERN FF1600 PRE-'90 OULTON PARK, MARCH 31**

## Linley and Jones share the spoils in Formula Ford



Parkington leads field into Old Hall

**BARRY LINLEY AND Stuart Jones** secured one win apiece in the opening rounds of this year's Northern FF1600 Pre-90 championship at Oulton Park last weekend.

Ian Parkington's Reynard 84FF led race one for the first four laps, but once Jones' Reynard 89FF had ousted Nigel Dolan's Van

Diemen RF86 for second at Knickerbrook on lap three, the leader's advantage was quickly reduced.

Jones led over Hilltop a couple of laps later, but the Van Diemens of Wayne Poole (RF88) and Linley (RF86) were on the move too and closing in.

"I got third into Shell and the leaders were

holding each other up," said Linley, who then took charge himself after Jones faltered into Lodge.

Parkington reclaimed second as Jones struggled with a misfire, but Jones still made the podium, as Dolan closed in again.

Although Parkington once again made the best start in race two, Jones

stuck with him and went ahead into Shell as they both went clear of the early scrap for third.

Dolan and Poole shared a couple of exchanges before Dolan consolidated third, which enabled him to close on Parkington to snatch second in the final dash to the flag.

● Peter Scherer

### RESULTS (BOTH 11 LAPS)

**1 Barry Linley** (Van Diemen RF86); **2 Ian Parkington** (Reynard 84FF) +2.110s; **3 Stuart Jones** (Reynard 89FF); **4 Nigel Dolan** (Van Diemen RF86); **5 Ian Ellis** (Reynard 89FF); **6 Wayne Poole** (Van Diemen RF88). **Class winners** Jones; Graham Legget (Crosle 25F). **Fastest lap** Linley 1m50.565s (87.65mph). **RACE 2 1 Jones**; **2 Dolan** +3.051s; **3 Parkington**; **4 Linley**; **5 Ellis**; **6 Poole**. **CW** Dolan; Legget. **FL** Jones 1m51.843s (86.65mph).

## IN BRIEF



Talbot took race two

### PRE-WAR SPORTSCARS

Neil Twyman's delectable Alfa Romeo 8C won the first race at Donington, despite a fuel pick-up problem. He spluttered to a halt in race two, allowing John Guyatt (Talbot Lago) to win.

### FF1600 POST-'89

Luke Cooper was a surprise winner of the first race at Oulton Park. Following a startline shunt, Jamie Jardine rolled at Shell, and both Douglas Crosbie and John Murphy went out of the lead with offs on the last lap, leaving Cooper to head Neil Winn. Winn won race two from Crosbie.

### BRSCC PORSCHE

Gerry Taylor was a double winner at Oulton. Richard Styryn led the first race until he missed a gear at Shell, then spun out at Druids, promoting Richard Sykes. Taylor dominated race two, with Sykes second after Styryn spun at Old Hall on the last lap.

### SUPER MIGHTY MINI

Elliot Stafford set the early pace at Oulton, but had to settle for third as Chris Morgan and Gary Patterson fought it out. Patterson hit the front on the last lap, only for Morgan to charge back and take victory in the sprint for the line.

### IRISH FORMULA VEE

After a first-lap red flag when Stephen Morrin rolled his car at Colonial, 'Veemasters' Ray Moore and Lee Newsome put on a superb show at Kirkistown, the wily Moore winning it by 0.14s.

### IRISH FORD FIESTA

Kirkistown's new class for 1250cc Fiestas entertained. Eight started and Chris Rogan led until a black flag for off-roading. This left James Turkington, brother of ex-BTCC champ Colin, to win on his debut.



Turkington Jr won

**MIGHTY MINIS OULTON PARK, MARCH 31**

## Winner Slade begins title defence in perfect style

**MIGHTY MINI CHAMP** Chris Slade started his title defence with a victory, but only after battling to the head of a terrific scrap.

Dan Palmer emerged with a healthy first-lap lead, after Slade had contact with Wesley Dunford at Old Hall. Poleman Kelvin Fletcher had contact too, but slotted into second, before the recovering Slade picked off Ben van den Bos and began to close in.

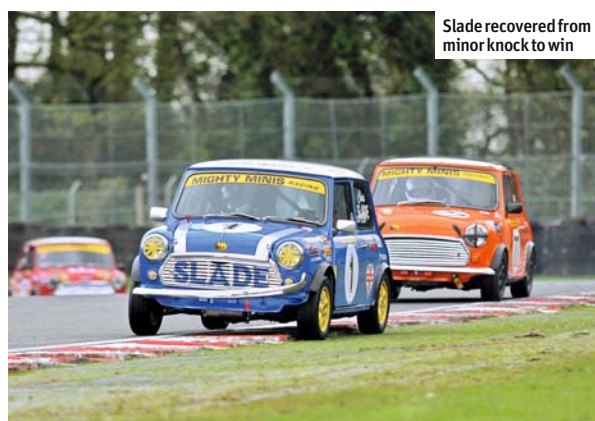
Fletcher locked up at Knickerbrook as he defended from Slade, but his defence was breached as

they arrived at Druids for the fourth time. As Fletcher tried to stick with his rival he had a spin and briefly fell back behind van den Bos.

Palmer's lead gradually reduced and Slade made the decisive move into Cascades on lap seven of nine, with Fletcher snatching second at Old Hall on the last lap.

● Peter Scherer

**RESULTS (9 LAPS) 1 Chris Slade**; **2 Kelvin Fletcher** +1.377s; **3 Dan Palmer**; **4 Ben van den Bos**; **5 Christopher Stevens**; **6 Caroline Gilbert**. **FL** Fletcher 2m19.337s (69.55mph).



Slade recovered from minor knock to win



McCullan's ageing Mondiale took record

**FF1600 KIRKISTOWN, MARCH 31**

## Irish Fordsters stir it up

**TWO STORMING RACES** got the FF1600 season underway in fine style.

The first developed into a dogfight between Jonny McCullan's ageing Mondiale, Neville Smyth's Ray and poleman Ivor McCullough (Rfoo).

McCullan and Smyth were up-close-and-personal every lap, to the point where McCullough decided it was more prudent to sit back and let them get on with it.

They did, and McCullan made it by a nose, lowering McCullough's 2011 lap record in the process.

Race two provided a repeat performance until McCullan spun at the

Hairpin, allowing McCullough and Adrian Pollock to finish one-two. **Stirring stuff.**

● Richard Young

### RESULTS (12 LAPS)

**1 Jonathan McCullan** (Mondiale M89S); **2 Neville Smyth** (Ray GR09) +0.030s; **3 Ivor McCullough** (Van Diemen RFOO); **4 Adrian Pollock** (Van Diemen DP09); **5 Neville Anderson** (Mondiale M89S); **6 Andrew Noble** (Reynard 89FF). **Class winners** John Stewart (Reynard 83FF); Paul McMorrان (Crosle 32F). **Fastest lap** McCullan 1m01.023 (89.196s) record. **RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 McCullough**; **2 Pollock** +1.484s; **3 Smyth**; **4 McCullan**; **5 Anderson**; **6 Noble**. **CW** McCullan; Stewart; McMorrان. **FL** McCullan 1m01.077s (89.117mph).

# 24 HEURES DU MANS 16-17 JUNE 2012



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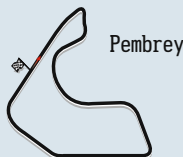
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# SPORTS EXTRA RESULTS ROUND-UP



Silverstone National



Pembrey



Donington Park



Oulton Park International



Kirkistown



Day (95) and Kitson in MR2 Super GT scrap

Hammett. **FL** Chese Im08.608s (76.39mph). **RACE 2 (13 LAPS)** 1 Clark 2 Chilton +7.213s; 3 Williams; 4 Chris Olive (Honda Civic EK9); 5 Hammett; 6 Mark Bennett (Honda S2000). **CW** Chilton; Olive; Hammett. **FL** Olive Im08.315s (76.72mph).

## DONINGTON PARK BARC/MOTORS TV LIVE, MARCH 31

**VSCC PRE WAR SPORTSCARS (12 LAPS)** 1 Neil Twyman (Alfa Romeo 8C); 2 Sue Darbyshire (Morgan Super Aero) +3.229s; 3 John Guyatt (Talbot Lago); 4 Josh Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Replica); 5 Trevor Swete (Invicta S-Type); 6 Nick Pellett (Swat0105). **FL** Twyman Im38.192s (72.55mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 Guyatt; 2 Darbyshire +0.863s; 3 Swete; 4 Pellett; 5 Beebee; 6 Nigel Batchelor (Bentley 4 1/2 Blower). **FL** Guyatt Im38.038s (72.67mph). **KUMHO BMW (12 LAPS)** 1 Garrie Whittaker (M3); 2 Colin Wells (M3) +2.889s; 3 Karl Skitt (318 Compact); 4 Tom Wrigley (M3); 5 James Card (M3); 6 Ian Hill (M3). **CW** Darren Fielding (M3); Mark Smith (M3); Roger Lavender (328i); Matthew Fielding (318 Coupe). **FL** Whittaker Im16.181s (93.52mph). **RACE 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Whittaker; 2 Wells +5.254s; 3 Wrigley; 4 Skitt; 5 Hill; 6 Card. **CW** Smith; Neil Newstead (328i); Lavender; Fielding. **FL** Whittaker

Im15.898s (93.97mph).

## OULTON PARK INTERNATIONAL BRSCC, MARCH 31

**NORTHERN FORMULA FORD 1600 POST-89 (9 LAPS)** 1 Luke Cooper (Swift SC10); 2 Neil Winn (Van Diemen LA10) +0.595s; 3 Ryan Cullen (Ray GRS08); 4 Douglas Crosbie (Van Diemen RF00); 5 Daniel Headlam (Van Diemen JL012K); 6 Vincent Jay (Ray GRK10). **CW** Jay Wheels (Swift SC94). **FL** Wheels Im52.090s (86.45mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 Winn; 2 Crosbie +1.058s; 3 John Murphy (Van Diemen RF90); 4 Kenneth Thirwall (Van Diemen RF92); 5 Martin Short (Van Diemen JL012K); 6 Cooper. **CW** Murphy. **FL** Crosbie Im48.997s (88.91mph). **PORSCH (11 LAPS)** 1 Gerry Taylor (Boxster); 1 Richard Sykes (Boxster) +3.151s; 3 David Bearman (Boxster); 4 Adam Croft (Boxster); 5 Ian Loggie (Boxster); 6 Tom Andrew (Boxster). **CW** Stephen Potts (Boxster); Alistair Kirkham (924). **FL** Sykes Im56.410s (83.25mph). **RACE 2 (11 LAPS)** 1 Taylor; 2 Sykes +2.849s; 3 Bearman; 4 Andrew; 5 Loggie; 6 Croft. **CW** Steven Brown (Boxster); Kirkham. **FL** Richard Styryn Im56.637s (83.08mph). **SUPER MIGHTY MINIS (9 LAPS)** 1 Chris Morgan; 2 Gary Patterson +0.028s; 3 Elliot Stafford; 4 Neven Kirkpatrick;

5 Bob Bennetts; 6 Dave Rees. **FL** Patrick Ford 2m09.650s (74.74mph). **FORD XR CHALLENGE (10 LAPS)** 1 Andrew Lennie (XR3i); 2 Lee Bowron (XR3i) +10.884s; 3 Michael Heath (XR2); 4 Lee Shropshire (XR2); 5 Phil Wright (XR3i); 6 Craig Brookfield (XR2). **CW** Heath. **FL** Steve Poole (XR2) 2m06.945s (76.34mph).

## KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI, MARCH 31

**IRISH FORD FIESTA (10 LAPS)** 1 James Turkington; 2 Andrew McShane +1.288s; 3 Ian Newport; 4 Norman Black. No other finishers. **FL** Turkington Im18.332s (69.49mph). **IRISH FORMULA VEE (12 LAPS)** 1 Ray Moore (Leystone JH004); 2 Lee Newsome (Sheane FV93) +0.141s; 3 Ian Campbell (Sheane FV02); 4 David Kelly (Sheane FV02); 5 Paula Moore (Leystone JH004); 6 Morgan McCourt (Leystone JH004). **FL** R Moore Im04.827s (83.96mph) record. **ROADSPORTS (3 LAPS)** 1 Jim Larkham (L3 Radical PR6); 2 Colin Reid (L3 Reis Aero) +1.45s; 3 Ryan Magennis (L0 GMS Honda); 4 Trevor Allen (L0 Stryker Honda); 5 Alan Davidson (L0 Westfield Honda); 6 Jonny Armstrong (L0 Westfield Honda). **CW** Magennis. **FL** Larkham Im00.824s (89.49mph). **RACE 2 (13 LAPS)** 1 Reid; 2 Larkham +19.735s; 3 Magennis; 4 Davidson; 5 Allen; 6 Jimmy Dougan (L0 Locost Honda). **CW** Magennis. **FL** Larkham, Im00.976s (89.27mph). **GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND (10 LAPS)** 1 Jake Byrne; 2 James Fleming +5.047s; 3 Andrew Clarke; 4 Jack Finlay; 5 Sophie Byrne; 6 Dylan Curley. **FL** Clarke Im12.136s (75.46mph). **RACE 2 (10 LAPS)** 1 J Byrne; 2 Fleming +6.421s; 3 Clarke; 4 Curley; 5 S Byrne; 6 Finlay. **FL** Clarke Im12.098s (75.50mph). **SALOONS & GT (13 LAPS)** 1 Connaire Finn (3.5 Ginetta G50); 2 Stephen Traub (20 Honda Integra) +50.739s; 3 Gerard McVeigh (20 Mitsubishi Evo 8); 4 Ralph Jess (32 BMW M3); 5 David Morrison (32 BMW M3); 6 Tony Traub (20 Honda Integra). **CW** S Traub. **FL** Finn Im00.613s (89.80mph).

## SILVERSTONE NATIONAL 750MC, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

**TOYOTA MR2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Paul Hinson; 2 George Robinson +0.36s; 3 Matthew Palmer; 4 Guy Hefford; 5 Stuart Nicholls; 6 Matthew Wallis. **Class winner Nicholls. Fastest lap Hinson** Im10.43s (83.85mph) record. **RACE 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Hinson; 2 Hefford +0.89s; 3 Robinson; 4 Michael Wells; 5 Lee Gambell; 6 Wallis. **CW** Nicholls. **FL** Hefford Im10.57s (83.69mph). **STOCK HATCH (12 LAPS)** 1 Joe Ferguson (Citroen Saxo VTR); 2 Patrick Fletcher (Saxo) +0.38s; 3 Nick Thornton-Jones (Saxo); 4 Andrew Tibbs (Saxo); 5 Tom Bell (Saxo); 6 Jake Farndon (Saxo). **FL** Fletcher Im11.22s (82.92mph) record. **RACE 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Ferguson; 2 Thornton-Jones +0.15s; 3 Farndon; 4 Fletcher; 5 Tibbs; 6 Mark Armstrong (Saxo). **FL** Bell Im11.24s (82.90mph). **CLASSIC STOCK HATCH (12 LAPS)** 1 Damian Cottrell (Vauxhall Nova GTE); 2 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i) +0.21s; 3 Martin Cayzer (Fiesta XR2); 4 Andy Philipotts (XR2); 5 Imran Khan (XR2); 6 Paul Thorpe (XR2). **FL** Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205GTi) Im12.43s (81.54mph). **RACE 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Scott; 2 Cayzer +0.89s; 3 Rozier; 4 Cottrell; 5 Philipotts; 6 Thorpe. **FL** Rozier Im12.01s (82.01mph) record. **750 TROPHY (11 LAPS)** 1 Ron Welsh (Fairthorpe FJ); 2 Paul Gorolini (JB) +22.53s; 3 Lyndon Thruston (DNC); 4 Michael Inglis (Austin 7 Black Shadow); 5 Michael Harvey (Austin 7 Ulster Special); 6 Tim Myall (Austin Pigsty Mk11A). **FL** Gorolini Im18.16s (75.56mph). **SAXMAX (10 LAPS)** 1 Owen Hunter; 2 James Ross +17.41s; 3 James Webb; 4 Guy Wenham; 5 Mike Day; 6 George Streater. **FL** Hunter Im14.45s (79.33mph). **RACE 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Hunter; 2 Wenham +0.58s; 3 Day; 4 Webb; 5 Streater; 6 Ross. **FL** Wenham Im14.35s (79.46mph). **SPORT SPECIALS & SRGT (13 LAPS)** 1 Chris Porritt (Caterham 7); 2 John Dickson (RAM Cobra) +11.91s; 3 John Plant (Allard J2); 4 Clive Hudson (Eclipse SMD); 5 Nigel Brown (Sylva Phoenix); 6 David Caldecourt (Sylva Phoenix). **CW** Dickson; Hudson; Caldecourt; Ken Paton (RAM Jaguar D-type); Harry Gordon-Finlayson (Westfield SEW); Charles Best (Lotus 11). **FL** Porritt Im02.74s (94.13mph). **TOYOTA MR2 SUPER GT (13 LAPS)** 1 Alric Kitson (Roadster); 2 Anthony Day (Roadster) +2.05s; 3 Rob Horsfield (Mk2); 4 Matthew Palmer (Mk2); 5 Stuart Nicholls (Roadster); 6 Mark Snelling (Mk2). **CW** Day; Palmer. **FL** Kitson Im04.11s (92.12mph) record. **RACE 2 (13 LAPS)** 1 Day; 2 Horsfield +5.018s; 3 John Wilson (Mk2); 4 Paul Hinson (Mk2); 5 Palmer; 6 Luke Austin (Mk2). **CW** Horsfield; Hinson. **FL** Kitson Im04.45s (91.63mph).

## PEMBREY BARC, MARCH 31-APRIL 1

**PICKUP TRUCKS HEAT 1 (12 LAPS)** 1 Nic Grindrod; 2 Steve Dance +1.091s; 3 Carl Boardley; 4 Anthony Hawkins; 5 Dave Briggs; 6 Phil White. **FL** Grindrod Im02.594s (83.73mph). **HEAT 2 (12 LAPS)** 1 Grindrod; 2 Dance +0.134s; 3 Briggs; 4 Boardley; 5 White; 6 Michael Smith. **FL** Dance Im02.957s (83.25mph). **FINAL (16 LAPS)** 1 Dance; 2 Paul Tompkins +0.648s; 3 Briggs; 4 Boardley; 5 Smith; 6 White. **FL** Tompkins Im03.501s (82.54mph). **MAXS SERIES (17 LAPS)** 1 Paul Roddison (Mazda MX5 Mk3); 2 Jeremy Shipley (Mazda MX5) +8.198s; 3 Jonathan Halliwell (Mazda MX5); 4 Kevin Waring (Mazda MX5 Mk1); 5 Ian Loversidge (Mazda MX5); 6 Jonathan Cryer (Mazda MX5). **CW** Mark Theaker (Mazda MX5 Mk1). **FL** Roddison Im09.873s (75.01mph). **RACE 2 (6 LAPS)** 1 Roddison; 2 Halliwell +5.270s; 3 Shipley; 4 Cryer; 5 Waring; 6 Loversidge. **CW** Dean Wilson (Mazda MX5 Mk1). **FL** Roddison Im09.747s (75.15mph). **HONDA VTEC CHALLENGE (13 LAPS)** 1 Andy Smith (Honda Accord); 2 Mark Chese (Honda Civic Type R EP3) +4.658s; 3 Michael Clark (Honda Civic); 4 Richard Chilton (Honda Integra); 5 Robert Williams (Honda Civic Type R); 6 James Hammett (Honda Civic EK4). **CW** Clark;



Better grids for BARC MX5s but Roddison still on top



Whittaker continued his Kumho BMW domination



# GTs riding high

After a fine title battle in 2011, the British GT championship is looking strong again this season. **BEN ANDERSON** looks at the likely contenders ahead of the Oulton Park opener this weekend

**B**ritish GT is booming right now. Off the back of one of its most successful seasons in recent memory, the 2012 championship looks set to continue in the same vein.

Most of the drivers who were involved in last season's dramatic final-round title shootout are set to return, joined by plenty of interesting newcomers, as well as some grand old stagers on a comeback tour.

Increased manufacturer interest in GT3 has played a big part in British GT's surge in popularity over the past two years. Since 2010 there have been new cars produced by Aston Martin, Audi, BMW, Ferrari, Ginetta, McLaren, Mercedes, Nissan and Porsche, and all will be represented on the grid this year.

Changes at world level, combined with the arrival of the Blancpain Endurance Series alongside FIA GT3, means there is a clear GT career ladder emerging, with Britain as a

viable lower rung. It is fast becoming a place for serious young drivers looking to forge relations with manufacturers, as well as a happy hunting ground for rich amateurs and established pros. Successfully balancing the needs of these different groups has been the key challenge for series boss Benjamin Franassovici.

"Over the past few years manufacturers have built cars, wanted to go racing, and it's been logical to go GT3," says Franassovici. "[At the same time] people have been complaining less about balance [of performance]. We've got data, we know what we're doing and now there's hardly any tweaking. That's what wasn't happening three years ago – there was no stability and no confidence."

There is certainly no shortage of confidence now. Witness the return of Motorbase, which will run a Porsche 997 GT3 R for Michael Caine and Swiss lollipop magnate Daniele

Perfetti after leaving the Carrera Cup. Team boss David Bartrum is sure British GT is a good place to be: "The grid's looking really good and really strong – the car variety is fantastic."

There will be four of the latest 997 GT3 Rs on the grid this season, with established squad Trackspeed running three. Former champion David Ashburn will return, partnered when possible by international GT ace



Impressive BMW Z4 joins the field





Porsche, Aston and Ferrari will battle it out



Harvey switches from the Carrera Cup



Geddie Sr will be back with McLaren



Lotus was setting the GT4 pace by end of 2011

Richard Westbrook. Carrera Cup returnee Glynn Geddie (who won British GT last year with his father Jim in a Ferrari 458) is hoping to join Ashburn for the rounds Westbrook can't do. Former European GT4 champion Joe Osborne returns to the series in a second car, sharing with historic racer Steve Tandy, while another historic ace, Jon Minshaw, will drive alongside 1992 BTCC and two-time Carrera Cup champion Tim Harvey.

"The Carrera Cup had come to a natural conclusion for me and it was time to do something different," says Harvey. "British GT cars are much more interesting to drive because there's more technology and they're quicker. Endurance racing has always been something I've thrived on."

Harvey expects Beechdean's new Aston Martin Vantage GT3, driven by team owner Andrew Howard and last year's star driver Jonny Adam, to be a title favourite this season. Former Clio Cup and SEAT Cupra Cup champion Adam certainly feels the new V12 Vantage will give the team a great shot at improving on its fifth place last year.

"I think we should be there or thereabouts," he says. "The new car is reliable and from the driving point of view you can relax a bit more. In the old car [the DBRS9] it was very hard to string three or four laps together, but this new car allows you to do that. It's not necessarily faster, but it's much easier to drive."

Accessibility is also the key strength of the BMW Z4 GT3, which will race in Britain full-time this year thanks to a tie-up between British GT regular Barwell Motorsport and the famous Ecurie Ecosse squad. Barwell's Mark Lemmer believes the ex-Marc VDS Blancpain race-winning machine will be a contender.

"It's not as grunty as the Merc or Aston, but it's good on its brakes, light on its tyres and does everything very well," says Lemmer, who reckons the new harder tyre introduced by Avon this year will negate some of the advantage enjoyed by the best chassis.

"The car is capable of winning the championship as long as the drivers [former race winner Oliver Bryant and historic convert Alasdair McCaig] do a nice job."

Nissan's GT-R, which appeared in the final two rounds of British GT last year, will return for a full programme this season. Former Porsche Carrera Cup scholar Benji Hetherington has linked up with returning squad JMH Automotive, which will run the car with help from factory outfit JRM. However, a late start and lack of testing means momentum will take time to build.

Someone looking to regain career momentum by joining British GT is Riki Christodoulou. The former British Formula 3 race winner has sat on the sidelines since running short of funds after three rounds of F3 last season. He will race the latest-spec Ginetta G55 alongside former British GT4 champion and SPEED Euro Series title winner Jody Firth. The returning Team WFR squad will also run a G50 for Cup graduate Jody Fannin and international sportscar ace Warren Hughes in GT4, which welcomes Mazda's MX5 GT into the fold this year.

But this season won't just be all about new blood. There are some established names in some strong packages that cannot be discounted. Reigning GT3 champion Jim Geddie is planning to join the grid at Rockingham in his new McLaren MP4-12C, and it is likely that 2006 champion Tim Mullen will race alongside him.

Ferraris can never be discounted in British GT and there will be at least three of the latest 458s on the grid. Established pacesetter Allan Simonsen will finally get his hands on Rosso Verde's version after missing the final two rounds of last season, while Aaron Scott/John Dhillon will race the Scuderia Vittoria car that finished third last year with Michael Lyons and Charles Bateman. MTECH's Matt Griffin and Duncan Cameron were title contenders last season and should be again.

It's often evenly matched line-ups that prove the best, which is why Griffin expects the United Autosports Audi R8 LMS of Bateman and emerging star Matt Bell will be the car to beat.

"If they were coming with the new Audi I'd be really worried," says Griffin. "Bateman did a good job last year and Matt's getting better. They will be hard to beat and if they don't make a mistake they'll win it." ❁

**CALENDAR**

**April 7 & 9**  
**Oulton Park**  
(two 1-hour races)

**May 17-19**  
**Nurburgring**  
(two 1-hour races)

**June 9-10**  
**Rockingham**  
(one 2-hour race)

**June 23-24**  
**Brands Hatch**  
(one 2-hour race)

**August 4-5**  
**Snetterton 300**  
(two 1-hour races)

**September 8-9**  
**Silverstone GP**  
(one 3-hour race)

**September 29-30**  
**Donington Park**  
(one 2-hour race)

**BRITISH GT OULTON PARK ENTRY LIST**

DRIVERS	CAR	TEAM	CLASS
Allan Simonsen/Hector Lester	Ferrari 458	Rosso Verde	GT3
Ron Johnson/Piers Johnson	Chevrolet Corvette	Speedworks M'Sport	GT3
Aaron Scott/John Dhillon	Ferrari 458	Scuderia Vittoria	GT3
Jonathan Adam/Andrew Howard	Aston Vantage V12	Beechdean M'Sport	GT3
Alex Buncombe/Jann Mardenborough	Nissan GTR GT3	RJN Motorsport	GT3
Benji & Freddie Hetherington	Nissan GTR GT3	JMH	GT3
Michael Caine/Danielle Perfetti	Porsche 997 GT3 R	Motorbase	GT3
Nick Tandy/Steve Parish	Porsche 997 GT3 R	Motorbase	GT3
Adam Wilcox/Phil Burton	Ferrari 430 Scud	Predator Racing	GT3
Jake Rattenbury/Ian Stinton	Ginetta G55	Stark Racing	GT3
Riki Christodoulou/Jody Firth	Ginetta G55	Team WFR	GT3
Matt Griffin/Duncan Cameron	Ferrari 458	MTECH	GT3
David Jones/Godfrey Jones	Mercedes AMG SLS	Team Pyro	GT3
Matt Bell/Charles Bateman	Audi R8 LMS	United Autosports	GT3
Richard Westbrook/David Ashburn	Porsche 997 GT3 R	Trackspeed	GT3
Joe Osborne/Steve Tandy	Porsche 997 GT3 R	Trackspeed	GT3
Tim Harvey/Jon Minshaw	Porsche 997 GT3 R	Trackspeed	GT3
Dominic Evans/Zoe Wenham	Ginetta G50	Century Motorsport	GT4
Owen Wildenthal/Mark Ticehurst	Mazda MX5 GT4	Jota Group	GT4
Sailesh Boliseti/TBA	Lotus Evora GT4	Lotus Sports UK	GT4
Warren Hughes/Jody Fannin	Ginetta G50	Team WFR	GT4
Steve Chaplin/TBA	Aston Vantage V8	Appley Engineering	GT4
Oliver Bryant/Alasdair McCaig	BMW Z4 GT3	Ecurie Ecosse	GT3
Ray Grimes/David Witt	Chevron GR8	Chevron Cars	GTC
Anthony Reid/Jordan Witt	Chevron GR8	Chevron Cars	INV



# FORD BEGINS ITS NEW ERA

British Formula Ford has gone turbocharged. BEN ANDERSON assesses how things are shaping up ahead of the cars' first race at Oulton Park this weekend

Jamun's Jake Cook is one of the favourites

**F**ormula Ford is entering a brave new world this season. A fresh set of regulations (which have been in the offing for half a decade or so) are finally here, meaning that this year's British championship grid will feature a brand new chassis and engine combination.

The new EcoBoost era is Formula Ford's attempt to modernise. New chassis, designed to the latest FIA safety standards, have more powerful turbocharged EcoBoost engines to replace the old Duratec motors (and featuring sequential, flappy-paddle gearboxes), and larger-profile wheels and tyres to increase grip. The result is a new look formula that is capable of lap times that wouldn't look out of step on a Formula Renault BARC grid...

So far, three manufacturers have committed to building new cars for the category. Duratec-era dominator Mygale has got in there early and examples of the French machines have already been seen out testing, while

category stalwart Ray and Fluid Motorsport boss Lindsay Allen's new Southern Motorsport concern both have EcoBoost cars in the pipeline that are expected to join the fight once the season is up and running.

The new machinery has been well received by drivers, with JTR team boss Nick Tandy (himself a former series race winner) expecting the EcoBoost cars to deliver better racing as well as a substantial improvement in lap times.

The issue, of course, is cost. The arrival of the EcoBoost rules has inevitably pushed up the price of a new car, which represents something of a risk when economic times are tough. Many premier single-seater grids are struggling, but Ford has been at pains to help teams get on the grid by subsidising the cost of certain spec parts and it is hoped that running costs will remain static thanks to improved gearbox reliability.

The cancellation of Formula Renault UK on the eve of the season (see

panel, right) highlights the risk of introducing costlier new equipment in austere times, though it may also simultaneously present an opportunity for Formula Ford to re-establish itself as a serious force in junior single-seater racing – in line with the FIA's wish for a streamlined, lower-cost route to the top of the sport.

A lot will depend on how EcoBoost

## 2012 BRITISH FORMULA FORD ENTRY LIST

DRIVERS	CAR	TEAM
Jake Cook (GB)	Jamun	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Luke Williams (GB)	Jamun	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Eric Lichtenstein (RA)	Jamun	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Ryan Cullen (GB)	Cullen	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Cavan Corcoran (GB)	JTR	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Antti Buri (FIN)	JTR	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Fred Martin-Dye (GB)	Enigma	Mygale (EcoBoost)
Matt Rao (GB)	Fluid	Van Diemen (Duratec)
Alex Drabble (GB)	Fluid	Van Diemen (Duratec)
Julio Moreno (EC)	JTR	Mygale (Duratec)
Fabian Welter (MEX)	RVR	Mygale (Duratec)
O'ly Rae (AUS)	Enigma	Mygale (Duratec)
George Blundell (GB)	Enigma	Mygale (Duratec)
Kenneth Thirlwall (GB)	Myerscough	Van Diemen (Duratec)
Abdul Ahmed (IND/USA)	Don Hardman	Ray (Duratec)
Charles Anti (USA)	AntiSpeed	Mygale (Duratec)



**CALENDAR**

- April 7 & 9  
Oulton Park
- May 18-20  
Brands Indy
- June 9-10  
Rockingham
- June 23-24  
Brands GP
- July 7-8  
Spa\*
- July 14-15  
Zandvoort\*
- July 28-29  
Nurburgring
- August 4-5  
Snetterton
- September 8-9  
Silverstone GP
- Sept 29-30  
Donington Park

\*EuroCup rounds only

New 1600cc turbo unit arrives for this season



is received and how much extra value it can offer competitors. Ford has also secured prize tests for this year's champ in USF2000 and Star Mazda, and the manufacturer has even loaned last year's scholarship champion Cavan Corcoran one of its EcoBoost Mygales to get him on the grid this year. Corcoran will be one of seven drivers set to contest the inaugural race for EcoBoosts at Oulton this weekend, with the hope that more will follow.

Aware that this new-world order

may take time to take off properly, series promoter Racing Line has sensibly revamped the scholarship class to include all the outgoing Duratec cars. This will allow teams to continue using their existing kit while offering a cheaper way in for new drivers.

The early signs are that this move will at least ensure that British Formula Ford starts the year with a respectable double-figure grid, while it waits for everyone else to begin following its fresh direction. ❖



**FORMULA RENAULT UK**  
A STUDY IN SINGLE-SEATER STRIFE

**THE CANCELLATION OF FORMULA Renault UK** less than two weeks before the start of the season shows the fragility of premium single-seater racing in Britain at the moment.

The UK's top entry-level championship must have thought it had reached its nadir last year, when just a dozen full-time drivers started the season. Only half that number had signed up for 2012 before Renault decided to pull the plug and focus on rebuilding the category for a comeback in 2013.

The writing has perhaps been on the wall since Renault introduced the latest Barazi-Epsilon-designed machine in 2010. Twenty drivers across seven teams began that new era at Thruxton two years ago, but many category stalwarts privately expressed reservations that a new car, introduced at a difficult time economically, would send costs spiralling and hurt the championship.

It seems their protestations were prophetic. Of those seven teams only two (category diehards Fortec Motorsports and Mark Burdett Motorsport) remained for this year's championship before it was axed. Fortec is planning to transfer its four drivers (Jake Dennis, Josh Hill, Dan de Zille and Shahaan Engineer) into the North European Cup, which features races on three grand prix circuits on its calendar that visits Germany, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands. Burdett's future is less clear, but he hopes to make a similar move with his drivers (Josh Webster and Gabriel Casagrande) and contest selected FR ALPS races.

Fortec hoped to boost the FR UK grid with guest entries from its Eurocup squad, and promoter SRO planned to run a 'B Class' series for old Tatuus cars at the final three rounds, but it seems these promises weren't enough for Renault to stick with it.

The teams are right to criticise the late timing of the manufacturer's decision, but ultimately FR UK priced itself out of a difficult market. For the same budget it takes to compete in FR UK drivers could race in the Eurocup, which hosts four of its seven events on grand prix circuits and offers a £500,000 scholarship into FR 3.5. Those who couldn't afford that have set their sights on more cost-effective options, such as Formula Ford, InterSteps and Formula Renault BARC.

FR UK cast itself adrift in the middle of this ocean – too expensive for most budget-conscious drivers, but lacking the range of prizes and circuits on offer overseas. Now, for 2012 at least, it is no more.

...but Formula Renault BARC is looking strong



## YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Merc's trick parts still stoke Red Bull's ire

### Shut up and catch up, Red Bull

Is it just me or are others getting fed up with the constant sniping emanating from Red Bull requesting again and again that the FIA clarifies the legality of the Mercedes DRS rear wing? I would have thought that as the matter was discussed with the FIA prior to the first race of the season, and that the cars have passed two sets of scrutineers, this would indicate it is indeed legal and therefore the matter is closed.

If Red Bull had developed the idea we would probably have had the line "we have developed the car within the rules and it is for other teams to try to catch us".

**Peter Priest**, by email

EDITORIAL CONTACT [mail@autosport.com](mailto:mail@autosport.com)

#### How refreshing it was to

see a woman representing Sauber during interviews at the Malaysian Grand prix.

Team CEO Monisha Kaltenborn demonstrates that women can be successful in F1 and that there are good opportunities for both sexes in the sport.

There are several good female designers in F1 too, all doing well in such a traditionally male-dominated sport. This can only get better as more women choose motorsport as a career.

**Luciane Sabiston**  
Didcot, Oxon

#### While I agree with Jean Todt

and Michele Mouton that a return to 'classical', longer events may generate more interest for some people in the WRC, if manufacturers don't feel it has a commercial benefit, then I doubt they'll run with the idea.

What we don't want is new manufacturers being put off by what they believe are increasing costs without seeing greater benefits.

Why not have a system where for the longer events a greater number of points are on offer. Manufacturers can then choose which rallies

they wish to compete on.

The number of WRC events could be increased, but with a minimum number of events to be participated in, then let the manufacturers decide which rallies suit them best.

**Andy Maclean**  
Churchill, Oxon

#### Just returned from a

glorious day at Brands Hatch. The last BTCC race was especially exciting, but is it appropriate to applaud a win if achieved by nudging your rival off-line at Clearways?

**Dr Richard Thompson**  
Bexhill, Sussex

#### Hats off to IndyCar for

putting on one of the best motor races I have ever seen, in Sunday's race at Barber Motorsports Park, Alabama.

This was one of those occasions where the nature of the track, weather, chassis, tyres and driver skill produced a start-to-finish stunner.

Special mention must go to the Dallara DW12, to Firestone for creating a tyre worthy of fast single-seater racing, and to the drivers for having the derring-do to pull off some amazing moves.

**David Herron**  
Washington, Tyne & Wear

AUTOSPORT.COM

### TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. ADAM PARR LEAVES WILLIAMS
2. SAUBER: PODIUM PROVIDES FINANCIAL BOOST
3. FERRARI VOWS TO PROTECT MASSA
4. FRY: FERRARI STILL FEELING F2012 BURDEN
5. MCLAREN: RAIN RUINED 1-2 CHANCE

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

### TOP STORY ONLINE

RAIKKONEN: WHY HE CAN WIN RACES IN '12

To read this exclusive feature and many others like it, log on to [autosport.com/plus](http://autosport.com/plus) and choose which package you'd like. A month will cost £5.50, a year £46. Includes access to Forix – the ultimate stats website.

WIN!



#### ROAD ANGEL VANTAGE

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Vantage – a dedicated safety camera and blackspot locator that displays the legal speed limit of every road you drive, automatically and wirelessly updating its database every few minutes as you drive. For more details on Road Angel visit [www.roadangelgroup.com](http://www.roadangelgroup.com) Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

FROM THE FORUM - [forums.autosport.com](http://forums.autosport.com)

WHAT OUR READERS ARE TALKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW  
Bahrain GP 2011-2012 and public unrest  
Is RB8 the worst 'Newey' Formula 1 car?

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on [autosport.editorial@haynet.com](mailto:autosport.editorial@haynet.com)

# THE LATEST GEAR

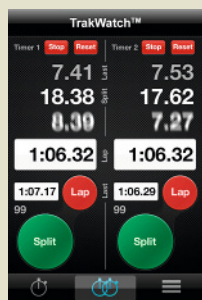
Desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

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Now you can show your support for the double world championship-winning Formula 1 team by donning some (or all if you're a super-fan) of its official 2012 attire. The baseball cap (£34.99) is the most affordable item and comes in Vettel or Webber spec, or you can choose from a T-shirt (£59.99), Polo (£64.99), Team shirt (£79.99) or Rain jacket (£149.99).

All the gear comes with the full range of Red Bull sponsor/partner logos and is made with top-quality material.



### KARTING TIMING APP

£9.99  
trakwatch.com

Available from the iTunes App Store, this new iPhone karting stopwatch App features three timers, a split-time option and a recall-session mode. Unlike conventional stopwatches, you can configure it to be finger-friendly, too, depending on your scrolling habits. Check the website for more info.



### EBBRO 1:43 NISSAN GT-R

£54.99  
autosport.com/shop

Ebbro has released both versions of the Sumo/JRM Nissan GT-R GT1 World Championship racers in 1:43 scale. Choose from the #23 car, driven to the 2011 drivers' title by Germans Michael Krumm and Lucas Luhr, or the #22 car pedalled to race wins by Brits Peter Dumbreck and Richard Westbrook.



### FUJIMI 1:20 LOTUS 97T

£56.55  
grandprixmodels.com

Japanese plastic model specialist Fujimi's Lotus-Renault 97T from 1985 comes in Portuguese and Belgian GP spec. We prefer the Estoril version; it was Ayrton Senna's first win, of course, and the treaded tyres – rare on a 1:20-scale kit – look absolutely mega. Fortunately, JPS decals are also available from GPM.

## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: WALTER ROHRL, AUDI QUATTRO, RALLY PORTUGAL



**SEARCH FOR:** Audi S1 GroupB Rally Portugal - Walther Rohl (2:32)  
Whoever loaded up this gem can't spell Walter Rohrl, but don't let that spoil it for you. The German world rally legend threads his mighty Group B S1 Quattro through a tunnel of crazy fans during a mid-'80s Rally of Portugal.

# WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online

## SNETTERTON

**BARC - April 7-8**

**Admission: £13**

**Tel: 0871 5084722**

Snetterton hosts an eclectic mix of modern and historic cars this weekend. Formula Renault BARC headlines the event and takes on extra significance with the cancellation of FRenault UK. Kumho BMW and the Porsche GT3 Cup are also likely to thrill. Also featuring are Classic Formula Ford 2000, Classic Formula Ford 1600, Pre-'90 Formula Ford 1600, MGOC, and the Classic Touring Car Racing Club's collection of categories.

## SILVERSTONE

**BRSCC - April 7-8**

**Admission: From £9**

**Tel: 01327 857271**

Alfa Romeo Championship, Ford Fiesta Junior, Formula Jedi, Ford Fiesta Championship, Ma5da MX150 Series, Ma5da MX5 Championship, Ma5da MX5 Cup and Production GTI.

## DONINGTON PARK

**MGCC - April 8**

**Admission: £15**

**Tel: 01332 810048**

MG Trophy, Peter Best Insurance Challenge, MG Metro Cup, FISCAR, MG Midget Challenge, BCV8, Thoroughbred Sportscars and Cockshoot Cup.

## KNOCKHILL

**SMRC - April 8**

**Admission: £12**

**Tel: 01383 723337**

Scottish Formula Ford, Scottish Legends, Scottish Mini Cooper Cup, Classic Sports and Saloons, Sports and Saloons, Scottish XR2 and Fiesta ST.

## CASTLE COMBE

**CCRC - April 9**

**Admission: £15**

**Tel: 01249 782417**

Julius Thurgood's HRDC initiative brings historic GTs and touring cars to compliment Combe's traditional season opener for its resident series.



British F3 opens at Oulton Park

## OULTON PARK F3/GT

**F3/GT**

**April 7-9 (No racing Sunday)**

**Admission: £13**

**Tel: 01829 760301**

The opening rounds of the F3 and British GT Championship represent a great opportunity to see stars of the future plying their trade. Jean-Eric Vergne is the latest British F3 graduate to

follow David Coulthard, Mika Hakkinen and many others into Formula 1. F3 will only race on Saturday before hot-footing it to Monza, so get there early to see the UK's top single-seater category. Support action continues with the Ginetta GT5 Challenge, the burgeoning MSV F3 Cup, Volkswagen Racing Cup and British Formula Ford.

## FIA GT1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

**Rd 1/10**

**Nogaro, France**

**April 9**

**gt1world.com**

Ferrari, McLaren and Porsche are among six new manufacturers entering the series following an eventful off-season. A switch to GT3 regulations should be more than compensated for by the arrivals, and by a driver line-up that now includes the likes of Oliver Jarvis and Toni Vilander alongside series regulars such as Frederic Makowiecki and Peter Kox.



World GT1 series has new marques

## INTERCONTINENTAL RALLY CHALLENGE

**Rd 3/13**

**Circuit of Ireland**

**April 6-7**

**ircseries.com**

## FIA GT3

**Rd 1/10**

**Nogaro, France**

**April 8**

**gt3europe.com**

## FORMULA 3 AUSTRALIA

**Rd 3/7**

**Bathurst, Australia**

**April 7-8**

**formula3.com.au**

## NEW ZEALAND V8 SUPERTOURERS

**Ruapuna Park, New Zealand**

**Rd 2/7**

**April 7-8**

**v8st.co.nz**

## Television

### THURSDAY APRIL 5

0235-0345 **ITV1**  
BTCC: Brands Hatch Highlights  
0730-0800 **Eurosport**  
WTCC: Inside World Touring Cars  
0930-1000 **ESPN**  
Planet Speed  
1330-1400 **Eurosport**  
WTCC: Inside World Touring Cars  
1900-1930 **Sky Sports F1**  
Legends: Emerson Fittipaldi  
1930-2000 **Sky Sports F1**  
Legends: Jackie Stewart  
2235-2340 **Motors TV**  
WRC: Rally Portugal Highlights

### FRIDAY APRIL 6

0100-0200 **Sky Sports 4**  
Racemax  
1210-1310, 2000-2100 **Motors TV**  
WRC: Rally Portugal Highlights  
1600-1940 **Eurosport LIVE**  
MotoGP: Qatar Practice 2 & 3  
1720-1925 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars: Tasmania Highlights  
2115-2315 **Eurosport**  
MotoGP: Qatar Practice Highlights

### SATURDAY APRIL 7

0015-0045, 0730-0800 **Eurosport**  
IRC: Rally Ireland Day 1  
0355-0425 **Channel 5**  
Motorsport Mundial  
1000-1115 **Eurosport 2**  
MotoGP: Qatar Practice Highlights  
1600-1900 **Eurosport LIVE**  
MotoGP: Qatar Qualifying  
2015-2215 **Eurosport**  
MotoGP: Qatar Qualifying Highlights

### 2100-2230 **ITV4**

BTCC: Brands Hatch Highlights  
2330-0000 **Eurosport**  
IRC: Rally Ireland Review

### SUNDAY APRIL 8

0600-0700 **Sky Sports 2**  
Racemax  
0730-0800 **Eurosport**  
IRC: Rally Ireland Review  
1600-1700 **Eurosport**  
MotoGP: Qatar Qualifying Highlights  
1930-2100 **BBC Red Button LIVE**  
MotoGP: Qatar Grand Prix  
2100-2230 **Eurosport**  
MotoGP: Qatar Grand Prix  
2300-0015 **ESPN**  
FIA GT1: Nogaro Qualifying Highlights  
2320-0050 **BBC1**  
MotoGP: Qatar Grand Prix Replay

### MONDAY APRIL 9

0400-0500 **Sky Sports 3**  
Racemax  
0410-0600, 2205-0010 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars: Tasmania Highlights  
0430-0600 **ESPN**  
FIA GT1: Nogaro Qualifying Highlights  
1300-1330 **ESPN LIVE**  
FIA GT1: Nogaro  
1800-2000 **Eurosport 2**  
MotoGP: Qatar Grand Prix Highlights  
0000-0100 **ESPN**  
FIA GT1: Nogaro Highlights

 **AUTOSPORT.COM**  
WATCH LIVE GT1 VIDEO

## Online

### **PLUS**

Coming up in our premium web content this week

#### MALDONADO INTERVIEW

Pastor Maldonado has had a fast but erratic start to the grand prix season, so Edd Straw sat down for a chat with the Venezuelan at Sepang, which you can read all about on AUTOSPORT Plus this week. Don't forget our guide to this year's British F3 Championship and an in-depth preview of the upcoming MotoGP season too.



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## REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



There was lots for Moody to get very excited about

**ON THE FACE OF IT**, MotoGP and British Touring Cars have nothing in common. One's a once-prestigious series where rising costs and technological warfare forced the manufacturers out and resulted in a new set of regulations designed to encourage privateers back in... and the other did that a couple of years earlier!

Now the thing that links them – for armchair petrolheads at least – is that Toby Moody is the voice for both. With Ben Edwards filling Martin Brundle's F1 boots at the BBC, Moody was the unexpected choice to take his place on ITV4's

flagship motorsport show.

*Revved Up* has waxed lyrical about Moody before, but that's no guarantee of success. A bit like Fernando Torres's move from Liverpool to Chelsea, simply being good doesn't necessarily translate into improving the overall product.

But the touring car show almost defines the description of "a safe pair of hands". Anchor Steve Rider has done more BTCC races than Matt Neal, Louise Goodman knows exactly where to shove a mic in order to get that pre-race quip from Jason Plato, and Tim Harvey retains a child-like enthusiasm

for the racing that's hard not to be infected by.

Between Harvey and Moody it could be just about the most enthusiastic partnership since that girl from X-Factor and her fella in that video that leaked onto the internet. Such was the excitement that accompanied the start to race one, I was sure a fire engine was needed in the comms box to put out the blaze in their trousers!

While it's all very well getting worked up about

the cars going three-wide into Paddock, it's nothing without context. And it was evident that Moody had done his homework.

He had an anecdote from conversations with every team boss and played a textbook roll in letting Harvey chastise Plato for nerfing Dave Newsham out of the lead, concentrating on the emotion of the incident.

All-in-all a great debut. Now all he has to do is keep it up...

*Revved Up*

"Anchorman Steve Rider has done more BTCC races than Matt Neal; Tim Harvey retains a child-like enthusiasm for it"

# THE WEEK IN PICTURES

Our lensmen pounding the beat from Hockenheim to Waterloo Bridge



## DO YOU REMEMBER THE LAST TIME?

Miguel Molina, Andy Priaulx and Bernd Schneider, who must surely have been in short trousers in 1992, look back to when Audi, BMW and Merc last faced off in the DTM

## BTCC BACKSLIDER

100 yards into his BTCC debut and Ginetta graduate Adam Morgan finds his Speedworks Toyota pointing the wrong way at Paddock Hill



## STAR TREATMENT

Roberto Merhi, Robert Wickens and Christian Vietoris join the Mercedes Junior Team



## PROBABLY QUICKER THAN AN HRT

Sky Sports promoted the launch of its F1 channel with a fleet of team-liveried London taxis

# NEXT WEEK CHINESE GP REPORT ALL THE BEST ACTION AND PHOTOS FROM SHANGHAI

**DON'T MISS IT!**



# FROM THE ARCHIVE

David Leslie's first BTCC win, Thruxton 1993



“Leslie blazed the rest of the lap and crossed the line 1.5s clear of the pack - an advantage he stretched”

Thruxton win was important for RML

**“RACING COMES FIRST” WERE AMONG THE FIRST WORDS**

David Leslie ever spoke to his wife-to-be Jane, a fitting maxim for a man who was, and remains, part of the Scottish motor racing fabric.

In celebration of his life, which ended tragically on March 30 2008, AUTOSPORT takes a look back to August 30 1993 and what was a seminal first victory – for both Leslie and his RML team – in British Touring Cars.

The Scot, in the privateer Ecurie Ecosse Vauxhall Cavalier run by RML, had already threatened to upset the odds and beat the might of the works teams at Brands Hatch (twice) and Pembrey, but it was on the high-speed, bumpy Thruxton surface that he eventually made the breakthrough.

Leslie had grabbed his fourth pole of the season at the circuit, but lost the lead to Ford's Paul Radisich on the run down to the first corner. He remained calm, however, and as Radisich held a tight line at the complex – what Leslie hoped he'd do – the Scot stayed wide and swung back to snatch the lead back at the left-hander.

He blazed the rest of the lap, and crossed the line almost 1.5s clear of the pack – an advantage he stretched over the early laps, in the process establishing a margin which would never be overhauled. Radisich closed as the race

wore on, but Leslie was still in full control as the chequered flag came out, confirming his breakthrough win.

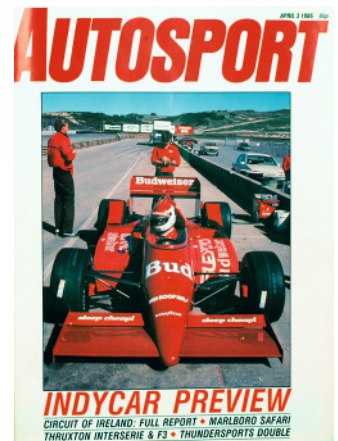
“The win was hugely important for David, me and RML,” team boss Ray Mallock says. “It's fair to say that all of our touring car success came about through that weekend.

“We knew we had built a car that was capable of winning, but that victory was in many ways the springboard for our works deal the following season [RML took over as the Vauxhall works team from 1994]. David was key to the development of the car of course. Up until 1989 I had done most of the development work on my cars, but in sharing the works Aston Martin with David I realised that I had someone whose judgement and feedback I could trust.

“The Cavalier David developed set the groundwork for John Cleland's triumph in 1995. Unfortunately David could not come across as Vauxhall already had two works drivers, but later I was really pleased to get David again when we ran with Nissan, and his development skills were again the bedrock of our success.

“Of course David didn't always show emotion publicly. But he put his heart and soul into everything he did and it was a hugely emotional win for all of us, and a great reward for all his contributions.” ❧

THIS WEEK IN...



APRIL 3 1986

**THE SPORT OF RALLYING CAME**

under scrutiny this week in 1986 following spectator incidents at both the Open Rally Championship Circuit of Ireland and the WRC's Safari Rally.

On the Friday of the Circuit of Ireland, a 15-year-old spectator was struck by Kalle Grundel's Ford RS200. Despite the advice of event organisers, the teenager and a friend had been standing on an otherwise deserted stretch of road. Grundel did his best to avoid them but the youth faltered at the last minute and stepped out, although he survived the impact.

In the Safari Rally, a young Kenyan was injured after being hit by Markku Alen's Lancia Rallye 037 on the Monday. Another was not so fortunate, however, killed instantly when Kenneth Eriksson's VW Gold suffered a steering breakage and crashed.



PICT: LAT ARCHIVE

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# JULIAN BAILEY

■ San Marino GP ■ Imola ■ Lotus 102B-Judd ■ April 28, 1991 ■ From the back of the grid to a points finish



Bailey took sixth in his final grand prix

## I SUPPOSE I COULD HAVE

chosen my win in the 1982 Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch in the Lola or the F3000 victory there – the first for a British driver – in '87, but the race that really stands out is my final grand prix for Lotus, the San Marino GP at Imola in '91.

It all started with my signing a contract with then-team boss Peter Collins. I remember sitting at Colin Chapman's old desk at the factory thinking, "This is the big time! So many great drivers have raced for Lotus – Rindt, Andretti, Peterson, Senna – and here I am!"

After I'd signed the contract Peter nipped upstairs to get me a set of overalls to try. I put them on and they fitted fine, but I then noticed they had Johnny Herbert's name on the waistband. In hindsight, the writing was on the wall straight away. Peter had been trying to get Johnny out of Japan, which he eventually did, of course [for round five in Canada], so I was obviously a stop-gap for the team.

Still, I was in, I had a contract, an Esprit road car, and went off to Phoenix as a fully-fledged Lotus F1 driver. And it was a disaster.

The car felt good in practice, but there was an oil fire on the

**"I made a cautious start from the back as it was wet, but I was much quicker than Mika that day - my fastest lap was 0.5s quicker than his - and I was on the move"**

Judd-engined 102B in qualifying, so I didn't make the cut. Then in Brazil the wheels fell off so I didn't qualify at Interlagos either.

Then came the first European race, at Imola. I managed to scrape onto the back of the grid, in 26th – one place behind [team-mate] Mika [Hakkinen].

There was a sombre mood in the team as one of the mechanics had

died after falling through a glass roof at the hotel, but I'd woken up feeling really confident that I could do something that day. I just felt really hooked-up – you have those days sometimes!

I made a cautious start from the back as it was wet and I couldn't see much due to the spray. I was much quicker than Mika that day – my [eighth] fastest lap was half

a second quicker than his – and I was on the move.

Once the track dried, I made my stop for dry tyres but the team called me in again. Turned out they hadn't removed the brake-duct blanking tape used in the wet, so that lost me time.

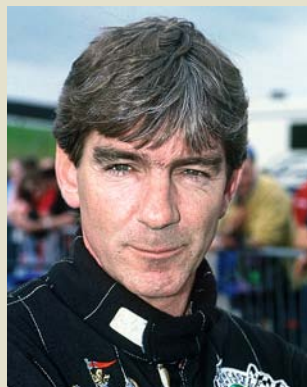
I went on a mission and was catching Mika, before my gearbox kept getting stuck in neutral. Then I had a full 360-degree spin at Acqua Minerale – no-one knew that, until now! I carried on, but with the gearbox still playing up.

On the last lap I could see Mika ahead of me. I'd blistered my tyres chasing him – I don't know how I got round that lap, to be honest – but finished less than a second behind him to score my first and only point in Formula 1.

It all went wrong again at Monaco next time out. I never went well there, it was my bogey circuit. I failed to qualify and that was that for me and F1. I knew Johnny was coming so I suppose I felt a bit unloved in the team.

It was a shame because Montreal was next and I loved that circuit. Still, I can always say I finished in the points for Lotus in a GP. ✪ *Julian Bailey was talking to Henry Hope-Frost*

## IN PROFILE



### LONDONER JULIAN BAILEY RACED

karts in Menorca before rising through the British FFord ranks, winning the prestigious Festival in 1982. His FIA F3000 victory at Brands Hatch in 1987 caught the eye of Ken Tyrrell, who signed him for F1 in '88. He raced six times, but failed to score, before moving to the factory Nissan sportscar squad for '89. A second F1 stint came with Lotus in '91, before a successful switch to touring cars and GTs. Bailey, 50, now runs a Surrey gastropub.

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## Porsche Carrera Cup GB

### Rounds 1 and 2, Brands Hatch, March 31-April 1

Richard Plant and Michael Meadows were the big winners as the 2012 Porsche Carrera Cup GB got off to a great start at Brands Hatch. While Plant won the opening race, Meadows took the early championship lead with two pole positions and a resounding win in race two.

Former Carrera Cup Scholarship winner Meadows led the opening race home as well, but was penalised for exceeding the track limits, leaving Plant to score his first Carrera Cup victory. Meanwhile 2012 Scholar Daniel Lloyd was a star of race two with a fine drive to second place behind Meadows.

There was lots of close racing down the order to mark the start of the tenth season for the Carrera Cup GB. Four more drivers took victories as Pro-Am1 wins were shared between Derek Pierce and Oly Mortimer and Pro-Am2 wins were taken by Will Goff and Tautvydas Barstys.

The action from the field of 450bhp 911 GT3 Cup cars now switches to Donington Park on 14/15 April for rounds three and four of the 20-race season.

For more information on the Porsche Carrera Cup GB visit [www.porsche.com](http://www.porsche.com)

#### Overall points' position after round 2

1	Michael Meadows	39
2	Jonas Gelzinis	34
3	Richard Plant	30
4	Sam Tordoff	28
5	Ben Barker	24
6	Glynn Geddie	18
=	Daniel Lloyd	18
8	Chris Dymond	13
9	Rory Butcher	12
=	Oly Mortimer	12
11	Ahmad Al Harthy	11
12	George Brewster	10
13	Derek Pierce	8
14	Michael Leonard	7
15	Keith Webster	4
=	Victor Jimenez	4
17	Yucel Ozbek	1
=	Tautvydas Barstys	1

#### Pro-Am1 category

1	Ahmad Al Harthy	15
2	Oly Mortimer	12
3	George Brewster	10
4	Derek Pierce	8
5	Michael Leonard	7
6	Keith Webster	4
=	Victor Jimenez	4

#### Pro-Am2 category

1	Will Goff	20
2	Tania Mann	11
3	Tautvydas Barstys	10
4	Jean Glorieux	9

#### Team championship

1	Team Parker Racing	58
2	Redline Racing	57
3	Parr Motorsport	37
4	Juta Racing	35
5	JD Pierce with Team Parker	26
6	Celtic Speed	22
7	Redline/Oman Air	15
8	GT Marques	12
9	Naas Court Hotel with Parker	7
10	Redline/Marque 1	5

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CUP  
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